The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Maynard Morris collection of Edward Kean materials

1787-1961 [bulk 1813-1832]
*T-Mss 2014-123

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015

Summary

Creator: Kean, Edmund, 1787-1833

Title: Maynard Morris collection of Edward Kean materials

Date: 1787-1961 [bulk 1813-1832]

Size: 2.1 linear feet (8 boxes)

Source: Donated by Maynord Morris, date unknown.

Abstract: Maynard Morris served as secretary of the Edmund Kean Club that celebrated the career of the Shakespearean stage actor. The collection, dated 1813 to 1961, holds letters, graphics, posters, and printed matter.

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Processing note: Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015

Creator History

Maynard Morris (1898-1964) served as secretary of the Edmund Kean Club (defunct) that honored the career of the Shakespearian actor. Morris, a theatrical agent, collected theatre related materials. He died in New York City in 1964.

Edmund Kean (1787-1833) first gained prominence, for his role as Shylock in The Merchant of Venice produced at the Drury Lane, London Theatre, in 1814. Critical acclaim for his artistry would continue throughout his life in productions that include Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, and Richard III.

Kean often was involved with controversy. In 1817, he refused to appear in the play The Italians written by Charles Bucke. His employer, the Drury Lane Theatre, wanted to stage the play, but Kean balked. His on-going fights with management led to the first public rebuke of Kean.

His personal life led to public scrutiny as well. In 1825, he was sued by the husband of Charlotte Cox for adultery. He lost the suit and his wife left him. When he returned to the Drury Lane, the audience pelted and booed him.

Despite these setbacks, Kean received wide recognition for his mastery of Shakespeare's plays in Europe and in the United States. In 1826, during a second tour of North America, the Huron Indians made him an honorary chief.

In later years, Kean's oratorical skills were diminished by his drug dependency. He collapsed into his son's arms during a performance of Othello in 1833. He would never appear on the stage again dying a few weeks later in Surrey, England.

Scope and Content Note

The collection, dated 1813 to 1961 (bulk dates 1813-1832), documents the career of Shakespearean actor Edmund Kean. Other files relate to the Edmund Kean Club. The collection contains letters, clippings, playbills, prints, and artwork.

There are approximately eighteen letters autographed by Kean.

The clippings are reviews of Kean's performances at the Drury Lane Theatre and other venues. These clippings include articles about Kean's refusal to act in the play *The Italians*.

The playbills represent significant examples of Kean's performances at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and other theatres in England and abroad. Playbill advertisements include the plays The Castle of Morsino, Five Miles Off, Hamlet, King Richard III, The Merchant of Venice and, Othello. There are several playbills from Kean's performances of Othello including his last stage performance at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Two playbills have been attributed to Kean's father and uncle Moses Kean.

The prints include Kean in character for performances, tributes, Kean's friends and acquaintances, and theatres.

Pamphlets in the collection are the Fifth edition…A Full Report on the Trial of Albion Cox, Esq. versus Edmund Kean, Esq.; A Celebrated Old Playhouse. The History of the Richmond Theatre; The Life and Theatrical Career of Mr. Kean, and The Patrician, the Tombs of Richmond Church.

There are two artistic renderings, a watercolor of the "Red House," where Kean resided for a time and a pen and ink drawing of Kean as Sir Edward Mortimer in The Iron Chest.

The Edmund Kean Club files include information about their efforts to restore the George Frederick Cooke monument at St. Paul Church which was erected by Kean.

The MWEZ numbers represent the Library's former classification system. When requesting materials,please refer to the finding aid's box list.

Key Terms

Occupations
Actors (performing artists)

Genre/Physical Characteristic
Clippings
Lithography
Pamphlets
Playbills
Works of art

Titles
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (London, England)
Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia, Pa.)

Names
Kean, Moses, -1792

Container List

b. 1 f. 1-6 Correspondence 1813-1832
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 576; 8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702; 8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758

Printed Matter

Clippings

b. 2 f. 1 Memoir of Edmund Kean. The New Casket 1832
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20,758

b. 2 f. 2 Recollections 1871
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 2 f. 3 Refusal--The Italians 1819
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 6 f. 1-3 1814-1830
8-MWEZ = n.c. 21, 251

b. 2 f. 4 1933
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 2 f. 5 (A) Celebrated Old Playhouse. The Richmond Theatre 1886
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758

Pamphlets

b. 2 f. 6 Fifth Edition...Albion Cox Esq. vs Edmund Kean, Esq 1825
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 2 f. 7 (The) Life of and Theatrical Career of Mr. Kean 1814
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 2 f. 8 (The) Patrician. The Tombs of Richmond Church 1844
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

Playbills

b. 3 f. 1-15 1806, 1814-1819
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752; 8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758

b. 5 f. 1-5 1812-1814, 1820
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752

b. 4 f. 1-16 1821-1833
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752

b. 2 f. 10 1923, 1961
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 4 f. 17 Mr. Kean and Mr. Harley
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758

b. 4 f. 18 Sweet Kitty Clover
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 2 f. 9 Walnut Street Theatre. Philadelphia, Pa 1821
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

Reviews

b. 2 f. 11-12 1815-1823
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758

b. 2 f. 13 King Lear. Booth and Kean 1829
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752

Prints

Prints (cont.)

Kean, Edmund

b. 7 f. 1 Character Roles
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 2 Kean in Scenes from Productions
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 3 Honorary Chief of the Hurons 1926
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 4 Tributes circa 1833
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251; 8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 8 f. 1 Edmund Kean's Grave circa 1833
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 7 f. 5 Other Individuals
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 6 Memorial to George Frederick Cooke 1821
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 7 Scenic Views
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 7 f. 8 Theatres
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251; 8 - MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 8 f. 2 Mr. Wallack as Othello
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752

Art works

b. 8 f. 3 Pen and Ink Sketch of Edmund Kean
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752

b. 8 f. 4 Watercolor of the "Red House"
8-MWEZ + n.c. 21, 251

b. 2 f. 14 Edmund Kean Club 1948, 1954
8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 758; 8-MWEZ + n.c. 20, 702

b. 8 f. 5 Kean, Moses. Playbills 1787-1788
8 - MWEZ + n.c. 20, 752