

# Lytton Strachey:

## An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator</b>	Strachey, Lytton, 1880-1932
<b>Title</b>	Lytton Strachey Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1885-1957
<b>Extent:</b>	5 boxes (2.08 linear feet)
<b>Abstract</b>	This collection documents the life and works of the English Bloomsbury group writer. The collection consists of manuscripts of Strachey's major biographical works <i>Portraits in Miniature</i> (1931) and <i>Queen Victoria</i> (1921), and drafts of essays, notes, and correspondence.
<b>RLIN record #:</b>	TCRC98-A26
<b>Language:</b>	English.
<b>Access</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition</b>	Purchases, 1960-1970 (R919, R1452, R2848, R3849, R3948, R4152, R5174)
<b>Processed by</b>	Chelsea S. Jones, 1998
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Giles Lytton Strachey was born in 1880, the eleventh of thirteen children, to General Sir Richard Strachey and his wife Jane Grant. Though he spent some years at boarding schools, including Abbotsholme and Leamington College, he received much of his education at home. His mother enjoyed strong interests in literature and politics and Strachey met many of the leading writers and thinkers of the day when they came to visit Lady Strachey. Strachey's secondary education was completed at University College in Liverpool where he studied Latin, Greek, mathematics, and English literature and history. It was at University College that he met and was influenced by Walter Raleigh, a professor of English literature and well known biographer.

After failing to receive a scholarship to Oxford in 1899, Strachey decided to attend Cambridge where he developed many friendships which lasted the rest of his life. At Cambridge he met Clive Bell, Thoby Stephen, and Leonard Woolf, with whom he started the Midnight Society and the X Society. Along with many other future "Bloomsberries" he was elected to the Apostles. In 1903 fellow Apostle G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* was published, producing a profound effect on the aspiring intellectuals. *Principia* became a rationalizing factor in loosening the repression of homosexual tendencies among the Apostles and in Trinity and King's College as well.

Strachey completed his work at Cambridge with a thesis on Warren Hastings but failed to receive a Trinity fellowship. He returned to his parents' home in Lancaster Gate and sought to support himself as a journalist. Much of his social life centered on the Bloomsbury group which focused on the Thursday night "at-homes" of the Stephens (Thoby, Adrian, Vanessa [Bell], and Virginia [Woolf]). Over the next several years Strachey traveled, visited friends and wrote his first book, *Landmarks in French Literature* (1912) which was commissioned by H.A.L. Fisher. In 1910 Strachey made the acquaintance of Ottoline Morrell with whom he carried on a playful and extended correspondence over the years. Through Morrell he met Henry Lamb and Henry Norton, who loaned him £100 to rent a cottage so he could begin his next major work, *Eminent Victorians* (1918). In 1915 Strachey met Dora Carrington, a graduate of the Slade School of Art and the woman who would shortly devote herself to him for the rest of his life.

In 1917 Strachey and Carrington moved into a cottage in Tidemarsch, Oxfordshire, and continued to carry on with their personal lives. Carrington maintained a relationship with fellow artist Mark Gertler before marrying Ralph Partridge in 1921, and Strachey moved through a series of relationships as well. Strachey's time at Tidemarsch cottage was also spent productively writing. He followed *Eminent Victorians* with *Queen Victoria* (1921) and produced a collection of essays, *Books and Characters* as well. His style was becoming very popular and he began to achieve a measure of fame which allowed him to support himself and his household from the proceeds of his writing. In 1924 Strachey purchased the lease to Ham Spray House and he, along with Carrington and Partridge, moved in. He completed *Elizabeth and Essex* in 1928 and started *The Greville Memoirs* which were completed posthumously by Ralph and Frances Partridge and Roger Fulford.

Though his frequent ill-health often made it difficult, Strachey enjoyed traveling and made several trips abroad between 1928 and 1931. Late in 1931 he began to decline rapidly from an illness which doctors were unable to identify. He died January 21, 1932, of what was later found to be stomach cancer. Carrington committed suicide a few weeks later, unable to live without him.

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## Sources

Holroyd, Michael. *Lytton Strachey: The New Biography*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994).

Palmer, Alan and Veronica. *Who's Who in Bloomsbury*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

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## Scope and Contents

Manuscripts and correspondence make up equal halves of the Lytton Strachey Collection, 1885-1957. The materials are organized into two series, with materials arranged alphabetically by title or author: I. Works, 1886-1931 (2.5 boxes) and II. Correspondence, 1885-1957 (2.5 boxes). This collection was previously accessible through a card catalog, but has been re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

The Works Series is composed of holograph and typescript manuscripts of two of Strachey's major biographical undertakings *Portraits in Miniature* (1931), and *Queen Victoria* (1921). Also present are drafts of the well-known essay "English Letter Writers" (1905) and research notes for various biographical projects. Several poems are also included with a letter from Strachey to Leonard Woolf. Titles are indexed in the Index of Works at the end of this guide.

The Correspondence Series is composed of three sections: Subseries A. Outgoing Correspondence, 1885-1931; Subseries B. Incoming Correspondence, 1889-1931; and Subseries C. Third-Party Correspondence, 1890-1957. Most of the letters present are accumulations of Strachey's correspondence with his mother, Lady Jane Strachey, and Leonard Woolf. A few letters between people other than Strachey are present, including a postcard from Strachey's sister Philippa to James Duggart, written in 1957. All correspondents can be identified using the Index of Correspondents in this guide.

Elsewhere in the Ransom Center is a photograph of Strachey, located in the Literary Files of the Photography Collection, and a Vertical File containing clippings of reviews of Strachey's publications. A portrait of Strachey painted by Robert Fry is also present in the Art Collection.

## **Related Material**

Other materials associated with Strachey may be found in the following collections at the Ransom Center:

- Hardy, Thomas
  - Hutchinson, Mary
  - Lehmann, John
  - Moeller, Philip
  - Morrell, Ottoline Violet Anne
  - PEN
  - Sassoon, Siegfried Lorraine
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## **Index Terms**

### **Correspondents**

Partridge, Ralph.

Strachey, Lady (Jane Maria), 1840-1928.

Strachey, Richard, Sir, 1817-1908.

Woolf, Leonard, 1880-1969.

### **Subjects**

Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1819-1901.

Biography.

Bloomsbury group.

Literature--History and criticism.

### **Document types**

Postcards.

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**Series I. Works, 1886-1931, nd**

Elizabeth and Essex, holograph fragment, nd, 1p	<b>box 1 folder 1</b>
"English Letter Writers" (1905)	
Holograph with author corrections, nd, 111pp	<b>box 1 folder 2</b>
Typescript, nd, 96pp	<b>folder 3</b>
Notebook, holograph notes, nd, 26pp	<b>folder 4</b>
Notes, holograph, nd, 10pp	<b>folder 5</b>
<i>Portraits in Miniature</i> (1931)	
Holograph fragments and holoscript with author revisions, nd, 84pp	<b>box 1 folder 6</b>
Page proofs, three sets, one with heavy editing, 1931	<b>folder 7-8</b>
<i>Queen Victoria</i> (1921)	
Holograph manuscript, nd, 302pp	<b>box 1 folder 9-10</b>
Holograph, continued	<b>box 2 folder 1</b>
Typescript, nd, 352pp	<b>folder 2-3</b>
Page proofs, first revisions, 1921, 315pp	<b>folder 4</b>
Typescript with revisions, nd, 358pp	<b>folder 5-6</b>
Research notes, holograph in notebooks and loose pages, nd, 150pp	<b>folder 7</b>
Research notes, continued	<b>box 3 folder 1</b>
R-Z	<b>folder 2</b>
School reports, 1886-1897	<b>folder 3</b>



## Series II. Correspondence, 1885-1957

### Subseries A. Outgoing Correspondence, 1885-1931

A-Z **box 3 folder 4**

Partridge, Ralph, 1919-1931 **folder 5-6**

Strachey, Jane Maria Grant, Lady, 1885-1925

1885-1893 **box 3 folder 7**

1894-1895 **folder 8**

1896-July 1899 **box 4 folder 1**

Oct. 1899-1904 **folder 2**

1905-1925 **folder 3**

Woolf, Leonard, 1900-1918

1900-1902 **box 4 folder 4**

1903-July 1904 **folder 5**

Aug.-Dec. 1904 **folder 6**

1905-1918 **folder 7**

### Subseries B. Incoming Correspondence, 1889-1931

The Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1929 **box 5 folder 1**

Partridge, Ralph, 1923-1931 **folder 2**

Strachey, Jane Maria Grant, Lady, 1889-1927

1889-1894 **box 5 folder 3**

1895-1896 **folder 4**

1897-1899 **folder 5**

1900-1927 **folder 6**

Strachey, Richard, Sir, 1889-1903 **folder 7**

Strachey, Lytton, 1880-1932

Woolf, Leonard, 1911-1929

**folder 8**

Subseries C. Third-Party Correspondence, 1890-1957

A-Z

**box 5 folder 9**



## Lytton Strachey Collection--Index of Correspondents

Box and folder numbers are followed by a number in parenthesis which indicates the number of items by that person. A single item is indicated where there is no number in parenthesis following the box and folder number. Where there is correspondence from Lytton Strachey, the number in parentheses is followed by the phrase "from Strachey". So in the example:

Partridge, Ralph--3.5-6 (127 from Strachey), 5.2 (8), 5.9

there are 127 letters from Strachey to Partridge, located in Box 3, Folders 5 and 6, eight letters from Partridge located in Box 5, Folder 2, and one letter from Partridge in Box 5, Folder 9.

- Ackerley, J.R. (Joe Randolph), 1896-1967--3.4 (2 from Strachey)
- Alker, Ralph--3.4 (from Strachey)
- Brinton, Roland D.--5.9 (4)
- Burlington Fine Arts Club--5.1
- Carrington, Dora de Houghton, 1893-1932--5.9
- Cholmeley, Robert Francis--5.9
- Doggart, James Hamilton--3.4 (13 from Strachey)
- Duff, J.D. (James Duff), 1860-1940--5.9 (5)
- Edgell, R. Arnold--5.9 (4)
- Forde, Henry--5.9 (6)
- Grant, Agnes--5.9
- Leathes, Stanley Mordaunt, Sir, 1861- --5.9
- Partridge, Frances, 1900- --3.4 (from Strachey)
- Partridge, Ralph--3.5-6 (127 from Strachey), 5.2 (8), 5.9
- Stookes, Alexander--5.9
- Strachan-Davidson, J.L. (James Leigh), 1843-1916--5.9
- Strachey, Lady (Jane Maria), 1840-1928--3.7-4.3 (368 from Strachey), 5.3-5.6 (232), 5.9
- Strachey, John St. Loe, 1860-1927--5.9
- Strachey, Philippa--5.9
- Strachey, Richard, Sir, 1817-1908--3.4 (10 from Strachey), 5.7 (13)
- Strachey Siblings--3.4 (10 from Strachey)
- Thursfield, Thomas W.--5.9
- Woolf, Leonard, 1880-1969--4.4-7 (160 from Strachey), 5.8 (65)

## Lytton Strachey Collection--Index of Works

- The Category--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- The Conversation--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- *Elizabeth and Essex*--1.1
- "English Letter Writers"--1.2-3
- To Him--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- Loves Uncertainties--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- "My love is larger than the universe..."--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- *Portraits in Miniature*--1.6-8
- *Queen Victoria*--1.9-3.1
- The Resolution--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- Review of
  - *The Praise of Shakespeare: an English Anthology*, compiled by C.E. Hughes--3.2
  - *The Rise of English Culture*, by Edwin Johnson--3.2
- Two Books on the Sonnets of Shakespeare--3.2
  
- The Situation--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- The Sonnet--3.2
- The Speculation--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)
- To D.C. and R.P., March 1st, 1920--3.2
- The Two Triumphs--4.7 (included with letter to Leonard Woolf, March 11, 1905)