

Rafael Sabatini:

An Inventory of His Papers in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Sabatini, Rafael, 1875-1950
Title:	Rafael Sabatini Papers
Dates:	1909-1950
Extent:	1 box (.42 linear feet)
Abstract:	This collection is mainly composed of manuscripts of Sabatini's works, with a small selection of his letters. The works represented in the collection include three novels, four short stories, one play, a single poem, and a fragment from a biography.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-03671
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase and gift, 1973 (R5374)
Processed by:	Jonathan Reynolds, 2006
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Rafael Sabatini was born in Jesi, Italy, on April 29, 1875, to opera singers Vincenzo and Anna Sabatini. Educated in Switzerland and Portugal, Sabatini was fluent in several languages; however, his mother, herself English, saw to it that English was his most natural tongue. After spending most of his young life traveling Europe, Sabatini settled in England around the turn of the century and began his career as a writer, publishing his first novel, *The Lovers of Yvonne*, in 1902. In 1918, he became a British citizen and served in the War Office Intelligence Department during World War I. In 1902, he married his first wife, Ruth Goad Dixon; their son Rafael died in a motorcycle accident in 1927. Following his divorce in 1932, Sabatini married Christine Dixon (no relation to his previous wife) and remained with her until his death in 1950 while on holiday in Adelboden, Switzerland.

A prominent historical novelist and dramatist, Sabatini possessed a style of accuracy and adventure that enthralled readers and audiences. His second novel, *Bardelys the Magnificent* (1906), solidified him as a public favorite. Among his most successful novels were *Scaramouche* (1921), an epic set in the French Revolution filled with duels, disguises, and death; and *Captain Blood* (1922), the story of a chivalrous West Indian buccaneer. Both of these characters returned in later novels to much success. Sabatini adapted several of his novels for the stage, including *Bardelys the Magnificent* and *Scaramouche*. A number of his most popular books made it onto the silver screen, including *The Scourge* (1922) based on his novel *Fortune's Fool* (1923), with the same conspicuous success as his writings.

The works of Sabatini have endured for over a century, with posthumous volumes of his works being published to continued acclaim, including *Heroic Lives* (1971), a compilation of his historic biographies, and *The Fortunes of Casanova* (1994), a collection of his short stories.

Sources:

"Rafael Sabatini." *Contemporary Authors Online*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed 23 November 2004).

Obituary, *London Times*, February 14, 1950.

Scope and Contents

This collection is mainly composed of manuscripts of Sabatini's works, with a small selection of his letters. The papers are arranged into two series: I. Works, 1909-1950, and II. Letters, 1912-1935. The works represented in the collection include three novels, four short stories, one play, a single poem, and a fragment from a biography.

Among the works in Series I. is *The Fortunes of Casanova*, which includes three short stories originally published in *Grand Magazine* in 1918 and differs from the posthumous short story collection of the same title published in 1994. Titles present include "The Augmentation of Mercury," "The Priest of Mars," and "The Oracle," plus a fourth unpublished story entitled *Courier of Love*. The notebook for this work also contains two publicity photos of Sabatini as a young man and a copy of his obituary from the *London Times* dated February 14, 1950.

Sabatini's notebook containing the manuscript of his novel *King in Prussia* (1944) also has calculations at the beginning which appear to be royalty figures for his works from 1937 to 1941. Typescripts with numerous revisions are present for the novels *The Lost King* (1937) and *The Sword of Islam* (1939). Additional typescripts include an unpublished play, *The Sacraments of Shame*, set in a 15th century English manor house, and "The Vintage Ale," a poem composed for a dinner aboard the *Doralie*, the houseboat of Mr. Harold Lee, on January 23, 1909. A handwritten fragment from *The Life of Cesare Borgia of France* (1911) is also present.

The letters in Series II. are mostly related to Sabatini's works and publishing rights, but there are a few that mention dinner invitations and trips abroad. They date from 1912 to 1935, with one undated item. Among the addressees of Sabatini's letters in this collection are Ernest A. Baker, Mabel F. Boore, Brandt, A. B. Cooper, Professor Getchell, Cyril Rhodes Harrison, Mrs. Jacob, Ellis D. Robb, Meredith Starr, Robley Durham Stevens, Mr. Williamson, and Mr. Vesper.

Related Material

Other collections in the Ransom Center with Sabatini items include B. J. Simmons & Co., Rupert Croft-Cooke, John Lane Company, Marie Adelaide Belloc Lowndes, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Hesketh Pearson, P.E.N., Grant Richards, Sir Hugh Walpole, and William A. Bradley Literary Agency.

Series I. Works, 1909-1950

<i>The Birth of Mischief</i> -- see <i>King in Prussia</i>	Box 1 Folder
The Fortunes of Casanova (short stories, 1918), notebook, handwritten and typescript drafts	Folder 1
<i>King in Prussia</i> (novel, 1944; published as <i>The Birth of Mischief</i> , 1945), handwritten notebook	Folder 2
<i>The Life of Cesare Borgia of France</i> (1911), Chapter XI: The Letter to Silvio Savelli, handwritten fragment with revisions	Folder 3
<i>The Lost King</i> (novel, 1937), typescript draft with revisions	Folder 4-5
The Sacrament of Shame (unpublished play, undated), typescript draft	Folder 6
<i>The Sword of Islam</i> (novel, 1939), typescript draft with revisions	Folder 7
“The Vintage Ale” (poem, 1909), typescript draft and finished booklet	Folder 8

Series II. Correspondence, 1912-1935

1912-1935, undated

Box 1 Folder 9