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#42 Brooks, Louise (1906-1985), Collection, 1924-2005
5 folders

INTRODUCTION

A collection of clippings, writings, images, and miscellaneous materials of silent screen actress Louise Brooks.

DONOR INFORMATION

Most of the materials in this collection were compiled by Gene DeGruson, Curator of Special Collections at Pittsburg State University, before his death in 1997. Additional materials were purchased or collected by the present Curator.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Louise Brooks (1906-1985) was born in Cherryvale, Kansas. As a child, she was an entertainer traveling around southeastern Kansas dancing at a variety of local events. The Brooks family moved to Independence, Kansas, in 1919 and later to Wichita, Kansas, where her father expanded his law career. At the age of fifteen Brooks joined the leading modern dance company of its day known as the Denishawn Dancers. She would later join the Ziegfeld Follies where a talent scout from Paramount Studios discovered her and signed her to a five year contract in 1925. With the advent of talking pictures Brooks tried to renegotiate her contract for the use of her voice. Paramount Studios would not agree to the new terms and Brooks left the United States to take a leading role in the German film, Pandora's Box, in 1929. The film was originally panned by critics and was a financial failure. The same was true for other European films she made. Brooks returned to Hollywood, but did not find success. She moved back to Wichita, Kansas, in 1940 to open a dance studio, but three years later she moved to New York City where she had some success in radio at CBS. The 1950s brought a new interest in silent films which led to a renewed interest in Louise Brooks. Before her death, Brooks found success as a film critic and entertainment commentator.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Louise Brooks Collection consists primarily of newspaper clippings, writings by Louise Brooks, and images. The clippings include obituaries of Louise Brooks and three magazines with articles about her. Writings include photocopies of her published articles as a film critic and entertainment commentator. Images are limited to two postcard photographs of Louise Brooks and two caricatures of her image. The collection is arranged into four series: **Clippings, Writings, Images, and Miscellaneous**. Additional information about Brooks is available in published materials in the Kansas Collection at Pittsburg State University.

The **Clippings Series** includes mostly newspaper clippings about Louise Brooks dated from 1924 to 2005. This includes transcriptions of articles from the Pittsburg Daily Headlight and Collegio when the Denishawn Dancers came to Pittsburg. Also included are complete issues of Esquire and Vanity Fair with featured articles on Louise Brooks.

The **Writing Series** consists of photocopied articles written by Louise Brooks from 1940 to 1971. This includes a photocopy of The Fundamentals of Good Ballroom Dancing as well as published articles when she was a film critic and entertainment columnist.

The **Image Series** contains four images of Louise Brooks. There are two French postcards and two caricatures of her likeness, one used on a calendar.

The **Miscellaneous Series** contains material from 1979 to 1997. This includes letters and notes from curator Gene DeGruson about Louise Brooks; receipts for purchased materials; and a printout of the Louise Brooks Society webpage with information about her life.

FOLDER LIST

Clippings Series

- f. 1 January 1924 – April 1984
- f. 2 August 1985 – Winter 2005

Writing Series

- f. 3 1940-1971

Images Series

- f. 4 undated

Miscellaneous Series

- f. 5 1979-1997

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