

# William Gillette's Little Buddies

by

Howard Ostrom

*'Come, Watson, come!' he cried. 'The game is afoot. Not a word! Into your clothes and come!' ABBE*

The recent discovery of William Gillette's long lost 1916 "Sherlock Holmes" silent film got me thinking about all the years he performed as Sherlock Holmes on stage, plus a film and on the radio. While Gillette, as Sherlock Holmes, may have been the constant in those well over 1300 performances, the Dr. Watson performers were the variable. How many different 'little buddies' did Gillette have in all those years of performing? This essay will attempt to sort through some of those Dr. Watson performers.



**Bruce McRae and William Gillette**

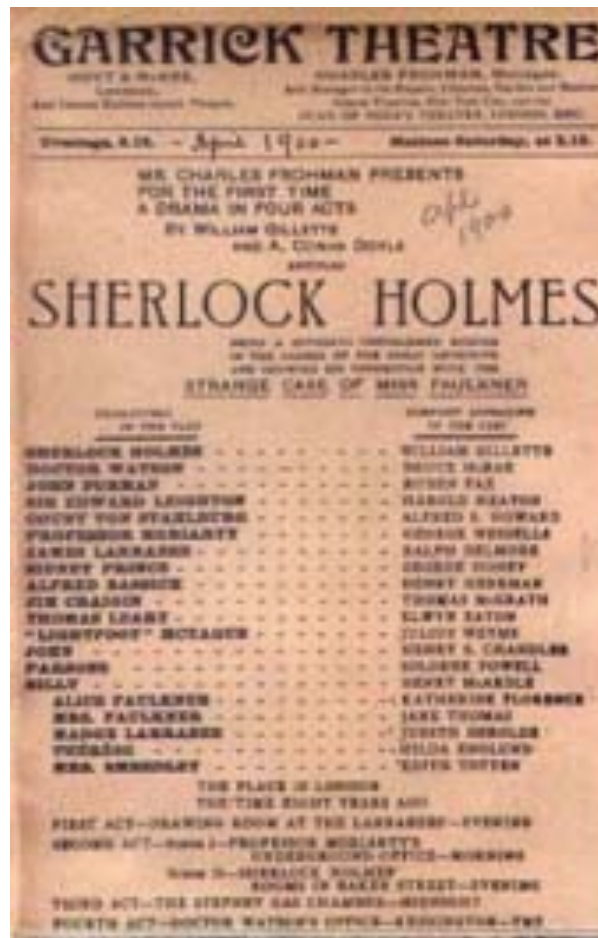
**Holmes and his "Hypodermic" with Dr. Watson - Act II**

## Stage 1899 - 1932

Star Theatre, Buffalo, N.Y. 10/23/1899 3 trial performances Bruce McRae - Dr. Watson

Syracuse - 1 night & Rochester - 1 night, week of 10/30/1899 Bruce McRae - Dr. Watson

Garrick Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 11/06/1899 - 6/?/1900 256 performances Bruce McRae - Dr. Watson



## GARRICK THEATRE Program April, 1900 Bruce McRae - Dr. Watson

**Bruce McRae (1867 - 1927)** was born in Bombay, India in 1867 of Scot and English Parents. He was a stage performer in British and American Theatre at the turn of the 20th century . He went to New Zealand at the age of 16 where he worked in cattle ranching, then moved to Australia for five years and became a surveyor. In 1890, he moved to the United States where he became manager of a

cattle ranch in Laramie, Wy. and a year later made his first appearance on stage supporting Forbes Robertson in 'Thermidor' at Proctor's 23rd Street Theatre. He became highly well-known on Broadway and the English Theatre, perhaps his best known stage role was as Dr. Watson in William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes".



**Bruce McRae and William Gillette at the Garrick Theatre (1899)**

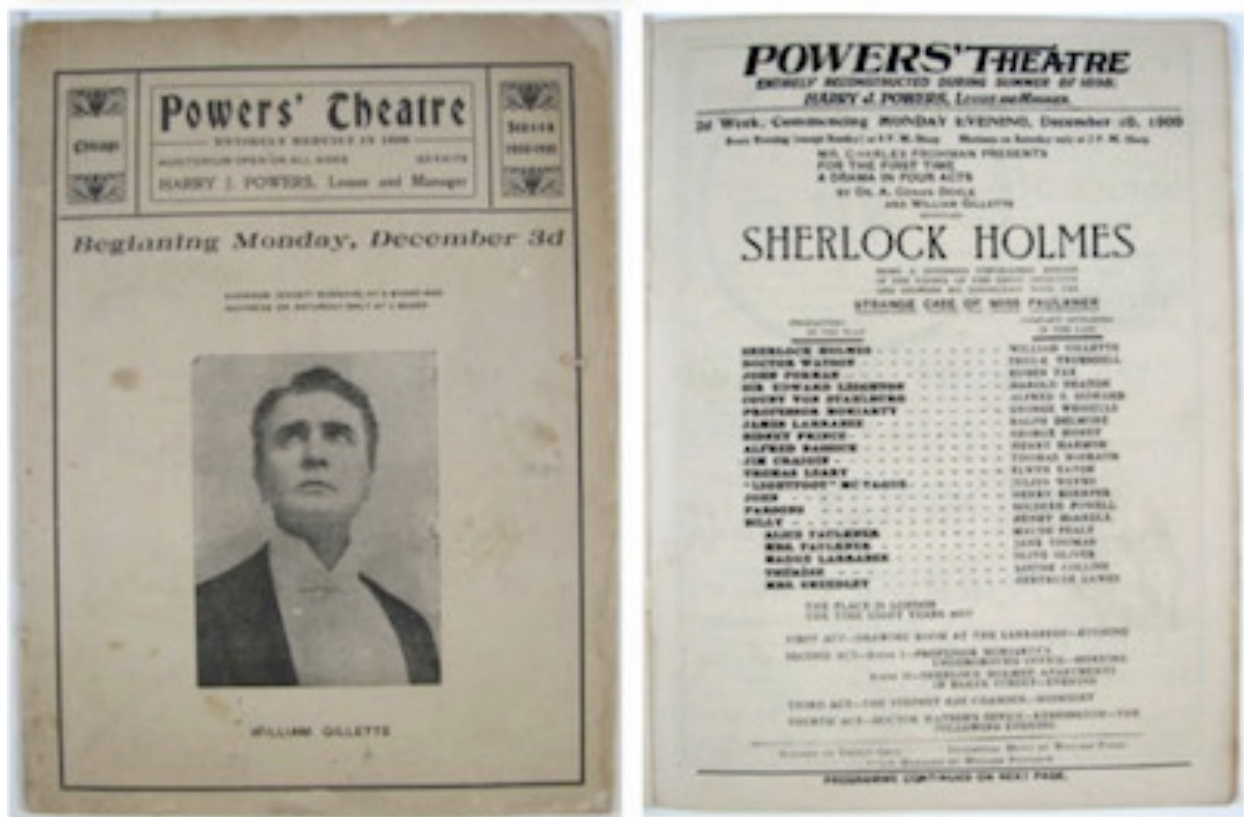


**Bruce McRae**  
**(1902 sans mustache)**

## Lengthy American Tour

Montauk Theatre, Brooklyn, 10/8/1900 2 weeks

Powers Theatre, Chicago, Il. 12/3 - 12/?/1900 Frederick Truesdell - Dr. Watson



**POWERS THEATRE Program December 10, 1900**  
**Frederick Truesdell - Dr. Watson**



Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa., 1/28 - 2/?/1901 Frederick Truesdell - Dr. Watson

**Broad Street Theatre**

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NIXON & ZIMMERMAN . . . . . Proprietors and Managers  
FRANK NIRDLINGER . . . . . Business Manager

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Week Commencing January 28, 1901.

Evenings at 8 o'clock. Saturday Matinee at 2 o'clock sharp.

MR. CHARLES FROHMAN PRESENTS  
FOR THE FIRST TIME  
A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS  
BY DR. A. CONAN DOYLE  
AND WILLIAM GILLETTE  
ENTITLED

# SHERLOCK HOLMES

BEING A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED EPISODE  
IN THE CAREER OF THE GREAT DETECTIVE  
AND SHOWING HIS CONNECTION WITH THE

## STRANGE CASE OF MISS FAULKNER

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY	COMPANY APPEARING IN THE CAST
SHERLOCK HOLMES - - - - -	WILLIAM GILLETTE
DOCTOR WATSON - - - - -	FRED K. TRUESDELL
JOHN FORMAN - - - - -	RUBEN FAX
SIR EDWARD LEIGHTON - - - - -	HAROLD HEATON
COUNT VON STAHLBURG - - - - -	ALFRED S. HOWARD
PROFESSOR MORIARTY - - - - -	GEORGE WESSELLS
JAMES LARRABEE - - - - -	RALPH DELMORE
SIDNEY PRINCE - - - - -	GEORGE HONEY
ALFRED BASSICK - - - - -	HENRY HARMON
JIM CRAIGIN - - - - -	THOMAS McGRATH
THOMAS LEARY - - - - -	ELWYN EATON
"LIGHTFOOT" MC TAGUE - - - - -	JULIUS WEVMS
JOHN - - - - -	HENRY KOERPER
PARSONS - - - - -	SOLDENE POWELL
BILLY - - - - -	HENRY McARDLE
ALICE FAULKNER - - - - -	MAUDE FEALY
MRS. FAULKNER - - - - -	JANE THOMAS
MADGE LARRABEE - - - - -	OLIVE OLIVER
THÉRÈSE - - - - -	LOUISE COLLINS
MRS. SNEEDLEY - - - - -	GERTRUDE DAWES

THE PLACE IS LONDON  
THE TIME EIGHT YEARS AGO

FIRST ACT—DRAWING ROOM AT THE LARRABEES'—EVENING  
SECOND ACT—SCENE I—PROFESSOR MORIARTY'S  
UNDERGROUND OFFICE—MORNING  
SCENE II—SHERLOCK HOLMES' APARTMENTS  
IN BAKER STREET—EVENING  
THIRD ACT—THE STEPNEY GAS CHAMBER—MIDNIGHT  
FOURTH ACT—DOCTOR WATSON'S OFFICE—KENSINGTON—THE  
FOLLOWING EVENING

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SCENERY BY ERNEST GROS      INCIDENTAL MUSIC BY WILLIAM FURST  
STAGE MANAGED BY WILLIAM POSTANCE

## BROAD STREET THEATER Program January 28, 1901 Frederick Truesdell - Dr. Watson

Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, Ma., 2/25 - 3/25, 1901 Frederick Truesdell - Dr. Watson

**Frederick Truesdell (1870 - 1929)** was born in Coldwater, Michigan. He was a Yale University graduate, a poet, a playwright and a silent screen character actor with Eclair, and of course he played Dr. Watson in William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" on stage. Sometimes he was billed as Fred C. Truesdell.



**Frederick Truesdell**

Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool, G.B. 9/2 - 9/8 1901 Percy Lyndal - Dr. Watson

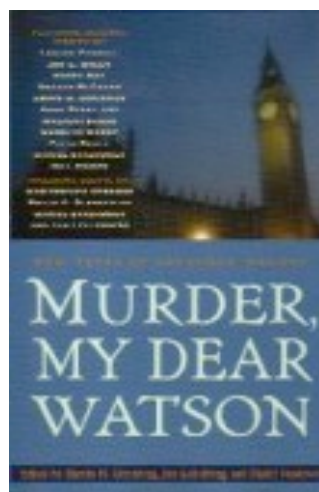
Lyceum Theatre, London, G.B. 9/9/1901 216 performances Percy Lyndal - Dr. Watson

**Percy Lyndal** became Gillette's Dr. Watson when the play moved to Great Britain. Lyndal earlier (1892) had starred in the hit stage play "Charley's Aunt" as Jack Chesney. Lyndal, curiously enough, would later be replaced in the Jack Chesney role by H. Reeves-Smith, who in 1929 would become a Dr. Watson in the film "The Return of Sherlock Holmes", with Clive Brook as Holmes. In the stranger than fiction category of near useless information I have, William Gillette and Percy Lyndal actually teamed up once again in the short story "The Adventure of the Agitated Actress". The pastiche was included in a collection of short stories titled "Murder, My Dear Watson" (2002), edited by Martin H. Greenberg, Jon Lellenberg & Daniel Stashower. The story pays homage to detectives William Gillette and Percy Lyndal, and includes other historical figures involved with the "Sherlock Holmes" production such as Charles Frohman and Charlie Chaplin. The story takes place in Gillette's London Theatre where during rehearsals for the London performance of William Gillette's Sherlock Holmes play, an actress's brooch is stolen from her dressing room. Despite his

protestations that he is not Sherlock Holmes, Gillette is forced to investigate the disappearance. His discoveries lead to a new actor joining the cast.



**Percy Lyndal**

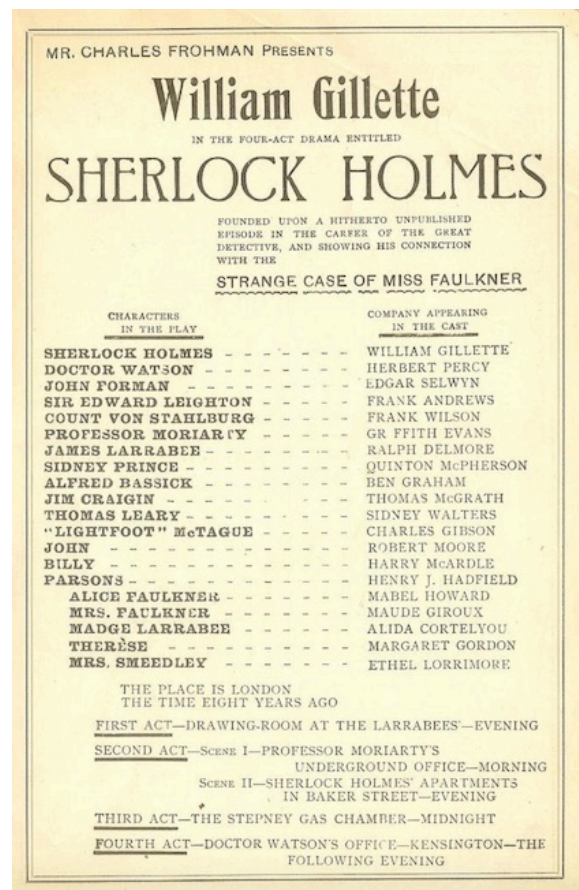


**William Gillette and Percy Lyndal**

Springfield, Ma., 10/17/1902, also Washington & Chicago ?/?/1902

Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, Ma. 10/27 - 11/2, 1902. Herbert Percy - Dr. Watson

Knickerbocker Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 11/3 - 11/27 1902 28 performances Herbert Percy - Dr. Watson



## KNICKERBOCKER THEATER Program November, 1902 Herbert Percy - Dr. Watson

**Herbert Percy** was used by producer Charles Frohman in a number of his Broadway productions in the first decade of the twentieth century. The first role being that of Dr. Watson opposite William Gillette in the 1902 revival of Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes". Percy performed with Bruce McRae in "Sunday" in 1904. He was in "Lady Jim" and "John Hudson's Wife" in 1906. He co-starred with Kyle Bellew in "The Thief" in 1907-1908. The last mention I find of him is a bit part in "Beau Brummell" in 1916. I was unable to locate a photo for Herbert Percy.



All dates below on this page were verified in issues of "N.Y. Clipper" magazine.

Willis Wood Theatre, Kansas City, Mo. 2/17 - 2/19 (N.Y. Clipper 2/28/1903)

Mo. Boyd's Theatre, Omaha, Neb. 2/19 - 2/21/1903

Broadway Theatre, Denver, Co. 2/23 -  
2/28/1903

Salt Lake Theatre, Salt Lake City, Ut. 3/2 -  
3/4/1903 (N.Y. Clipper 3/7/1903)

Columbia Theatre, San Francisco, Ca. 3/9 -  
3/21/1903

Oakland, Ca. 3/23 - 3/24/1903 (N.Y.  
Clipper 3/28/1903)

San Jose, Ca. 3/25/1903

Stockton, Ca. 3/26/1903

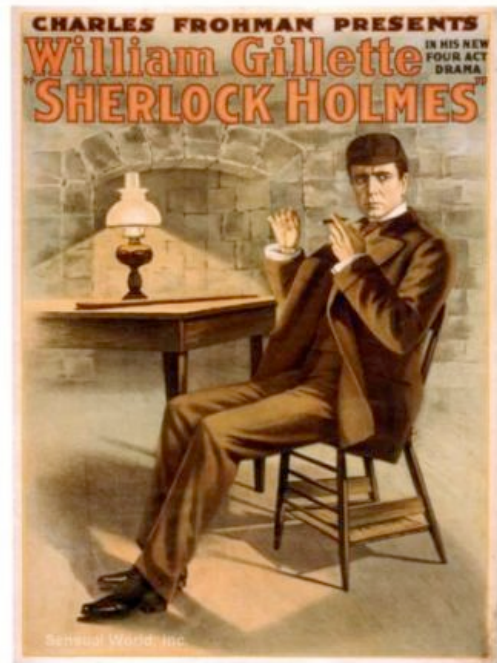
Sacramento, Ca. 3/27 - 3/28/1903

Los Angeles Theatre, Los Angeles, Ca. 4/1 -  
4/4/1903 (N.Y. Clipper 4/18/1903)

English's Opera House, Indianapolis, Ind.  
4/13 - 4/15/1903

Toledo, Oh. 4/16/1903

Detroit Opera House, Detroit, Mich. 4/20 - 4/25/1903 (N.Y. Clipper 4/18/1903)



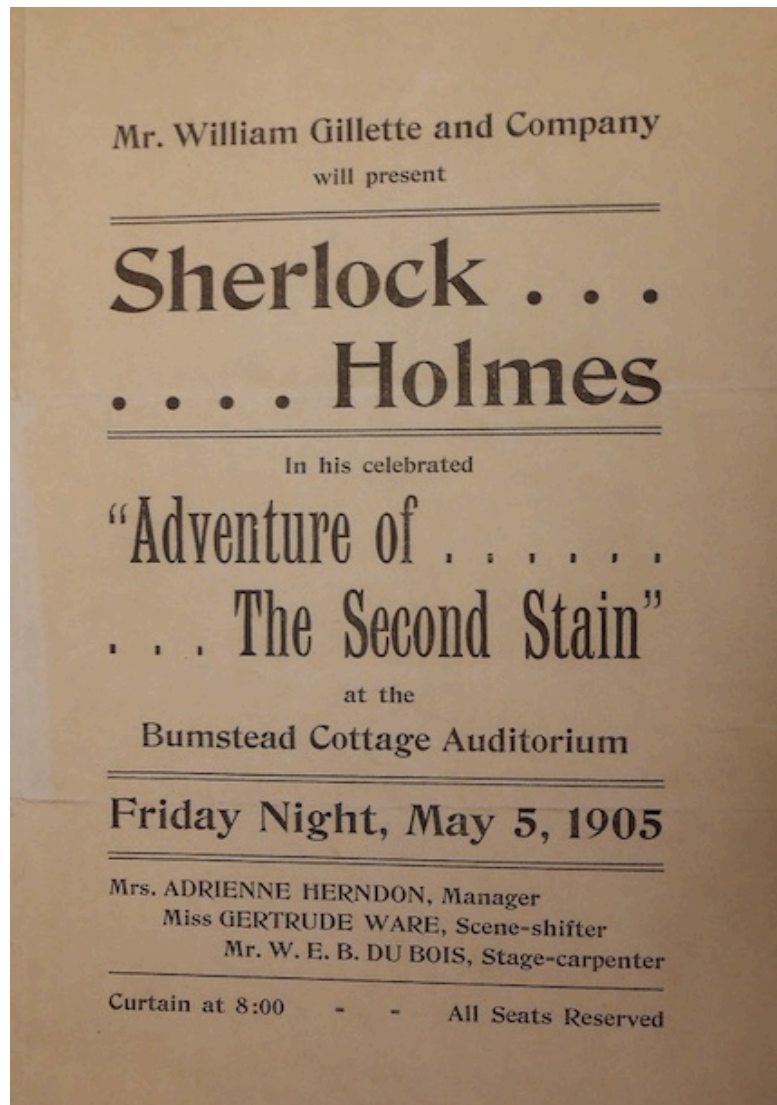
Empire Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 3/06/1905 56 performances **William Courtleigh - Dr. Watson**

**William Courtleigh (1867 - 1930)** was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, and appeared as Dr. Watson in Gillette's 1905 revival of "Sherlock Holmes". Courtleigh was a well know stage actor who appeared on Broadway from 1895 to 1930. His son, William Courtleigh, Jr. was American silent film actor whose promising career was cut short after he fell victim to the 1918 flu pandemic. One of Courtleigh's last few roles was in "Judas" (1929) which was written by Walter Ferris and none other than Basil Rathbone.



**William Courtleigh**

Bumstead College Auditorium, Atlanta, Ga. 5/5/1905 "The Adventure of the Second Stain"



### **BUMSTEAD COTTAGE AUDITORIUM Program May 5, 1905**

Information on "Adventure of the Second Stain" is very hard to come by as the production was at an all-black college in the south at the turn of the century and virtually little is known about it. Was William Courtleigh there as Watson, or was Watson even in it? I don't know. I do know Gillette was in London in mid-April of 1905 to make arrangements for a copyright performance of his new play "Clarice". He was scheduled for two weeks there. Did he go to Atlanta on his return, or did he send a touring company? I'm not sure where he was in early May. What I do know of this production you read in the essay "Voices in the Darkness" at: <http://www.nplh.co.uk/voices-in-darkness.html> .

Duke of York's Theatre, London, G.B., 10/17 - 12/2/1905 48 performances  
Kenneth Rivington - Dr. Watson

It would seem like the run at the Duke of York's Theatre may have been extended to 12/9/05 based on this comment in the 12/16/1905 "New York Clipper"; "Several royal parties have witnessed the excellent performance of William Gillette, as "Sherlock Holmes," at the Duke of York's this week. The business continues to capacity, but the play must be withdrawn on Dec. 9 to make room for the revival of the successful "Peter Pan," which is scheduled two days later in that house." Still though the Dec. 2 London Letter, in the same publication reported Dec. 2 was the final performance; "Tonight William Gillette will make his final appearance on the English stage at the Duke of York's. I am informed that in the future he will only act in America, and continue his visits to England only in the nature of Summer vacation. Mr. Gillette is an established favorite with the English playgoers, and his decision not to play here anymore is deeply regretted. His present engagement, it will be recalled, began with his new play "Clarice". It did not make a good start, so it was put aside and "Sherlock Holmes" revived to big business. During the latter part of Mr. Gillette's stay "Clarice" was done at an extra matinee during the week, and the attendance was satisfactory. Mr. Gillette has great faith in "Clarice," and believes it will be a success in the States."

**Kenneth Rivington** appeared as Dr. Watson opposite William Gillette's Sherlock Holmes in "Sherlock Holmes, The Strange Case of Miss Faulkner", at the Duke of York's theatre in London (1905). Rivington also appeared as Sherlock Holmes in a touring production of the play, which was notable for featuring a young Charlie Chaplin in his first dramatic role. Rivington played Dr. Watson again in a production of "The Speckled Band" (1921), this time opposite H. A. Saintsbury's Sherlock Holmes.



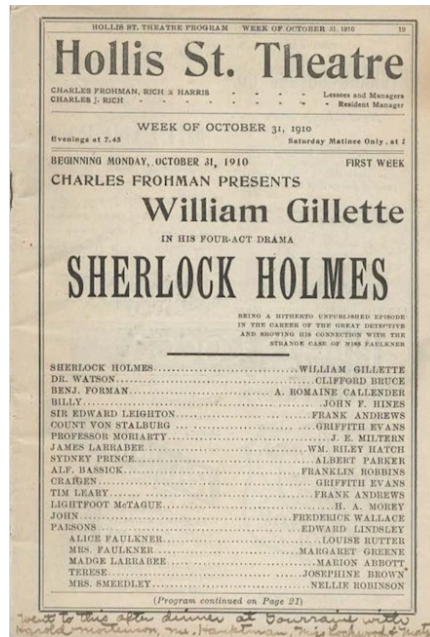


**Kenneth Rivington**

Opera House, Chicago, Il., 10/15/1906 - This entry in a reference book would be wrong as Gillette was performing "Clarice" in N.Y.C. at that time.

Lyceum Theatre 10/13/1910 2 performances Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson

Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, Ma., 10/31 - 11/?/1910 Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson



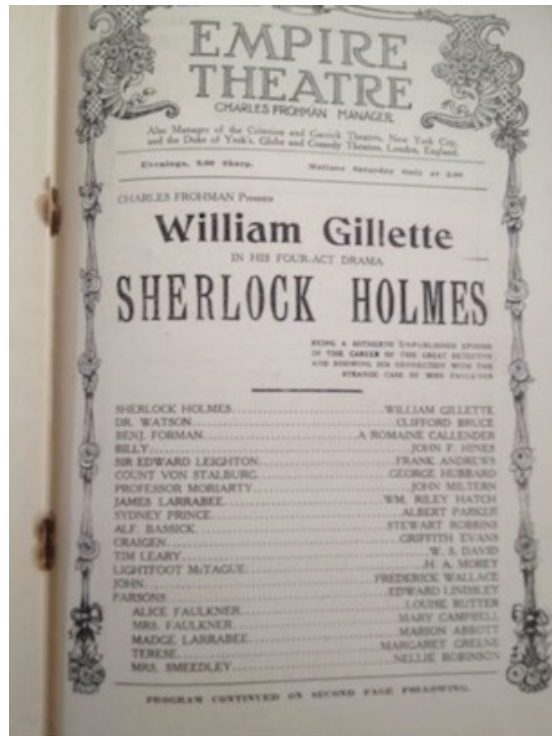
## Hollis St. Theatre Program October 31, 1910 Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson

Empire Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 12/5/1910 Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson

Empire Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 4/1?/1911 1 Week? Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson

**Clifford Bruce (1885 - 1919)** was born in Toronto, Canada in 1885. Bruce played Dr. Watson in the 1910/11 revivals of Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes". He often supported in many American silent drama, westerns and action-serial's, first with the Selig Film Company in 1913, followed by Fox studios and later the Metro Film Company in the late 1910's. He's perhaps best remembered as the Gypsy leader in Pearl White's action-adventure serial 'The Perils of Pauline' for the Pathe Film Company (1914) and as Tom the friend in Theda Bara's 'A Fool There Was' (1915), he was last seen as Baron Demetrius Strakosch in 'Black Is White' (1920), which was released a year after his death. He died in New York at the age of only 34.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rothwell-Smith, Paul [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0115446/bio?ref=nm\\_ov\\_bio\\_sm](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0115446/bio?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm)



**EMPIRE THEATRE Program April 1911**  
**Clifford Bruce - Dr. Watson**



**Clifford Bruce and Pearl White**

Empire Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 10/11 - 11/6 1915 32 performances Edward Fielding - Dr. Watson

Hollis Street Theater, Boston 12/6 - 12/12/1915 1 week (Variety 11/26/15)

Blackstone Theatre, Chicago, Il. 1/10 - 1/23/1916 (Variety 12/31/15)

This was a revival tour for "Sherlock Holmes" and also "Secret Service" so the below 1916 dates could have been either - they are simply listed as William Gillette in the N.Y. Clipper.

Cleveland, Oh., 2/7 - 2/12/1916 (N.Y. Clipper 2/21/16)

Detroit, Mich., 2/14 - 2/1916

Syracuse, N.Y., 2/21/1916

Lyceum Theatre, Rochester, N.Y., 2/22/1916

Pittsfield, Mass., 2/24/1916

Hartford, Ct., 2/25 - 2/26/1916

At this point the tour ended and Gillette headed to Chicago to make silent films.

Broad Street Theater, Philadelphia, Pa. 1/8/- 1/?/1923 2 weeks Edward Fielding Dr. Watson

Ford's Theatre, Baltimore, Md. 1/22/1923 1 week Edward Fielding Dr. Watson

National Theatre, Washington, D.C. 1/29 - 2/4 1923 Edward Fielding Dr. Watson

Parson's Theater, Hartford, Ct. 2/5 - 2/7 1923 Edward Fielding Dr. Watson

Schubert Theater, New Haven 2/8 - 2/10 1923 Edward Fielding Dr. Watson

**Edward Fielding (1875 - 1945)** - was born in Brooklyn, New York, as Edward B. Elkins. When the 6'3" (it is said Gillette picked him for his height) Edward Fielding joined the cast of Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" as Dr. Watson in it's 1915 stage revival, it would lead to his playing Dr. Watson in Gillette's 1916 silent film "Sherlock Holmes", and the start of a long film career for Fielding. He would play



leading man to the likes of Ethel Barrymore, Olga Nethersole, Grace George, and Laura Hope Crews. He is probably best remembered among his nearly 100 film credits for his roles in “Rebecca” (1940), “The Major and the Minor” (1942), and “The Pride of the Yankees” (1942).<sup>2</sup>



**Edward Fielding**

(Photo from “Pride of the Yankees” 1942)

### **Farewell Tour 1929 - 1930**

Springfield, Ma., 11/15/1929 Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson

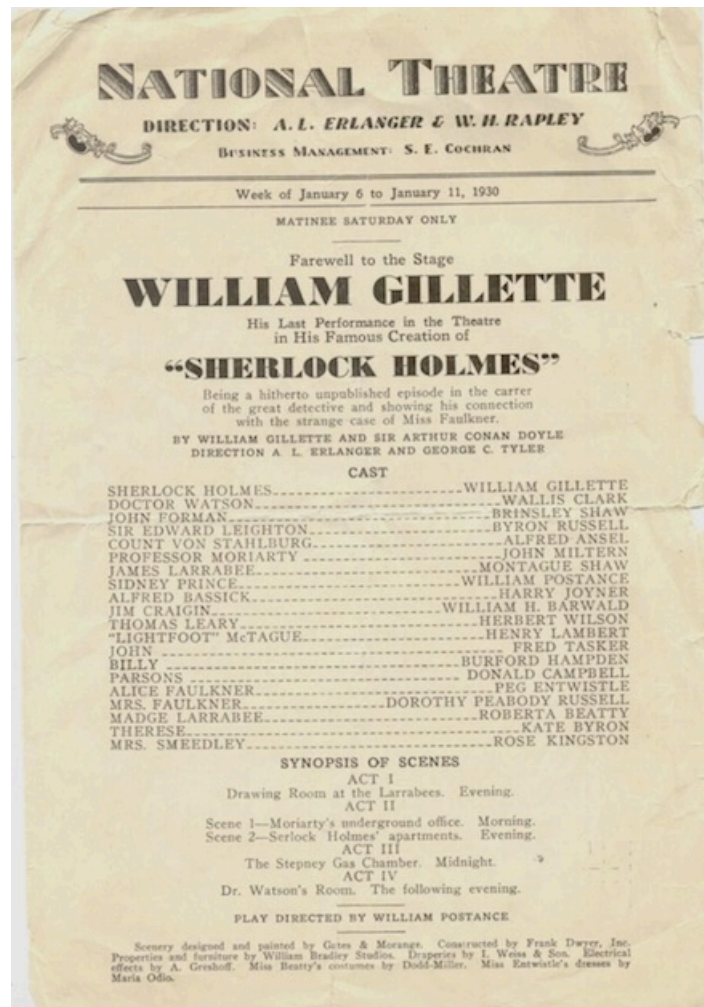
Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, Ma., 11/18 - 11/23/1929 Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0276132/>

New Amsterdam Theatre, N.Y., N.Y. 11/25/1929 45 performances Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson

National Theatre, Washington, D.C. 1/6 - 1/11/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson



**NATIONAL THEATRE Program January 11 , 1930**  
**Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson**

Baltimore Auditorium, Baltimore, Md., 1/13 - 1/?/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

Shubert Theatre, Newark, N.J., 1/20 - 1/?/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa., 1/27 - 2/?/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

Shubert Theatre, New Haven, Ct., 2/13 - 2/15/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

**STYLE and COMFORT in GLASSES**  
White Gold is the vogue in glasses! It possesses distinction to a rare degree and a refined beauty which assures correct appearance as well as comfort.

**FRITZ & HAWLEY-INC**  
OPTICIANS 816 CHAPEL STREET

Good Soda — Fresh Candy BETWEEN THE ACTS Taft Pharmacy

February 13, 14, 15, 1930 Matinee Saturday  
LAST PERFORMANCES OF THE STAGE  
**WILLIAM GILLETTE**  
IN  
**"Sherlock Holmes"**  
Being a hitherto unpublished episode in the career of the great detective and showing his connection with the strange case of Miss Faulkner.  
By William Gillette and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
Direction A. L. Erlanger and George C. Tyler

CAST  
SHERLOCK HOLMES \_\_\_\_\_ WILLIAM GILLETTE  
DOCTOR WATSON \_\_\_\_\_ WALLIS CLARK  
JOHN FORMAN \_\_\_\_\_ BRENSLEY SHAW

**O'Brien**  
IMPORTER  
44 COLLEGE STREET Opposite Hotel Taft  
PARTY AND FORMAL DRESSES, EVENING GOWNS,  
SPORTS CLOTHES, COATS AND HATS  
are being shown in our new line—original French models and many adaptations, that fill the demands of the fashionably dressed woman.  
*Moderate Prices*

broadway!!!

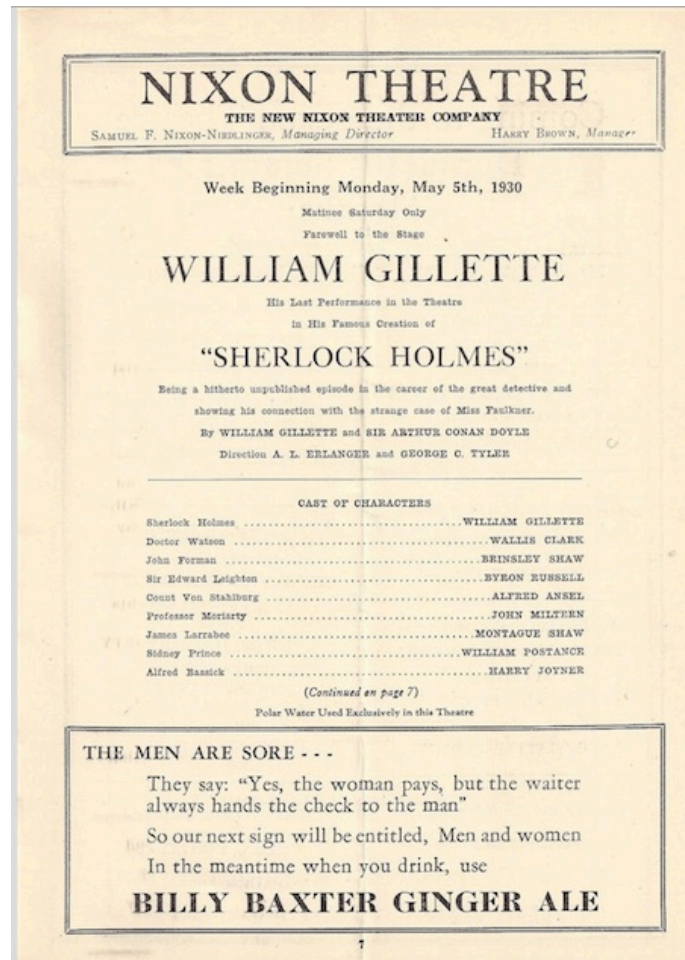
**SCHUBERT THEATRE Program February 13 , 1930**  
**Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson**



Erlanger Theatre, Chicago, 2/25 - 3/17/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

Ohio Theatre, Cleveland, Oh., 4/7 - 4/12/1930 Wallis Clark Dr. Watson

Nixon Theatre, Pittsburgh, Pa., 5/5 - 5/10/1930 Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson



**NIXON THEATRE Program May 5 , 1930  
Wallis Clark - Dr. Watson**

**Wallis Clark (1882 - 1961)** was born in Essex, England and cast by William Gillette as Dr. Watson for his Farewell Tour of 1929 - 1930, as well his Final Farewell Tour of 1931 - 1932. Besides a long stage career Wallis Clark would also have film credits in over 170 pictures. He is one of only four people in history to appear in five Best Picture Oscar winning films. Those films were, "It Happened One Night" (1934), "Mutiny On the Bounty" (1935), "The Great Ziegfeld" (1936), "You Can't Take it With You" (1938), and "Gone With the Wind" (1939). One might say, Mr. Clark had quite a film career following his stage stint as the good doctor.



**Wallis Clark**

### **Farewell Tour 1931 - 1932**

Colonial Theater, Boston, Ma. 12/28/1931 - 1/2/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Lyceum, Rochester, NY. 1/9/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Royal Alexandra, Toronto, Canada, 1/11/ - 1/16/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Des Moines, Ia., 1/18/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Biltmore Theatre, Los Angeles, Ca., 1/27 - 2/6/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Columbia Theatre, San Francisco, Ca., 2/15 - 2/22/1932 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Tacoma - stop was cancelled (Variety March, 1932)

Seattle, Wa., 3/7/1932

Post Tree Theatre, Spokane, Wa. 3/8/1932

Butte, Helena, Fargo, Duluth, St. Paul - all got one-nighters

Metropolitan Theatre, Minneapolis, Minn., 3/10/1932

Other scheduled stops over the twelve week tour were, Portland Me., Schenectady, Syracuse, Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, Portland, Back East, Penn. one nighters for a week, ending 3/19/1932 at The Playhouse, in Wilmington, De. his final performance? or Princeton, N.J., 5/12, 1932?

**Reginald Mason (1875 - 1962)** could be referred to as William Gillette's final Dr. Watson, as he portrayed Dr. Watson on Gillette's Final Farewell Tour, and would return to play Dr. Watson for Gillette's final Sherlock Holmes performance on radio in 1935. Although Mason was a noted stage actor; unfortunately, the roles he played on film could not compare with those he played onstage, and sometimes, in films, he was even uncredited.<sup>3</sup>



**Reginald Mason**

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0556919/bio?ref=nm\\_ov\\_bio\\_sm](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0556919/bio?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm)

## Silent Film 1916

Essanay Film Manufacturing Co., Chicago, Il., "Sherlock Holmes" Edward Fielding - Dr. Watson



**Edward Fielding as Dr. Watson (far right)**

Having discussed Fielding earlier under his stage appearances as Dr. Watson, worth noting on this silent film is that even though William Gillette was the first actor universally acclaimed for portraying Sherlock Holmes, having written and staged the first authorized play in 1899, and having performed the part over 1300 times, this film is the only preserved visual record of him doing Sherlock Holmes. Luckily for us, although previously considered a lost film, it was discovered at a French film archive in October 1, 2014.<sup>4</sup>

## Radio 1930 - 1935

"The Adventure of the Speckled Band" WEA-F-NBC 10/20/1930 Leigh Lovel - Dr. Watson (Note: also credited sometimes as Leigh Lovell)

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0007338/trivia?ref=tt\\_trv\\_trv](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0007338/trivia?ref=tt_trv_trv)



**Leigh Lovel** “is an american actor who played Dr. Watson on Radio between 1930 and 1935 in two series. In the first series, he played with William Gillette (episode 1), Clive Brook (episodes 2-3) and Richard Gordon (episodes 4+) as Sherlock Holmes. In the second series, Holmes was played by Louis Hector.”<sup>5</sup>



**Leigh Lovel**

“Sherlock Holmes” Lux Radio Theater WABC, N.Y, N.Y. 11/18/1935 Reginald Mason - Dr. Watson

Reginald Mason bio and photo are above under Gillette’s Final Farewell Stage Tour.

### **Other**

**Frederick C. Packard (1899 - 1985)** was a professor of speech and dramatics at Harvard University. He originated, edited and produced a service called the Harvard Vocarium, which recorded voices that previously had been unavailable. William Gillette’s voice as Sherlock Holmes, with Professor Packard’s voice as Dr. Watson was one of those recordings and still exists. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://sshf.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Leigh\\_Lovel](http://sshf.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Leigh_Lovel)

<sup>6</sup> Zecher, Henry, “William Gillette America’s Sherlock Holmes” pg. 553



**Frederick C. Packard**

From Sherlockian Peter Blau, B.S.I., I've since learned the following about the Packard recording of Gillette.

From Peter's notes about the recording:

"According to an article in the Boston Sunday Post, Sept. 12, 1948 (John Kelso), one winter's night in 1933 Packard and his wife attended William Gillette's performance of "The Three Wise Fools" in Boston. After the performance, Packard persuaded Gillette to visit the Packard home in West Medford, where the recording was made with Packard as Watson and his wife as Alice Faulkner.

Note: Gillette's revival of Austin Strong's comedy "Three Wise Fools" was in 1936, not 1933. Gillette was born July 24, 1853, and he was 82 years old when he toured in "Three Wise Fools"; this was his only stage production after his tour in "Sherlock Holmes" ended on Mar. 19, 1932."<sup>7</sup>

And from a piece Peter Blau wrote about the recording:

"It was in February 1936 that William Gillette, then 82 years old, came to the Shubert Theatre in Boston during his tour in a revival of Austin Strong's comedy "Three Wise Fools". Professor Packard and his wife attended one of the performances, and after the performance Packard persuaded Gillette to visit the Packard home in West Medford, where the recording was made, with Watson's lines read by Packard, and Alice Faulkner's lines read by his wife, whose name, by neat coincidence, was Alice."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Blau, Peter, B.S.I., personal e-mail to me.

<sup>8</sup> Blau, Peter, B.S.I., personal e-mail to me.

The Professor Packard - William Gillette voice recordings can be heard on YouTube at:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38HgyxMThOw>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfHaVFKSYGE>

*"Holmes was a man of habits... and I had become one of them... a comrade... upon whose nerve he could place some reliance... a whetstone for his mind. I stimulated him... If I irritated him by a certain methodical slowness in my mentality, that irritation served only to make his own flame-like intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly. Such was my humble role in our alliance." CREE*



### **A Final Note Watson**

***"It is too little to say William Gillette resembled Sherlock Holmes...  
...Sherlock Holmes looks exactly like William Gillette" - Orson Welles***

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