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As early as 1839, ranchers were herding cattle through the Spanish land grant in the wilderness north of St. Helena that would become Rancho Guenoc. Settlers in wagon trains began arriving in 1854, bringing with them an adventuresome spirit and the beginnings of viticulture to the northern California region of Lake County.

In 1874, a farmer and stockbreeder named David Hudson built a simple farmhouse in Guenoc Valley that he called The Homestead. Folks who knew Hudson said he was unpretentious as his humble spread and the 1,500 acres he worked.

Perhaps not as humble, but as unpretentious in her own way, British stage actress Lillie Langtry shared Hudson's respect for the land when she purchased The Homestead and 2,700 additional acres sight unseen in 1888. Soon after, she and her American friend, Fred Gephard, transformed these simplistic roots into an opulent estate that would reflect her more worldly spirit.

Langtry knew she had found paradise as soon as she saw her house and the land surrounding it.

Writing her memoirs, *The Days I Knew*, published in 1925, she recounted her first impression of Hudson's farmhouse and the property she would own for over 18 years:

Built entirely of wood, the house, which had no pretension to style but was fairly roomy and stood rather high on piles. There was no garden at all, and off to the side of the house stood corrals and barns.

I found the ground floor comprised of a large living room, into which the house-door directly opened, with a dining room and a kitchen at the rear. A staircase from the foyer led to a gallery running entirely round it, on to which the doors of the bedroom opened, no space being wasted in halls or passages.

In an 1888 newspaper account of Langtry's move to the country, a reporter for the San Francisco Evening Post quoted Langtry's California real estate agent James Stewart as saying:

She wants everything nice. Naturally her tastes run toward the English style of doing things, but she says when she gets into her new home she will be thoroughly American.



Lake County poster, circa 1880's



The Jersey Lily, by George Frederick Watts.



Langtry House

The Langtry House and assorted farmhouses stand in the Guenoc Valley surrounded by hills and peaks all sides. Wide stretches of lawn frame the home and a massive scarred 300-year old oak tree stands guard. A broad porch encircles the lower floor and the restored covered balcony runs along the front and two sides of the upstairs.

From the upper balcony or through the French doors leading to the balcony from the bedroom, the view opens out on the symmetrical rows of vines planted next to the house and grow up the hill to the modern winery. The grape arbor that was originally in front of the house and covered the walkway gives the Langtry House a splendid feeling of isolation.

The flowerbeds that encircle the house provide fresh flowers for the house throughout spring, summer and early fall. The yellow and white roses along the front fence are in bloom from early May into late summer. Fragrant pink, blue, lavender, orange, scarlet, and yellow wild flowers blanket the hills and the valleys.

Originally, there were two wells on the property. Long since filled and covered over, one for use by the servants was on the west side of the house close to where the vineyard meets the wide lawn. The second was a quarter of a mile away next to a pump house that piped water to a storage tank atop the hill on the east side of the house. Fresh water to the house came from the headquarters springs, supplied through bolted cast iron pipes laid in the late 1800s.

The barn across from the Gephard Hunting Lodge housed the prize thoroughbred horses. The field between the Langtry House and the Gephard Hunting Lodge was once the one-mile oval training track for the horses.

The roads into Guenoc Valley today are certainly not as rough as they were in Lillie's day. Still, much is the same as it has always been. If Lillie were to return today (and some say she does appear now and again), she might still observe a wild boar or other wild game roaming the property as in her day. McCreery Lake is still a habitat for blue heron, snowy egret, Canadian geese, numerous species of ducks as well as bald and golden eagles.

Today, guests of the Langtry House and the Gephard Hunting Lodge hunt boar and other seasonal game at Langtry Farm, and fish in its many beautiful streams and lakes.

LILLIE'S WELL-GROUNDED LIFE OF ENCHANTMENT

Lillie Langtry was born Emilie Charlotte Le Breton in 1853 to William Le Breton, a Church of England minister and his wife, Emilie Davis Martin Le Breton. As a couple, they shared many talents and great intellect.

Lillie was the only daughter in the family of six sons. Her father was a very handsome and cultured man; her mother as beautiful as her daughter would become. Lillie and her friends referred to the always lovely Emilie Le Breton as "the Duchess" because of her refined manners, gentle ways and her love of the rural life.

They lived on the on the Isle of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands that lies in the English Channel between England and France. The Jersiaise are known for their fierce loyalty, independence and resourcefulness — all qualities present in Lillie Le Breton.

It is easy to surmise that as the only daughter, Lillie would grow up pampered, indulged and spoiled. To the contrary, Lillie wrote of her brothers teaching her to *steady my nerves, control my tears and look at things from a boy's point of view.*

The boys were never abusive toward their sister and allowed her to join them in their primary activity—playing childish practical jokes on their neighbors. Of the six boys, only William and Clement would live to grow old with Lillie. Her other four brothers died in accidents or fell victim to disease.

THE STORY OF LILLIE
LANGTRY, FRED GEPHARD
AND GUENOC VALLEY IS A
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SURROUNDING IT.





Living the life of my brothers transformed me into an incorrigible tomboy. I could climb trees and vault fences with the best of them, and I entered with infinite relish into their practical jokes.

I have a lively recollection of my youngest brother and myself patrolling the old tree-shaded churchyard at midnight (when we were supposed to be in bed) mounted on stilts and draped in sheets, disquieting late passerby very effectually. This prank continued until someone wrote to the Jersey papers, promising the ghosts at St. Saviour's graveyard a dose of old lead if they appeared again.

We had a veritable passion for annexing doorknockers, and scarcely a door in the Parish was allowed to retain one. We braved threats, dogs, enraged householders, even shotguns to obtain these trophies.

While the tomboy element was conspicuous in me, I had a serious side as well, and would read for hours and, sometimes longer than my parents thought good for me.

Her brothers also taught her to fish, swim in the bays that proliferated the island, and how to ride a horse at breakneck speed in the hills around their home at St. Saviour's rectory.

Her father believed women should be as well educated as men. He read her Shakespeare and her brothers' tutors taught her Latin, history and mathematics. Her mother shared her love of poetry, as well as her great love of nature and all that lives.

THE QUEEN OF SOCIETY MARRIES AND MOVES ON

Empowered at an early age to fulfill her sense of destiny, Lillie would accomplish far more in the world than English Society could possibly imagine when it deemed her title, "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World" as her most outstanding achievement.

As a young teenager shortly before receiving the first of several marriage proposals, Lillie received some sage advice from one Lord Suffield who was visiting the Isle of Jersey to escape England's harsh winter. During a picnic on the beach, he suggested to Miss Le Breton that such a beautiful young woman should really have a season in London.

Lillie was 15 when she visited London with her mother to attend a ball at the Suffield's palatial home. The ill-fated experience was especially traumatic for young Lillie, said to have "withered in a complete wallflower." However, her youthful failure to take London by storm did not deter her ambition to eventually live there and become part of its glittering society. However, Lillie's strongest and deepest qualities did nothing to

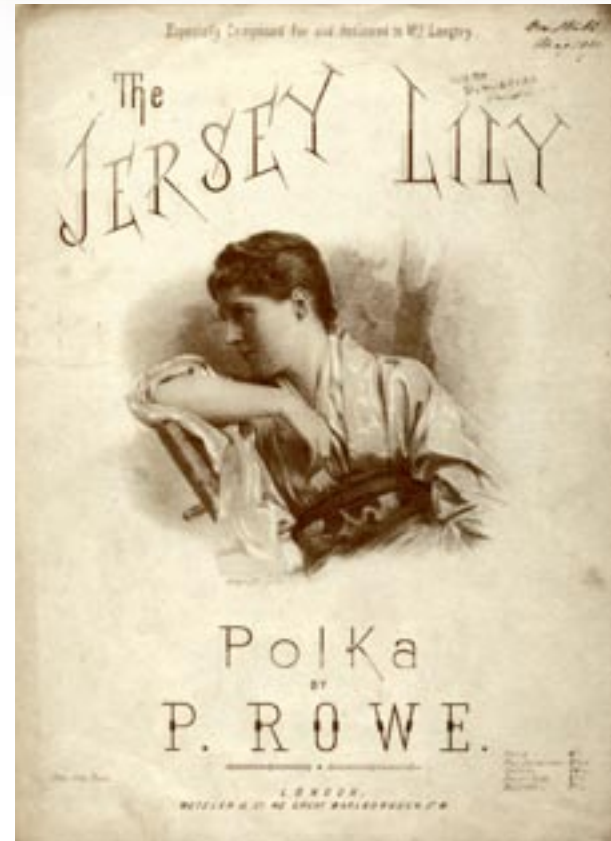
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Lillie, second from left, with mother and father and one of her brothers.



Top: Edward Langtry.
Far right: Theatre poster for
an 1882 performance.
Right: A young Lillie.



LANGTRY IMPRESSED THE
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ROGUISH WAYS AND HIS ABILITY
TO HANDLE A YACHT IN THE
ROUGHEST WEATHER.

prepare her for her eventual marriage to one Edward Langtry. The widowed Ned, as he was called after the death of his first wife in 1871, was the only son of a wealthy Belfast shipping company owner and an expert yachtsman. Langtry impressed the 20-year old Lillie with his roguish ways and his ability to handle a yacht in the roughest weather.

He wooed Lillie for four months. After making every effort to put his best foot forward to win her over, they married in March 1874 —then the scene shifted dramatically. Once under his roof, he expected Lillie to settle in docilely as the wife of an English country gentleman in Southampton. Lillie had other plans, but did not express them aloud.

In her heart, she knew she would have to move to London to realize her dreams. It took eight years into their marriage before Ned reluctantly made the move, and in a short time Lillie Langtry was hailed as the new “Queen of Society.”

At that time in English Society, posing for photographs for sale in every corner sweet shop and newspaper kiosk was very vogueish. This put a woman in the “professional beauty” rank that included women such as the Princess of Wales, Lady Gladys Lonsdale, the Countess of Warwick, and the American Jennie Jerome Churchill (mother of Sir Winston). Lillie Langtry not only joined them, she surpassed them. Taller than most

women and even some men, Lillie's women friends envied by her wasp-waist figure, which their men admired right along with them. Vendors sold more of photographs of Lillie Langtry than of the Royal family. Even more surprising is the fact that Lillie could still count these women as her friends. Beautiful, elegant and poised, Lillie had a rare gift for making others feel important.

Following her launch into English Society, poets and painters lined up to reveal Lillie Langtry. Artists Edward Poynter, Frank Miles, Frederick Leighton, George Frederick Watts, Edward Burne-Jones, James Whistler and John Everett Millais all sought to make her the subject of their poems and paintings.

One painting, *A Jersey Lily*, by fellow Jersiaise, John Everett Millais, has her dressed all in black except for a white lace collar and cuffs, and a white gardenia at the collar "at the special request of a friend." In her left hand, she holds a scarlet lily her mother sent from Jersey. The portrait earned England's "Painting of the Year" in 1879, 1890 and again in 1920 when Lillie Langtry was 67 years old.

IN THE COMPANY OF ARTISTS AND ACTORS

As time went on, Lillie discovered she preferred the company of artists, writers and actors.

Early in her career as a society beauty she met a number of amateur thespians, as well as professional actors Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, Madge Kendall, the Bancrofts and Sarah Bernhardt, who encouraged Lillie's budding ambition to become a stage actress.

Meanwhile, English noblemen and crowned heads of Europe were especially impressed with Lilly Langtry. In fact, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and heir to Queen Victoria's throne, totally ignored Victorian convention and pursued Lillie openly with the hope of her as his mistress.

His success remains open to debate, but their obvious regard for each other certainly provoked much comment. The fact that he sought her out at parties and that they were frequently seen riding together in Hyde Park in the early morning and late evening was evidence enough for most people.

Historians and other biographers writing on Langtry and the Prince cite the building of the "Red House" in Bournemouth (now the Langtry Manor Hotel), a small town on the south coast of England, as further evidence of Langtry's "royal alliance" with the Prince. The deed to the house and property was in Emily Langston's name, but Prince Albert Edward supposedly purchased the estate. Beginning in 1878, newspapers made it point to mention her attendance at the various balls, parties, evenings at the opera and theater and other public events that the Prince also attended.



A Jersey Lily, painted by John Everett Millais.



Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales.

THE FUTURE
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Lillie would only say, "the Prince of Wales loved music, and could discuss it critically. Almost every night he might be seen at the opera in the omnibus box, surrounded by his chosen intimates. His affability to servants was well known to all who entertained him, for he seldom passed one without a word or a kind look."

LILLIE'S CALLING TAKES HER TO AMERICA

The general public enjoyed the truer embodiment of Lillie Langtry once she turned to acting. As did her teacher actress Henrietta Hodson Labouchere, retired and looking for a student to train for the stage.

It did not take long for Lillie to realize she had met her calling and was fulfilling her secret ambition. She was soon trodding the hallowed boards of British theaters and performing, not as a member of a company but as the star of the show.

At first, as could be expected, there was plenty of grumbling over such an unprecedented move. Lillie ultimately proved the merit of her daring. It took a few years, but the critics did relent in their bashing her every performance and begin to evaluate her fairly as an accomplished actress.

Nonetheless, in her debut performance in *A Fair Encounter*, she proved even the supremely confident Lillie Langtry could succumb to stage fright.

Alas, not a word of the opening soliloquy could I remember. There I stood, a forced smile on my lips and a bunch of roses in my arms without the vestige of an idea of what was to happen next. Fortunately, after several promptings from my coach, who was listening anxiously for her cue behind the door, I recovered my wits and the 'encounter' proceeded to a languid finish without further incident.

Theaters in London and the English provinces enjoyed strong box office receipts when she appeared. Yet, more than a few English drama critics continued to grumble over the fact she had not started at the bottom of the profession like most of her fellow thespians. Lillie soon realized that rather than battle endlessly against such resentment and prejudice she would have an easier time proving her worth in America.

All the while, Ned Langtry was not the least bit supportive of his wife's career. Although, he could not protest too loudly as his own income had fallen drastically due to severely decreased land rents. He had lost Lillie's love and respect early in their marriage and spent most of his evenings emptying a whiskey bottle before stumbling off to bed.

Lillie was involved in a very intense love affair for four years with Arthur Jones, a childhood friend who still lived on the Isle of Jersey. The affair ended when she went on stage, but the two remained life-long friends.

Rumors surfaced of a brief relationship with Prince Louis of Battenburg, the nephew of the Prince of Wales. She gave birth to a daughter, Jeanne-Marie, in Paris in 1881 and kept her the existence of her daughter a secret for many years.

By this time, she and her husband were estranged. Ned Langtry later claimed he did not know of the child until she was about fourteen at which time Lillie had filed for divorce and asked for custody of Jeanne. As her original intent was to hide the child from Ned, his claim of ignorance might be true. Her mother minded the baby when Lillie traveled. Once Jeanne-Marie was old enough, she and her grandmother would accompany Lillie on her acting tours in England and in the United States.

LILLIE ARRIVES IN AMERICA; FRED GEPHARD STEPS INTO HER LIFE

Lillie Langtry arrived in the United States for the first time October 23, 1882 at the age of 29. She met eager Americans who had read about her and were anxious to see in the flesh the "most beautiful woman in the world" — not to mention the "first officially-recognized mistress" of the future king of England.

The public clamored to witness her American acting debut November 6, 1882 at Wallack's Theater in New York City. The Tom Taylor comedy, *An Unequal Match*, sold out days in advance of the actual performance.

The daily wave of newspaper coverage informed everyone of Lillie's every move, thought and facial expression, even changes to her wardrobe. Manufacturers named products after her and countless mothers of baby girls born that year named their daughters Lillie.

Popular songwriters wrote their commemorative Jersey Lily waltzes, Jersey Lily polkas and Jersey Lily schottisches. Townspeople throughout the United States convened to rename their towns either Lillie or Langtry. Judge Roy Bean established Langtry, Texas, in 1882 as a monument to Lillie Langtry. He adored the woman but died in 1903 without ever meeting her.

Lillie stirred up so much excitement that many people were too astounded to react, or not sure how to properly respond. For the most part, the public either over-reacted or found a way to disparage this British invasion.



Above: Lillie as Hester Grazebrook in *An Unequal Match*.
Left: Theatre program from *Six Nights and One Morning*.



Prince Louis of Battenberg,
the father of Lillie's
daughter, Jeanne-Marie.



Fred Gebhard

However, one young American man knew exactly what to do about Lillie Langtry.

Fred Gephard had heard the gossip about Lillie and the Prince of Wales and the assorted aristocratic lords. Choosing either to disbelieve or to ignore the gossip, he waltzed into her life while other men stood back and only dreamed about such a daring move.

Gephard was the only son of a wealthy fur and silk importer who had died and left him \$5 million with an annual interest income of \$80,000. Gephard had studied architecture and wine. He owned thoroughbred horses and collected rare books and oriental carpets. When he was not yachting at Bar Harbor, Maine, or frequenting the racetracks at Monmouth Park, Belmont and Saratoga Springs, he spent most of his spare time lounging around New York's various clubs. He ardently desired a useful life and knew that he wanted to continue racing horses, but it was not until he met Lillie Langtry that the idea of breeding his own stock took root.

As persuasive as he was handsome, Gephard convinced Lillie that becoming a partner with him in a joint horse-breeding venture was just what she wanted to do with her life.

Gephard's way with Lillie Langtry did not make him popular with his fellow clubmen and horsemen, nor with the press. Over the years, they would make every effort to avenge his every move in his relationship with Lillie.

Nonetheless, Gephard always stood by his feelings for Lillie — even when the scandalous rumors became so ridiculous they made him look like a fool. Gephard detested publicity, but loving such a famous and notorious woman demanded as much, and he usually withstood it like a man. Lillie valued that quality in Gephard.

LILLIE AND FRED FIND A PIECE OF PARADISE

Lillie Langtry and Fred Gephard in their home in Guenoc Valley is a love story, though incomplete in many respects. Lillie gave herself wholeheartedly to Fred Gephard and hoped to marry him one day. Until that day came, the couple remained undeterred in their plan to purchase property in California.

Langtry paid \$82,000 for a total 4,190 acres in Guenoc Valley, while Gephard purchased 3,800 acres adjacent to her property for only \$33,000. Except for 190 acres, their combined 8,000 acres were part of the original 21,000-acre Spanish land grant ceded to one George Roch in 1845.

In May, 1888, following a successful engagement at the California Theater, Langtry said goodbye to her acting company in San Francisco, and she, Gephard and a few of their friends boarded a

fleet of ferries for the trip across the San Francisco bay on their first visit to Guenoc Valley. From Vallejo, they hooked Langtry's lavishly appointed private railcar named the Lalee to a train and headed north by land on an all-day jaunt to their first stop in St. Helena. Colonel William D'Alton Mann, a former Union army officer in the Civil War built the Lalee according to Langtry's specifications, was included in the entourage.

On her sojourns across American west, the 75-foot long Lalee attracted as much attention as the opulent travelers inside. Painted bright blue with motif of polished brass lilies under the white roof arched over polished Oriental teak platforms, the private rail car was a traveling palace. Its ten rooms included a salon with walls covered in cream and gold Lyons brocade cloth, a grand piano between bookcases and several overstuffed chairs. Langtry had her own private bath and dressing room with fixtures of silver. There was a large kitchen and a pantry and two more guest rooms.

The party detrained in St. Helena for lunch at what was then the Windsor Hotel. Afterward they climbed into two six-in-hand stagecoaches for the ride over Howell Mountain into Guenoc Valley for their first look at their properties.

The seventeen miles we had to drive led us, by a corkscrew road, up to the summit and over one of the highest of the group. The way was rough and narrow, and, as the only springs of the two coaches were leather thongs, we felt every stone, but the beauty of the well-wooded gorges, green and cool, with rapid rivers hurrying through them, well repaid us for our thumps and bumps. Then, as we descended the mountain on the farther side, the panorama opened out, and for the first time I caught a bird's-eye view of my property.

The huge plateau appeared a dream of loveliness. Being early July, vast masses of ripe corn waved golden in the light summer breeze, dotted here and there with the enormous centenarian, evergreen oaks. It was, without exaggeration, entrancing. In the distance were the boundary hills of the far side of my land, hazy and blue as the Alps sometimes are, and on which...my numerous cattle ranged. On and down we drove, each turn of the road making us gasp with the new picture disclosed, till, threading our way through my vineyards and peach orchards laden with fruit, which covered a great part of the near hills, we reached home.

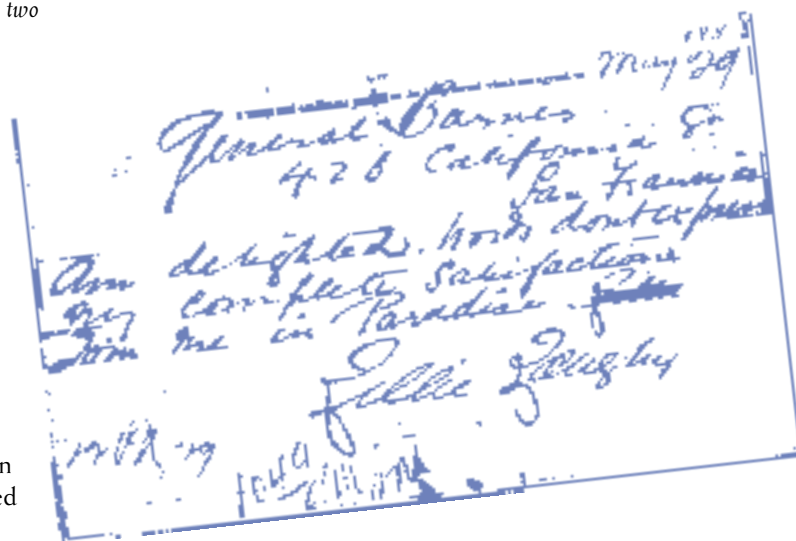
A few days after they arrived in Guenoc Valley, Lillie and Fred rode into Middletown in a surrey with two beautifully matched white horses, and Mrs. Langtry cabled General Barnes at his office in San Francisco:

Am delighted. Words don't express my complete satisfaction. Join me in Paradise.

Their first visit lasted only a week, but it was enough time for Lillie and Freddie to explore their joint properties and decide what they wanted from the land.



Lillie Langtry's private railcar, The Lalee.



Cable to General Barnes, May 29, 1888.

BY THE EARLY 1900S, THE REGION WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE HOME OF SEVERAL PRODUCERS OF FINE WINES. LILLIE LANGTRY WAS ONE OF THESE PRODUCERS.



Vineyard harvest at Langtry House.

Gephard's acreage would house his horse breeding operation, Guenoc Stock Farm and Langtry would produce wines from her property. From grapes grown over more than 7,000 acres, the wine business flourished in Lake County in the late 1880s. By the early 1900s, Lillie Langtry was proud of her recognition as one of the region's more successful producers of fine wines.

Langtry and Gephard wanted very much to make this paradise their permanent home. Lillie's plan to that end would be to buy a theater in New York City where she would perform for three months. Then, living aboard the *Lalee*, she would travel across the United States playing cities large and the small clamoring to see her in person, and close her season in San Francisco in May or June and relish the six months she could then spend in Guenoc Valley with Fred, her mother and her daughter, Jeanne — who also desired a private paradise where they could escape Lillie's prying fans and the libelous pens of the press.

Lillie relayed her aims for the Langtry House in interviews, while James Stewart explained the plan to a reporter for the *St. Helena Star*:¹

She is greatly pleased with her newly acquired possessions and has laid out plans and given orders for a general overhauling and remodeling of things about her ranch. She has secured the services of a French gardener who will lay out fine lawns, etc., and otherwise beautify the premises. The lady seems to take great pride in the place and aspires to make it a second Eden. She will have fine stables erected for some blooded stock she is to import. Mr. Gebhard is also to make extensive improvements on his property, and will soon have his celebrated horse, Eole, sent out here. Mrs. Langtry expects to be back here in about a month.

A year later she wrote Dr. Charles Aby from Chicago where she was performing on June 9, 1889:

You don't know how much and often I think of the ranch and picture the changes you have made. Please don't lose patience of heart because I can't come this summer, for I hope the day is not far distant when I shall spend six months in the year there, and I do want to feel that it will be pretty and complete. I am so glad you are getting up the chickens. I do love a poultry yard, and it will be one of my chief pleasures. Some day we must have geese and ducks as well. You ought to have those by the lake, and when we are up there we will be independent of Middletown butchers. How are the sheep? Are there any lambs? I am highly delighted at the advent of Eole's posthumous daughter, and I think she should be called Miss Eole after the old horse. Where is the windmill going to be? If you hear of any good brood mares out there let me know, and if I am in funds I will buy them. How different it must all be now, making your own butter and everything. How does the bakery do? I will be with you in spirit this summer anyhow. Are there any pigs left or have you exterminated them? Freddie says he is going to pay for the wagon, as it is for him.



The Gebhard Hunting Lodge and
Horse Stable (inset).





One of the many thoroughbred race horses owned by Fred Gebhard and Lillie Langtry, pictured in front of the horse stables at the Gebhard Hunting Lodge.



Lillie's portrait graced the labels of her wine bottles. She claimed her claret was the finest in America.

Out of her desire to marry Fred Gephard, Lillie applied for American citizenship in June 1887 and immediately sued for an American divorce from Edward Langtry. Edward refused to comply with her request. No matter how much she threatened, cajoled and even bribed him, he would not budge. Had she been able to marry Fred, Lillie would have committed herself to a life of exile from England as long as Edward Langtry was alive. If she stepped foot on British shore, she would be arrested for bigamy.

"They may treat me cruelly," Edward Langtry would say. "She shall never untie her father's altar knot while I live."²

According to an article in *The Star* published after Edward's death in 1897, whenever Lillie passed through Ireland on one of her acting tours, he would know in which town and on which train she was scheduled to arrive. He would wait for the train for hours before its arrival and then half an hour before the train pulled into the station, he would pin down one of the porters and tell him:

"Boy, I can't stick it out any longer. Watch her for me. Look closely at her. Tell me how she looks. Does she look well? Is she as beautiful? Be careful about her dresses and tell me all about her what she wears."

He would then leave, only to return once the train had departed to grill the porter for all the particulars. Then he would break down and sob as if his heart would break. Whether it was true or not, Lillie never told anyone if she had heard this story.

With her American citizenship denied on a technicality in the application, and the divorce suit set aside, Lillie and the man she had hoped to marry continued with their dreams for life in Guenoc Valley.

While her attorneys continued to work to free her from her marriage, the two bred racehorses and produced wines from Langtry Farms with her portrait on the bottle label for the next 18 years. She claimed her claret was the finest in America.

AS PERSUASIVE AS HE WAS HANDSOME,
GEPHARD CONVINCED LILLIE THAT PARTNERING WITH
HIM IN A JOINT HORSE BREEDING VENTURE WAS JUST
WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO WITH HER LIFE.

TRAGEDY DERAILS THE DREAM

An idyllic life together in Guenoc Valley for Lillie and Fred was not to be. A turning point came as they were preparing for an extended stay at Langtry Farms.

Before leaving on vacation, they returned to New York in June 1888 and readied 16 horses, which included English imports and Kentucky-bred mares, for transport to California by train. Lillie and Freddie and her daughter, along with her mother and her brother and his wife, were to follow a few weeks later.

The train carrying the horses left New York in the middle of August but never made it to the west coast. Tragically, it derailed just outside Shohola Glen, New York. The car carrying the horses caught fire and plunged into the Delaware River, leaving 11 horses dead at the scene or so badly injured they had to be laid down.

Fred's champion stallion, Eole, was lost in the disastrous crash. Considered one of the greatest racehorses in the country, Eole had won 40 percent and been "in the money" 80 percent of the he ran his seven year racing career. In 1883, in a four-mile race, he won the coveted Woodlawn Vase, then in the custody of the Coney Island Jockey Club and is now the trophy for the Triple Crown leg, The Preakness.

The progeny of the Gephard-Langtry thoroughbred stallions and mares had raced on local and Southern California racetracks for several years. The Guenoc Stock Farm, as small as it was, attracted the attention of famous West Coast horse breeders such as Leland Stanford in Pal Alto, and James B. Haggin from Sacramento, who all sent their mares to Gephard's stallions. One standout in particular was St. Saviour, a big powerful horse who lost only one race in his career before retiring to stud.

When Gephard sold most of his fillies and colts at auction in San Francisco in 1894, the country's best known horsemen attended to buy the best of the lot, some going for as much as \$380.

Lillie took the train wreck and tragic loss much better than her devastated young lover. Though the events of August 1888 marked the turning point in their romance, Lillie continued to pursue her divorce from Edward Langtry and firm up her plans to live at Langtry Farms for at least six months out of the year.

Gephard, on the other hand, immediately canceled the trip to Langtry Farms, and chose to stay in New York when a few weeks later Lillie, her mother and daughter were headed to England.



1894 sketch of Fred Gebhard.



LILLIE'S
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FRIENDS AND
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Faced with what he considered an irreplaceable loss and the cold realization that Edward Langtry would never release Lillie as long as he remained alive, Freddie gave up hope. The arguments between the once passionately devoted couple grew more heated and the periods of estrangement grew longer until finally they broke up forever. From then on, when Fred was at Guenoc Lillie simply avoided the place.

Once she and Fred had said goodbye, Lillie elected to remain in England awhile longer. Her daughter would soon take her place in Society as a debutante. Her father had died in February 1888, and her mother was not as strong as she once was.

In March 1894, Gephard married Louise Hollingsworth Morris, a daughter of a wealthy Baltimore, Maryland horse breeder. Two years later he sold his Guenoc Valley property to Andrew McCreery, who also purchased additional surrounding properties.

Lillie stayed at the Langtry House more often after Freddie had sold the Guenoc Stock Farm.

Still, her stays were not for any great length of time, as her stage career was becoming more demanding than ever. Eventually, exasperated with the pile of debts that kept accumulating in connection with the running of Langtry Farms, she too faced reality and sold her little piece of paradise in 1906 to George and Lizzie Mastick.

LILLIE WRITES THE NEXT CHAPTERS IN HER LIFE

Both estates functioned as investment properties with summer homes that absentee landowners managed. In 1919, William Detert bought these properties and combined them into a single estate that eventually totaled 21,200-acre he called Guenoc Ranch.

Though he did not live full time at Guenoc Ranch, Detert still enlarged the four-room Gephard House, which his nephew, Richard, lived in for several years with his family.

When William Detert died, the Woodland Farms Corporation bought the entire ranch from his estate and leased it to Edward and Joan Foley. The Foley family raised prize polled Herefords and Guenoc Ranch became famous for cattle breeding excellence. The ranch manager and sometimes the ranch hands who worked for the owners resided in the Langtry House. But eventually the house fell into despair and the ranch hands moved out. It was not until 1980 that the long-abandoned Langtry House underwent a thorough restoration.

Many of the floor joists had rotted, leaving the house to settled into the ground. Workers lifted it hydraulically and built a new foundation. Except for the dining room all of the floors in the house are original. The dining room floor had to be replaced as a log had fallen out of the fireplace and burned a large hole completely through.

The Langtry House was again renovated 25 five years later in 2006 to blend contemporary interior design elements with the home's vivid history.

True to her Victorian upbringing, Lillie seldom mentioned Fred Gephard by name. In her memoirs, she referred to him simply as *an American friend*. Upon her return to the United States after a long absence, Lillie told a reporter what she missed most about her almost-adopted country was an American friend.

If there is any truth in the old saying , ladies love outlaws, Lillie may have confirmed it when in 1891, she found herself involved with a man whom her friends despised. There is an old saying George Abington Baird from Scotland fit the description of an angry young man at the time, drinking all day and all night, gambling, brawling and involving himself with females of low repute in one tawdry affair after another. No one could understand the attraction he held for someone of Lillie's eminence.

Lillie described him in her memoirs only as *...an eccentric young bachelor, with vast estates in Scotland, a large breeding stud, a racing-stable and more money than he knew what to do with.*

Although he probably had more money than most of the gentry, he detested these people as much as they did him. Baird could have easily become one of Britain's best horse breeders and eventually accepted into society, except he rejected any friendly overture from them.

Of course, some segments of Society saw Lillie's association with Baird as a grand opportunity to ostracize her, but Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, made it very apparent to all that he still considered Mrs. Langtry worthy of royal friendship — a strong signal to those who hoped to remain in his good graces that they had best revise their attitude.

LILLIE APPLIES HER TOUCH TO HORSERACING

Baird mistreated Lillie, which stained her reputation even more. However, he did do something very worthwhile for her shortly before he died in 1893 in New Orleans, where he and his henchmen had gone to promote a boxing match. He introduced Lillie to the English world of racehorse ownership. When he gifted her with his two-year old chestnut colt, Milford, Lillie declared that *although a gift horse, one could look in his mouth with impunity.*



Lillie Langtry's bedroom and dining room after the 1980 renovation.



Lillie's racehorses, Yentoi (top) and Merman.

ON JULY 27, 1899, IN
ST. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH,
SHE QUIETLY MARRIED
HUGO DE BATHE, 28
YEARS OLD. SHE WAS 46.

Owning and racing this brilliant son of Saraband, racing contemporary of Ormonde, Minting, and The Bard, fueled the further development of Lillie's early grand passion and the start of a whole new career. She threw herself into breeding and racing horses with the same enthusiasm and excitement as she did in all of her other ventures. Perhaps even more so since it is so easy to become enamored of these beautiful animals.

From 1892 until about 1910, she owned several phenomenal racehorses. Besides the colt Milford, she had two Australian-breds, Merman and Maluma, as well as Lady Rosebery, Smilax, Vergia, and Yentoi. Each of these noble animals won nearly every important race on the English turf and when she died her grandson, Victor Malcolm, the only one of her grandchildren to love racing as much as she, inherited her many racing cups and ribbons. In 1894, Lillie had her Guenoc thoroughbreds shipped to her stables in England near Newmarket, the center of racing in Great Britain. She was as philosophical about her successful racing career as she was about everything else in her life. As she once said: "Racing is a serious business. It is very nice to win, but it is very sad when you lose."

Unfortunately, horses not only provide great excitement, joy and pleasure, they also can break a person's heart. Lillie owned a filly named Maud Mackintosh, who was her great pet, and who *went out every Saturday for some time, and regularly won her race*, she wrote.

One Saturday, after a race at Newmarket, Maud Mackintosh fell dead in the paddock. The usually imperturbable Lillie Langtry went into a corner of the paddock and sobbed. Later, taking this and a few other tragic accidents with her horses as a sign that her luck was about to run out, she sold her horses and her breeding farm.

Fred Gephard died in 1910. In 1916, Lillie confided to British novelist Somerset Maugham that though he remained the love of her life, she was now remarried to another man.

On July 27, 1899, in St. Saviour's church, she quietly married Hugo de Bathe, 28 years old. She was 46. Her horse, Merman, won the Goodwood Cup for her on that same day. Totally enamored of Lillie Langtry by now, the press called her the Goddess of Goodwood and wrote reams about her success as a horsewoman, an actress, and a mother. *Everybody loves a winner*, Lillie noted sardonically.

FROM LADY DE BATHE TO *THE DEGENERATES*

Hugo's father, Sir Henry de Bathe, was a baronet and upon his death in January 1907, Hugo succeeded the title to become Sir Hugo Gerald de Bathe. Lillie became Lady de Bathe and would later perform in Vaudeville under that name. She also changed her *nom de course* to Lady de Bathe. Also in 1899, she opened perhaps her most famous play, *The Degenerates*.

Though she reigned as "Queen of the Turf" until 1911, racing under the nom de course "Mr. Jersey," Lillie Langtry continued to act on the dramatic stage. She retired briefly for two years from 1896 to 1898 to spend more time at the track and with her daughter, Jeanne, who was growing into a lovely young woman with social aspirations of her own.

In 1902, Jeanne married Sir Ian Malcolm, a member of parliament from Argyllshire, Scotland, in a ceremony in London attended by the elite of Society. She gave Lillie three grandsons and one granddaughter. Jeanne and her family lived part of the time in a house in London and the rest of the time in the family castle in Argyllshire, called Poltalloch.

In a bold move in 1901, Lillie leased the Imperial Theater in London and completely renovated it for her first production, *The Degenerates*. The venture was not a success and she began to lose money. She was very happy to relinquish her lease and allow a religious group to take over the property.

Certain groups denounced the play as immoral since the main character was a divorced woman who sacrificed her own reputation to save a young married woman hell-bent on having a love affair with an unscrupulous foreigner.

Rumors flew around London and in every city *The Degenerates* played, decrying the drama as merely a depiction of Lillie Langtry herself. They intimated that Lillie created the stage sets from her own belongings from her own home, and that even Jeanne played the role of the daughter in the play. None of the rumors bore an ounce of truth, but several American cities banned the play when she brought it to the United States in 1900. Boston was not one of them where it played to rave reviews.

Following a six-month acting tour in South Africa in 1906, Lillie started performing Vaudeville sketches in the United States and in music halls in Great Britain. Until 1917, she worked seven days a week, giving two performances a day for 12 to 20 weeks at a stretch. During this time she also sat down long enough to write a novel, a delightful farce called *All at Sea*, published in 1909. She made a silent film, *His Neighbor's Wife*, in New York in 1913. She said she enjoyed the film experience, but never did another because she preferred performing in front of a live audience.

She traveled back and forth between England and the United States during the years of World War I. Lillie personally protested the war before it started, but once England joined in the fighting, she would often donate the proceeds of her performances to war-relief charities.

She was an early supporter of English women's right to vote. After seeing a number of women of the radical fringe chained to the gates of the Prime Minister's home at No. 10 Downing Street, and learning of stuffed home-made bombs that had been slipped into the mail boxes of members of parliament, Langtry decided that perhaps English women were not ready for the vote. She resigned her position as vice-president of the Actresses' Enfranchisement League.



Lillie's daughter, Jeanne-Marie and granddaughter Mary.



Lillie in *The Degenerates*.



Lillie as Pauline in *Lady of Lyons* (top)
and as Lady Ormonde in *Peril*.

While most of her productions were drawing-room melodramas and comedies, she scored with the public and the critics for several performances in Shakespearian productions that include *As You Like It*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Langtry is also well remembered for her portrayals of Kate Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*; Pauline in *Lady of Lyons*; Lady Ormond in the ever-popular *Peril*; Esther Sandraz in the play of the same name; Mrs. Dering in the comedy, *Mrs. Dering's Divorce* (first produced in Providence, Rhode Island); and Mrs. Trevelyan in *The Degenerates*, which she first brought to the United States in 1900.

She also attempted to produce full-length stage plays during this time. She were her own ideas from which she commissioned young playwrights to turn into dramas for her, such as *A Royal Necklace*, *Mademoiselle Mars*, and *The Crossways*.

LILLIE STOPS AND SMELLS THE FLOWERS

After appearing steadily on the professional stage for over 30 years, Lillie Langtry officially retired from the stage in 1918. At which time, she moved permanently to her Villa Le Lys in Monte Carlo. She grew prize-winning flowers in her garden, and wrote of her villa in her memoirs:

Where there is a will there is a way, even in house construction. I scooped wine cellars out of rocks, kitchens out of rubble-heaps, and, coaxing a side of the ravine from the Monegasque Government. I made of it one of the most picturesque gardens in the principality. My little house, clinging to a rock, is ideally situated betwixt mountain and sea, and it is impossible for one who loves nature to be other than happy in such surroundings. My hanging gardens I tend myself—as far as they need gardening, for the inaccessible part of the precipitous rocks clothe themselves with lovely alpines, stocks, maidenhair ferns, wild orchids, wall-flowers, bluebells, snapdragons, masses of geraniums and other unbidden but welcome guests and even cinerarias perch themselves in loft ledges and do better there in their wildness. In the cultivated portion irises, mimosas, daturas, cyclamens, primulas and all the lovely winter blooming flora thrive. Small successes sometimes please one out of all proportion, and last year, when I was awarded the first prize (a medal) by the Horticultural Society of Nice for the best garden on the Riviera, minded by "la Proprietaire." I was a very proud woman.

Lillie's popularity as an actress never waned. Eventually even the harshest critics admitted that she was a very good actress. A few even said she was excellent.

Edward Michael, Lillie Langtry's business manager for many years, echoed the thoughts of many of the people who knew her in his memoirs, *Tramps of a Scamp*.



Photo of Lillie in 1929, the year of her death. She died in Monaco and is buried at St. Saviour's Church.

Lillie's last years were active and full. She published her memoirs, *The Days I Knew*, and made several trips to Paris and London each year to visit with her grandchildren. In addition to gardening, she enjoyed motoring in her own automobile, gambling at the casinos in Monte Carlo, visiting the race tracks in France and England and sharing memories and good times with her brother, Clem up until his death in 1927.

Lillie Langtry died on February 12, 1929, at her villa. Mathilde Peat, with her companion and housekeeper at her side. Her remains were shipped to the Isle of Jersey for burial beside her family in St. Saviour's churchyard. Her headstone is a gracefully sculpted bust of Emilie Charlotte Le Breton bearing the name Langtry de Bathe.

LILLIE'S LIFE IS REMEMBERED

On May 11, 1984, Mary Malcolm McFadyean, the granddaughter of Lillie Langtry, visited the Langtry House for the first time with her husband, Colin McFadyean and her daughter, Annabel Bartlett McCall. A public ceremony attended by the press and a large crowd of interested observers honored Mary and her family on the Langtry House lawn. Officials presented her a terracotta-colored plaque in memory of her grandmother from the Greater London Council, which recognizes and designates historical monuments in London. The plaque reads:

Home of Lillie Langtry, International Beauty and Actress, 1888-1906

Mary Malcolm McFadyean, a former announcer with the British Broadcasting Corporation when television programs were live events, also pleased the public and the press by delivering a short talk in which she described her first visit with her grandmother at Lillie's London hotel when she was 11 and Lillie was in her 60s.

She remembered Lillie as "a plump, short lady with dyed fair hair and wonderful warm kissable cheeks." She also recalled that her grandmother had a huge wardrobe of dresses, hats and furs, and told her to try them on. Mary said when she did she felt like an absolute queen.

Mary recalled always wanting a bicycle as a child, even though her parents were reluctant to give her one because they lived in such a small space. Nonetheless, said Mary, Lillie sent over to the Malcolm household at 5 Bryant Square in London, a Harrod's van full of the latest models of bicycles from which little Mary delightedly chose her favorite one. She called it "the Rolls Royce" of bicycles.

Mary claimed her grandmother was "too much ahead of her time for England," and admitted that, "she achieved much more in her life under great stress than I have in mine."

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1853 Lilly born St. Saviour's Rectory, October 13
- 1874 Married Edward Langtry at St. Saviour's Church (age 20)
- 1877 Introduced to Prince of Wales (age 23)
- 1878 Presented to Queen Victoria (age 24)
- 1880 Met Prince Louis of Battenberg (age 26)
- 1881 Birth of Jeanne-Marie / First appearance on London Stage (age 27)
- 1882 First American stage tour (age 29)
- 1887 Became American Citizen; divorced Edward Langtry (age 33)
- 1891 Appeared Theatre Royal, Jersey (age 37)
- 1897 Won Cesarewitch with own horse 'Merman' (age 44)
- 1900 Opened Opera House, Jersey (age 46)
- 1901 Bought Imperial Theatre, London (age 47)
- 1906 First Vaudeville appearance (age 52)
- 1907 Broke the bank at Monte Carlo (age 53)
- 1909 Wrote novel *All at Sea* (age 55)
- 1913 Appeared in silent film (age 60)
- 1925 Wrote autobiography (age 72)
- 1929 Died in Monaco; buried at St. Saviour's Church (age 75)

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END NOTES

1. Published in the St. Helena Star, June 8, 1888.
2. From a June 15, 1897, statement by Edward Langtry published in the San Francisco Examiner, June 16, 1897, by special cable from London.



Sketch of Lillie Langtry
by artist Frank Miles.



Lillie as Juliet in the Shakespeare classic.



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