Summary

Creator: Bronte, Emily, 1818-1848

Title: Emily Brontë papers

Date: 1830s-1990s [bulk 1830s-1844]

Size: 0.42 linear feet (2 boxes)


Abstract: Emily Brontë (1818-1848) was an English writer, poet, and the sister of Charlotte, Anne, and Patrick Branwell Brontë. Her papers, dating from the 1830s to 1844, are composed of holograph poems, essays, and a painting. The collection also holds supplementary materials, dating from the 1940s to the 1990s, about the history of the painting and holograph poems.


Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Amy Lau in 2022.

Creator History

Emily Jane Brontë (born 1818 in Thornton, England) was an English poet and writer best known for her novel Wuthering Heights (1847). She was the second youngest sibling of the English writers Charlotte, Patrick Branwell, and Anne Brontë.

Brontë’s formal education was sparse. She briefly attended the Clergy Daughter's School and Roe Head School. The rest of her education came largely from her aunt, Maria Branwell, and her older sister, Charlotte. Unlike her other two sisters, Brontë never worked as a governess. In 1838, Brontë worked as a teacher at Law Hill School for six months. Upon her return home to Haworth, Brontë performed domestic work and never took another paid position.
In 1842, Brontë and her sister, Charlotte, attended Pensionnat Héger in Brussels, Belgium, to become more proficient in French and German. They intended to open their own school in England. However, after nine months, the sisters returned home when their aunt, Maria Branwell, became ill and died. In 1844, Brontë and Charlotte tried to open their own school, but were unable to attract students.

From childhood into adulthood, Brontë and her sister, Anne, wrote poetry and stories about an imaginary world called Gondal. In 1846, Brontë published twenty-one poems in the poetry collection, *Poems* by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell under the pseudonym, Ellis Bell. Her novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), was published in conjunction with her sister Anne's novel, *Agnes Grey* (1847).

In September 1848, Brontë became ill shortly after her brother's death. She died three months later in Haworth, England, in December 1848.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Emily Brontë papers include her holograph poems, essays, and a watercolor painting, dating from the 1830s to 1844. The holographs are made up of two essays written in French and approximately twenty-five poems. The collection also holds supplemental materials about the holograph poems and a watercolor painting dating from the 1940s to the 1990s.

The holograph poems were written between the 1830s and 1844. Most of the poems have textual corrections, and some are fragmented. The back side of some of the holographs contains pencil sketches of unidentified objects and people. The first line of text was used to identify poems without titles. Two poems, "Not many years but long enough to see" (1830s) and "There let thy bleeding branch atone" (1830s), were previously attributed to Charlotte Brontë and Anne Brontë, respectively.

The additional materials associated with the holograph poems consist of transcriptions and typewritten informational notes about the poems' publication and attribution histories. None of the associated materials are signed or dated but appear to be created by Berg Collection staff during the 1990s.

The watercolor painting, titled *Forget Me Not*, depicts a forlorn woman sitting dejectedly in an archway with a dog and letter lying at her feet. Emily Brontë's name appears below the illustration. Please note that the painting retains the Berg Collection's historic local call number for continuity and tracking purposes.

The supplemental material affiliated with the watercolor painting features a letter and essay, dated May 6, 1992, from Jane Sellars, then director of The Brontë Society and Bronte Parsonage Museum. In the essay, Sellars compares the painting to other illustrations in the museum's collection and speculates that it was painted by Patrick Branwell Brontë.

The two holograph essays, "Le Chat" (May 15, 1842) and "Le Papillon" (August 11, 1842), are devoirs, or essay exercises, written while Brontë attended Pensionnat Héger. Unlike the painting and poems, the essays do not have any additional materials.

**Arrangement:** The papers are arranged alphabetically by title.

**Key Terms**
Subjects
Authors, English -- 19th century
English poetry -- 19th century
English poetry -- Manuscripts
Short stories, English
Women authors, English

Occupations
Authors.
Poets.

Genre/Physical Characteristic
Manuscripts (documents)
Manuscripts for publication
Watercolors (paintings)

Names
Bronte_., Anne, 1820-1849
Bronte_., Charlotte, 1816-1855
Bronte_., Emily, 1818-1848
Bronte_., Patrick Branwell, 1817-1848
Sellars, Jane
Container List

b. 1 f. 1-2  "All hushed and still within the house" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 3-4  "And like myself lone wholey [sic] lone" 1841 February 27, 1920s-1990s
b. 1 f. 5-6  "At Castle Wood" 1844 February 2, 1990s
b. 1 f. 7-8  "The buisy [sic] has glided by" and "I know not how it falls on me" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 9  Le Chat 1842 May 15
b. 2  Forget Me Not 1830s, 1992 May 6
b. 1 f. 10  Berg Coll MSS Brontë, E. (++++)
b. 1 f. 11-12  "Heavens glory shone where he was laid" 1839 December 19, 1990s
b. 1 f. 13-14  "His land may burst the galling chain" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 15-16  "I'm happiest when most away" and "Weaned from life and torn away" February 1838, 1990s
b. 1 f. 17-18  "It is not pride it is not shame" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 19-20  "May flowers are opening" 1839, 1940s
b. 1 f. 21-22  "Methinks this heart should rest awhile" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 23-24  "Not many years but long enough to see" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 25  Le Papillon 1842 August 11
b. 1 f. 26-27  "She dried her tears and they did smile" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 28-29  "That dreary lake that moonlight sky" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 30-31  "There let thy bleeding branch atone" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 32-33  "There was a time when my cheek burned" October 1839, 1990s
b. 1 f. 34-35  "Tis evening now the sun descends" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 36-37  "Tis moonlight summer moonlight" 1840 May 19, 1990s
b. 1 f. 38-39  "Upon her soothing breast" and "I gazed within thine earnest eyes" 1830s, 1990s
b. 1 f. 40-41  "What winter floods what streams of spring" 1832 March 27, 1990s
b. 1 f. 42-43  "When days of Beauty deck the vale" 1836, 1990s
b. 1 f. 44-45  "The wind was rough which tore" 1839 November 23, 1990s