

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn, and Archer, Ellen, Letters

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters

[ca. mid-1800s], 1909



Title Statement

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn, and Archer, Ellen, Letters Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters, [ca. mid-1800s], 1909 Ms.2023.119

Author: LM Rozema, Archivist

Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries (0434)
560 Drillfield Drive
Newman Library, Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
Business Number: 540-231-6308
specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



2023 (CC0 1.0)

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2024-07-24 07:01:21 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2023.119

Unit Date

[ca. mid-1800s], 1909

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters contain one [ca. mid-1800s] letter by Gaskell to a friend declining an invitation to spend the evening together and four letters from Archer to F. Redway about the history and sale of Charlotte Brontë's Bible, which Archer acquired through her and Brontë's friend William Green. Gaskell was also a friend and biographer of Charlotte Brontë. The collection was acquired along with the Bronte Bible (as it is now called), which is cataloged in the Rare Books Collection of Special Collections and University Archives with the call number BS185 1612 .L8 Spec Large.

Creator

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn, 1810-1865

Creator

Archer, Ellen (Burley in Wharfedale, England)

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

The organization that has made the collection available believes that the **Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell letter** in the collection is in the Public Domain under the laws of the United States, but a determination was not made as to its copyright status under the copyright laws of other countries. The collection may not be in the Public Domain under the laws of other countries. See the WATCH File for Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell for information about rights holders, where applicable. Copyright restrictions may apply. Contact Special Collections and University Archives for assistance in determining the use of these materials.

The copyright status of the **Ellen Archer letters** in the collection is unknown. Copyright restrictions may apply. Contact Special Collections and University Archives for assistance in determining the use of these materials.

Reproduction or digitization of materials for personal or research use can be requested using our reproduction/digitization form: <http://bit.ly/scuareproduction>.

Reproduction or digitization of materials for publication or exhibit use can be requested using our publication/exhibition form: <http://bit.ly/scuapublication>. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives (specref@vt.edu or 540-231-6308) if you need assistance with forms or to submit a completed form.

Source of Acquisition

The collection was acquired with the Bronte Bible by Special Collections and University Archives prior to 2005.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters was completed in October 2023. The Bronte Bible was cataloged in the Rare Book Collection prior to 2005.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters, [ca. mid-1800s], 1909, Ms2023-119, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Charlotte Brontë or Bronte (1816-1855) was a British novelist, poet, and one of the well-known Brontë sisters, including Emily and Anne. Her most famous works include *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853).

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865) was also a British novelist and poet, probably best known for *North and South* (1854-1855), *Wives and Daughters: An Everyday Story* (1864-1866), and *Cranford* (1851-1853). She is also known as a close friend and biographer of Brontë, publishing *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857.

"Madam" and "Dr. Cradock", recipients of the Gaskell letter, were possibly novelist Harriet Grove (nee Lister) Cradock (1809-1884) and her husband Rev. Edward Hartopp Cradock (1810-1886), principal of Brasenose College of the University of Oxford.

Ellen Archer lived in Burley in Wharfedale, Leeds, Yorkshire, England. She was a friend of William Green, who had been a friend of Charlotte Brontë. The author inscribed a 1612 Bible and gave it to Green. Following his death, Archer acquired the Bible, selling it in 1909. No other information could be found about Archer.

F. Redway of Wimbledon is Frank Redway, a rare book and autograph dealer. (Source: The Publisher's Weekly, May 6, 1911, p. 1864, available online from the Internet Archive at <https://archive.org/details/PublishersWeekly1911/1911-05-06/page/1864/mode/2up?q=Frank+Redway>)

Scope and Content

The Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters contains a letter from E.C. [Elizabeth Cleghorn] Gaskell, dated "The Star [possibly a hotel in Oxford, England], Tuesday evening", to "Madam", probably the

wife of Dr. Cradock [possibly Harriet Cradock, wife of Rev. Edward Cradock]. She declines on behalf of herself and her daughter an invitation to join the recipient that evening due to being "extremely tired with our day's work of sight-seeing" and ends with "compliments to Dr. Cradock and yourself." Although undated, it is likely from the mid-1800s.

The Archer letters are all from Ellen Archer of 15 Grange Field Avenue, Burley in Wharfedale, Leeds, Yorkshire, England to F. Redway of 37a Trinity Road, Wimbledon, S.H., [Frank Redway, rare book dealer] and date July 11, November 6, November 23, and November 24, all in 1909. They discuss the history and sale of Charlotte Brontë's Bible, which was signed by Brontë at Haworth on April 21, 1834. In the July 11 epistle, Archer writes, "I got it from the late Mr. Wm. [William] Green, he got it of Charlotte Brontë on condition that he never parted with it so long as he lived & he faithfully kept his promise".

Archer writes on November 6 about her disappointment that the Bible did not fetch more at auction. She gives a little more detail about the history of the Bible, saying that the Blands originally owned it, and the family knew both Charlotte Brontë and William Green. She also suggests they may have all met while Brontë was a governess at Stone Gappe. [Brontë was governess there for the Sidgwick family in 1839.]

On November 23, Archer asks about the final sale price of Charlotte Brontë's Bible and informs Redway of letters she received at the auction and afterwards "from a Gentleman at Manchester" who may be related to the Blands and offers to share them with Redway.

These missives are transcribed by Archer to Redway on November 24. First, a copy of an October 29 inquiry to Sotheby & Co. from Harry B. Wood indicates that he learned they would be selling "'Charlotte Brontë's Bible, issued by Robert Barker,' bound in calf" and that he would like to know "whether the Blands in question were family connections of the well-known artist, Julius Caesar [Ibbetson]". Wood on November 7 elaborated on his family history, stating that his grandmother was a Miss Bland who gave him miniatures of two children, and the miniatures were likely copied from a painting by Ibbetson of his own children. Family rumor has it that the artist may be "connetions of my grandmother's" and is asking if Archer can help him trace the connection between his own family, the Ibbetsons, and the Blands who previously owned Charlotte Brontë's Bible. Wood also proclaims, "Seems a pity however that such an interesting Souvenir [referring to the Bible] should be allowed to leave the country of origin" and implies the Bible was sold to someone in America. Archer ends her letter to Redway by stating that she has misplaced a leaf from the Bible that included names and dates for births, marriages, and deaths for the Blands in the 1600s and 1700s.

Finally, the collection includes an envelope to F. Redway, probably from one of these letters from Ellen Archer, stamped Burley in Wharfedale, Leeds, November [maybe 23?], 1909.

The collection accompanied Charlotte Brontë's Bible, which are discussed in the aforementioned Archer letters. The Bronte Bible (as it is now called) has been cataloged in the Rare Book Collection with call number BS185 1612 .L8 Spec Large.

Separated Materials

These letters were acquired with Charlotte Brontë's Bible (now called the Bronte Bible), a 1612 Bible owned and inscribed by Charlotte Brontë, Haworth, April 21, 1834. The Bronte Bible (call number BS185 1612 .L8 Spec Large) has been separated to the Rare Book Collection in Special Collections and University Archives.

Keywords

Authors

British literature

Brontë, Charlotte, 1816-1855

Rights Statement for Archival Description

The guide to the Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell and Ellen Archer Letters by Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, is licensed under a CC0 (<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>).

Arrangement

The collection is arranged chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Letter from E.C. [Elizabeth Cleghorn] Gaskell to "Madam" [Mrs. Cradock?]

Unit Date [ca. mid-1800s]

folder 1

Letter from Ellen Archer to F. Redway

Unit Date 1909-07-11

folder 1

Letter from Ellen Archer to F. Redway

Unit Date 1909-11-06

folder 1

Letter from Ellen Archer to F. Redway with envelope

Unit Date 1909-11-23

folder 1

Letter from Ellen Archer to F. Redway

Unit Date 1909-11-24

folder 1

Envelope [from Ellen Archer] to F. Redway

Unit Date 1909-11-[23?]

folder 1