Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892.

Walt Whitman manuscript
circa 1870-1892

Abstract: This collection consists of an undated, untitled holograph Walt Whitman poem, later published, posthumously, as "186" and "187" in Notes and Fragments (1899).
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 099, F892
Creator: Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892.
Title: Walt Whitman manuscript
Inclusive Dates: circa 1870-1892
Extent: 1 item (1 leaf, 2 p.)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 099, F892, Walt Whitman manuscript, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box V-1, F892: Shelved in SPEC MSS 099

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Source: Source unknown.


Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

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Biographical Note

American poet Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, in West Hills, Long Island, New York, and died of illness on March 26, 1892, in Camden, New Jersey. Whitman is best known for his collection of poetry, \textit{Leaves of Grass}, which was first published in 1855. Whitman continued to revise and rework his \textit{Leaves of Grass} for the remainder of his life, ultimately producing nine different editions, each featuring further revisions, new poems, and some deletions of earlier poems. In 1881 Whitman settled on the final arrangement of \textit{Leaves of Grass} and subsequently made no further revisions to the core text. All new poems written after 1881 were added to \textit{Leaves of Grass} as annexes to the 1881 edition; the final authorial edition of his poems, the so-called "death-bed" edition, appeared in 1892, shortly before his demise.

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of an undated, untitled holograph Walt Whitman poem, later published, posthumously, as "186" and "187" in Notes and Fragments (1899).

The poem is inscribed in Whitman’s hand on a remaindered piece of ruled Department of Justice stationery. It consists of two passages or fragments which were later published posthumously in the 1899 Notes and Fragments. The passages were published as "first drafts and rejected lines and passages, mostly very fragmentary, from ‘Leaves of Grass,’ largely antecedent to the 1855 edition" by the book’s editor, Richard Maurice Bucke, who had received the manuscripts in his capacity as one of Whitman’s literary executors. The passages are not titled in the manuscript; Bucke identified them as "186" and "187". "186" is inscribed on the recto of the leaf, with some additional corrections by Whitman (first line: "The same old mystery and problem"). "187" is inscribed on the verso of the leaf, with some additional corrections by Whitman (first line: "The true, new world, the world of science, mind and literature"). The corrected states of the manuscript are textually identical to the poems as published in Notes. It is unclear from the manuscript whether the two passages were intended by Whitman to be individual entities or parts of the same poem. The manuscript itself is not dated; the stationery on which it is written has the year "187[ ]" printed on it, with a blank space in which the last digit of the year would have been filled in by hand; therefore, the manuscript cannot have been composed any earlier than 1870.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892.

Topical Terms

Poets, American--19th century.
American Poetry--19th century.

Form/Genre Terms

Manuscripts.

Poems.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.
MSS 099, F277 Walt Whitman letter to Thomas Donaldson.
MSS 099, F661 Walt Whitman photograph and note.
MSS 099, F819 Horace Traubel collection of Walt Whitman papers.
Detailed Description of the Collection

Untitled poem, autograph manuscript, circa 1870-1892 [Box V-1 F892]

1 leaf, 2 p.