

Somerset, Emily essay book

Emily Somerset essay book
1867-1873

Title Statement

Somerset, Emily essay bookGuide to the Emily Somerset essay book MSS.16962

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Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
P.O. Box 400110
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4110
URL: <https://small.library.virginia.edu/>

6 May 2026

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-05-08 07:01:33 +0000.

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

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS.16962

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1915

Unit Date

1867-1873

Mixed Materials

1 (folder)

Language

English

Extent

0.03 Cubic Feet One letter-sized file folder.

Condition Description

Good.

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection has been minimally processed and is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Whitmore Rare Books by the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 18 July 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16962, Emily Somerset essay book, Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Content Description

This collection contains an essay book belonging to Emily Somerset, who lived in England. Bound in contemporary morocco with Essays of Emily Somerset embossed in gilt to front cover and has decorative endpapers. Adhered to front pastedown is a contemporary gift plate reading: "E. Somerset from her cousin, C. Somerset, 1867". A later gift inscription in pencil to verso of front endpaper, "Annie Usher from her Uncle. November 28th 1923." The essay entries began in 1867 when Emily was eighteen. The manuscript contains twelve essays with decorative calligraphic head and tail pieces written over forty-five pages, with an additional three pages of recipes at the back of the book. Some essays, such as the opening title "On self culture," reflect popular trends in education regarding women's physical and mental health (including the importance of balancing classroom time with exercise). Others suggest Emily's more individual interests or perceptions of the world conveyed in essays like "Art and its effect upon us" (August 1867), while others reveal her deep interest in literature like her February 17, 1868 essay "On Books" which argues for the importance of books and the consumption of literature. Entries end in 1873, leaving the latter half of the book blank. Emily became a Wesleyan schoolmistress and married schoolteacher William James Middleton in 1879. She died in 1921. The question remains whether Emily Somerset and the later owner, Annie Usher were related in some way, as Emily's death in 1921 is quite close to Annie's receipt of the manuscript as a gift in 1923.

Keywords

Women's Scrapbook/ Commonplace Book Collections (University of Virginia)

Women -- Education