Writing in Time

Werner, Marta L.

Published by Amherst College Press

Werner, Marta L.
Writing in Time: Emily Dickinson's Master Hours.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/99350

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=3118271
1861

Towards A 828

Summer 1861

Historic National Events
- June 3: The first skirmish of Union and Confederate forces in the East occurs near Philippi in western Virginia.
- June 8: Tennessee secedes from the Union.
- June 10: The first land battle of the war, the Battle of Big Bethel, occurs in Virginia.
- June 20: West Virginia breaks from Virginia, voting to remain in the Union along with Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky, even though they are slave states.
- July: The city of Washington is surrounded by a series of earthworks and forts for greater protection.
- July 4: Congress puts out the call for 500,000 more volunteers.
- July 21: The Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) occurs in Virginia. (Civilians actually come out to watch the battle with picnic baskets but are appalled at the carnage: 4,878 casualties.)
- July 27: President Lincoln replaces Irvin McDowell with George B. McClellan as Commander of the Army of the Potomac.
- August: Frazer Stearns joins the 21st Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment as First Lieutenant. Professor of Chemistry at Amherst College William Clark also joins.
- August 10: The Battle of Wilson’s Creek unfolds in Missouri. The first Union general, Nathaniel Lyon, is killed in action.
- August 28–29: Fort Hatters at Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, falls to Union naval forces.

Writings Circulated
- ED writes Mary Bowles, about August, “Mary, / I do not know of you, a long while –...”; her letter includes the poem “My River runs to thee –” (L 235; Fr 219C).
- ED copies and sends “The Drop, that wrestles in the Sea –” (Fr 255A) to Samuel Bowles, ca. second half of the year.
- ED copies and sends “I Came to buy a smile – today~” (Fr 258A) to Samuel Bowles, ca. second half of the year.
- ED writes to Samuel Bowles, possibly in early summer; the letter (L 251) includes “Through the strait pass of suffering –” (Fr 187B).\(^{162}\)
- ED writes Samuel Bowles, possibly soon after 8 June, “Dear friend. / How hard to thank you – ...” (L 300).\(^{163}\)
- ED writes to Mary Warner Crowell, about August, “Dear Mary – / You might not know...” (L 236).
- ED writes Susan Dickinson, 19 June; her letter includes the poem “Is it true, dear Sue?” (L 232; Fr 189).\(^{164}\)
- ED exchanges variant versions of “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –~” (Fr 124C, D) with Susan Dickinson (L 238), ca. summer.\(^{165}\)
- ED copies and sends “Just so – Jesus – raps ~” (Fr 263A) to Susan Dickinson, ca. second half of the year.

163 Franklin and Habegger both re-date this letter, moving it from Johnson’s placement in 1864 to 1861. While Franklin re-dates the letter December 1861, Habegger believes it falls soon after 8 June 1861. Here he follows Leyda’s Years and Hours, II. 28, and the evidence is convincing.
164 Hart and Smith also date this letter-poem to Susan Dickinson “about June 19, 1861”; see OMC, pp. 95–96.
165 Dickinson made several copies of this poem—two (one lost) in 1858 and three, including Fr 124C and Fr 124D, in 1861. For a complete textual history of this poem, see OMC, pp. 97–100, and Franklin’s notes (Poems 1998) for Fr 124 [A]–[G]. In 1862, Dickinson sends another copy to Thomas Wentworth Higginson in her first 15 April letter to him.

Writings Retained
- “Master. / If you saw a bullet” (Dickinson composes and revises the fifth extant “Master” document; MS A 828/L 233, ca. summer–autumn).
- ED copies the following poems onto a sheet, ca. second half of the year: “We – Bee and I – live by the quaffing –” (Fr 244B); “God permits industrious Angels –~” (Fr 245); “The Sun – just touched the Morning” (Fr 246A); “The Lamp burns sure – within –” (Fr 247A). [This sheet will become the first sheet of F10.]
- ED copies the following poems onto a sheet, ca. second half of the year: “One life of so much consequence!” (Fr 249A); “You’re right – ‘the way is narrow’ –” (Fr 249A); “Safe in their Alabaster chambers –~” (Fr 124E). [This sheet will become the fourth sheet of F10.]
- ED copies the following poems onto a sheet, ca. second half of the year: “The Court is far away~” (Fr 250A); “If He dissolve – then there is nothing – more –~” (Fr 251A); “I think just how my shape will rise –~” (Fr 252A); “I’ve nothing Else – to bring, You know –~” (Fr 253B). [This sheet will become the fifth and final sheet of F10.]
- ED copies the following poems onto a sheet, ca. summer: “What shall I do – it whimperers so~” (Fr 237B); “How many times these low feet staggered ~” (Fr 238A); “Make me a picture of the sun ~” (Fr 239A); “Bound – a trouble –~” (Fr 240A). [This sheet will become the first sheet of F9.]
- ED copies the following poem onto a leaf, ca. summer: “What is – ‘Paradise’ –~” (Fr 241A). [This single leaf will become the second leaf of F9.]
- ED copies the following poems onto a leaf, ca. summer: “It is easy to work when the soul is at play~” (Fr 242A); “That after Horror – that ‘twas us –~” (Fr 243A). [This single leaf will become the fifth leaf of F11.]
- ED may have bound F9 in summer 1861.