

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson died in 1801, after a long illness. She was buried with her parents at Christ Church Burial Ground.

Bibliography:

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Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of six volumes of writings by Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson who is considered to be the outstanding female poet of her place and time, and a leader in the literary world of colonial Pennsylvania. These volumes, which date from 1752 to 1799, are arranged alphabetically by title.

The volume entitled "Laura to a Friend" was written between 1769 and 1795 and includes poetry, prose, letters and memoranda which cover a wide range of political, social, moral, religious and economic subjects, which were either composed or extracted by Fergusson. Although the material dates from 1768, apparently it was recorded from 1790 to 1795. Much of the material is signed "Laura," which was Fergusson's most commonly used pseudonym. Records indicate that the spine title of this volume which states "Lania to a Friend" is incorrect and is, in fact, "Laura to a Friend." The volume includes a contents list, created by Fergusson. Some titles includes: An Allegory in Two parts: the Birth and Life of Cunning; The Dream of the Patriotic Philosophical Farmer, 1768; Eulogy to the Memory of Rebeckah Smith, Wife of the Reverend Dr. Smith who died of the yellow fever that raged in Philadelphia, October 20, 1793; and eulogies to others.

The volume "Poemata Juvenilia," written between 1752 and 1772 contains manuscript copies of early poems by Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson. According to a press release issued by the Library Company of Philadelphia at the time of acquiring this volume in 1985, "although it was believed that [Fergusson] wrote poetry in her youth, that work was presumed lost until this volume" was found. Most of the poems in this volume are signed Laura. Included in this volume are copied poems by others, including Benjamin Franklin's son William, to whom she was engaged from 1752 until 1762 when he married Miss Elizabeth Downes in London. Also included in her poems are descriptions of her friends including Francis Hopkinson, Provost William Smith, Rebecca Moore, Nathaniel Evans, and Jacob Duché. This