Leaves of Grass at 150

University Libraries--University of South Carolina

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/rbsc_pubs

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation

University of South Carolina, "University of South Carolina Libraries - Leaves of Grass at 150, August 2005". http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/rbsc_pubs/41/

This Catalog is brought to you for free and open access by the Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in RBSC Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact SCHOLARC@mailbox.sc.edu.
LEAVES OF GRASS
AT 150
an exhibition chiefly from
The Joel Myerson Collection
of Nineteenth-Century American Literature

A Record of the Exhibit
as mounted

Department of Rare Books & Special Collections
Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina
August 30-October 15, 2005
CONTENTS

Foreword

The Exhibit

Case 1: Prologue--Whitman's Early Writings

Case 2: The First Edition, 1855

Case 3: The Emerging Project, 1856-1860

Case 4: The Poet in Wartime: Drum-Taps, 1865, and its Sequel

Case 5: Increasing Respectability, 1867 and 1871--Revision and Accretion

Case 6: The Centennial Edition, 1876--"Intercalations"

Case 7: The Seventh Edition and David McKay

Case 8: Specimen Days and Collect, 1882-1888

Case 9: November Boughs and Whitman's Complete Poems & Prose, 1888

Case 10: The Birthday Edition, 1889


References
FOREWORD

This exhibit, drawn chiefly from Thomas Cooper Library's Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century Literature, marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of Whitman's major work, *Leaves of Grass* (1855). This booklet records the arrangement and explanatory text of the exhibit as actually mounted. The library has issued a more formal catalogue for the exhibition, compiled by Professor Myerson, which summarizes the poem's remarkable bibliographical history and provides an up-to-date record of the library's combined holdings of *Leaves of Grass* editions, both those in the Myerson Collection and earlier acquisitions. The bibliographical headings here derive from Professor Myerson's more formal catalogue, as do important passages in the text. Professor Myerson's catalogue, which is cross-referenced to his authoritative *Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography* (1993), supersedes the library's previous Whitman catalogue by Anthony Szczesiul (1992).

The exhibit is arranged chronologically, to show the growth and development of Whitman's poetry, and the effects on his books of his own close involvement in their production. Included are all the major editions in the development of *Leaves of Grass*, from two variants of the 1855 first edition through to three inscribed copies of the 1889 Birthday edition and the 1891-92 Deathbed edition. Also included are early magazine and newspaper publications; books that Whitman originally published separately, such as the Civil War poems *Drum- Taps*, and its *Sequel*; the advertising poster for his books that Whitman designed in 1871; and some manuscript material. The Whitman poetic manuscript, "Veil with their lids" was purchased for the collection with support from the Nancy Pope Rice and Nancy Rice Davis Library Treasures Endowment, and the rare edition of Whitman's 1876 Centenary edition was recently added with support from contributions through the library's TAP fund (Treasures Acquisition Program).

Most items on display (marked JM) have been drawn from the library's Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature, transferred to the University under a generous gift-purchase agreement in 2001. Previous Whitman holdings on display (marked SC) include most notably the 1855 first edition donated by the Haltiwanger family in 1971 as the library's millionth volume. Items marked JMPC are on loan from Joel Myerson's personal collection, and one item is on loan from Prof. G. Ross Roy. Items have also been drawn for display from the Francis Lord Civil War Collection and the Matthew J. & Arlyn Bruccoli Mitchell Kennerley Imprint Collection.

Patrick Scott
Director of Special Collections
THE EXHIBIT

Case 1: Prologue--Whitman's Early Writings

Whitman's Birthplace
Walter Whitman Jr. (the democratic-colloquial Walt came later) was born on May 31, 1819, in West Hills, Huntington, Long Island, the second son of a carpenter and farmer (who had allegedly built this house himself). At age 12, Walter Jr. began work in the printing trade, completing an apprenticeship, and then becoming a schoolteacher, journalist and editor.

Whitman as Schoolteacher
"Death in the School-Room (a Fact),"
--Although Whitman is now firmly enshrined in the "pantheon of great American writers," this was not always the case. If he had died prior to 1855, he would be nothing more than a footnote to histories of American journalism and fiction writing, for his early writings gave no indication of the achievements to follow. After the collapse of the printing business in 1835, Whitman had worked as a schoolteacher, and he often wrote about schools in his journalism.

"Shall I, in time to come, be great and famed?"
"Ambition,"
*Brother Jonathan*, 29 January 1842
(JM: E 36). Head title.

"Upon the ocean's wave-worn shore"
"A Sketch,"
*New World*, 10 December 1842
(JM). Head title.
--This poem was first attributed to Whitman in 1994.

Whitman's Temperance Novel
*Franklin Evans; or the Inebriate*
special issue of the *New World* (November 1842)
--While Whitman later disparaged this early temperance novel, he thought well enough of it, when he was editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1846, to reprint it in a condensed version.

"The pure love of two human beings is a sacred thing"
"Eris: A Spirit Record,"
*Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1844
--As its title implies, this magazine, which featured full-page engravings, a colored plate of current dress fashions, and a section of music for drawing-room performance, was targeted at a social elite or readers ambitious to join one.
Whitman as Newspaper Editor
Whitman was editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* throughout 1846, and he contributed over 450 items during that year. The Myerson Collection has a (loosely) bound run preserving all issues of the paper from 3 July through 31 December, 1846. The two issues displayed here, from 23 July and 17 October, carry Whitman’s short review of Thomas Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero-Worship* and his article on baseball and the benefits of exercise to Brooklyn youth.

Death and Fidelity
“The Tomb Blossoms,”
—“Let it not be to any a subject of special wonder that they who have so often assisted in ushering into the world the productions of others should now in turn venture to originate ideas of their own, and appear before the public in the ambitious character of Authors” (preface).
Whitman’s contribution was the story of a poor widow, whose husband had been buried in one of two unidentified pauper’s graves, and who as a precaution tended both graves.

Case 2: The First Edition, 1855

*Leaves of Grass*
Brooklyn, N.Y., 1855. First edition, only printing, first issue.
A 2.1.a, TCL has bindings A (SC) and B (JM). 95 pp. Probably 800 copies printed.
---The 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, while published without Whitman’s name on the title page or binding, did bear his identity in three ways: the book’s copyright notice is in his name, he identifies himself as “Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos,” in the text, and the Hollyer engraving of Whitman serves as the book’s frontispiece. As the accompanying brochure explains, the SC copy displayed here, originally owned by one of the printers, Thomas Rome, was donated in 1971 as the library’s one millionth volume by Mr. & Mrs. James W. Haltiwanger and Mr. & Mrs. Charles Haltiwanger in memory of James W. Haltiwanger, Sr.

The Myerson Copy of the First Edition: the Significance of Variant Bindings
While some copies were issued in paper wrappers, most were bound in green cloth, stamped with a pattern of leaves and ferns, and with differing degrees of gilt. The binding variants are evidence that, even with Whitman’s energetic promotion, the book sold slowly and copies were bound in batches. This variant second copy is part of the Myerson Collection.

The Format and Layout of the First Edition
This modern facsimile reprinting of the first edition by the Eakins Press (C21; JM) shows the use of the long, irregular poetic lines unique to this edition of *Leaves*. On the facing page can be seen the newspaper-like double columns of Whitman’s preface on the role of the poet in democratic America.
Case 3: The Emerging Project, 1856-1860

The Second Edition, 1855

Leaves of Grass
Brooklyn, N.Y., 1856. Second edition, only printing.
A 2.2. TCL has two copies (JM, SC). 384 pp. Probably 1000 copies printed.
--Whitman greatly expanded the length of this edition, from twelve poems to thirty two, and also added titles to each poem. The most notable new poems were paens to American expansion: Broad-Axe Poem, Sun-Down Poem (later Crossing Brooklyn Ferry), and Poem of Many in One. Like the first edition, this edition also lacked Whitman’s name on the title page, although it did appear on the binding, and the Hollyer engraving again served as the frontispiece. The most notable change was in format, from the large thin elegant quarto of the first edition, with just 95 pages, to the stubby fat little pocket-sized 16mo in the second, with nearly four hundred pages.

Emerson and “the beginning of a great career”
When Ralph Waldo Emerson responded favorably to a review copy of the first edition that Whitman had sent him, Whitman first sent Emerson’s letter to a newspaper and then shamelessly, without authorization, quoted Emerson’s phrase “I greet you at the beginning of a great career” by goldstamping it at the base of the spine of the second edition. Emerson was not pleased. Also shown is Whitman’s sketch for the binders with instructions about the spine, as reproduced in Joel Myerson, Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography (1993).

The Third Edition, 1860

Leaves of Grass
A 2.3.a. TCL has bindings B (JM), C (JM, SC), and E (JM). 456 pp. 1000 copies printed.
Copies in binding E were used for sale in Britain.
--The third edition was the first published commercially, by the Boston firm of Thayer & Eldridge. The format returned to , and it was stereotyped to allow continued reprinting if successful. Whitman’s name was still not on the title page or binding. The Schoff engraving of the Hine portrait of Whitman replaced the Hollyer engraving as the frontispiece.

A New Plan and New Themes
Whitman first planned an expanded third edition as early as 1857. During the three-year delay before it reached publication, he greatly expanded his vision for the continuing expansion of his great poem, that he now envisaged would eventually reach a total of 365 poems. Major new sections in the third edition included Chants Democratic; Enfants d’Adam (Children of Adam) and Calamus, celebrating heterosexual and homosexual love respectively; and A Word Out of the Sea (now better-known under its later title Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking).

Advertising Leaves of Grass
D4. TCL has two copies (JM, inscribed by R. Maurice Bucke; SC).
--Whitman himself (anonymously) edited and partially wrote this separately-published pamphlet
of favorable reviews to advertise the Thayer & Eldridge edition. Unlike the book itself, this pamphlet advertised Whitman's authorship of *Leaves of Grass*.

**The Third Edition for British Bookbuyers**

*Leaves of Grass*


A 2.3.a. TCL has one copy (JM). American sheets with a pasted label on the title page.

---As happened with the first edition, no one in Britain was interested enough to make a separate edition of *Leaves of Grass*, so American sheets were shipped overseas and the British publisher merely pasted a small label on the title page to indicate that he was the “publisher” (or distributor) of it.

**Early Success: the Need for a Second Printing**

*Leaves of Grass*


A 2.3.b. TCL has two copies (JM, SC).

---The first printing, of 1000 copies, sold out within in a month, and a second printing followed. However, by the end of 1860, Thayer and Eldridge went out of business. Whitman would not have another commercial publisher *Leaves of Grass* for two decades.

**Unauthorized Reprinting from the Third Edition Plates**

*Leaves of Grass*


A 2.3.c. TCL has two copies, both in Binding A (JM, SC).

---A New York publisher Richard Worthington bought the Thayer & Eldridge plates at auction and reprinted the work without Whitman’s permission. Three subsequent undated reprintings took place, and TCL has five copies of these (all JM).

---

**Case 4: The Poet in Wartime: Drum-Taps, 1865, and its Sequel**

*A Wartime photograph of Walt Whitman*

By Matthew Brady, about 1862 (JM).

---When war broke out, Whitman, almost forty-two years old, did not enlist like his younger brothers. In 1862, he moved to Washington, found employment first in the Army Paymaster’s Office, and later at Interior and then the Attorney-General’s office. In Washington he also undertook volunteer work as a hospital visitor, and in 1864 he visited the Virginia battlefields. He described this portrait by one of the most important Civil War photographers as having “a sort of Moses in the burning bush look.”
Drum-Taps: “We must march, my darlings!”

Walt Whitman’s Drum-Taps.

New York [and Washington], 1865[-1866].

A 3.1.a2. TCL has two copies (JM, SC). 72 + 24 pp. 1000 copies printed. This second issue also includes the Sequel.

Whitman’s war poems range from patriotic recruiting ballads (such as “Beat! Beat! Drums!”), through more specific cameos of war-time (“By the bivouacs fitful flame” and “As toilsome I wandered Virginia’s woods”), to poems drawing on his experience in war hospitals (“Sight in the Camp” and “The Dresser”), to empathetic portraits of individual soldiers (“O tan-faced Prairie-boy”).

The First Draft of “O Captain! My Captain!”


Whitman’s well-known elegy on the death of Abraham Lincoln was based on personal admiration. Whitman had attended Lincoln’s second inaugural in March 1865, and six weeks later his friend Peter Doyle was present in Ford’s Theater when Lincoln was shot.

“O Captain! My Captain!”

Contemporary photograph of Abraham Lincoln [?by M. P. Rice].

Donated by Prof. G. Ross Roy.

--Following Lincoln’s assassination, Whitman added to Drum-Taps, his recently-completed volume of war poetry, a 24-page Sequel containing his tribute to Lincoln, including the elegies “When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom’d” and “O Captain! My Captain!”

The Sequel, after the assassination of President Lincoln

Sequel to Drum-Taps (Since the Preceding Came from the Press). When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Boom’d and Other Pieces.


A 3.1.a2. TCL has two copies (JM, SC), bound with Drum-Taps as issued.

--As well as the title poem, on the death of Abraham Lincoln, this Sequel also includes “O Captain! My Captain!” and more personal war poems.

Whitman as Hospital Visitor, I

Memoranda During the War Written on the Spot in 1863-1865. Camden, 1875-‘76. 68 pp.

A.8.1.a2. TCL has two copies (JM, SC).

--Ten years after the War, Whitman published this slim volume printing notes that he had kept from his volunteer work as a hospital visitor in Washington. The format allowed copies to be bound in with his collection Two Rivulets, as well as bound separately, as here, primarily for presentation or “Remembrance.” The JM copy is inscribed by Whitman to Rob’t McCowan on front endpaper.
Whitman as Hospital Visitor, II


A.15.1.a. TCL has one copy of the first printing (SC), and three copies of the second (JM, SC).

-This posthumous collection reprints three articles originally published in 1863 and 1864 in the Brooklyn Eagle and the New York Times, together with edited letters from Whitman to his mother.

Case 5: Increasing Respectability, 1867 and 1871-- Revision and Accretion

Whitman at Work on the Fourth Edition


A 43 (JM).

-As well as adding new poems to each successive edition, Whitman rewrote and rearranged previously-published sections of the work. This is a facsimile of a copy of the 1860 Leaves of Grass at the New York Public Library that Whitman revised and otherwise marked up in preparation for the 1867 edition of Leaves.

Whitman and the fascination of language

Page from Whitman’s dictionary, signed by him, along with a photograph of him in about 1870 (JM). Whitman’s interest in American language not only influenced his poetry, but also led to his contributing to his friend William Swinton’s book, Rambles Among Words (1859).

The Fourth Edition, 1867

Leaves of Grass


A 2.4.a3. TCL has a copy of the first issue (SC) and two copies of the second (JM, SC). First issue: 338 + 72 + 24 + 36 pp. Possibly 100 copies of the first issue and 250 copies of the second issue.

--In the fourth edition, Whitman’s name did not appear on the title page or binding, and it was the first edition to appear without a physical likeness of Whitman. It was also the first to show Whitman’s process of adding to his text by accretion. Earlier editions of Leaves of Grass had incorporated new poems into the text during typesetting; now Whitman physically added sheets from other works to the book. The first issue contains the reset text of Leaves and three appendixes, each with separate pagination: the newly-set “Songs Before Parting” and the remaining sheets from the separately published Drum-Taps and its Sequel. The following year, with the supply of sheets from Drum-Taps used up, he reissued Leaves of Grass with “Songs Before Parting” and then reissued Leaves by itself.
Increasing Respectability


Unlike his publications at the start of his career, as Whitman became famous, his works appeared in more mainstream journals; this example, published with Emerson’s help, was in one of the best-regarded Boston magazines.

A Whitman manuscript poem

“Veil with their lids . . .” manuscript [ca. 1870].


Public Poetry for an Industrial Exhibition

After All, Not to Create Only. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1871.

A 6.2. TCL has bindings A (JM, SC) and B (JM, SC). 24 pp. 2000 copies printed.

–On August 1, 1871, Whitman was commissioned by the Managers of the American Institute to read an original poem at the opening of their fortieth annual industrial exhibition, a month later. In addition to this pamphlet publication, he would incorporate it into Leaves of Grass, and retitle it in honor of the 1876 Centennial Exposition.

Passage to India and the Fifth Edition of Leaves, 1871

Passage to India. Washington, 1871.

A 5.1.a1. TCL has one copy (JM). Wrappers. 120 pp.

Leaves of Grass

Washington, 1871. Fifth edition, first and second printings, first and second issues of each.

A 2.5.a1,2 A 2.5.b1,2. On display are copies of the first printing, first issue in wrappers, and a proof of the title page of the second issue (both JMPC). TCL has three copies of the second printing, first issue (JM [2], SC). First printing first issue: 384 pp.; second issue, 384 + 120 pp. 500 copies of the second printing, first issue printed.

--The fifth edition lacks Whitman’s name on the title page but has it on the binding. The first printing was packaged in two ways: the first issue has Leaves of Grass only and the second has Leaves bound together with the sheets of the separately published Passage to India. In the second printing, first issue, Leaves and Passage to India were reprinted and again bound together. Then Whitman took 100 sheets of Leaves only and inserted a cancelled title leaf, with a Camden, N.J., imprint.

Whitman’s first prose collection: Democratic Vistas, 1871

Democratic Vistas.

Washington, 1871. First edition, first (two issues), and second printings.


--Whitman published this book of three prose essays in the same format he adopted for his two poetry collections the same year, and he advertised them together.
Advertising Whitman, I
Sheet with spine label for 1871 Leaves of Grass (A 2.5.a.), and advertisement for Whitman’s books, probably designed by Whitman (JMPC).

Advertising Whitman, II
Advertising poster for Whitman’s books (1872), designed by Whitman (F 94; SC, purchased with support from the Thomas Cooper Society, 2000). The last line of this rare poster advertises the first book about Whitman, by his friend the nature writer and environmentalist John Burroughs. Thomas Cooper Library’s Whitman collection is complemented by a collection of Burroughs’s works, formed by W. Ormiston Roy, and donated by Prof. G. Ross Roy.

A Commencement Poet for Dartmouth College, June 1872
A 7.1.a. TCL has three copies (JM, and two SC). 18 pp.
—The title poem was written at the invitation of the graduating students at Dartmouth. These poems were subsequently revised and spread through various editions of Leaves of Grass, rather then being bound into any specific editions of Leaves.

Increasing Respectability, II
—Following a stroke in January 1873, Whitman had to move from Washington to live with his brother in Camden, NJ, and magazine contributions such as this were important financially.

Whitman’s First British Editions, I: Recognition (and Circumspection), 1867
London: John Camden Hotten, 1868. C 1.1. TCL has two copies (JM, SC).
—Favorable reviews in Britain, by the American Moncure D. Conway and by W. M. Rossetti, the respectable civil servant brother of Dante Gabriel and Christina, encouraged Whitman to explore British publication. In July 1867, he sent Conway an annotated copy of the fourth edition, and a selection from Drum-Taps, but Rossetti made the final selection to soften moralistic attacks.
The publisher J. C. Hotten, a risk-taker who flouted both international copyright and the British obscenity laws, also published Baudelaire’s Fleurs du Mal and Swinburne’s notorious Poems and Ballads.

Whitman’s First British Editions, II: Completeness (and Deniability), “1872”
Leaves of Grass
Washington, 1872 [i.e., London: John Camden Hotten, 1873]. Sixth edition, only printing.
A 2.6. TCL three two copies, all in binding A (JM [2], SC). 384 + 120 + 14 pp. Contains Leaves of Grass, Passage to India, and After All, Not to Create Only.
—British readers pressed for a complete edition, and Hotten responded with this unauthorized type-facsimile piracy of Whitman’s new American edition, evading legal problems by retaining the Washington imprint and the original date. Under British obscenity law, the publisher could be prosecuted for publishing an obscene book but not for merely distributing it.
Case 6: The Centennial Edition, 1876—"Intercalations"

A Proof Sheet for the 1876 Cancel Title-Page
Single sheet (JM).
–In 1876, to celebrate the United States centennial, Whitman reissued *Leaves of Grass* as part of a two-volume set. As this proof of the cancel title leaf for the reissue shows, Whitman had not planned to print his name on the title-page of the edition. However, Whitman signed the title page to each copy, making this the first time Whitman’s name appeared on the title page of *Leaves of Grass*.

An Uncut Proof Sheet for Whitman’s “Intercalations”
Broadside (JM).
–Rather than reprinting *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman inserted the cancel title and printed four new poems on a separate slip, which he then cut into four sections or intercalations and pasted on the blank parts of pages in the text.

The “Centennial Edition”, 1876
*Leaves of Grass*
A2.5.b2. TCL has one copy of the second printing, second issue, signed on title page and with pasted-in intercalations (JM, purchased through the Treasures Acquisition Program, 2005). One hundred copies were issued.
–Open to show one of the pasted-in intercalations.

The Linton Engraving of Whitman
Two likenesses of Whitman appeared in the Centennial *Leaves of Grass*: the Hollyer engraving and, shown here, William J. Linton’s wood-engraving based on an 1871 photograph by George C. Potter of Washington, D.C.

The Other Volume of the Centennial Edition
*Two Rivulets, including Democratic Vistas, Centennial Songs, and Passage to India.*
A 9.1.b. TCL has two copies of the second printing (JM, inscribed; SC).
–The intercalated 1876 reissue of *Leaves of Grass* was part of a two-volume set, along with a volume of his prose (including Memoranda during the War) and uncollected poems, *Two Rivulets*. Both volumes were bound alike as the *Centennial Edition*, limited to a hundred sets. Much of the poetry would subsequently be incorporated into *Leaves of Grass* itself.

A New Printing, incorporating the Intercalations
*Leaves of Grass*
A 2.5.c1.3. TCL has three copies of the third printing, second issue (JM [2], SC). 600 copies were printed.
–Later in 1876, Whitman reprinted the intercalated volumes, setting in type in the text the
previously intercalated poems.

The First Separate Edition of Whitman’s 1855 Preface


A 10.1.a-b. TCL has two copies of the second printing (JM, SC). Wrappers. 31 pp.

This was the first separate edition of Whitman’s prose introduction to *Leaves of Grass.* Many more would follow, as it became clear that in this work Whitman was formulating his poetic beliefs and practices.

A Correspondent from Britain, 1876

Envelope addressed to Whitman, with cancellation dated September 26, 1876.

Because he sold his books himself, as well as through agents, and because his readers saw his poetry as especially personal and wanted to get in touch with the poet, Whitman conducted a large correspondence, both with Americans and Europeans.

Whitman and his British admirers


One way Whitman kept in touch with his British admirers was to write one of them with the full knowledge (and hope) that his letter would be passed on to a wider audience. In this case, Rossetti printed up copies at his own expense for distribution.

Case 7: The Seventh Edition and David McKay

Finding a Commercial Publisher Again

*Leaves of Grass*


A 2.7.a.1-2. TCL has copies of both states of the first issue, the first with date ‘1881-2’ (JM) and the second with date ‘1881-82’ (JM [2], SC). 382 pp. 1010 copies printed.

Whitman was able to return to a commercial publisher, James R. Osgood of Boston, for the seventh edition (or sixth American edition) of *Leaves of Grass* in 1881. This is far and away the most bibliographically complex edition of *Leaves,* one which shows a total of fifteen printings, two states, and seventeen issues during Whitman’s lifetime.

Advertising the Osgood Edition

Broadside announcement for the Osgood 1881-1882 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (A 2.7.1; JM).

The Seventh Edition for British Bookbuyers

*Leaves of Grass*


A 2.7.b.2. TCL has a copy in Binding C (JM). Title leaf is a cancel.

Whitman shipped some sheets from the first printing to England for the publisher Trübner to use in securing copyright, and they sold them with a cancel title leaf but declined further
involvement. Sheets of both the second and third printing were issued in Britain by the London publisher David Bogue, again with a cancel title. Subsequently, 300 copies of the tenth printing, 1883, were issued by the Glasgow publishers Wilson & McCormick (tenth printing, second issue: A 2.7.j2, SC, with integral title; third issue, A 2.7.j3, JM, with cancel title).

The Author’s Edition: the Boston District Attorney & the Split from Osgood

Leaves of Grass
A 2.7.c3. TCL has one copy (SC). Title leaf is a cancel. 225 copies issued. Identified and signed as the “Author’s Edition” on the title page.
—After Osgood had completed three printings, the district attorney of Massachusetts denounced the book as “obscene literature,” and when Whitman refused to bowdlerize it by revising it, they withdrew the book from publication and turned over the remaining sets of sheets to the author. Whitman took the sheets, added a cancel title leaf which he signed in each of the 225 copies, and bound them in casings as the “Author’s Edition” in 1882, selling the copies himself from his home in Camden.

Selling books from Home
Notecard from Walt Whitman, dated March 8 1881, acknowledging an order from J. Christopher Starr, with envelope (JM).

The Move to a Philadelphia Publisher: Rees Welsh and David McKay

Leaves of Grass
A 2.7.i. TCL has one copy (JM).
—Following Whitman’s split with Osgood, the Philadelphia firm of Rees, Welsh obtained the plates from Osgood and published the fourth through seventh printings, incorporating some textual changes. Rees Welsh also did an eighth printing, dated 1882, but the firm was bought out in November by David McKay, who took some leftover sheets and placed his cancel title leaf dated 1883 on them. McKay then reprinted the book with an 1882 title page, shown here. McKay would remain Whitman’s publisher for the rest of the poet’s life.

The 1888 McKay Edition, with the butterfly spine-stamping

Leaves of Grass
A 2.7.1. TCL has two copies (JM, SC). Between 1400 and 2200 copies printed.
—This handsomely-produced volume, to which Whitman had now added his first “annex”, Sands at Seventy, illustrates the quality of McKay’s reprints. Printings from the seventh edition stereotypes were used (with varying additions) for Whitman’s Complete Poems and Prose (1888), the Birthday Edition (1889), and the Deathbed Edition (1891). Finally, after Whitman’s death in 1892, McKay published the fifteenth printing, which included “A Backward Glance” and Good-Bye My Fancy.
Case 8: *Specimen Days and Collect, 1882-1888*

The Search for a Publisher

**Specimen Days & Collect.**
A 11.1.a. TCL has one copy in binding B (JM). 376 pp. 1000 copies printed.
In 1882, while Whitman was negotiating with Osgood about publishing *Leaves of Grass*, he had also proposed a second book of prose pieces, and in June he took the project to his new publishers, Rees Welsh. “Collect” refers to the second section of the book, reprinting earlier material, including *Democratic Vistas*. On its publication at the end of September, the first printing sold out within a week.

**David McKay and Specimen Days**

**Specimen Days & Collect.**
A 11.1.b. TCL has copies in binding A (JM, SC) and B (JM). 1172 copies printed. Of the second McKay issue, A 11.1.b, with cancel title dated 1882-1888, TCL has one copy (JM).
Almost immediately after publication, David McKay, previously an employee with Rees Welsh, bought the firm out and took over publication of Whitman’s books. This second printing sold slowly, necessitating an updated title-page in 1888, the year the stereotype plates were reused in Whitman’s *Complete Poems and Prose*.

**A Whitman Receipt to McKay for Royalties, 1886**
Whitman, manuscript letter to David McKay, 18 December 1886, acknowledging receipt of royalties (JMPC).

**A Special Printing for British Readers (and a Scottish publisher)**

**Specimen Days & Collect.**
A 11.1.c. TCL has copies in the first state (JM, binding A) and the second state (JM, binding B). Title leaf is integral. Possibly 500 copies printed in America for British sale.
Unlike some of Whitman’s earlier books, this was a distinctive reprinting specially for the Glasgow publisher, rather simply sheets of an American printing with a pasted-over label with the publisher’s name or a pasted-in substitute title page.

**Two Whitman poems in preliminary form**
“You lingering sparse leaves of me,” first state of proof sheet for poem appearing in *Lippincott’s Magazine*, November 1887 (JM, F101) and “On, on the same, ye jocund twain!,” second galley proof for poem appearing in *Once a Week* (New York), 9 June 1891 (JM, F59). The inscription by Thomas Harned, who was to be one of Whitman’s executors, notes that “In his later years, W.W. had his poems set up, one by one, at a Camden printing office, and in this form they were offered to the Magazines, and usually refused.”
Whitman in *Century Magazine*

“Twilight,”

*Century Magazine*, December 1887 (E 2670).

---The four-line poem that Whitman contributed to this influential magazine is representative of many that he published in the last decade of his life.

**Case 9: November Boughs and Whitman’s Complete Poems & Prose, 1888**

**A Presentation Copy of November Boughs, inscribed to Horace Traubel**

*November Boughs.*

A 12.1.a. TCL has copies in bindings B (JM), C (JM), D (JM), and E (JM, SC). 140 pp. Between 1000 and 1100 copies printed.

—Whitman’s 1888 collection (largely prose) shows the complex relationship between the author and David McKay, as both were often simultaneously engaged in the publication and distribution of Whitman’s later books. Whitman apparently used the 100 copies in this binding (binding B, with flexible covers) for personal presentation. This is inscribed by Whitman to Horace Traubel, who had helped prepare the volume.

**David McKay’s Regular Binding**

*November Boughs.*

A 12.1.a. Binding E.

---*November Boughs* shows all the characteristics of a typical Whitman book: there are two presentation bindings and three styles of the trade binding. Whitman himself soon decided that stiff boards were better than the original flexible binding.

**A Scottish Imprint on November Boughs**

*November Boughs.*

A 12.1.a. TCL has one copy (JM). Title leaf is a cancel.

—This volume, which includes Whitman’s essay on Robert Burns, is the only Whitman edition on which Gardner’s imprint appears.

**November Boughs: Large Paper, Green Cloth, Gilt**

A 12.1.c. TCL has three copies (JM [2], SC). Possibly 100 copies printed.

—in 1891, Whitman had ordered extra copies printed of both *November Boughs* and his “Second Annex,” *Goodbye, My Fancy*, intending to offer them bound together as a single volume. After his death his literary executors bound each in a large paper format in green cloth, as opposed to the red of the trade bindings. For many years these were considered the first printings because of their large paper format.
“A Complete Budget of All My Writing in One Book”

Complete Poems & Prose.
A 2.7.m. TCL has three copies, in bindings A (JM) and C (JM, SC). 382 + 374 + 140 pp.
Leaves of Grass, Specimen Days & Collect, and November Boughs. 600 copies printed.
–Whitman first envisaged a collected edition of his poetry and prose in August 1886, and in
May 1888, McKay agreed that, together with the plates of the seventh edition of Leaves of Grass
and the new work November Boughs, he could use the stereotypes of Specimen Days to produce
it. The resulting volume of nearly 900 pages was produced very quickly, Whitman receiving his
advance copy on November 27. Even though the print run was purposely limited, Whitman
nonetheless tried out several binding styles, and 100 copies of the 600 were in due course sold
through McKay and another 200 in Britain through Putnam. All copies are numbered, and
signed by Whitman on the title-page of Leaves of Grass.

Printed spine label for Complete Poems & Prose, 1888
(A 2.7.m), designed by Whitman (JMPC).

A Pocket-sized Leaves of Grass for British Readers
Leaves of Grass
A 2.8.a. TCL has copies in all three bindings (JM), including publisher’s leather. 318 pp. 8000
copies printed. TCL also has copies of the fifth (JM [2]), sixth (JM), eighth (JM), and ninth
(JM) reprints.
–Walter Scott’s handy series of selections from standard authors also included a reprint of
Whitman’s prose collection Democratic Vistas.

The Poet as Prophet, I: A Pilgrimage to Camden
John Johnston, M.D., A Visit to Walt Whitman and Some of His Friends in 1890,
with a Series of Original Photographs.
–Whitman’s house on Mickle Street, in Camden, N.J., is on the right, marked with a X.

The Poet as Prophet, II: A Book of Wisdom
Gems from Walt Whitman, selected by Elizabeth Porter Gould.
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1889.
C 3. TCL has multiple copies (JM, SC). 58 pp.
–Whitman had given approval for Gould’s project, which presented short quotations rather than
sustained passages that readers might substitute for Whitman’s own full-scale editions.

Case 10: The Birthday Edition, 1889

The Birthday Edition: “a special, complete, final utterance”
Leaves of Grass with Sands at Seventy & A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads.
A 2.7.n. The SC copy, inscribed by Whitman, and once belonging to the playwright Clifford Odets. 404 + 18 pp. 300 copies printed.

On May 31, 1889, Whitman would reach the age of seventy, and he arranged for this distinctively-bound pocket edition (incorporating his recent autobiographical essay A Backward Glance), in large part for presentation to friends. Appearances notwithstanding, it was printed from the same stereotype plates as earlier Osgood or Mackay copies. Whitman’s title-page note explained:

*To-day, finishing my 70th year, the fancy comes for celebrating it by a special, complete, final utterance, in one handy volume, of L. of G., with their Annex [i.e. November Boughs], and Backward Glance—and for stamping and sprinkling all with portraits and facial photos, such as they actually were, taken from life, different stages. Doubtless, anyhow, the volume is more a PERSON than a book. And for testimony to all, (and in good measure,) I here with pen and ink append my name.*

All known copies were signed by Whitman on the title-page, and most are also signed across the frontispiece photograph [ca. 1880], one of six portraits sprinkled through the volume. The butterfly was a studio prop, though Whitman later commented: “I had quite the in-and-out-of taming, or fraternizing with, some of the insects.”

The Birthday Edition, inscribed by Whitman to his literary executor

*Leaves of Grass with Sands at Seventy & A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads.*

A 2.7.n. The JM copy, inscribed by Whitman to Horace Traubel.

—Horace L. Traubel (1858-1919), a teenager when he first met the poet in Camden, NJ, would be named one of Whitman’s three literary co-executors (with the lawyer Thomas Harned and the Canadian physician Richard Maurice Bucke). Traubel also became Whitman’s Boswell, publishing extensive records of his conversations with Whitman during his last years.

The Birthday Edition: the continuity of Whitman’s influence

*Leaves of Grass with Sands at Seventy & A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads.*

A 2.7.n. Loaned for this exhibit by Prof. G. Ross Roy: triple-inscribed—from Whitman to the critic Edward Dowden; from Dowden’s widow to Dr. Clara Barrus, executrix of Whitman’s friend John Burroughs; and from Barrus to W. Ormiston Roy, who bequeathed it to his grandson G. Ross Roy. —The provenance of this remarkable copy links Whitman to two of his warmest early admirers. Edward Dowden (1843-1913), professor of English literature at Trinity College, Dublin, wrote an important essay on Whitman in 1871, that led to a continuing correspondence; John Burroughs (1837-1921), nature writer and pioneer environmentalist, met Whitman in Washington in 1863 and wrote one of the earliest books about him, *Notes on Walt Whitman* (1867). Barrus memorialized the friendship in her book *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (1931). The Canadian landscape architect W. Ormiston Roy had shared Burroughs’s interest in nature as well as in Whitman.

Whitman on American literature

“Have We a National Literature,” *North American Review*, March 1891 (E 2758).
In this invited essay for a prestigious magazine, Whitman asserts that “Books profoundly considered show a great nation more than anything else,” that “the evolution-principle, . . . the greatest law in nature” has now reached American literature, but that American poetry is still derivative from European models.


Goodbye, My Fancy, a “Second Annex” to Leaves of Grass

Good-Bye, My Fancy.
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1891.
A 13. TCL has copies in bindings A (JM) and C (JM [2], SC). Also on display is one of the unbound copies, in unsewn sheets, that was found in Whitman’s room after his death (JM). 66 pp. 1000 copies printed.

Whitman began gathering this final compilation, which included both short poems and prose, in the fall of 1890. By the following May, he had sets of unbound sheets to give to friends. The stereotype plates from this separate edition were reused, with altered page numbering, when this “second annex” was included in the “Deathbed Edition” of Leaves of Grass later the same year.


Leaves of Grass
A 2.7.1. TCL has one copy, binding D (JM). 438 pp. Leaves of Grass, “Sands at Seventy,” Good-Bye, My Fancy, and“A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads.” Possibly 100 copies used for this issue.

--Known as the “Deathbed Edition,” Whitman’s final packaging of Leaves of Grass was finished on 6 December 1891, the last version of Leaves that Whitman personally saw through the publication process.

The Continuing Influence of the Author’s Final Intention

Leaves of Grass

--Whether from deference to the author’s last wishes, or from the economic realities of its stereotype plates, the Deathbed edition was the basis for several further printings of Leaves of Grass.

The First American Selected Edition, 1892

Selected Poems by Walt Whitman. Edited by Arthur Stedman.
C 7.1.a1 and a2. The McKay issue has a cancel title page.

—Even before Whitman’s death, it was clear that American readers would welcome a selected edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Selections were already widely available in Britain. Stedman had obtained Whitman’s grudging acceptance of his project, though Stedman’s preface makes clear that he had selected as much for moral acceptability as readability.

**A Cheap Edition of *Leaves of Grass* for British Readers**

*The Penny Poets—XXVII. Poems by Walt Whitman.*

London: Review of Reviews Office [1895].

C 10. TCL has two copies (JM). Wrappers.

**Walt Whitman in Old Age**

“Walt Whitman, born May 31, 1819; died March 26, 1892,” engraving from *Illustrated London News* (2 April, 1892).

**Whitman’s Last Will & Testament**


—Whitman’s lengthy will, made in June 1888, while primarily concerned with provision for his relatives, left personal gifts to his friends Harry Stafford and Peter Doyle, and attempted to ensure continuing attention to his literary reputation by appointing three friends (Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas Harned, and Horace Traubel) as literary executors, “absolute charged of my books, publications and copyrights and to manage and control the same.”

**A Final Tribute to Whitman**

*In Re Walt Whitman: Edited by his Literary Executors, Horace L. Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas Harned.*


D 24. TCL has an advance copy in unprinted wrappers (JM, shown here), and two copies of the published book (SC, JM). 1000 copies. regular issue copy of the

—This volume of tributes had been begun during Whitman’s lifetime, but following Whitman’s death on March 26, 1892, was turned into a memorial volume. Shown here is Harned’s graveside tribute.

**A Walt Whitman poem handprinted for a student assignment**


"Set up by M. B. [Matthew J. Bruccoli] and M.L. [Michael Lazare] and printed from the original manuscript in the Van Sinderen Collection of the Yale Collection of American Literature, New Haven, Connecticut, May 1953." One of two known copies (out of the original ten). Inscribed by one of the student printers to the other. Donated by Matthew J. Bruccoli, in recognition of the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature.

**A Modern Typographic Experiment in Presenting *Leaves of Grass***

Leaf from *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking* (Labyrinth Editions, 1978; H 49), one of the more interesting visual interpretations of Whitman’s long lines (JM).
REFERENCES


Folsom, Ed., "This heart's geography's map": the Photographs of Walt Whitman [*Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, 4: 2-3, special double number] (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1987).


—manuscripts at the Library of Congress, Duke, Virginia, and Texas


—also at: http://www.sc.edu/library/spcoll/T&D.pdf

__________, *Leaves of Grass at 150: An Exhibition Chiefly from the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Columbia, SC: Thomas Cooper Library, 2005); 100 numbered copies only.


—also at: http://www.sc.edu/library/spcoll/aamlit/whitman.html