Walt Whitman - A Centenary Exhibition

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Walt Whitman: A Centenary Exhibition held March through April, 1992.

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Of this catalogue, 125 copies have been issued in a special binding, with 100 numbered for sale, and 25 reserved for private distribution.

Copies may be ordered from:
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Columbia, SC 29208

All of the photographs in this catalogue are from items on display in the exhibit.

Designed by Mary Boettger and produced by University Publications.
INTRODUCTION

When Walt Whitman published his first edition of *Leaves of Grass* on or around the fourth day of July in 1855, he believed he was embarking on a personal literary journey of national significance. Setting out to define the American experience, Whitman consciously hoped to answer Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1843 essay, "The Poet," which called for a truly original national poet, one who would sing of the new country in a new voice. The undertaking required unlimited optimism, especially considering the fact that Whitman had published only a small handful of poems prior to 1855; however, Whitman felt confident that the time was ripe and that the people would embrace him. This optimism and confidence resulted largely from his awareness of the tremendous changes in the American literary world that had taken place during his lifetime.

At the time of Whitman's birth in 1819, the Constitution and the democratic ideas which this country was founded upon were only a generation old; America was a land of seemingly unlimited space, resources, and possibilities, yet a land with no cultural roots to call its own. In 1820, a year after Whitman's birth, Sydney Smith of Britain's *Edinburgh Review* was prompted to ask, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?" But the period between Smith's remark and the publication of Whitman's first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 was one of remarkable and unprecedented change in America, particularly in the world of books.

By 1855, America could boast of the world's largest and most advanced publishing industry, an industry which published distinctly "American" books by authors such as Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, Fuller, Thoreau and Emerson. The amazing growth of American Literature and of the supporting publishing industry was the result of a self-conscious effort by authors and publishers to establish for America a literary culture of its own. The resulting increase in, or rather, the sudden appearance of professional authorship in this country was made possible only through American
ingenuity, innovation and technology in publishing. In short, the advent of modern publishing practices during this period brought books to the people in heretofore unimaginable numbers, spawning as a result one of the greatest periods in the history of American literature.

Working as a printer, editor, journalist and publisher during the years of the publishing industry’s phenomenal growth, Whitman became keenly aware that the tools necessary for his emergence as the new, democratic poet were at his disposal. He believed he could bring poetry to the common people, and with the publication of his 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, he assumed for himself the role of the American Poet, referring to himself as “one of the roughs,” a common man. Whitman carefully continued to cultivate his literary personality throughout his career, especially through the relatively new field of photography. As he revised and enlarged *Leaves of Grass* (8 editions and numerous printings would appear between 1855 and 1891), Whitman’s goal as the self-styled national poet became more clearly defined. *Leaves of Grass* is essentially a poem in process, with each succeeding edition representing a unique period in the poet’s life as well as the nation’s. This is perhaps best illustrated by Whitman’s Civil War poetry. Originally published in 1865 as a separate volume entitled *Drum-Taps*, these poems were later integrated into *Leaves of Grass*, growing in importance in the book as the war’s historical significance became clearer in Whitman’s mind. He would eventually claim that *Leaves of Grass* “revolves around that four year’s war, which, as I was in the midst of it, becomes, in “Drum-Taps,” pivotal to the rest entire.”

Today, a century after the publication of the final edition of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman’s place in American literary history often seems as nebulous and enigmatic as the ideas upon which America was founded. Numerous poets since Whitman have consciously either placed themselves in the wake of his tradition or reacted violently against him, and the aesthetic value of Whitman’s poetry continues to be a controversial subject. The intention of this exhibit is not to make a critical appraisal of Whitman’s work; instead, it is hoped that the materials assembled here will help explain the phenomenon which was Walt Whitman. While the subject matter and themes present in Whitman’s poetry reflect the historical attitudes and concerns of his day, the books themselves are also artifacts of a fascinating and extremely dynamic period of American publishing history.
CATALOGUE

This catalogue has benefited greatly from the advice of Professors Ezra Greenspan and Joel Myerson, of the University of South Carolina's English Department. Special thanks also go to the Thomas Cooper Society for its generous support and to Mrs. Davy-Jo Ridge, who built the Library's Whitman collection during her tenure as Associate Director of Libraries, in consultation with Professor G. Ross Roy. Bibliographic information given below has been updated in light of Dr. Myerson's forthcoming Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), and the Whitman items on display have been assigned numbers from this bibliography. These numbers will follow annotations, and a typical entry may read as follows: "(Myerson A 2.1a)."

Finally, several key items in the exhibit are on loan from the personal collection of Dr. Myerson. These are indicated below.

The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gentleman

The Pilot; A Tale of the Sea

Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper are generally considered to be the first literary professionals in America, a great accomplishment in light of some of the circumstances of publishing in their day. As Americans, they had to compete with the popularity of already-established British writers, and due to the lack of an international copyright, which did not exist until 1891, the American book market was constantly flooded with pirated editions by British authors. The publishers of these books owed nothing in royalties and sold them very cheaply, making it all the more difficult for an aspiring American author to appear in print.

Moby-Dick; or, The Whale
By Herman Melville. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851.

The Whale
By Herman Melville. 3 vol. London: R. Bentley, 1851.

Melville's Moby-Dick is a good example of the problems writers faced in the absence of international copyright laws. Melville sent marked proof sheets to England before publishing the book in America, a standard strategy used in an effort to ensure British copyright privileges. But Melville subsequently had little if any control over either the printer's errors or the revisions and bowdlerizations made by his British publisher, Richard Bentley. Perhaps the most significant variant is the British edition's omission of the book's epilogue, "And I Only Am Escaped Alone to Tell Thee," in which Ishmael explains how he survived to tell his tale.

Essays: Second Series

Poems

Although Whitman at times denied that Ralph Waldo Emerson influenced him as a poet, probably in an effort to cultivate his rough, uneducated persona, the ideas of Emerson were the greatest single factor influencing Whitman's poetry. Many of Whitman's concepts on poetry and on the role of the poet can be traced to Emerson's essay entitled "The Poet," which was published in 1844 in Essays: Second Series. Whitman was once heard to say of his debt to Emerson, "I was simmering, simmering, simmering; Emerson brought me to a boil."

Walden: or, Life in the Woods

At the urging of Emerson, Thoreau made a few visits to Whitman in 1856. Although at times Thoreau was taken aback by Whitman's mannerisms, he was genuinely intrigued and often impressed with Whitman both as a poet and a person: "We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human."
The Raven and Other Poems

In 1875, Whitman managed to turn the re-burial of Poe's remains in Baltimore into an opportunity for some good press for himself. A few days after the ceremony, an anonymous report, written by Whitman, appeared in the Washington Evening Star. It noted the "conspicuous absence of the popular poets" at the ceremony and described how Whitman, "though ill from paralysis, consented to hobble up and silently take a seat on the platform."

The Song of Hiawatha

Poems by John G. Whittier; Illustrated by H. Billings
Boston: B. B. Mussey, 1849.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and John Greenleaf Whittier were two poets of Whitman's day who enjoyed the popular success Whitman craved. Their poetry adequately represents the traditional, genteel verse which Whitman's rambling free-verse violated. It is said that John Greenleaf Whittier threw his complimentary copy of the first edition of Leaves of Grass in the fire; however, he did become reconciled to some of Whitman's poetry in later editions, particularly Whitman's Civil War verse. When Whitman's health was failing in 1885, Whittier was among a group of men who presented the ailing poet with a horse and buggy to afford him more time in the outdoors.

Franklin Evans; or, The Inebriate. A Tale of the Times (1842).

This contrived, melodramatic temperance novel was Whitman's first separately published work. It appeared on November 23, 1842, published by The New World as part of their "Books for the People" series. Advertisements for the work hailed Whitman, who had never written a novel before, as "one of the best Novelists in this country." In later life, Whitman seemed embarrassed by the work, and he went so far as to tell Horace Traubel that it was written under the influence of alcohol. Ironically, it was Whitman's best selling work during his lifetime. (Myerson A 1.1, binding A)

Brooklyn Daily Eagle
Tuesday, July 28, 1846. Collection of Joel Myerson.

Whitman edited the Brooklyn Daily Eagle from March of 1846 through January of 1848. Shortly after assuming his position as editor, Whitman began devoting two columns on the front page to literature, and this issue includes the first part of a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne entitled "Old Esther Dudley." Whitman's editorials appeared on the second page, and in this issue, Whitman comments in telling fashion on the need for continuing democratic reforms: "We must constantly be pressing onward—every year throwing the doors wider and wider—and carrying our experiment of democratic freedom to the very verge of the limit."

Leaves of Grass
Brooklyn, N.Y., 1855.

This particular copy was originally owned by Thomas Rome, one of the printers of the edition. It was the one millionth volume acquired by the University Libraries, having been donated by Mr. and Mrs. James W. Haltiwanger and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Haltiwanger in memory of James W. Haltiwanger, Sr.

One of the most strikingly unique books in American publishing history, the first edition of Leaves of Grass was self-published, and Whitman assisted the printers in setting the type. The book's unusual physical characteristics combined with Whitman's use of a frontispiece portrait in place of his name helped to create a mysterious aura about it. The only mention of the poet is found in the copyright notice and in one line from the first of the book's twelve untitled poems (later called "Song of Myself"): "Walt Whitman, one of the roughs, a kosmos." In the
preface to this edition Whitman calls for a national literature, claiming that Americans “have probably the fullest poetic nature” of all the people in the world and that “The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.” (Myerson A 2.1.a, binding A)

Leaves of Grass
Brooklyn, N.Y., 1856.

The second edition includes thirty-two poems, now with titles, and a forty-two-page appendix of first edition reviews entitled “Leaves Droppings.” The focal point of “Leaves Droppings” is a laudatory letter of thanks from Ralph Waldo Emerson which Whitman had received in return for a complimentary copy of the first edition. Whitman used the letter as an endorsement without Emerson’s permission, going so far as to quote it on the spine of this edition: “I Greet You at the Beginning of A Great Career. R. W. Emerson.” Emerson’s immediate reaction to Whitman’s promotional tactics are unknown, but considering the book’s stormy public reception, it is unlikely that he would have been pleased. (Myerson A 2.2)

Leaves of Grass. Imprints. American and European Criticisms of Leaves of Grass
Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860.

This small advertising pamphlet for the third edition reprinted a number of critical responses to the first and second editions of Leaves of Grass, and a few of the anonymous reviews were actually written by Whitman himself. Due to its slight size and construction, this item today is exceptionally rare. (Myerson D 4)

Leaves of Grass

The young, progressive Boston publishing firm of Thayer & Eldridge was eager to be associated with Whitman and brought out the third edition in 1860. The first printing of 1000 copies sold quickly, but Whitman’s good fortune ran out when Thayer & Eldridge went bankrupt in December of 1860. To Whitman’s dismay, the plates were sold at auction and eventually fell into the hands of Richard Worthington’s New York publishing firm. Worthington continued to reprint the book for a number of years without the author’s permission. The exhibit copy is one of three known copies from a small British issue of the edition; it is comprised of American sheets with a pasted label on the title page. (Myerson A 2.3.a²)

Walt Whitman’s Drum-Taps
New York, 1865.

Drum-Taps contains the most important poetry that emerged from the American Civil War. The first issue had already been printed and bound before Lincoln was assassinated in April of 1865, but shortly after Lincoln’s death, Whitman came out with the second issue, which included the twenty-four page “Sequel to Drum-Taps” appended to the back of the volume. The exhibit copy is of the second issue and includes two of Whitman’s most famous poems, “O Captain, My Captain” and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d.” The former, in which Whitman uncharacteristically uses a regular rhythm and rhyme scheme, is often scorned by scholars, but the latter is certainly one of Whitman’s greatest achievements. Both are responses to the death of President Lincoln, and together they are illustrative of Whitman’s wide-ranging capabilities. (Myerson A 3.1.a²)

Leaves of Grass
New York, 1867.

There are three issues of the fourth edition of 1867. All three contain the 338-page Leaves of Grass proper, which is followed in the first issue by Drum-Taps, Sequel to Drum-Taps, and Songs Before Parting. The second issue omits Sequel to Drum-Taps, while the third issue contains only the 338 pages of Leaves of Grass. The exhibit copy is from the second issue. (Myerson A 2.4.a² [rebound])
Poems of Walt Whitman
Selected and Edited by William Michael Rossetti.
London: J. C. Hotten, 1868.

Whitman’s first English publication, the Rossetti edition is the only book in which Whitman consented to any changes or expurgations of his work. Although Rossetti handled the matter judiciously, Whitman was never satisfied with the book, even though it was well-received and brought him more attention and support than any of his American editions. 1500 copies were printed. (Myerson C 1)

Photograph of Whitman
Around 1870. G. Frank Pearsall, Brooklyn, N.Y. Collection of Joel Myerson.

This photograph is framed with Whitman’s autographed title page of Joseph Worcester’s Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language (1849). Descendants of Thomas B. Harned, one of Whitman’s literary executors, saved the title page, but the rest of the book has been lost. Worcester was once an associate of Noah Webster but later became his rival. Whitman is known to have preferred Worcester’s dictionary over Webster’s, and it is probable that Whitman used this dictionary as he developed his theories on poetry and language in the years leading up to the first edition of Leaves of Grass in 1855.

Photograph of Whitman

This Gardner photograph is signed by Whitman and dated June, 1871.

Democratic Vistas

In Democratic Vistas, his most extensive published prose work since 1842’s Franklin Evans, Whitman attempts to formulate fully his theories on democracy, literature, and the role of the poet. The exhibit copy is from the first issue and is in wrappers. (Myerson A 4.1.a)

After All, Not to Create Only
Washington: Pearson, Printer, 1871.

This poem was written upon invitation to be read at the opening of the American Institute’s fortieth annual National Industrial Exposition in New York on September 7, 1871. Whitman was paid $100 for his efforts, and he made the most of this opportunity for publicity, sending copies of the poem and “press re-leases” to all the New York area newspapers. This particular copy is from a small printing of loose folio sheets. A second printing was sold in cloth. (Myerson A 6.1)

As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free and Other Poems
Washington, 1872.

This poem was written upon invitation to be read at the Dartmouth College commencement in 1872. The Preface to this work is significant, for in it Whitman claims that he has completed Leaves of Grass and is moving on to new poetic undertakings. The succeeding years, however, would prove that he could not keep himself from periodically revising Leaves of Grass. This copy is signed by the author. (Myerson A 7.1.a)

Leaves of Grass
Washington, 1872.

With the fifth edition, the poems of Drum Taps and Sequel to Drum-Taps (1865-6) have been integrated into the text of Leaves of Grass, with thirty-two of them forming the central “cluster” of the book. The war’s growing significance to Whitman and his work is seen in the following line which he added to “By Blue Ontario’s Shore”: “As a wheel turns on an axle, so I find my chant finally turning on the war.” The exhibit copy is from the first issue of the second printing and includes a 120-page annex, “Passage to India.” (Myerson A 2.5.b)

Leaves of Grass
Washington, 1872 [i.e., London: John Camden Hotten, 1873].

The sixth edition is an anonymously published type facsimile which was printed in London by John Camden Hotten, and it contains a number of textual and printing variants which distinguish it from the American fifth edition. Hotten pirated the book and,
in an effort to avoid British censorship laws, posed as the book's distributor rather than publisher. (Myerson A 2.6, binding A)

Memoranda During the War
Author's Publication. Camden, New Jersey, 1875-76.

During the Civil War, Whitman spent a great amount of his time working as a volunteer in the Army hospitals of New York and Washington, and his experiences during these years greatly influenced both his life and the direction of his work. Memoranda During the War is based upon Whitman's notebooks and diaries from the war years. He had first proposed publishing the book in 1863, but he was unable to gather support for the endeavor. He finally published the book himself in 1875, binding the first issue in Two Rivulets, a collection of his prose works. The exhibit copy is from the separately published second issue, which appeared shortly after Two Rivulets; it is possible that the second issue consisted of no more than a hundred copies. (Myerson A 8.1.a)

Leaves of Grass

Two Rivulets, including Democratic Vistas, Centennial Songs, and Passage to India
Author's Edition. Camden, New Jersey, 1876.

After suffering a stroke in 1873, Whitman's revisions of Leaves of Grass became less extensive. This issue of Leaves was printed from the fifth edition plates, and it was issued with Two Rivulets in uniform binding as a two-volume Centennial Edition of poetry and prose. Whitman kept a supply of these books on hand and autographed them as they were sold. (Myerson A 2.5.c and A 9.1.b, binding A, respectively)

Letter to William Michael Rossetti

In an effort to gain British subscribers for Whitman's 1876 two-volume Centennial Edition, Rossetti had this letter he had received from Whitman set into type and distributed to friends and potential subscribers. Only two copies of this circular are known to exist. (Myerson F 38)

Leaves of Grass

In 1881, Whitman signed a contract with the respected Boston publishing firm of James R. Osgood and Company, and they brought out the seventh edition, which contained twenty new poems. The revisions Whitman made for this edition of Leaves would be final, and any new material he produced over the next decade would be annexed to the back of this 382-page Leaves of Grass text. Initial sales of the 1881-82 Osgood edition were very good, but in March of 1882, the District Attorney of Boston labeled the book as "obscene" and ordered it to be either expurgated or withdrawn from public sale. Whitman refused to compromise his work, and Osgood discontinued publication, handing the plates and approximately 225 unbound copies over to the author. The seventh edition is the most bibliographically complex edition of Leaves of Grass, having gone through fifteen printings with a variety of publishers. This copy is the first state of the first printing, with the title page reading "1881—2." The second state reads "1881—82." (Myerson A 2.7.a, first state)

Leaves of Grass

In November of 1881, Whitman sent copies of the seventh edition to Trübner of London in an effort to secure British copyright. Although Trübner refused to serve as his British distributor, the book was taken up by the firm of David Bogue shortly thereafter. (Myerson A 2.7.b)

Leaves of Grass

This copy is from the first issue of the seventh edition's third printing, and it is distinguished by the title page which reads, "Third Edition." The issue consisted of 510 copies, printed on December 17, 1881. (Myerson A 2.7.c)
Leaves of Grass

Whitman bound some of the remaining sheets which J. R. Osgood had printed and issued it with his own title page as the "Author's Edition" in 1882. There were between 200 and 250 copies in the issue; the title-page of the exhibit copy is signed by Whitman. (Myerson A 2.7.c)

Leaves of Grass

In June of 1882, Rees Welsh took over production of the seventh edition from Osgood and went through five printings in less than a year, capitalizing on the book's scandalous reputation after it had been banned in Boston. Over 2,000 copies were reported sold in the first week of sales. The edition changed publisher's hands again when Rees Welsh was bought out by David McKay in November of the same year. (Myerson A 2.7.d-g)

Leaves of Grass

After taking over production of Leaves of Grass, David McKay exported one hundred copies to Scotland in June of 1883 for distribution by the firm of Wilson & McCormick. Royalty statements show that Whitman received 17 1/2 cents for each copy sent abroad, half of what he received for domestic sales. (Myerson A 2.7.f)

Specimen Days & Collect
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1882-83 [i.e., 1888]. Collection of Joel Myerson.

This volume of prose contains a brief autobiography, a revised version of Memoranda During the War, and a miscellany of nature notes, diary entries, and essays. The book was first printed by Rees Welsh in the fall of 1882, but it was taken over by McKay later that same year. McKay bound the book uniformly with a printing of the seventh edition of Leaves and presented the books as a two-volume Complete Works. This is one of three known copies from the second issue, with the title page bearing, "1882—'88." (Myerson A 11.1.b)

Specimen Days in America
London: Walter Scott, 1887.

This is a revised British edition which contains a new preface; it was published as part of Walter Scott's Camelot Series. (Myerson A 11.2.a)

Specimen Days in America
Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1888. Collection of Joel Myerson.

This is the only known copy of a Canadian issue of Specimen Days. It was printed by Walter Scott of England, presumably for issue in Canada. (Myerson A 11.2.a)

"With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea."
Broadside. Collection of Joel Myerson.

Whitman sometimes printed broadsides such as this to either serve as setting copies or be distributed among his friends; it is one of only four known copies. (Myerson F 98)

Leaves of Grass
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1884 [i.e., 1888].

David McKay issued printings of the seventh edition of Leaves of Grass in 1882, 1883, 1884 and 1888. This copy is from the third issue of the edition's eleventh printing, and it includes a twenty-two page annex, "Sands at Seventy," at the back of the book. Between 1882 and October of 1891, the firms of Rees Welsh and David McKay sold a total of 6414 copies of the seventh edition. Whitman's royalties for these sales totaled $2244.90, or 34 cents per copy. 400 export copies brought him an additional $70. (Myerson A 2.7.k)

Complete Poems and Prose of Walt Whitman, 1855-1888

This is yet another printing (thirteenth) of the seventh edition of Leaves of Grass, this time with Whitman's prose works appended to the back of the book. This copy is designated as an "authenticated and personal book" which has been handled by Whitman, and it also contains portraits and an autograph. 600 copies of Complete Poems and Prose were printed, and Whitman designed the spine label for this alternate binding variant. (Myerson A 2.7.m, binding A)
November Boughs

November Boughs is a series of reflections in poetry and prose. At this point in his career, with his health failing after suffering another stroke, Whitman concedes, "I have not gain'd the acceptance of my own time, but have fallen back on fond dreams of the future." He is content to have the value of his work "be decided by time." This copy is inscribed by Whitman to Thomas B. Hamed and dated October 6, 1888. (Myerson A 12.1.a1. Presentation binding)

Leaves of Grass with Sands at Seventy and A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads

This copy was a gift to the library from the collection of Clifford Odeis. The 1889 "birthday edition" of Leaves of Grass is actually the fourteenth printing of the seventh edition. It is the culmination of Whitman's long-time desire to publish a pocket-size edition of his work, and only three hundred copies were printed. This copy bears on the first fly-leaf the inscription, "E E Read from his friend the author," and is signed by Whitman on the title page. (Myerson A 2.7.n, binding A)

Good-Bye My Fancy. 2d Annex to Leaves of Grass
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1891.

With Horace Traubel's assistance, Whitman was able to come out with this small issue of prose and poetry. After publication, the plates were repaginated 407-422 and used as an annex to the 1891 Leaves of Grass. (Myerson A 13, binding C)

Leaves of Grass; Including Sands at Seventy, Good-Bye My Fancy, and A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1891-'2.

The 1891-'2 "Deathbed Edition" of Leaves of Grass is in fact the second issue of the seventh edition's twelfth printing; the annexes are also reprints. With his health failing, Whitman "created" this final "edition" of Leaves of Grass by using sheets from an 1888 printing. He bound them with cancel title and contents leaves and with the annexes appended at the back. Whitman wrote for this edition "An Executor's Diary Note, 1891 " which states "that whatever may be added to the Leaves shall be supplementary, avowed as such, leaving the book complete as I left it." Whitman knew that he had little time left and that this would be his last edition. The book appeared for sale early in 1892, and Whitman died in his Camden, New Jersey home on March 26 of that year. (Myerson A 2.7.P)

Complete Prose Works
Philadelphia: David McKay, 1892.

McKay came out with this complete collection of Whitman's prose shortly after his death in 1892. (Myerson C 6.1.a-b)

Calamus. A Series of Letters Written during the Years 1868-1880 by Walt Whitman to a Young Friend (Peter Doyle)

Peter Doyle was a former Confederate soldier whom Whitman met on a Washington street-car in December of 1865. Their intimate and emotional relationship is chronicled in the letters of this volume. This copy is number 15 of a special large-paper issue of thirty-five numbered copies; it is signed by the editor. (Myerson A 14.1.a)

Leaves of Grass. Including Sands at Seventy, Good-By My Fancy, Old Age Echoes, and A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads

Complete Prose Works. Specimen Days and Collect. November Boughs and Good-Bye My Fancy

This large-paper issue of "Leaves of Grass and Prose" was limited to only ninety copies of each book, sixty being for sale in the United States and thirty in Great Britain. They were printed from the McKay plates of earlier editions. This particular pair is from the American issue, and both are numbered 29. (Myerson C 8.1.h1 and C 6.2.a1, respectively)
The Wound Dresser; A Series of Letters Written from the Hospitals in Washington During the War of the Rebellion

This copy is from the first printing of the book's first trade edition, an issue which consisted of sixty copies. It is numbered 29 and is signed by the editor. (Myerson A 15.1.a)

An American Primer

This edition was limited to five hundred copies; the exhibit copy has a portrait of Lincoln tipped in. (Myerson A 19.1.a, binding A)

Song of Myself
By Walt Whitman. East Aurora, N.Y.: The Roycrofters, 1904.

This is from a special edition of approximately one hundred copies which were printed on a variety of papers and bound in a variety of leathers. The exhibit copy is laid paper bound in limp suede. (Myerson H 65.1.b)

Lafayette in Brooklyn

Lafayette in Brooklyn was printed from a manuscript Whitman had prepared for the printer, but which was never published during his lifetime. It is a reminiscence of Lafayette's visit to the United States in 1825, when Whitman was six years old. This is number 139 of an edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies. (Myerson A 21.1.b)

Criticism: An Essay

The manuscript of this essay was found among Whitman's papers after his death, and the Carteret Book Club put it in print for the first time. One hundred copies were printed for its members on Italian handmade paper. (Myerson A 22.1.a)

Drum-Taps

The introduction to this 1915 English publication of Drum-Taps is tinged by the wartime propaganda of the day, particularly in the following statement: "Whitman had no very tender regard for the Germany of his time. He fancied that the Germans were like the Chinese, only less graceful and refined and more brutish." (Myerson A 3.2)

Song of the Broad-Axe

This edition was limited to four hundred copies; this is number 310. (Myerson H 72)

Leaves of Grass, Comprising All the Poems Written by Walt Whitman, Following the arrangement of the Edition of 1891-'2

Four hundred copies of this edition were printed by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn, with woodcuts by Valenti Angelo. The volume is bound in wooden boards with a calf spine. (Myerson C 60.1.a)

Salut Au Monde

This is another limited edition by Random House. Three hundred and ninety copies were printed on Zanders hand-made paper by the State printing office in Prague; this is number 69. (Myerson H 61)

Song of the Redwood Tree

Two hundred and fifty copies were printed from the original text of the poem as it appeared sixty years earlier in Harper's magazine. (Myerson H 76)
This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body. . .

FROM PREFACE TO LEAVES OF GRASS (1855)