



# Walt Whitman's Journalism: Missing Files

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Here is not only the best imitation, by long odds, of Walt Whitman, the b'hoi-poet and representative man of Yankeedom, which we ever saw, but an excellent bit of sarcasm besides. The author is the same who wrote that capital parody on Southey's "On to Moscow," entitled "On to Richmond."

But the parody itself, written in the days when the Southern cause seemed triumphant, is lame and inept. Except for its mockery of Whitman's parallelism and "spasmodic" style, some gratuitous French, and a reference to Sesostris, the parody's chief interest is historical. It pictures Whitman as a drunken Northern jingoist, ranting to all who will listen (in the darkest days of the Northern cause) that the South is all but defeated; that the disastrous battles of Bull Run, Manassas, and Centreville were really Northern victories: "And didn't we celebrate the victory in a pundy branch on the Avenue? / I should say so." Ultimately, incoherent with drink, he passes out.

That Whitman, who did not leave for Washington for almost a year after the parody appeared, should be mocked as a bellicose spokesman of Northern aggression was not altogether without provocation on his part. Only two months earlier, on 28 September 1861, both *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York New Leader* had published his stirring call to arms, "Beat! Beat! Drums!" Ironically, this was Whitman's only war poem to be published before the appearance of *Drum-Taps* in 1865.<sup>3</sup> *The Southern Literary Messenger's* virulent response shows how effective a war poem Whitman had composed.

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## NOTES

1 [George William Bagby,] "Editor's Table," *The Southern Literary Messenger*, 31 (July 1860), 74-75; 31 (August 1860), 155; 34 (January 1862), 72-73. These items are not listed in Scott Giantvalley, *Walt Whitman, 1838-1939: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1981).

2 *Leaves of Grass*, Comprehensive Reader's Edition, edited by Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), pp. 472-474n.

3 *Leaves of Grass*, p. 283n. Two *Drum-Taps* poems had appeared in the 1860 edition: "Not the Pilot" (*Leaves of Grass*, p. 308) as a "Debris" poem; "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice" (*Leaves of Grass*, pp. 315-316) as "Calamus, No. 5," a chant of brotherhood, not war.

## WALT WHITMAN'S JOURNALISM: MISSING FILES

Despite extensive research, aided by an American Philosophical Society grant, I have failed to locate files or issues of some newspapers which Whitman either wrote for or edited, newspapers needed to help complete Walt Whitman, *The Journalism*, volumes in *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman* (New York University Press).

Most needed are the following newspapers:

1. Long Island *Patriot*. 1831-1832.

2. Huntington [Long Island] *Long Islander*, 5 June 1838 (first issue)–May 1839. Editor.
3. New York *Evening Tattler*, June 1842–September 1846. (Issues of 9 June 1842 and 11 August 1842 located.)
4. New York *Sunday Times*, June 1842–July 1843. (Issue of 14 August 1842 located.) Co-editor until ca. July 1843, commencing?
5. *Sunday Times* [New York] & *Noah's Weekly Messenger*, July 1843–July 1844. (Issues of 31 March 1844 and 5 May 1844 located.)
6. New York *Sun*, 1842–1844. (Microfilm located.) Original file was in New York City Municipal Archives–probably destroyed by New York Public Library after micro-filming.
7. New York *Statesman*, 13 March 1843 first issue)–? May 1843 (last issue).
8. New York *Democrat*, 17 or 18 July 1844 (first issue)–16 October 1844 (last issue). Editor.
9. Brooklyn *Freeman*, ? November 1848 (first issue after fire)–10 September 1849. Editor.
10. New York *Daily News*, 19 December 1849–23 February 1850. Editor.
11. *The Salesman and Traveler's Directory for Long Island*. 4 June 1851–? June 1851? Editor.

Any help in locating missing numbers would be most gratefully received and fully acknowledged.

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