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CLINTON QUOTES WHITMAN

In a speech at a Human Rights Campaign dinner in Washington, D.C., on November 8, 1997, President Bill Clinton concluded by quoting Walt Whitman: "After experiencing the horrors of the Civil War and witnessing the transformation of the previous century, Walt Whitman said that our greatest strength was that we are an embracing nation. In his words, a 'Union, holding all, fusing, absorbing, tolerating all.' Let us move forward in the spirit of that one America. Let us realize that this is a good obligation that has been imposed upon our generation, and a grand opportunity once again to lift America to a higher level of unity, once again to redefine and to strengthen and to ensure one America for a new century and a new generation of our precious children." According to a report in the *Washington Post* (November 9, 1997) by Peter Baker, Clinton's speech—the first by a sitting president to a gay rights organization—pledged solidarity in the battle for equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans.

Just over two months later, it was widely reported that one of the gifts Clinton allegedly gave to White House intern Monica Lewinsky was a copy of *Leaves of Grass*.

WHITMAN CONFERENCE IN CAMDEN

"The Cultures of Walt Whitman," a conference for scholars and teachers, will be held October 23-24, 1998, at Rutgers University-Camden. Those wishing to participate are invited to submit two- to three-page proposals (or complete papers) by June 1, 1998, to Tyler Hoffman, Department of English, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ 08102 (e-mail: TBHLHH@crab.rutgers.edu). Topics may include new directions and current trends in Whitman scholarship; cultural contexts (religious, philosophical, social, political, sexual, etc.) and regional ties that illuminate Whitman's writings; and issues related to the teaching of Whitman at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.