"Missing Me One Place Search Another": Three Previously Unpublished Walt Whitman Notebooks

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"MISSING ME ONE PLACE SEARCH ANOTHER": THREE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED WALT WHITMAN NOTEBOOKS

CHARLES B. GREEN

But to my jottings, taking them as they come, from the heap, without particular selection. There is little consecutiveness in dates. They run any time within nearly five or six years. Each was carelessly pencilled in the open air, at the time and place. The printers will learn this to some vexation perhaps, as much of their copy is from those hastily-written first notes.

—Whitman, Specimen Days

Nowhere, perhaps, is Whitman’s statement regarding his note-taking more applicable than when it comes to sorting through his daybooks and notebooks. The problem of establishing an accurate rendering of these scattered “jottings” can indeed lead to “some vexation,” as discovered by Edward Grier and William White, the editors who undertook the daunting task of collecting and presenting this “heap” so as to dovetail into the even larger “heap” entitled The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman. These two editors have undeniably contributed much that is valuable to the Collected Writings, an overall project described by Gay Wilson Allen as “a monument to academic courage, faith, generosity, and scholarly work.” The recent discovery of three unpublished Whitman notebooks in the Library of Congress’s Charles E. Feinberg Collection of the Papers of Walt Whitman, however, has refocused attention upon Grier’s and White’s handling of their material and its rendering in the Collected Writings.

The original intention was to have the materials co-edited by the two scholars as a single collection encompassing all of Whitman’s notebooks and prose manuscripts left incomplete or unpublished, but the editors soon parted ways, dividing the work into rough manuscript concentrations. Unfortunately, the consequence of this split was the production of two quite distinct works, Grier’s six-volume Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts (NUPM) and White’s three-volume Daybooks and Notebooks, 1876-1891 (DBN). Meticulously edited at the level of detail, these volumes nonetheless suffer from a lack of unified organization. First, the absence of a comprehensive index requires readers to move back and forth between the works, creating their own system of cross-referencing. Second, especially in the case of White’s work, gaps
appear in the materials. As Ed Folsom notes in "The Whitman Project: A Review Essay," "there is an uncomfortable sense that these volumes are a sort of hodge-podge of things that White . . . happened to have access to, and that happened to be ready to print . . . even if they didn't quite fit together." Third, neither editor makes it precisely clear what has been left out, with White brushing aside potential criticisms of such omissions with the rationale that "sooner or later one must stop searching and researching, and go to print."

When Grier and White divided up their overall project, it was decided that White would edit the daybook and notebook manuscripts located in Charles Feinberg’s extensive collection, while Grier would attempt to tackle everything else. For reasons not made clear, White limited his focus primarily to materials dating from 1876 to 1891 and promptly published three volumes in 1978. Grier labored for a more extended period, drawing together six volumes, and was preparing to deliver his work to press when it occurred to him that White, in ignoring materials dating prior to 1876, had omitted manuscripts of significant importance. Crossing the agreed-upon boundaries, Grier decided to add approximately forty manuscripts located within the Feinberg-Whitman Collection to his own volumes. During this unorthodox editorial process some materials inevitably fell through the cracks. The recent discovery of three unpublished notebooks located within the Feinberg-Whitman Collection provides just such an example and demonstrates some of the problems inherent in this fractured project.

The first three items in Container One of the Feinberg-Whitman Collection are a homemade manuscript notebook dated “September & October 1863,” a folder labeled “Address Books, 1876-86,” and a folder labeled “April-May 1879, Notebooks and Address Books.” The first and third items are transcribed in NUPM and DBN respectively. The problem occurs when we turn to the contents of the folder situated between these items. This folder, labeled “Address Books 1876-86,” contains three small notebooks which appear neither in Grier’s nor in White’s gatherings. While the date on the folder falls within the parameters of White’s focus, these materials could also have come under the scrutiny of Grier’s eleventh-hour assessment. Possibly, both editors reviewed these materials only to dismiss them as mundane and unimportant. Grier’s introduction specifically speaks of his decision to omit certain “classes” of manuscripts from his assemblage and, though White does not formally make such a declaration, the fact that he chose to slight so much of the Feinberg-Whitman Collection indicates a de facto exclusion process. Yet, these notebooks contain information that seems just as important as other material the editors did choose to include. In these pages, Whitman jots down trial lines and titles for his poetry and prose, records ideas for his Lincoln lecture, composes a catalog of spring blos-
soms, and makes notes about his friends, his health, and his daily activities.

What makes the omission of these notebooks even more curious is that White, who in his introduction initially appears to express concern over this issue of what to include and what to leave out, worrying whether these rawest of Whitman documentary forms deserve a place in a collection of the poet’s writings at all, ultimately concludes that all Whitman materials do have reference value.7 In his review essay, Ed Folsom agrees with this conclusion and suggests that White’s annotations, when taken as a whole along with Whitman’s “jots and doodles,” offer a useful “kind of do-it-yourself biography of Whitman’s later years.”8 Just as the notebooks collected within NUPM have helped to illuminate Whitman’s transition from political journalist of the 1840s to poet-prophet of the 1850s and 1860s, and materials brought together within the DBN have served to shed light on the marked shift that occurred in Whitman’s poetics during the 1870s, these records may prove to be of significance.9 Materials that appear meaningless to scholars working with one set of assumptions can contain, for later scholars, vitally important clues. Each item left behind is another puzzle piece that can be used in various ways as people construct and reconstruct new versions of Whitman’s life and work. Perhaps the poet said it best himself in his prophetic advice at the end of “Song of Myself”: “Missing me one place search another. . . .” At the very least, these unpublished “leaves” add to or corroborate things already known or suspected, and their absence from the Collected Writings calls into question the handling of the Feinberg-Whitman Collection, suggesting that Edward Grier may have been premature in pronouncing the project “complete.”

College of William & Mary

Glendale

birthdays
Harry Stafford
23 March

Mrs. S
4th April

window shades
406 Arch St

Ristine
Gold & Silver Plater

[Glendale Notebook]
[leaf 1: all but approx. 1.3 cm at top has been removed (cut out)]

[leaves 2-6: removed (cut out)]
[leaf 7]

[These 8 lines entered with purple pencil]
of Watches, Jewelry, &c
806 Race

Straw hats done up
203 Race

Allen Leslie Belleville
put in Indians
Navajo
Apache
Pueblo

at Cooper's Sept '8
'86

No 11

Box 267
Mm: Hutchison, Burlington, N.J.

É.É Curtis Clay Hutchison
George Hutchison.

John B. Williams
24 W 14th
N Y City—

—Ring town

Reading road
get ticket for Ring town
Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday
Louis Wagner
depot
train leaves 9 45 a.m.
gets there at 2:35

get ticket for Ring town
Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday
Louis Wagner
depot
train leaves 9 45 a.m.
gets there at 2:35

[These 9 lines entered with purple pencil]

[leaves 8-9: all but .85-1.3cm of leaf removed (cut out), blank]
[leaf 10: lower half of leaf removed (torn out)]

[leaf 11: all but 1.9cm of leaf removed (torn out), blank]
[leaf 12: all but 7.62cm of leaf removed (torn out)]

[leaves 13-15: all but .64cm removed (cut out), blank]
[leaf 16]
[These 9 lines entered with purple pencil]

[leaf 17: all but .64-1.3cm removed (cut out), blank]
[leaf 18: all but 1.3-2.54cm removed (torn out), blank]
[leaf 19]

[This address and names are not in Whitman's hand]

[These three lines entered with purple pencil]

[leaves 20-21: full leaf, blank]
[leaf 22: all but .64-1.3cm removed (cut out), blank]
[leaf 23: all but .64cm removed (cut out), blank]
[leaves 24-31: full leaf, blank]
[leaf 32: text entered vertically]
[These 9 lines entered vertically, with purple pencil]

[leaf 33: full leaf, blank]
[leaf 34: all but .64cm removed (torn out), blank]
Henry Whitall Phillipsburg N.J. [Not in Whitman's hand]

early in May
cherry blossoms
pear "
ammond "
—early wild violets

middle of May
apple blossoms — apples
dog-wood — the pretty
wild-honey suckle — little clusters
latter middle of May, of pine-seeds

white black blackberry blossoms

stra wild strawberry

low in the ground in the woods
— profusion of little white or yellow
wild flowers.22

Joshua Killingbeck23
449 Benson

Mrs Gilchrist25
39 Somerset St Boston
In the summer, in the
rush of excursions, the
streets & spaces
Never did the place
look

Two Rivulets
of+ Songs
Sequeling Leaves of Grass26

Letter from Walt Whitman
Gossip & Going around

A run across Central Jersey27

Rubber goods
Tillinghast
12 So 2d St Phila

Arch Street
Perfumery — 510
Photo Materials } 624
Buttons — 804
Globes & School
furniture } above 12th

I'd
I'll make the Songs of the Nation— who-let make-pass
- the Laws or lead to War who may ^
Old Proverb
[revisions entered in blue pencil]

I'll make the Songs of The States

I'd make the songs of the Nation -who'er may -who
make the laws or lead to war
they may

Milliard Shute28

Please call at 431 Stevens St.29
& get shoes to

P.H. Poten30
Wyoming
Luzerne Co. Pa.

152
only

What is composed out
what is set up out of
them that is — is it not? —
of main importance
that is important.

Death of Lincoln
finish & condense the
preparatory description
of the condition, scenes, &c.
before the war
make it more graphic,
clear — make it brief. 32

Certainly of course
It is quite certain my
friends that I shall not
be able to tell you any
truly new at least in the way of
thing, but just what or events you may know
before — at any rate rate
facts or events. But
our history, or the whole world
these facts or events, history
is a favorable notion of
what only the more than
mine are as the font of
types, the letters in their
boxes in the case? it

Two Rivulets
of Songs 33
addenda to Leaves of Grass

[leaf 28: full leaf, blank]
[leaf 28: reverse]
Dec 11, '77 - car 111 — John Nutter, dyspepsia. English stock, (father an opera-singer) born in Richmond — been a foot-runner — horse fancier—married — been driving '6 mos —

[tipped-in address from newspaper advertisement: image of eyeglasses followed by two printed lines: H. Cutler Practical Optician, 310 S. 5th st. Established 1819]

D.Y. Kilgore 394 + Powel[ton?] Ave West Phil
Baring St. Car on Market
Office 605 Walnut
Ivan C. Michels.
[Ell]a Wright
Herby's picture at Payne's — 624 Arch

get "Manual for Nursing"
12 mo. 143 pp. G P Putnam's Sons

also "Cerebral Hyperaemia"
by Dr Wm H Hammond
12 mo. 108 pp. G P Putnam's Sons

Nota - Bene's (name for a book)
Chas A Layer conductor Camden & Atlantic RR
March 2 '78

Maggie Smithers N.E. C. or 4th and Wash.
Elwood L. Griscom (Broadway coach — Camden March '78)
Louis J. Wagner (RR news agent)
No. 421 Taylor Ave
Camden N. J. [45]

Augustus E. A. Johnston [46]

George W. Dowles [47]
(Conductor 120 Car — Union
March '78 Phil.)

James Huneker [48]
1711 Race St. —
(young man that came to see me abt April 18
in Camden)

Abraham Lincoln

that the practical
mechanic's farm
(see printed slip)

Wm M. F. Round [49]
"Rosecroft"
Still River —
Worcester Co —
Mass —

Patrick A Connelly [50]
hat bands Horsman’s
5th & cherry

Charlotte Pendleton [51]
Cincinnati
Ohio.

Craig E. Lippincott [52]
715 Market St
Philadelphia
Pa.
Mrs Gilchrist 53
Round House Hotel
Northampton
Mass.

Chas F. Bender 54
562 Berkley St
Camden, N. J.

So 4th — Phil.

perfumery 20  26

restaurant
good democratic
 So 4th st

Mrs John Bigelow 55
Highland Falls
Orange Co.
New York

Mrs Sarah Knight 57
Glen Elg. po
Howard Co
Maryland

Palm soap
Koone Van Hooge & Co
Phila.

[these three lines not in Whitman's hand]

[these three lines not in Whitman's hand]

[leaves 13-16: removed (torn out)]
[leaf 17]

[four lines not in Whitman's hand]

[leaves 18-21: removed (cut out)]
[leaf 22: several cut-outs, 5 cm remaining intact at bottom of leaf, blank]
[leaf 23: removed (torn out)]
[leaves 24-47: removed (cut out)]
[leaf 48]

[leaves 49-59: removed (cut out)]
[leaf 60: 12.7cm cutout removed from top of leaf, blank]
[leaves 61-62: removed (cut out)]
[leaf 63: 8.26cm cutout removed from top of leaf, blank]
[leaf 64: removed (cutout)]
[leaf 65: 11.5cm cutout removed at top of leaf, blank]
[rear flyleaf: written vertically]

[rear flyleaf: reverse]

156
Mrs Loyd’s grandson
Joseph Van Stiver
driver 105 Union - Phil - Feb ‘78
Hudson Greenleaf
Phil. boy

NOTES


4. White’s rationale behind this decision is left unclear. In his “Introduction” to the DBN he simply states that the materials that he chose to include “belong in an edition of Whitman’s collected works if such productions are to achieve anything approaching completeness.” His rendering of the Daybooks are meant, he suggests, to “give us the bare bones of the poet’s outward life” as they supplement the biographical information in Whitman’s Correspondence, Horace Traubel’s With Walt Whitman in Camden, and Specimen Days. The inclusion of the Canadian diary, the other journals and notes, Words, and The Primer of Words, he adds, are intended to “fill out the record” (1:xviii-xix).

5. In his introduction, Grier notes that “publication of the Feinberg Manuscripts was limited to only a selection, Daybooks and Notebooks, ed. William White. Since some forty of the manuscripts left unpublished, especially those before 1865, are of striking importance, I have taken them on at the last minute as my responsibility” (Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts, edited by Edward F. Grier [New York: New York University Press, 1984], 1:xvi; hereafter abbreviated NUPM).

6. NUPM 1:xvi.

7. DBN 1:vi-vii.


9. Betsy Erkkila makes a similar point regarding the value of this type of material in her review of the NUPM, suggesting that “items that appear to be mere noise in our current readings of Whitman might turn out to be sites of meaning and significance in future analyses of his life and work” (The Mickle Street Review no. 10 [1988], 114).

10. Brown, kraft-material notebook, 9.2 X 14.9cm, containing forty, twenty-two ruled leaves. Leaves are attached through cover with string knotted inside. Evidence of tape along outside of cover at fold, now missing. Entries written with plain pencil unless noted. Front and back covers are blank with the exception of several ink stains on the outside. Reverse sides of leaves are blank unless noted. Measurements are approximate.
11. Whitman is referring to the family farm of the Staffords where he spent much of his time from 1876 on. The farm was located one and a half miles from Glendale, N.J., which was twelve miles away from Camden. Whitman also called the farm Timber Creek, White Horse, and Kirkwood.

12. Harry Stafford was one of the most important young men in Whitman’s life; see *The Correspondence*, edited by Edwin Haviland Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1961-1977), 3:2-7, for a discussion of Whitman’s relationship with Harry; hereafter *The Correspondence* is abbreviated *Corr*.

13. Probably Harry’s mother, Susan Stafford. Of Mrs. Stafford, Whitman wrote to her son: “There is not a nobler woman in Jersey” (*Corr*. 3:3).

14. Whitman would later send this acquaintance a copy of an article he was interested in that appeared in the *Philadelphia Progress*, April 30, 1881. He sent it to 1412 Walnut St., Philadelphia. (This name appears as “Allan” Leslie Belleville in *DBN* 2:222, 234).

15. Probably a note to remind himself to include Native-American references in a text he was working on.

16. This date, though clear, seems curiously out of place here, with the majority of entries having been made between 1876-1879.


18. Unidentified.


21. See *DBN* 1:84, 178; and *DBN* 2:302.

22. Gaining back his strength and spirit at Timber Creek, Whitman reveled in the nature he rediscovered on the farm. Sitting for hours in the sun, he rendered his perceptions of and reactions to the surroundings. Sounds, birds, insects, all attracted his attention, but the trees impressed him the most. The listing in this notebook represents a partial catalogue of those companions with whom Whitman shared his days on Stafford farm. On May 14, 1881, an article appeared in the *Philadelphia American*, entitled “Bumble-Bees and Bird Music,” which builds upon this list and its general structure (*PW* 1:123-126).

23. Whitman met Joshua Killingbeck in Camden and later hired him to pave the front walk of his Mickle Street house (*DBN* 2:335).

24. This notebook is the same type and size as the Gilchrist Notebook (see note 9). It is difficult to determine which cover is front and which is back. Reverse sides of leaves are blank unless noted. Measurements are approximate.

25. Mrs. Anne Gilchrist came to Philadelphia in 1876 with three of her children to be near Whitman. Although he had attempted to dissuade her from leaving England, her determination, as well as passion for the poet, remained unchecked. Her fantasy regarding the relationship that would ensue upon their meeting inevitably gave way as she painfully came to recognize that the poet did not share her affection and could not fulfill her fantasies. In the spring of 1878, she left Philadelphia to be near her daughter who was studying medicine in Boston. This entry documents her arrival in Massachusetts.
26. Possibly a trial of the title for *Two Rivulets* (Camden, New Jersey, 1876), which constituted the companion volume to the 1876 "Centennial Edition" of *Leaves of Grass. Two Rivulets* includes new poetry and prose, as well as *Democratic Vistas*, a group of "Centennial Songs—1876," *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free*, *Memoranda During the War*, and *Passage to India*. In the preface to *Two Rivulets*, Whitman states that he put the book together "at the eleventh hour, under grave illness"(5).

27. Probably trial titles for journalism pieces Whitman was thinking of writing.

28. This person has not been completely identified, although it is known that Whitman had dinner with him along with Charles Peterson and John Johnston in November or December of 1878. He is mentioned in *DBN* as a "banjoist at Johnny Johnston's" (*DBN* 1:127, 129).

29. In October 1873, Whitman, in precarious health, moved in with his brother George and his sister-in-law Louisa at 431 Stevens Street, a new house on the corner where he chose a third-story bedroom facing south. He lived here for eleven years, until 1884 when he moved to Mickle Street where he would live until his death in 1892.

30. Unidentified.

31. Whitman's "oculist" (*Corr. 5:105*).

32. Originally proposed by Whitman's New York literary friends, Whitman's first lecture on the death of Lincoln was scheduled for April 1878. Illness caused a postponement until Whitman's appearance at Steck Hall in Manhattan on April 14, 1879. He repeated the lecture almost annually through 1886.

33. Apparently another title considered for *Two Rivulets* (see note 26).

34. Brown leather veneer cover over white cardboard notebook, 10.16 X 16.83cm, partially disbound, containing sixty-five, twenty-two ruled leaves. Leaves are sewn in with string. Outside covers are blank. Reverse sides of leaves are blank unless noted. Measurements are approximate.

35. Unidentified.

36. Additional information concerning "H. Cutler" has yet to be located.


38. Unidentified.

39. Unidentified.

40. This was Anne Gilchrist's son, Herbert, who looked at Whitman as an uncle. Herbert was studying to become a painter, and he spent much of the fall of 1878 with Whitman, painting his portrait at Timber Creek, but rejoined his mother in November. (For commentary on Gilchrist's painting and its reproduction, see Gay Wilson Allen's "The Iconography of Walt Whitman," in Edwin Haviland Miller's *The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman* [New York: New York University Press, 1970], 137-140.) Whitman wrote an unsigned notice about the painting for a Camden paper (*DBN* 1:60).

41. The picture was probably being framed at Payne's (see note 40).
42. Unidentified.
43. A "First Violin - M. Smithers" appears in a listing of the Camden Parlor Orchestra in *DBN* 1:231.
44. Unidentified.
45. See note 20.
46. Unidentified.
47. Unidentified.
48. James Gibbons Huneker (1857-1921) was a U.S. critic of music, art and literature, a leading exponent of impressionistic criticism, as well as an author. He came to see Whitman and later published "A Visit to Walt Whitman" in his *Ivory Apes and Peacocks* (New York: Scribners, 1915), 22-31.
49. Called on Whitman on April 16, 1878. William M. F. Round remains unidentified except as a friend of Joaquin Miller and a journalist (*DBN* 1:95).
50. This is probably "Paddy" Connelly, whom Whitman describes as a "little black-eyed post boy at the ferry" in an 1891 notebook (see *DBN* 1:230). He may also be one of the "young Connelly boys" who came to see Whitman at his home in September 1887 (*DBN* 2:435).
51. Unidentified.
52. The son of J.B. Lippincott of *Lippincott's Magazine*, one of Whitman's publishers through the 1870s and 1880s (*DBN* 1:148).
53. This is Anne Gilchrist's address after she left Philadelphia late in April 1878 (see note 25).
54. Charles F. Bender was a hatter who operated in Philadelphia and who presented Whitman with one of his famous hats (*DBN* 1:100).
55. Probably wife of John Bigelow, Minister to France, co-editor of the New York *Evening Post* from 1848 to 1861, whom Whitman visited in West Point, New York, on June 16, 1878 (see *Corr.* 3:121).
56. Whitman wrote Erastus Brainerd on December 9, 1879, and sent him the poem, "What Best I See in Thee," published in the *Philadelphia Press* on December 17, 1879, and later included in the 1881-1882 edition of *Leaves*. Brainerd probably worked for the *Press* (*DBN* 1:97).
57. Unidentified.
58. Unidentified.