

## HENRY S. SAUNDERS: A TRIBUTE

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THERE ARE, of course, books containing pictures, photographs, and portraits of Walt Whitman: Gay Wilson Allen, *Walt Whitman*, Revised Edition (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), containing 24 portraits; Edwin Haviland Miller's *The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman: A Tribute to Gay Wilson Allen* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), also containing 24 portraits of the poet; and Walt Whitman's *Specimen Days* (Boston: David Godine, 1971), containing 68 portraits, arranged chronologically from 1846 to 1891, age 27 to 72.

But nothing approaches Henry S. Saunders's *Whitman Portraits*, which has more than 300 reproductions of photographs, paintings and drawings, busts, plaques, medals, caricatures, cigar box labels, various illustrations, title-pages, and other "fancy pictures" (as Saunders calls them). Unfortunately, as with other books that Saunders put together, *Whitman Portraits* was not published in the normal sense: he merely typed up new copies—nine in the present case—and gave them to friends, keeping one copy for his own Whitman collection. This collection is now in Brown University.

The other books which Saunders produced in editions of a few copies each include *A Whitman Controversy: Being Letters Published in Mercure de France 1913–1914* (48 pp., 1914), dealing with Apollinaire (and others) and Whitman's homosexuality; *Illustrations to Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass Gathered from Various Sources Including Many Original Photographs* (1924), containing more than 330 pictures; *Portrait Gallery of Whitman Writers with Quotations* (1927), various writers, each captioned by his or her comment on Whitman; *Whitman in Fiction* (6 pp., 1950), listing 87 works of short stories and novels in which Whitman is quoted or mentioned or drawn upon for a title; and *Whitman Music List* (26 pp., 1950), citing 309 compositions in print or manuscript based on Whitman's writings, and gramophone records.

Saunders's only published book on the poet is *Parodies on Whitman* (New York: American Library Service, 1923, 171 pp.), with a Preface by Christopher Morley. Saunders also was the compiler, with Emory Holloway, of the "Bibliography for Whitman," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, edited by William Peterfield Trent, John Erskine, Stuart P. Sherman, and Carl Van Doren (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), 2:551–581. In addition, he wrote "Whitman's Vitality Today" in *Sunset of Bon Echo*, 1 (May 1919), 25, his only recorded article about Whitman.

Although he is certainly known to Whitman scholars, Saunders may well have been relatively obscure; nevertheless, a short obituary appeared in *The New York Times* on 1 November 1951, p. 29:

### HENRY SAUNDERS

LONDON, Ont., Oct. 31 (Canadian Press)—Henry Saunders, 'cellist and authority on Walt Whitman bibliography, was buried here yesterday. He was a brother of the late Sir Charles Saunders, who developed Marquis wheat.

Mr. Saunders adopted music as a profession fifty years ago and played for twenty-one years

with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He collected books, poems and magazine articles by and about the American poet. His *Whitmaniana*, compiled over twenty years, was purchased in 1932 by a United States university.

Mr. Saunders privately bound 3,000 books. He also was keenly interested in painting Canadian flowers in water colors. He presented his collection of 2,000 insects to the Royal Ontario Museum.

Saunders, who was born in 1864, the son of a druggist, met Whitman when he (Saunders) was a young boy, according to Charles E. Feinberg, the Whitman collector in Detroit, though the poet did not record the meeting in his *Daybooks*: he did not keep a full account of everyone he met. (The Henry Saunders mentioned in Justin Kaplan's *Walt Whitman: A Life* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980, p. 96], "One of Whitman's boardinghouse acquaintances, a seventeen-year-old junior clerk named Henry Saunders, forged [in 1843] thirty thousand dollars in checks before he was transferred from the lodgings they shared at 68 Duane Street to the Tombs, a few blocks away in Centre Street," was not the Toronto Henry Saunders, but a friend who became a character in Whitman's "Fact Romance" in *The Aristidean*, December 1845.)

Henry Saunders, the Toronto cellist, through his typewritten and self-published books of photographs which he took and developed himself, through his bibliographical endeavors full of detailed information, and through his compilations and collections, has made a major contribution to Whitman scholarship, for which we are very grateful.

*Charlottesville, Virginia*

WILLIAM WHITE