

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHITMAN 2000: THE IOWA/BEIJING CONFERENCE

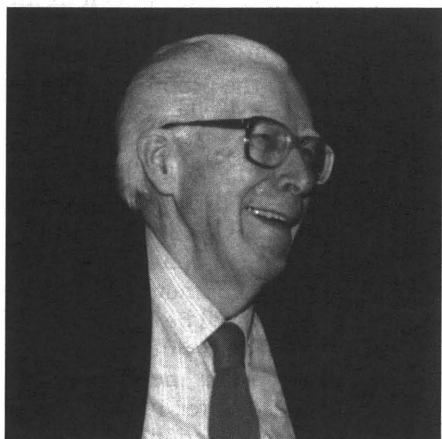
The University of Iowa and Peking University are jointly sponsoring an international conference on Whitman, "Whitman 2000," to be held in Beijing, China, from October 18-22, 2000. The conference will feature major Whitman scholars from around the world. The conference is directed by Ed Folsom of The University of Iowa, with Liu Shusen of Peking University and Kenneth Cmiel of The University of Iowa as associate directors. Selected papers from the conference will be published in a Chinese edition by Peking University Press and in an English edition by the University of Iowa Press. Details of the conference will be forthcoming. Those interested in attending can write to Ed Folsom, Department of English, The University of Iowa, 308 EPB, Iowa City, IA 52242-1492 for further information.

AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

The eleventh annual conference of the American Literature Association will be held May 25-28, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Long Beach, California. The conference director is Jeanne Campbell Reesman (University of Texas at San Antonio). The conference will begin on Thursday morning and continue through Sunday, with an opening reception Thursday night and a closing celebration Saturday evening. Preregistration conference fees are \$50 (\$10 special rate for independent scholars, retired individuals, and students).

The Whitman Studies Association will sponsor a panel at the conference. Scholars interested in attending the conference should check the ALA website for further information: www.americanliterature.org. Specific questions about the conference can be directed to Jeanne Campbell Reesman at jreesman@utsa.edu; questions about the American Literature Association itself can be directed to Alfred Bendixen at abendix@calstatela.edu.

IN MEMORIAM: C. CARROLL HOLLIS (1911-1999)



C. Carroll Hollis, one of the most influential Whitman scholars of the twentieth century, died in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on December 12, 1999. A longtime professor at the University of North Carolina, Carroll Hollis served as chairman of the English Department from 1966 through 1971; he retired in 1977. He did his undergraduate work at Marquette University, graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He taught at the University of Detroit from 1938 through 1961; while in Detroit, he met the great

Whitman collector, Charles E. Feinberg, and began working with Feinberg's voluminous collection of Whitman manuscripts. From 1961 to 1963, on Feinberg's recommendation, Hollis served as an American literature and culture manuscript specialist at the Library of Congress, where Feinberg had decided to house his Whitman collection.

It was while working with the Feinberg archives in the 1950s (and after publishing important work on Orestes Brownson) that Hollis discovered the scope of Whitman's interest in the American language. This subject became the major area of his investigations for the next forty years, from his first essay on Whitman in the *Walt Whitman Newsletter* in 1956 up through his suggestive essay on discourse markers in my *Walt Whitman: The Centennial Essays* (1994). In the late 1950s, Hollis's work on Whitman and language yielded the insight that the poet's friendship with the journalist William Swinton had been central to his growing interest in language. Hollis proposed that Whitman had in fact ghostwritten much of Swinton's study of language, *Rambles Among Words* (1859). Largely because of Hollis's argument, major sections of *Rambles* now appear in Edward Grier's *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts* volumes as part of *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*.

Hollis's most extended study of Whitman and language is his *Language and Style in Leaves of Grass* (1983), an influential book that details the ways Whitman's poetry is built upon a surprising combination of familiar nineteenth-century communication models: oratory, which furnished him with his cadences and direct address, and journalism, which gave him his diction. If, for Emerson, Whitman's poetry was "a remarkable mixture of the Bhagvat Ghita and the *New York Herald*," for Hollis it was an equally remarkable mixture of the *New York Herald* and the lyceum. Hollis applied developments in "speech act" theory to Whitman's poetry and showed—through his study of Whitman's changing use of negation and metonymy, as well as his increasing use of a Latinate vocabulary—how Whitman's later poetry differed in measurable ways from the early editions of *Leaves of Grass*. Hollis admired Whitman

but never worshipped him—in fact, he liked Whitman most for his sly and devious ways, his writing anonymous reviews of his own work, his masterful manipulation of his image and reputation, his ability (as Hollis puts it in the conclusion to *Language and Style*) to “pull the most successful metonymic trick in poetic history” by claiming his book was actually a man.

Hollis's work stands behind (and has often inspired) the proliferating studies of Whitman and language over the past decade—works like James Perrin Warren's *Walt Whitman's Language Experiment* (1990), Mark Bauerlein's *Whitman and the American Idiom* (1991), Erik Ingvar Thurin's *Whitman Between Impressionism and Expressionism* (1995), and Christopher Beach's *The Politics of Distinction: Whitman and the Discourses of Nineteenth-Century America* (1996), each of which quotes Hollis in the opening pages and builds upon his insights.

Carroll Hollis was also an important figure in the development of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*. When I brought the journal to The University of Iowa as a replacement for the *Walt Whitman Review*, Hollis offered sage advice and never failed to contribute whenever I asked. Most memorable, for me, are two essays: “Is There a Text in This Grass?” (Winter 1986), a witty and wise examination of “orality” in *Leaves*, and “Recollections of Charles Feinberg” (Summer 1988), an amazing narrative full of anecdotes that reinvigorate Feinberg's passion for all things Whitmanian. Hollis ended that account with this story:

Charles was a devout Jew, and I was a far-from-devout Catholic, and mutual friends always wondered, aside from Whitman, how we got along. I guess it was something of a learning experience for us both. We didn't talk about such matters very often, but I once told him that the only Pope for whom I had any respect and affection was John XXIII, the one who opened Church windows and let in some fresh air. Shortly thereafter, on a trip to Israel with some other benefactors, the group stopped in Rome and had a Papal audience, which Charles found very rewarding. I also found it rewarding, for Charles brought me back a very ornate, and, I'm sure, expensive medallion of that good man. I still have it around somewhere, and whenever I see it back in the drawer I think of Charles and smile.

After I had published some work on Whitman and photography, Carroll gave me a signed photo of Whitman, one that had been given to him by Charles Feinberg. “You're the one who should keep the photos now,” he said, and, whenever I glance at it on my wall, I think of both Charles and Carroll and smile.

I also smile whenever I look at the photographs of Carroll that were taken at the Whitman Centennial Conference in Iowa City in 1992, the last major scholarly conference in which he took part. There, at a reception, Carroll decided he had to show some of us, including Gay Wilson Allen, his secret garb—a Whitman t-shirt that he was wearing beneath his formal attire. The image of Carroll—this elegant and distinguished scholar—tearing open his dress shirt to reveal his Whitman underwear is unforgettable. It was, he seemed to be saying, an emblem for all of us scholars who too often dress up Whitman to the point that we disguise him, cover him over, smother his radical originality. We need occasionally to expose the “rough” beneath the formal surface to remind ourselves what got us interested in the first place. Carroll Hollis was a master at reminding us, with a glint in his eye, what mattered.