

## THE GAY WILSON ALLEN PAPERS

Duke University's Trent Collection has long been well-known to Whitman scholars. Now that collection is wonderfully complemented by the Gay Wilson Allen Papers, which have been recently made available at the Jay B. Hubbell Center for American Literary Historiography, a division of Duke's Special Collections Library. For Whitman scholars, the Allen Papers are a significant resource. They document not only Allen's career but also the history of Whitman scholarship from Whitman's day to the 1980s.

In several stages between 1985 and 1992, Allen donated his professional papers to the Hubbell Center. During the 1992-1993 academic year they were processed. They occupy 33 linear feet of shelf space, number approximately 5500 items dated from 1801 to 1988, and consist of nine series: Correspondence, Clifton Joseph Furness Papers, Printed Materials and Manuscripts, Scrapbooks, Teaching Materials, Walt Whitman Materials, Walt Whitman Scholars, Writings, and Miscellaneous.

The Correspondence Series contains correspondence to and from Allen and other figures, dating mainly between the mid-1920s and the late 1970s. By the mid-1930s Allen's correspondence files had become so voluminous that he gradually changed his alphabetical filing system from collective files by alphabetic letters to individual files by correspondent; thus, the series contains two filing systems, and some correspondents have materials filed under both alphabetic letters and their last names. Among the correspondents represented extensively in this series are Roger Asselineau, Fredson Bowers, Oscar Cargill, Malcolm Cowley, Charles E. Feinberg, Milton Hindus, Emory Holloway, Sholom Kahn, and Frederik Schyberg; there is also extensive correspondence related to Allen's early teaching career, to his dealings with several presses, and to the marketing and reception of *The Solitary Singer*. The series also contains some pieces of original correspondence, acquired by Allen, by such notable figures as Richard Watson Gilder, Alice James, and William James.

The Clifton Joseph Furness Papers Series documents the history of Whitman criticism from Whitman's own day to the start of Allen's biography *The Solitary Singer*. Allen acquired Clifton Joseph Furness's papers in 1948; but Furness himself had acquired some of Clara Barrus's papers around the time of her death in 1931; in turn, Barrus, in her role as the literary executor of John Burroughs, had acquired some of Burroughs's papers in the years before his death in 1921. Some further words on this complex and fascinating series are in order.

In his later years, Whitman's comrade John Burroughs appointed as his literary executor Clara Barrus. Apparently she had originally planned to write an extensive study on Whitman and his followers, based on materials found in her Research Files; but in the process of writing this study she narrowed its focus to the relationship between Whitman and Burroughs. During Burroughs's last years, she prepared typescripts of some of his correspondence with Whitman and related figures; for each of these, she solicited Burroughs's comments and copied them in her own hand. Barrus completed her last book, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (1931), with the help of Clifton Joseph Furness, who acquired the materials found in the Clara Barrus Papers Sub-

series, including portions of Barrus's correspondence, of her research materials, and of the manuscript of her study of Whitman and Burroughs.

Furness was in a good position to make use of these materials. He was thought by many of his contemporaries to be the greatest living Whitman scholar. He was in close contact with a number of other Whitman admirers, friends, scholars, and collectors, as his Correspondence Subseries shows. He had spent years collecting information on Whitman and filing it away in several thick ledger notebooks to be found in the Notebooks Subseries. The Writings Subseries suggests that in the 1930s and 1940s Furness had three major Whitman projects under way—a definitive Whitman biography, and extensive Whitman bibliography (in collaboration with Henry Scholey Saunders and David Goodale), and a study of Whitman's reception in New England—none of which was published. In the late 1930s and early 1940s Furness had submitted the manuscript of his Whitman biography to several publishers, who rejected it largely on stylistic grounds; once World War II was well under way, restrictions on publishers made the publication of his massive manuscript impossible. The war also made impossible the collection of data, especially international data, for his Whitman bibliography. Stymied in these projects, Furness began to develop a study of Whitman's reception in New England (tentatively entitled *The Bull in the China Shop*), which never got very far beyond the initial planning stages. With a tremendous wealth of knowledge about Whitman collected but unpublished, Furness passed away.

Shortly thereafter, in 1948, Gay Wilson Allen was able to persuade New York University to purchase for his use Furness's papers, which by now included papers from Barrus and Burroughs as well. Allen contacted David Goodale and Henry Saunders to ask if they would cooperate in the publication of Furness's Whitman bibliography. Both accepted, and at some point—perhaps around Saunders's death in 1951—Allen acquired what appears to be Saunders's revised copy of the portion of Furness's Whitman bibliography concerned with "Biography and Criticism," Part 6 (of 11).

At the time Allen acquired Furness's papers, he had been a Whitman scholar for several years, but had always expected that Furness would author the definitive Whitman biography. When this turned out not to be the case, Allen—with the help of some of the Furness Papers—set about the job himself. The result was Allen's acclaimed *The Solitary Singer* (1955), among the earliest of his many significant contributions to Whitman scholarship. Thus, besides containing a wealth of material about Whitman's life and works, the Clifton Joseph Furness Papers Series of the Allen Papers traces the entire history of Whitman scholarship, from Furness back to Barrus and to Burroughs.

The next series in the Allen Papers, Printed Material and Manuscripts, contains books and monographs, clippings, essays and offprints, periodicals, and book sale catalogs, most of which relate to Allen's scholarly interests. Allen grouped these materials together, although many of them originally belonged to Barrus, Furness, Saunders, Bertha Johnston, John H. Johnston, and other Whitman scholars and enthusiasts.

The Scrapbooks Series contains two oversize scrapbooks, dating chiefly from the mid-to-late 1950s, that contain memorabilia relating to Allen's career as a Whitman scholar.

The Teaching Materials Series helps to document Allen's activities as a professor at New York University and as a lecturer at Nagano, Japan, in 1955, where one of his fellow lecturers was Nobel laureate William Faulkner. The Series includes Japanese newspaper clippings about Faulkner as well as Allen's notes about him.

The Walt Whitman Materials Series contains various materials related to Allen's research on Whitman. The Commemorations and Societies Subseries and the Popular Culture Subseries document the ever increasing interest in Whitman's life and works during the twentieth century. The Correspondence Subseries and Pictures Subseries contain copies of letters and pictures relating to Whitman and his age; the Writings Subseries contains copies of Whitman's poems and prose.

The Walt Whitman Scholars Series contains papers of six Walt Whitman scholars. It suggests the international range both of Whitman scholarship and of Allen's interests. In addition to the interest in Whitman she shared with her husband, Evie Allison Allen was also a skilled translator of Germanic languages. Charles N. Elliot and Emory Holloway, as well as Canadian Henry Scholey Saunders, were Whitman collector-scholars who interacted with both Allen and Furness. The late Peter Mitilineos was one of Allen's students and was particularly interested in the writings of Italian Whitman scholar Pasquale Jannacone. The writings of German Whitman scholar Hans Reisiger were an interest of both Professor and Mrs. Allen.

The Writings Series contains not only copies of Allen's many essays and book reviews but also the various drafts and production stages of several of his books.

Additional information about the Allen Papers and the Hubbell Center may be obtained by writing or calling The Jay B. Hubbell Center, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Box 90185, Durham, North Carolina 27708-0185; phone 919-660-5820; fax 919-684-2855.

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STANLEY S. BLAIR

## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: NAMING THE BRIDGE FOR WALT WHITMAN

Resolved: That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Committee on Bridge Names, designation of the present Delaware River Bridge be changed to the "Benjamin Franklin Bridge," and

Be It Further Resolved: That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Committee on Bridge Names, designation of the Packer Avenue-Gloucester City Bridge be the "Walt Whitman Bridge. . . ."

And so on June 16, 1954, the Delaware River Port Authority Special Committee on Bridge Names voted unanimously to rename the bridge already in existence and to name a second bridge soon to be built in honor of two American heroes.<sup>1</sup> But still to be heard were other voices as a remarkable campaign developed which is best viewed as an instance of democracy in America, though turned against democracy's very champion, Walt Whitman.