

WHITMAN IN CAMDEN CITY DIRECTORIES, 1877-1892

DONALD EDGE

WALT WHITMAN APPEARS in Camden City, New Jersey, directories from 1877 until his death in his Mickle Street home in 1892. His name appears on page 713 of *Howe's Camden City Directory, Containing the Names of the Inhabitants of Camden City, 1891-1892*, where the alphabetical entry reads:

Whitman, Walt, poet, h[ouse]. 328 Mickle

This entry is the same in the directories printed by Howe starting in 1883. The 1891-1892 directory also contains separate listings for:

Davis, Mary O wid[ow] Levin T h[ouse] 328 Mickle

Fritzinger Frank, mariner, h[ouse] 328 Mickle

The directory for 1889-1890 does not contain a Mary O Davis, but it does list:

Fritzinger, Frank, foreman, h 328 Mickle

Fritzinger, Harry M, laborer, h 328 Mickle

In previous directories, by Chew, some details of Whitman's life emerge. He first appears in the city directory in 1877-1878, listed as a boarder at his brother George's house:

Whitman, Walter b[oar]ds 431 Stevens

The next year, in the directory for 1878-79, he is identified as the poet Walt Whitman:

Whitman, Walt, poet, 431 Stevens st.

In 1881-82 he is again "Walter"—

Whitman, Walter, poet, 431 Stevens st.

And in 1882 he is again identified as a boarder:

Whitman, Walter, poet, bds 431 Stevens st.

The directories yield names and details about Whitman's neighbors, as well as the whereabouts and occupations of others close to Whitman—his brother George, for example. The directories list citizens by alphabetical occupation ("poet" is not among them), and they list fraternal organizations, including officers and members. A fruitful source for Whitman scholars, the directories are to be found in the library of the Camden County Historical Society at Park Boulevard and Euclid Avenue in the Parkside neighborhood of Camden, New Jersey. The Library does not permit photocopying of the original directories, but they are available on the library's microfiche.

Cherry Hill, New Jersey