



The New York Public Library  
Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and  
American Literature

Guide to the

**Susan Jaffe Tane collection of Walt Whitman**

1842-2012 [bulk 1950s-1990s]

Berg Coll MSS 186048

Processed by Amy Lau in 2022.

## Summary

**Title:** Susan Jaffe Tane collection of Walt Whitman

**Date:** 1842-2012 [bulk 1950s-1990s]

**Size:** 7.17 linear feet (19 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Susan Jaffe Tane in 2021.

**Abstract:** Susan Jaffe Tane is a philanthropist and collector of Walt Whitman manuscripts, photographs, books, periodicals, and ephemera. The collection chronicles Whitman's legacy through manuscripts, photographs, music scores, sound and video recordings, ephemera, and LGBTQ-related materials associated with Whitman's life and poetry.

**Other Finding Aid:** Inventories are available for some materials, including those described in the Photographs, Manuscripts and Related Material series; Affiliated Scores and Recordings series; and Associated Ephemera and Periodical Clippings series. Please contact division staff for more information.

**Preferred citation:** Susan Jaffe Tane collection of Walt Whitman, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Amy Lau in 2022.

**Separated Materials:**

Rare books, periodicals, and printed matter were separated and cataloged by Special Collections Cataloguing. Five manuscripts unrelated to Walt Whitman were removed from the collection for separate arrangement and description.

## Creator History

Walt Whitman (born 1819 in Huntington, Long Island) was a well-known 19th-century American poet, essayist, and journalist. He grew up and spent much of his career in Brooklyn, New York. Whitman's

famous poetry collection, *Leaves of Grass* (1855, 1891-1892), was continuously expanded, revised, and republished during his lifetime. The collection celebrated the body, soul, nature, and democracy.

During the Civil War, Whitman worked as a government clerk in Washington, D. C., and nursed wounded soldiers. Those experiences influenced his poetry collection, *Drum-Taps* (1865). Whitman's widely recognized poems, "O Captain! My Captain!" (1865) and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1865), addressed the death of President Lincoln.

Whitman died in Camden, New Jersey in 1892.

Susan Jaffe Tane is a philanthropist and collector of Edgar Allen Poe, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman manuscripts, photographs, books, and periodicals. Tane is the former vice president of Utensco, a manufacturing company.

Francis O. Mattson (1931-2013) was a Walt Whitman collector and a former curator of the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. For more than fifty years, Mattson assembled a large collection of Whitman manuscripts; books; periodicals; photographs; broadsides; criticism; audio and video recordings; sheet music; and LGBTQ-related books, periodicals, and ephemera.

## **Custodial History**

In addition to the LGBTQ-related materials in the collection, Francis O. Mattson also collected LGBTQ-related books, periodicals, and broadsides. These items were accessioned with the collection and are currently held at the division. For a list of the items, please see the Additional Resources inventory.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The collection, dating from 1842 to 2012, contains materials compiled by Susan Jaffe Tane that relate to or were created by, Walt Whitman. Except for some photographs, the materials were initially collected by Francis O. Mattson and are associated with Whitman's life and poetry. The bulk of the collection, dating from the 1950s to the 1990s, holds music scores and binders of ephemera from events inspired by Whitman's life and poetry. The rest of the collection is composed of manuscripts, postcards, photographs, a radio script, journal and newspaper clippings, sound and video recordings, and LGBTQ-related materials created by, or about, Whitman.

The collection is arranged into four Series: Photographs, Manuscripts and Related Material; Affiliated Scores and Recordings; Associated Ephemera; and LGBTQ-related Materials.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

American poetry -- New York (State) -- New York

Free verse

Journalists -- United States

LGBT community centers

Poets, American

Poets, American -- 19th century -- Correspondence  
Sexual minorities

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Fliers (Ephemera)  
Manuscripts (documents)  
Photographs  
Scores

**Occupations**

Journalists.  
Poets.

**Names**

Gould, Elizabeth Porter, 1848-1906  
Mattson, Francis O.  
O'Connor, William Douglas, 1832-1889  
Perry, Bliss, 1860-1954  
Tane, Susan Jaffe  
Traubel, Horace, 1858-1919  
Whitman, Walt, 1819-1892  
Berg Collection

## Container List

Series I: Photographs, Manuscripts and Related Material 1869-2008 (2 boxes 0.63 linear feet)

This series, dating from 1869 to 2008, is made up of manuscripts and photographs created by Whitman's friends and associates. Mattson, who compiled the manuscripts, wrote notes about the manuscripts; the series retains his notes. The manuscripts include cards, envelopes, essays, and letters written by Horace Traubel, William Douglas O'Connor, Bliss Perry, and Elizabeth Porter Gould that largely discuss Whitman and his work. There are two envelopes signed by Whitman.

The series also holds photographs that include portraits of Whitman at home in Camden, New Jersey, and in a studio. Of note are five signed Whitman portraits. The rest of the series features photographs of William Douglas O'Connor alone and with his niece, Grace Ellery Channing; a stereograph card of Whitman's birthplace; and two photographs of Gay Wilson Allen.

The material in this series is grouped by format type, then arranged alphabetically.

### Cards, Envelopes, Essays, and Letters

- b. 1 f. 1 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey 1895 May
- b. 1 f. 2 Barrus, Clara 1920s
- b. 1 f. 3 Cowley, Malcolm 1970 June 4
- b. 1 f. 4-5 Dixon, Thomas 1869 June 9
- b. 1 f. 6 Dowden, Edward 1890s
- b. 1 f. 7 Eastman, Max 1943 January 24
- b. 1 f. 8 Fausset, Hugh l'Anson and Emory Holloway 1940 March-April
- b. 1 f. 9-10 Feinberg, Charles E 1982 July 26
- b. 1 f. 11 Gilder, Jeannette L 1901 November 30
- b. 1 f. 12 Gilder, Richard W 1899 August 8
- b. 1 f. 13 Gould, Elizabeth Porter 1893-1902
- b. 1 f. 14 Holland, Josiah Gilbert 1881 June 9
- b. 1 f. 15-16 Ingersoll, Robert G 1880s
- b. 1 f. 17 Ives, Lew T 1892 May 9
- b. 1 f. 18-19 Johnston, John H 1910 July
- b. 1 f. 20 Mabie, Hamilton W 1896 September 17
- b. 1 f. 21-22 O'Connor, William Douglas 1884-1888
- b. 1 f. 23 Osgood, James R 1872 October 10
- b. 1 f. 24 Perry, Bliss 1920s
- b. 1 f. 25-26 Platt, Isaac Hull 1910 June 23
- b. 1 f. 27 Starrett, Vincent circa 1920s
- b. 1 f. 28 Swinton, William 1883 September 14
- b. 1 f. 29 Traubel, Horace L 1892-1911
- b. 1 f. 30 Untermeyer, Louis 1920s
- b. 1 f. 31-32 Whitman, Walt 1880s  
Holds two signed envelopes.

### Photographs

- b. 2 f. 1 Allen, Gay Wilson 1960s

Series I: Photographs, Manuscripts and Related Material (cont.)  
Photographs (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 2-3 O'Connor, William Douglas 1880s-1890s
- b. 2 f. 4 Whitman, Walt 1871-1880s  
Contains five photographs signed by Whitman.

Series II: Affiliated Scores and Recordings 1904-2010 (6 boxes 2.5 linear feet)

This series, dating from 1904 to 2010, incorporates music scores, a radio script, and sound and video recordings compiled by Mattson. The music scores consist of commercial sheet music and songbooks featuring compositions inspired by various Whitman poems. Most of the compositions set Whitman's poems to music. The scores are written for voice, mixed chorus, piano, string orchestra, and brass-percussion ensemble. Two pieces of sheet music, "On the Beach at Night" and "Turn, O Libertad," were owned by Joaquin Nin-Culnell. "On the Beach at Night" is annotated by Nin-Culnell, and "Turn, O Libertad" is signed to Nin-Culnell by the composer, Roger Sessions. The rest of the scores are not annotated or signed.

The series includes a radio script, *The Eagle's Nest*, by Arthur Miller.

Mattson also collected commercial sound and video recordings of music and films loosely affiliated with Whitman's poems, life, and name. The commercial sound recordings include readings of Whitman's poetry, as well as recordings of Whitman's poetry set to music. The rest of the recordings feature three mainstream commercial Hollywood films; a professor's lecture on Whitman; two music bands who produced albums loosely inspired by Whitman; and a university and a high school concert that each contains one song inspired by a Whitman poem.

The material in this series is grouped by format type, then arranged alphabetically.

Radio Script

- b. 2 f. 5 *The Eagle's Nest* 1942

Sheet Music

- b. 2 f. 6 A-B 1961-1979
- b. 2 f. 7 C 1974-2001
- b. 2 f. 8 D 1936-1949
- b. 10 f. 1
- b. 2 f. 9 E-F 1943-1974
- b. 2 f. 10 G-I 1926-2004
- b. 2 f. 11 J 1946
- b. 2 f. 12 L 1919-1983
- b. 2 f. 13 M 1904-1971
- b. 10 f. 2
- b. 3 f. 1 O 1956-1998
- b. 10 f. 3 Box ten, folder three contains sheet music of "On the Beach at Night" annotated by Joaquin Nin-Culnell.
- b. 3 f. 2 P 1904-1948
- b. 3 f. 3-5 S 1908-1990
- b. 10 f. 4
- b. 3 f. 6 T 1926-1982
- b. 10 f. 5 Box three, folder six contains sheet music of "Turn, O Libertad" signed to Joaquin Nin-Culnell from Roger Sessions.
- b. 3 f. 7 V 1924
- b. 3 f. 8 W 1933-1995
- b. 3 f. 9 Y 1968-1972

Sound and Video Recordings

- b. 9 f. 5 Commercial Motion Pictures 1988-2010
- b. 11

Series II: Affiliated Scores and Recordings (cont.)  
Sound and Video Recordings (cont.)

- b. 11      **Commercial Music 1950s-1990**
- b. 9 f. 5
- b. 12
- b. 9 f. 6      **Poetry Readings 1950s-1992**
- b. 11-12
- b. 9 f. 7      **Lecture 2004**
- b. 11-12      **University and High School Concerts 1950s-1964**

Series III: Associated Ephemera and Periodical Clippings 1842-2012 (13 boxes  
4.71 linear feet)

This series, dating from 1842 to 2012 and compiled by Mattson, is composed of bookmarks, commemorative coins, photographs, flyers, theater and dance programs, ink drawings, cigar signs, letters, greeting cards, stickers, stamps, comics, art, subway cards, postcards, journal and newspaper clippings, notes, catalogs, tickets, a speech transcript, and commemorative brochures from societies, schools, events, and landmarks associated with Whitman. The series retains Mattson's groupings by binders, journal and newspaper clippings, folders, and scrapbooks. Most of the items date from the 1960s to the 1990s and are connected tenuously to Whitman. Items in the series range from bookmarks, brochures, flyers, and photographs of Whitman's birthplace to a condition book from the 1962 Walt Whitman Stakes. The series includes Mattson's notes on Whitman and reflects his collecting efforts.

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by binder letter.

- b. 4 f. 1-2      **Binder A 1880s-2007**
- b. 4 f. 3-5      **Binder B 1893-2012**  
Features calendars, train schedules, subway cards, and maps with quotes from, or images of, Whitman.
- b. 4 f. 6-7      **Binder C 1899-2011**  
b. 5 f. 1      Holds calendars, train schedules, subway cards, maps that contain quotes from, or pictures of Whitman. Also includes rare book dealer catalogs that profile Whitman manuscripts and Little Blue Book editions of Whitman's poetry.
- b. 5 f. 2-5      **Binder D 1906-2011**  
Consists of 140 postcards that either mention Whitman, or have an illustration of or quote from Whitman.
- b. 5 f. 6-11      **Binder E 1932-2010**  
Incorporates a ticket, sign, and brochure from the opening of the Walt Whitman Bridge spanning the Delaware River.
- b. 6 f. 1-4      **Binder F 1900-2000s**  
Holds commemorative coins from the opening of the Walt Whitman Bridge and United States Bicentennial. Also features watercolor paintings, ink drawings, and sketches of Whitman created in the 1990s and 2000s.
- b. 6 f. 5-6      **Binder G 1876-2002**  
Contains calendars, train schedules, subway cards, and maps with quotes from, or pictures of, Whitman.
- b. 6 f. 7-8      **Binder H 1919-2001**  
b. 7 f. 1      Is composed of calendars, train schedules, subway cards, and maps with quotes from, or images of, Whitman.
- b. 7 f. 2-4      **Binder I 1881-2009**
- b. 15 f. 1-3      **Binder J 1910s-2009**  
Includes newspaper clippings; facsimile of 1855 edition of *Song of Myself*; flyers for New York City events about Whitman; engravings, drawings, and reproductions of photographs of Whitman; and prints of advertisements that quote, or depict, Whitman.
- b. 7 f. 5      **Hofstra University Conference 1980-1981**
- b. 13-14      **Journal and Newspaper Clippings 1842-1899**  
b. 15 f. 4      Includes clippings from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *New-York Daily Tribune*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Munsey's Magazine*, *Appleton's Journal*, *The Athenaeum*, and *Die Gegenwart Band*.  
b. 16-19

Series III: Associated Ephemera and Periodical Clippings (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 6-11      **Personal Notes, Clippings, Flyers, and Catalogs 1928-2012**
- b. 8 f. 2-4
- b. 10 f. 7-8      **Scrapbooks 2009-2012**
- b. 8 f. 5-6

Series IV: LGBTQ-related Materials 1920s-2007 (3 boxes 1.08 linear feet)

This series, dating from the 1920s to 2007, comprises LGBTQ-related ephemera, magazines, newspapers, a poster, a dance program, a letter, and ink sketches influenced by Whitman that were collected by Mattson. The bulk of the material comprises flyers from various plays, poetry readings, and lectures about or inspired by Whitman. Present are bookmarks from LGBTQ bookstores, a Pride Month Poster from 1989, a 1938 Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers dance program, postcards identifying Whitman as an LGBTQ icon, ink sketches of Civil War Soldiers reading *Leaves of Grass*, and newsletters and journal articles about Whitman's sexuality. Mattson also retained a homophobic open letter to New York Public Library Trustees written by Charles F. Heartman circa 1925 protesting the opening of the Walt Whitman Exhibition due to Whitman's sexuality. The series includes adult magazines and newspapers that contain articles celebrating Whitman's sexuality.

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by format type.

- b. 8 f. 7      **Bookmarks, Brochures, Postcards, Newsletters, and Journals 1977-2007**
- b. 8 f. 8      **Dance Program 1938**
- b. 8 f. 9      **Flyers 1975-1996**
- b. 8 f. 10      **Ink Sketches 1960s**
- b. 8 f. 11      **Letter circa 1925**
- b. 10 f. 6      **Magazines and Newspapers 1955-1995**
- b. 9 f. 1-3
- b. 9 f. 4      **Poster 1989 June**