

WALT WHITMAN AND FOLGER McKINSEY
OR
WALT WHITMAN IN ELKTON, MARYLAND:
A STUDY OF PUBLIC TASTE IN THE 1880's

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ON HIS second trip to America, in June, 1884, Edward Carpenter, an English admirer of Walt Whitman, called on the poet a number of times at his home, 328 Mickle Street, in Camden, New Jersey. During one of his visits, Carpenter later wrote, he and Whitman were joined by Folger McKinsey, "a young Philadelphian of literary leanings."¹ More than a year after having made McKinsey's acquaintance, Carpenter, in a letter of October 23, 1885, inquired of Whitman: "Do you see anything of your friend McKinsey or has he left Philadelphia?"²

Whitman's young friend Folger McKinsey was born in Elkton, Maryland, on August 29, 1866, and received his education in that town. In 1879 the McKinsey family moved to Philadelphia, where Folger became a clerk in a business concern. Soon afterwards, however, he accepted a position in the office of a publishing house, and subsequently became a clerk in the record department of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company. While in the employ of the railroad, he wrote and published his first poem, called "Satana Victo." This was the beginning of a prolific career as a writer of both poetry and prose.³

In October, 1884, some four months after he had spent a pleasant evening with Carpenter and Walt Whitman, McKinsey accepted a position as editor of the *Shore Gazette*, a weekly newspaper published in Ocean Grove, New Jersey.⁴ After filling this position for

* Department of English.

¹ Edward Carpenter, *Days with Walt Whitman* (New York, 1906), p. 41.

² Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (November 1, 1888-January 20, 1889) (New York, 1914), p. 193.

³ George Johnston (ed.), *The Poets and Poetry of Cecil County, Maryland* (Elkton, 1887), p. 247.

⁴ *The Cecil Democrat*, September 19, 1885.

a few months, he returned to Philadelphia to become a special writer for the *Philadelphia Press*.⁵ In September, 1885, he left Philadelphia to take charge of the local department of *The Cecil Whig*, in Elkton, Maryland, and continued in this capacity until the following March, when he became editor of the *Daily and Weekly News* in Frederick City, Maryland.⁶

When Folger McKinsey became associate editor of *The Cecil Whig*, he had just passed his nineteenth birthday. In spite of his youth, he was intensely interested in literature, his favorite American poets being Joaquin Miller and Walt Whitman. In Elkton, McKinsey soon began to play a leading role in the cultural life of the town. On October 26, 1885, he was elected vice-president of the Elkton Lyceum,⁷ which met quite regularly for the next two months for debates, and to hear the reading of poetry and essays, as well as special addresses. McKinsey was an active debater, taking the affirmative side on the question, "Has the local option law of Cecil County accomplished the purpose for which it was instituted?" and upholding the claims of John Adams on the question, "Which did the most towards the formation and perpetuation of the government of the United States, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, or Alexander Hamilton?" Other debates held before the Lyceum, but in which Folger McKinsey apparently had no part, were on such subjects as the following: "Which is the greater benefit to the community, the Old Maid or the Old Bachelor?" and "Resolved that there is more pleasure in anticipation than in possession."⁸

In addition to his activities in the Elkton Lyceum, McKinsey was a member, and very likely one of the founders, of the Pythian Journalists' Club, which held its first banquet at the Deer Park Hotel, in nearby Newark, Delaware, on December 4, 1885. The program at this affair began with an address by the president of the Club, after which James L. Vallandigham, Esq., read a paper on "Historical Reminiscences of a Trip to Virginia in War Time"; William DuHamel contributed a poem, "Scott at Lundy's Lane"; and H. H. Curtis gave an address entitled "The Newspaper." At this meeting letters acknowledging their election to honorary mem-

⁵ *Elkton Appeal*, September 2, 1885.

⁶ *The Cecil Democrat*, February 27, 1886.

⁷ *Ibid.*, October 31, 1885.

⁸ See the October, November, and December issues of *The Cecil Democrat*.

bership were read from George Johnston, J. Clinton Sellers, Scott Way, Joaquin Miller, and Walt Whitman. The meeting concluded with the announcement that the next meeting of the Club would be held in the parlors of the Howard House, in Elkton, early in January.⁹

Whether or not there was any direct connection between the next meeting of the Pythian Journalists' Club and a proposed lecture course in Elkton is not clear, but the following editorial appeared in the *Elkton Appeal* of January 6, 1886:

With commendable enterprise and zeal certain young men of Elkton have undertaken to secure for our citizens a course consisting of five lectures to be delivered during January and February. To make this undertaking a success it needs, as it deserves, the co-operation of our citizens. In a town like Elkton, where we boast of an intelligent population, it should require no great effort to make a movement of this kind succeed, upon the contrary we think it ought to succeed without effort; but from present reports as to the interest manifested in it we are sorry to say such is not the case. During the Winter months we have no entertainments of any kind in Elkton, and it seems to us that the intelligent portion of our citizens would be glad indeed to avail themselves of an entertainment of this character, which not only breaks the monotony, but at the same time brings them in contact with cultured and thoughtful minds, which must prove both agreeable and instructive.

The editorial then went on to urge the citizens of Elkton to contribute liberally, holding out the hope that if sufficient subscriptions could be obtained the lectures would be by some of the most prominent and popular lecturers in the country.

The January 16, 1886, issue of *The Cecil Democrat* announced the first lecture of the series as follows:

The first lecture of the Young Men's Course will be delivered in the Hall in Elkton by Rev. Waldo Messaros on Tuesday evening next, commencing at 8 o'clock. Subject: "From Acorn to Oak." Mr. Messaros is said to be an eloquent speaker and his lectures [are] highly praised by those who have heard it [sic] delivered. Season tickets \$1 each. Regular tickets 25 cents.

The *Elkton Appeal*, which was published on Wednesdays, contained the following notice of the lecture course in its January 20 issue:

⁹ *Elkton Appeal*, December 9, 1885.

The first lecture of the course inaugurated by a company of the Young Men of Elkton, was delivered last evening, by Rev. Waldo Messaros, of Philadelphia.

The next lecture will be by the Rev. Geo. R. Kramer, of Brooklyn, on Friday evening, January 29th. Subject "Eloquence and Elocution."

On Tuesday evening, February 2nd, Walt Whitman, the poet, of Camden, will lecture on "Abraham Lincoln."

Hon. A. K. McClure, editor of the *Philadelphia Times*, will appear during the course.

The Cecil Democrat of January 23, 1886, carried a great deal of information concerning the Young Men's Lecture Course, including a review of the first lecture given, an announcement of Walt Whitman's coming appearance in the series, and a long account of a visit to the Camden poet. All three notices apparently were written by George Johnston, local editor of *The Cecil Democrat* and member of the Pythian Journalists' Club. Of the lecture given by the Reverend Waldo Messaros, the reviewer wrote:

The opening lecture of the young men's course in this town was delivered on Tuesday night last by the Rev. Waldo Messaros of Philadelphia. The lecture was entitled, "From Acorn to Oak," and while it was not a discourse upon trees, the lecturer discoursed upon pretty much everything else that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. The lecture was intended to show the design of the Almighty in creating and developing the American people. In order to do this the lecturer began away back among the aborigines and presented several ingenious theories respecting their origin, and then went back still further and talked about the age of this Continent in which the little acorn which was planted at Plymouth Rock has grown to be a great and powerful nation, and said that the Continent was the oldest of all the land on the face of the earth. As a whole, the lecture was a good one and highly appreciated by the audience, but if it had been boiled down and delivered in one hour instead of nearly two, it would have been better. Mr. Messaros is apparently not a deep thinker nor a very close or logical reasoner, but he is evidently a close student and capable of making much out of very little, but is withal a pleasing and fluent speaker.¹⁰

¹⁰ The *Elkton Appeal* for February 10, 1886, reported that Professor Hartley was going to lecture at the Oratory at Delaware College on February 12. By some strange coincidence, the subject of his lecture was to be "From Acorn to Oak."

In the "Local Department," under "Minor Locals," appeared the following notice concerning Whitman:

The managers of the Young Men's Lecture Course have engaged the world-renowned Walt Whitman, who will lecture in Odd Fellows Hall, in this town, on Tuesday evening, February 2nd. Subject, "Horace Greeley." The writings of no other living man have created so much discussion in the literary world as those of Walt Whitman, and our citizens will do well to avail themselves of this opportunity to hear and see the friend of Lord Tennyson, and the person whom the critics of the old world rank as the greatest and best poet of America. For some further information respecting Mr. Whitman see the article headed "Walt Whitman at Home" in another column.

In the article entitled "Walt Whitman at Home. A Visit to the Good Gray Poet of Camden," the writer, who signs himself as Quilp, and who presumably was George Johnston, mentions that he was accompanied by someone else. This companion probably was Folger McKinsey, who, as a personal friend of Whitman, must have made the arrangements for the visit. Unfortunately I have been able to locate issues of only two newspapers out of the four or five newspapers published in or near Elkton in 1885-1886. Copies of *The Cecil Whig* for this period would no doubt reveal more concerning the call on Whitman since McKinsey was associate editor of that paper. The account in *The Cecil Democrat* is in itself of extreme interest, and since it has never been republished anywhere else, I am going to quote it in full.

Saturday, December 12th, 1885, was a bright sunshiny day, the memory of which will linger long in the mind of the writer, and to which he will look back with feelings of reverence and respect for the destiny which threw him in contact with the good white-haired poet of Camden, the world-renowned Walt Whitman; the poet par excellence of the nineteenth century, the exponent of the millennial splendors and harmonies which greeted the prophetic vision of Holy John in the Patmian Isle; the interpreter and expounder of that which is to be, when the latter day glories of modern civilization and development have been brought to perfection, and science and poetry and religion shall have been blended into an intellectual trinity, for the enlightenment and elevation of mankind; Walt Whitman, the hoary-headed poet and priest, who for a quarter of a century, in spite of the jeers and frowns of humanity, has kept bright the flame of the true poetic fire which he himself kindled in the

long ago beneath the altar in the new temple, which he in early manhood dedicated to the worship of the phantasms that the next generation may see resolved into a sublime and glorious reality. We, for the writer was accompanied by a friend, found the old sage in a small frame tenement in one of the thoroughfares of Camden, N. J., where he has resided for some years. His house is not large, and is quite as unpretentious as the man himself. A few gentle taps brought his housekeeper, who is also maid of all work, to the door, and we were ushered into the presence of the friend of Lord Tennyson; the unknowable, the incomprehensible, the undefinable Walt Whitman. He occupied an [sic] easy chair in the northeast corner of the room, which was apparently about twelve by fourteen feet. His hair and beard, both of which were white as the driven snow and of great length, blended beautifully with the hair on a robe made of the hide of a prairie wolf, which covered the chair in which he sat, and differed little from it, except that some of the hair on the robe was slightly flecked with black. Indeed, the hair of the man was so much like the hair of the beast, that it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other; and his face, as he greeted us kindly and shook us warmly by the hand, would have seemed, had we been a little farther away from it, as the broad, bright sun shining through a halo of the thinnest vapor which its rays were powerless to dispel, but in doing so irradiated it with an unearthly glory, so bright and genial was the good-natured smile that played upon the old man's countenance, and so warm and captivating and magnetic were the glimpses we now and then caught of the inner part of the man that was hidden behind this strange exterior.

On the wall over the mantel-piece was suspended a portrait of one of the poet's ancestors, who came from Holland about a century and three-quarters ago. It was well preserved, and had as meek an expression of countenance as Moses may have been supposed to have had when he stood on the mountain top and looked across Jordan into the promised land, after the toils and trials of forty years in the wilderness. In the recesses on either side of the chimney were portraits of the poet's father and mother. They looked as if they might have been good-natured, mild-mannered people who were in love with nature and with themselves.

We didn't think of it at the time, but it appears to us since that there might have been just a little resemblance between the portrait of the poet's mother and the poet himself, but we are sure there was not much.

Scattered over the mantel-piece and the table and suspended on the walls were photographs of the poet's friends. They lay around loose, like snow flakes in winter time; sometimes they

were piled up in drifts, and possibly some of them were on the floor. Of books there were many, and, like the pictures, they were scattered everywhere around the room; on the chairs, on the sofa, on the floor; most of them shut, but some of them open as if they sought to drink in the wild, weird music of their owner's voice, and were trying to catch the words of wisdom that fell from his lips and made the little room where he dwelt an intellectual Mecca for the poets of all nations and all climes.

Shortly after we entered, two other visitors came into the room. They were young ladies just ready to bloom into early womanhood—pupils from Bryn Mawr College. They walked straight up to the venerable figure in the chair and, gently laying one arm on the old man's shoulder, reverently kissed his cheek.

Pretty soon the writer made an incidental remark about the growth of the new Philadelphia City Hall, and the old man remarked that he often gazed upon it from a distance, and it always seemed to him like the airy fabric of a vision, and even its unfinished tower as it pointed skyward was a shape of beauty, notwithstanding Goss [*sic*], the English poet, had said it was the ugliest thing he had seen in America.

After a casual remark by one of the young ladies which led the old man to say that it wasn't a nice thing to be a literary hack and write for people whenever they ask you, one of the girls rejoined, "But doesn't it make you feel good to think of what will come after you?" This pointed question, which may be pardoned in consideration of the artless innocence and inexperience of the questioner, the sage seemed to think demanded something more than a categorical answer, and he proceeded to make a deliverance upon the subject of the implied implication of writing for posthumous fame, and in his curiously quaint and philosophical manner proceeded to say that no great writer thought of the future, but wrote as the guiding spirit of his inner manhood prompted him at the moment, without any regard to futurity, and that he didn't believe Shakspeare wrote the half of the sonnets attributed to him, for the reason, as he seemed to wish us to think, of their intense egotism. Continuing, he said, "Some of the wilder or more daring of the poets, such, for instance, as Hugo and Keats, may have written for futurity, but not so Tennyson; he wrote to please himself and his family, and accepted his lordship for that reason. The trend of his early writings was radical, but he had become conservative like Emerson, who left his pulpit and evolved from a priest into a philosopher. Whittier," he continued, "is rather radical, but most of them are conservative as they should be. Nature is conservative, but her power for breaking down the mystical is amply provided for. The reason

is good, but there is something like Socrates' demon behind it. His demon did not command him to do things, but not to do things; for instance, not to escape from the death penalty. This," said the sage, "was the spirit which impelled me to write the 'Leaves of Grass,' wherein I have sought to embody the lessons it taught me." Just here the writer ventured to ask if that wasn't the same idea expressed by Shakspeare when he says there is a divinity which shapes our ends? "Yes," he replied, "possibly it may be," but, while his voice said yes, his manner of saying it meant no, and we could not resist the conclusion that in the deepest recesses of his soul he referred to something grander, and higher, and nobler, and better, than the divinity to which the immortal dramatist referred. What it may have been we cannot tell, for the conversation of the poet is as hard to comprehend as his poetry. His attempt to express his own opinion of the spirit which guided him, seemed like the vain effort of a bird with broken pinion trying to rise and soar heavenward. Frequently he hesitated and halted for a word, and then his thoughts went back as it were along the pathway he had trod to look for it, and while doing this he repeated himself and went on, only to do the same thing again and again. It was like the finite attempting to grasp the infinite; it was mortality trying to express the immortal emotions and gorgeous conceptions that struggled for an outlet but failed to find it; but his conversation, with all its incomprehensibility, impressed the writer with a consciousness of his own insignificance, as compared with the gigantic intellect of the intellectual giant in whose presence he stood, and left a pervading sense of the indescribable pleasure like that produced by reading his poetry, the intellectual essence of which may be felt, but the effect of which cannot be described.

At the conclusion of the interview, which we have tried to describe, the young ladies took an affectionate leave of the venerable philosopher, one of them leaving the prints of her fresh young lips on his cheek, and the other taking the print of his lips which he impressed upon her cheek away with her.

There may be parts of Walt Whitman's poetry so incomprehensibly common, so deeply obscure, as to suggest the idea that they are immoral, but no one can see the author of them face to face and hear him talk, and not be convinced of the purity, the wisdom, and the goodness of the man. He that in the chilling midnight air and amid the falling dew on the bloody field of battle lay beside the wounded soldiers that the warmth of his body might warm them into life, and did it so frequently that he became a hopeless paralytic, can't have a bad heart; can't be amenable to the charge of intentional immorality.

In its January 27 issue the *Elkton Appeal* again announced the

Reverend George R. Kramer's lecture on "Eloquence and Elocution" and also the lecture to be given by Walt Whitman. Apparently taking a cue from *The Cecil Democrat*, the *Appeal*, which had earlier advertised Whitman's subject as "Abraham Lincoln," now switched to "Horace Greeley." The same notice informed *Appeal* readers that "Walt has written considerable poetry which ordinary folks have not been able to understand; but as he will read several pieces on this occasion, perhaps he will be able to so present it as to make it plain."

Contradicting the *Appeal's* statement on the subject of Whitman's lecture and correcting his earlier mistake, the writer for *The Cecil Democrat* unwittingly made another error in reporting the relationship between Whitman and Lincoln in the following article:

In noticing the young men's course of lectures last week we stated that the subject of the lecture on Tuesday evening next would be "Horace Greeley." This is not true, and we knew it just as well last week as we do now, but for some reason unknown to ourself or any other person we bungled and botched the matter, notwithstanding our great desire to get it exactly right. The fact is that the subject of Mr. Whitman's lecture will be "The Death of Abraham Lincoln." Mr. Whitman was upon terms of close intimacy with Mr. Lincoln and occupied a seat by his side when the fatal shot that killed the martyred President was fired. Having been present he is well qualified to give an accurate account of the tragedy. His description of the assassin is said to be one of the finest specimens of word painting extant. The lecture was delivered in Boston in 1881, and was highly commended by the critics of that city, which is a sufficient guarantee of its worth.¹¹

Although the *Appeal* appeared on the day following Whitman's lecture, no notice of the event got into the February 3 edition. It did contain a brief review of Mr. Kramer's lecture of January 29, which had given great satisfaction because the speaker "is one of the few men who is able to illustrate the subject of his lecture." The reviewer also scolded persons who indulged in talking or loud whispering at a lecture and pointed out that if they incurred public rebuke for thus disregarding the comfort and rights of their fellow man, they got only what they deserved.

The Cecil Democrat of February 6 reviewed Whitman's lecture on the death of Lincoln, which the poet had first delivered in New

¹¹ *The Cecil Democrat*, January 30, 1886.

York in 1879 and then in Boston in 1881, and which he read in Philadelphia on April 15, 1886, a little more than two months after reading it in Elkton. In writing of Whitman's Elkton appearance, the reviewer found himself on the defensive after all the publicity he had given the occasion. He wrote:

Walt Whitman, the greatest celebrity in the American literary world, lectured in this town on the "Death of Abraham Lincoln" on last Tuesday night, to a well-filled house and to the gratification of those who were capable of understanding and appreciating his peculiar, though by no means eloquent style, as eloquence is now generally understood. Mr. Whitman's style was in striking contrast with that of the two lecturers who have preceded him. He is 66 years of age, and so infirm from paralysis that he is unable to stand upon his feet while delivering his lecture; it is therefore not to be expected that he should play the role of the monkey or the parrot, and mimic everything in Heaven above and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth; nor is it to be expected that he should rival the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero. But it was expected that he would give a truthful account of the death of the martyred President in his own peculiar manner, and couched in such phraseology as he deemed best adapted to the subject. This he did, and in our opinion did well, though candor compels us to say a large number of his auditors would probably disagree with us, and maintain with great vehemence that the lecture was a failure; and we must confess that from their standpoint we agree with them. It would be strange indeed, if in a town which furnished a large audience nightly for two weeks in succession last summer to listen to a lot of charlatans and mountebanks that everybody holding tickets in the Young Men's Lecture Course would have been pleased with the effort of Mr. Whitman. However, those who were disappointed should remember that Mr. Whitman has delivered this identical lecture before the most cultivated and refined audiences in Boston, which has not inappropriately been styled the Athens of America, to their entire satisfaction and delight, which seems to indicate that the failure of an Elkton audience to appreciate and enjoy it, was not so much the fault of the lecture as of their want of ability to discern its beauties. Mr. Whitman, who has not inaptly been styled the Homer of America, is not the only poet whom his countrymen have failed to appreciate. Though his immortal prototype begged his bread from door to door, no sooner was he dead than seven cities disputed the honor of being his birthplace, and four others contended for the honor of furnishing a sepulchre for his body.

The Elkton *Appeal* noted Whitman's lecture briefly in its February 10 issue, commenting, "There is some diversity of opinion as to the merits of the lecture. Mr. Whitman was the guest while here of the Pythian Journalist Club." In a letter of March 18, 1886, to his friend John Burroughs, Whitman himself wrote concerning his lecture on Lincoln delivered in Elkton and in Camden as follows:

Have read my Death of Abraham Lincoln paper twice this spring, on application (\$25 and 30)—got along with it rather slowly, but didn't break down, and seems to have given a sort of satisfaction.¹²

Apparently the Hon. A. K. McClure of Philadelphia could not come to Elkton to lecture as promised earlier by the *Appeal*, with the result that the Reverend Waldo Messaros was recalled, by popular demand, for a lecture on February 9. Ironically enough, *The Cecil Democrat* of February 6 carried an announcement of the Messaros lecture in the column next to the one in which the reviewer of Whitman's talk made unfavorable allusions to the previous performance of the "Greek Orator," as Messaros was better known to his audiences. The contempt of George Johnston for this popular lecturer, and for the taste of his audience, can be easily detected in the following brief review of Messaros' second appearance in Elkton:

Rev. Waldo Messaros' lecture on "Old Maids" on Tuesday evening last was well attended, and quite as eloquent as the other one he delivered in this town a few weeks ago. The reverend gentleman seems to be a very versatile and eloquent genius, and what he don't know about old maids is not worth finding out.¹³

On March 24, 1886, the *Appeal* observed that the Reverend Waldo Messaros was going to lecture in the Oratory of Delaware College, in Newark, Delaware, on the following day, and advised the people of Newark and vicinity to patronize the grand treat by all means. Taking into consideration the great success of the "Greek Orator" in Elkton and the poor reception of Whitman's lecture, the Reverend Waldo Messaros' talk on "Old Maids" may well have attracted the citizens of Newark, who had provided only a moderate sized audience for the great pulpit orator, the Reverend

¹² Clara Barrus, *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades* (Boston, 1931), p. 260.

¹³ *The Cecil Democrat*, February 13, 1886.

Henry Ward Beecher, when he lectured in Newark on "The Reign of the Common People" some three weeks earlier, on March 1.¹⁴

The last lecture in the Elkton Young Men's Course was delivered on March 23, 1886, by the Reverend Doctor J. Richard Boyle, of Grace Church, Wilmington, Delaware, who spoke on "William the Silent."¹⁵ In his review of this talk, the writer in *The Cecil Democrat* summed up the lecture series by saying, "The people of Elkton are under a great debt to the enterprising managers of the course for the enjoyment they derived from these lectures, and we are sorry they took no greater pains to liquidate their obligations."¹⁶ Although this course of lectures failed to provide the most prominent and popular lecturers in the country, as promised by the *Appeal* editorial of January 6, the series will be remembered because Walt Whitman visited Elkton to read his famous lecture on the death of Abraham Lincoln¹⁷ and ran a poor second to the Reverend Waldo Messaros in public esteem.

Folger McKinsey, who had been responsible for Whitman's appearance in Elkton, resigned as associate editor of *The Cecil Whig* toward the end of February, 1886, and left for his new field of labor in Frederick City, Maryland, early in March before the final lecture had been delivered. On January 4, 1886, while he was still living in Elkton, he had married Miss Frances Holenrake Dungan, of Frankford, Pennsylvania, in Camden, New Jersey,¹⁸ possibly to permit Whitman's attendance at the wedding. After McKinsey left Elkton, his editorials and poems printed in the *Frederick City News* attracted the attention of the Baltimore publishers, who began bidding for his services.¹⁹ In 1898 he joined the *Baltimore News* and later became its managing editor. Early in 1906 he went to the *Washington Post*, but joined the *Baltimore Sun* in April of the same year. The *Bentztown Bard*, a title McKinsey had acquired in Frederick City, became the first columnist of *The Sun*,

¹⁴ See the Elkton *Appeal*, February 17, 24; March 10, 24, 1886.

¹⁵ Elkton *Appeal*, March 17, 1886.

¹⁶ *The Cecil Democrat*, March 27, 1886.

¹⁷ At this point I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mrs. Ethyl Howard Rowe, of Elkton, Maryland, who first told me about Walt Whitman's visit to Elkton and directed me to the pages of *The Cecil Democrat* for further information.

¹⁸ *Baltimore Sun*, January 3, 1936.

¹⁹ Paul Winchester and Frank D. Webb (eds.), *Newspapers and Newspaper Men of Maryland Past and Present* (Baltimore, 1905), p. 96.

contributing a daily column of prose and verse to that paper.²⁰ In 1907 he published, in Baltimore, *A Rose of the Old Regime and Other Poems of Home-Love and Childhood*, and in 1911 he published, again in Baltimore, a volume called *Songs of the Daily Life*. Among other poems he wrote "Baltimore, Our Baltimore," the official song of that city, set to music by Emma Hemberger.²¹ Folger McKinsey's distinguished career came to an end with his death in 1950.

Thus the "young Philadelphian of literary leanings" referred to by Edward Carpenter carried his literary ambitions to fruition. And until the death of Walt Whitman in 1892 "he was honored by the closest personal friendship of the poet, a man who drew few of his acquaintances close to him, making this selection all the more complimentary."²²

ADDENDUM

In his "Additional Note" written in 1887 for the English edition of *Specimen Days*, Walt Whitman wrote: ". . . commemorated Abraham Lincoln's death on the successive anniversaries of its occurrence, by delivering my lecture on it ten or twelve times."¹ Three years later, in an article published in the *Boston Transcript*, April 19, 1890, Whitman wrote of his Lincoln lecture in Philadelphia on April 15, 1890, "We believe the delivery on Tuesday was Whitman's thirteenth of it."² Although this article was published anonymously, it was written by Whitman himself, according to the testimony of Williams Sloane Kennedy.³

In spite of Whitman's own statements on the subject, his biographers and other authorities have differed in their estimates of the number of times the poet delivered his lecture on the martyred President. Thus Henry Bryan Binns, in his *Life of Whitman*, London, 1905, set the number at thirteen,⁴ as did Emory Holloway, who wrote in his *Whitman, An Interpretation in Narrative*, New York, 1926, "The Lincoln lecture was delivered each year for thirteen. . . ."⁵ William E. Barton, on the other hand, in his *Abraham*

²⁰ Gerald W. Johnson and others, *The Sunpapers of Baltimore* (New York, 1937), p. 262.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Paul Winchester and Frank D. Webb (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

¹ Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days in America* (London, 1887), p. 310.

² *Boston Transcript*, April 19, 1890.

³ William Sloane Kennedy, *The Fight of a Book for the World* (West Yarmouth, Mass., 1926), p. 270.

⁴ P. 332.

⁵ P. 297.

Lincoln and Walt Whitman, an exhaustive study of Whitman's lectures on Lincoln, published in 1928, concluded that most of the biographers of the poet had overestimated the number of times Whitman had delivered his lecture on Lincoln's death. According to Barton's own investigations, Whitman read his paper on "The Death of Abraham Lincoln" on the following occasions: (1) April 14, 1879, in Steck Hall, New York; (2) April 15, 1880, in Association Hall, Philadelphia; (3) April 15, 1881, in the Hawthorne Rooms, Boston; (4) March 1, 1886, in Morton Hall, Camden; (5) April 15, 1886, in the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia; (6) April 6, 1887, in Unity Church, Camden; (7) April 15, 1887, in Madison Square Theatre, New York; (8) April 14, 1889, in New York; and (9) April 15, 1890, in the Art Club Rooms, Philadelphia.⁶

Since he was able to discover only nine Whitman lectures on Lincoln, Barton considered Whitman's own comments concerning the number of times he delivered his lecture as untrustworthy. "He was not very accurate in his count of such matters," wrote Barton.⁷ We must agree with Clifton Joseph Furness, however, that if we do not accept Whitman's own testimony, then the whole matter seems impossible of any conclusive settlement.⁸

As we have already seen, on March 18, 1886, Whitman wrote to his friend John Burroughs:

Have read my Death of Abraham Lincoln paper twice this spring, on application (\$25 and 30)—got along with it rather slowly, but didn't break down, and seems to have given a sort of satisfaction.⁹

Barton cites one of the above-mentioned lectures as taking place in Camden on March 1, but he does not have any reference to another one prior to March 18, 1886. In her book *Whitman and Burroughs, Comrades*, Boston, 1931, Clara Barrus, in a footnote to Whitman's letter to Burroughs, recorded her bewilderment over the poet's statement:

There seems to be some confusion in the data concerning Whitman's Lincoln lectures this year [1886]. The Reverend W. E. Barton gives one of the lectures as taking place March 1, in Morton Hall, Camden. The *Camden Coast Pilot* of March 6, records a Lincoln lecture by Whitman in Camden in Morgan Hall, and the *Philadelphia Press* for March 2, also reports the same event. It is not probable that Camden had both a Morton and a Morgan Hall where Whitman lectured early in March, and yet, on March 18, Whitman had written of having already given his lecture twice that spring. We know that he gave one later, April 15 of that year, in Philadelphia. It is probably owing to insufficient and confusing data that Whitman and other authorities

⁶ William E. Barton, *Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman* (Indianapolis, 1928), pp. 194-214.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁸ Clifton Joseph Furness (ed.), *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 203.

⁹ See n. 12 above.

differ in stating the number of Whitman's Lincoln lectures as anywhere from nine to a baker's dozen, although Whitman has been charged with magnifying the number of his lectures by one who has found himself unable to ferret out the full number claimed.

That Whitman's statement in his letter to Burroughs was accurate is proved by his lecture in Elkton, Maryland, on February 2, 1886.¹⁰

Whitman's lecture in Elkton raises the number of authenticated lectures to ten. If we were to accept Emory Holloway's statement that Whitman delivered his last tribute to Lincoln in Philadelphia, in April, 1891,¹¹ an assertion which Holloway did not document and which does not agree with the account given in other biographies, it would bring the number of Whitman's lectures to eleven. Even without this unauthenticated lecture, however, the above-discussed lecture in Elkton gives added substance to Whitman's statement in 1887 that he had delivered his lecture on Lincoln's death ten or twelve times. Perhaps future research will uncover additional lectures, bringing the final count to thirteen, the number mentioned by Whitman in his Boston *Transcript* article of 1890.

¹⁰ Whitman's lecture in Elkton was first cited twenty years ago by Rollo G. Silver, who published a brief note on it in an English periodical. See Rollo G. Silver, "Walt Whitman's Lecture in Elkton," *Notes and Queries*, CLXX (March 14, 1936), 190-91.

¹¹ Emory Holloway, *op. cit.*, p. 313.