



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20506
Room 420

Email: CHALLENGE@NEH.GOV

Phone: (202) 606-8309 FAX:
-8579

WWW.NEH.GOV

SAMPLE PROPOSAL

This narrative portion from an NEH Challenge Grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is only an example, not a template. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects the institution's unique programs and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff in the NEH Office of Challenge Grants well before the application deadline.

Purpose: Endow the Walt Whitman Archive

Institution: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Amount of Final Award: \$500,000

Formatting of sample proposals may vary from that suggested by program guidelines. Applicants should consult the Challenge Grant application guidelines at www.neh.gov for instructions.

The Walt Whitman Archive



Narrative

The year 2005 marks the 150th anniversary of the first publication of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), the founding book of American literary democracy. Before Whitman, America was politically independent but culturally bound to British fashions and traditions. Whitman called for writers "essentially different from the old poets, and from the modern succession of jinglers, and snivelers, and fops." Many early readers were puzzled by *Leaves of Grass*, but Henry David Thoreau warmed to the volume and lauded Whitman as "apparently the greatest democrat the world has ever seen." A distinguished political theorist in our own day, George Kateb of Princeton University, concurs: "Whitman is a great philosopher of democracy. Indeed, he may be the greatest" in part because he writes the "best sentences and phrases about democracy." Whitman imbued his art with the political vision of the founders, making freedom and equality the guiding principles that literally shaped the form and content of *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman's radical new work was based on experimenting with a voice that refused to discriminate, and with a poetic line that opened itself to a teeming variety of experience while balancing the individual elements of that diversity. Not surprisingly, American culture has been in an incessant conversation with Whitman ever since—a dialogue about democracy, poetry, love, death, and the endless

permutations of life that he believed would define America and eventually produce a republic equal to its ideals. Whitman's extraordinary cultural afterlife crosses art forms to shape fiction, music, architecture, painting, and dance. His words and his image are also prominent in popular culture, regularly appearing in films, television programs, popular music, and advertising—as well as in our political discourse. He is central to the ongoing process of regenerating and revivifying democracy.

Significance and Intellectual Quality of Humanities Activities

Walt Whitman was the son of Walter Whitman, Sr., a proud Revolutionary patriot who gave these names to three of his sons: Andrew Jackson Whitman, Thomas Jefferson Whitman, and George Washington Whitman. Like his father, Walt Whitman always worked with the democratic principles of the founders never far from his mind. Widely hailed as the poet of democracy, he gave voice to an inclusive society, left an incomparable record of antebellum America and the nation-defining crisis of the Civil War, and helped articulate the new national identity that gradually emerged in the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction years. For Whitman, an American democracy fully responsive to a varied people was not an achievement to be celebrated but a hope to be fulfilled. He noted in *Democratic Vistas* that the "word democracy is a great word whose history remains unwritten because that history has yet to be enacted." Whitman is America's central cultural spokesman: it is no hyperbole to say that what Homer was to Greece and what Dante was to Italy, Whitman is to the United States.

The *Walt Whitman Archive* is making available, in a way never before attempted, a complete record of this "American bard," thus giving the general public and scholars at all levels the opportunity to read and study his writings. Ed Folsom of the University of Iowa and Kenneth M. Price of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) co-edit the *Walt Whitman Archive*. The *Whitman Archive* <<http://www.whitmanarchive.org>> is best described as a *digital thematic research collection*, a newly emerging literary form (Carole Palmer in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman et al., 2004, 348-65). The *Whitman Archive* meets the same needs addressed in the familiar multi-volume scholarly edition, while also addressing needs that go well beyond the capacity of a print edition. A

digital thematic research collection might be described as a laboratory for the humanities that approaches the ideal of amassing all needed research materials in a single location. Thematic research collections embrace many types of materials not seen in typical print editions devoted to an individual writer. The *Whitman Archive*, for example, already includes teaching materials, a substantial biography of the poet, all 131 photographs of Whitman (with full annotations), searchable finding guides to manuscripts, a regularly updated annotated bibliography of scholarship since 1975, a growing body of critical work, and a great deal of contextual material, both encyclopedia entries about various topics relating to Whitman and selected writings by Whitman's associates. Also included is material related to the building of the site: essays about the *Archive*, technical documentation, text encoding guidelines for the staff and for curious visitors (not to mention future builders of other electronic archives), and more. Despite significant overall progress, we have accomplished only about one-fourth of the editorial work we have outlined. The *Whitman Archive* is scrupulously documenting its course, false steps and all, because of a conviction that the shift from print to electronic editing is a matter of real consequence. We anticipate a future generation of scholars who will migrate Whitman materials into another system, while reusing, expanding, and perhaps refining our work.

No print-based edition of Whitman can do justice to his vast and fluid poetry because of limitations of space and economy. An electronic edition—searchable, open to corrections and new discoveries, and accessible globally at all hours of the day and night—has significant advantages over a print edition. High quality color facsimiles of fragile documents are reproduced on the site and can be endlessly manipulated by users without damage to the original artifacts. In comparison to a print edition, an electronic edition can also be far more capacious. We are now building on the solid base of a decade's worth of work to create a fully realized digital thematic research collection. The *Archive* demonstrates that sophisticated electronic textuality can overcome many of the limitations of print-based presentation. We have been very pleased by the positive response to our work as seen in articles in the *Washington Post* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, in the *Choice* Outstanding Academic Book award given to a CD-ROM edited by the co-directors of the *Archive*, and in the high volume of traffic to our site.

Many signs point to the importance of Whitman. Since 1990, over 120 books and well over 1,100 articles have been published about Whitman, his work, and his relationship to American history, American culture, and cultures around the world. This remarkable outpouring of scholarly work is matched by a popular admiration of Whitman: few of America's great writers continue to generate as much interest in the wider culture as the poet of *Leaves of Grass*. He continues to speak powerfully to Americans in many ways. In recent years his words have been inscribed in public areas with increasing frequency: on the balcony overlooking the main terminal of Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., in the Archives-Navy Memorial Metro Station (where his words reach across a sea-wave sculpture to the words of Fernando Pessoa, a Portuguese poet and admirer of Whitman), on the balustrade at Battery Park in New York, and at the entry of the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin (built according to Frank Lloyd Wright's specifications, including the inscription from his favorite American poet). He was a central voice in Ken Burns's magisterial *Civil War* series for PBS and again for Ric Burns's PBS series on New York. He has been a key figure in more than twenty films in the past two decades and is continually invoked, portrayed, and celebrated in political speeches, television programs, musical compositions (from classical to pop), and paintings. Schools, bridges, summer camps, corporate centers, truck stops, political think tanks, and shopping malls are named after him. Whitman's inclusive vision of democracy, his celebration of the breadth and diversity of the American nation, resonates in a nation still seeking to fulfill its democratic promise.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the voluminous commentary on Whitman is that it spans the range of critical and theoretical approaches and methodologies. There are New Historical studies of Whitman, feminist studies, gay studies, deconstructions, close readings, comparative examinations, textual studies, and biographical approaches. Whitman is one of very few American authors who has remained a vital figure throughout the sometimes bewildering changes in critical fashions. He is perhaps the only American writer to have successfully made the transition from "canonical" writer to "marginal" writer: as literary critics came more and more to celebrate the marginal elements of the culture, Whitman re-emerged as a writer from the working class, as well as a writer with radical and unconventional

attitudes toward sexuality. In some fascinating ways, he has been reinvented as a writer who has more in common with the edgier and challenging marginal authors in America than with the more centrist mainstream writers. The "poet of democracy" has remained a democratic writer, but one with more radical ideas than previously detected. Such reinventions of Whitman have characterized the response to him ever since he himself created a fluid identity in his poetry and in photographic portraits of himself, shifting from a Broadway dandy to a journeyman laborer, from a tough-talking journalist to a gentle nurse, from a young "rough" to an aged prophet. Since his death, his readers continue to find aspects of his work that often contradict each other (as he warned they would), but that open the way for reading him as a socialist, a capitalist, a nationalist, an internationalist, a racialist, a multicultural sage. He has proved to be (as he said he was) "large" and to "contain multitudes." The great value of that multitudinous vastness is that it continues to provoke debate and discussion about the meaning and direction of a vast and multitudinous nation.

Whitman's growing significance is not limited to the United States, however. He has, in fact, had greater impact on world literature than any other American writer. As parts of *Leaves of Grass* have been translated into every major language over the last century, Whitman has taken on new cultural identities as other nations have absorbed him into their own literary traditions. Hundreds of poets—Spanish-speaking poets from Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Spain; German-speaking poets; French poets; Russian poets; Chinese poets; Japanese poets; Arabic poets—have been influenced in significant ways by their reading of Whitman, adapting his democratic messages to the challenges faced by other cultures. Whitman becomes again and again an immigrant in foreign literary traditions—and thus continues to have a dramatic impact on poetic development and democratic philosophy around the world. He has become a major exporter of American democratic ideas to the rest of the world. He has been associated with political reform in Germany, Russia, China, and other countries. Thomas Mann, for example, wrote in 1922, "We Germans who are old and immature at one and the same time can benefit from contact with this personality, symbol of the future of humanity, if we are willing to accept him . . . for I see what Walt Whitman calls 'Democracy' is essentially nothing else than what we, in a more old-

fashioned way, call 'Humanity.'" Whitman's work has also served as the basis for evolving theories of democracy both in the U.S. and other nations. Not only has Whitman been viewed as a champion for an ever-greater democracy that empowers an ever-greater number of people in our own country, but he has served as a springboard for thinkers and writers in other countries who have built upon and expanded his ideas of democracy. Pedro Mir, for example rewrote "Song of Myself" as "Countersong to Walt Whitman: Song of Ourselves," adapting Whitman's conceptions of democracy for the emerging democracies of Latin America, emphasizing a "we-based" democracy over an "I-based" one.

Whitman stands at the center of a wide-ranging cultural debate encompassing the history of sexuality and sensuality in American culture, evolving theories of democracy, the development of radically new forms of socially conscious poetry, and a testing of the boundaries between prose and poetry. Even attempts to spawn an international poetics (where poets from various cultures engage in energetic dialogue across national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries) will be significantly influenced by the synthesizing, searchable archive that we are producing.

Jerome McGann, whose theoretical writings and practical example put him at the forefront of electronic editorial projects, has described the *Whitman Archive* as "one of the most significant editorial ventures in American studies ever undertaken." The *Archive*, already large, will become truly massive and increasingly valuable as work continues. The last editors of Whitman comprised a team of eight scholars working over a fifty-year period to produce twenty-five print volumes, *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*. The sheer number of editors involved no doubt contributed to the inconsistency and incoherence that plagued the *Collected Writings*. (In contrast the *Whitman Archive* has a more tightly focused editorial team, with two lead editors.) Moreover, the *Collected Writings* left fundamental facts about Whitman's work still inaccessible, such as a record of the drafts and notes that led to his great poem "Song of Myself." The material that the *Whitman Archive* is bringing together will allow for—and in some cases necessitate—a re-examination of what have been considered safe assumptions about his work. For example, it has been widely asserted that "the manuscript" of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* was lost, but our work on Whitman's poetry manuscripts has uncovered over one hundred manuscript fragments

relating to this volume. These scattered and partial documents constitute a rich and illuminating record, enabling us to grasp far more clearly than ever before the genesis and purposes of one of the defining books of American culture. Our work has documented that Whitman once planned an altogether different structure for the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* that would have ended the volume with a poem he referred to as "Slaves" (ultimately entitled "I Sing the Body Electric"). At one time, in other words, Whitman placed in the final and most powerful rhetorical position the central contradiction at the heart of antebellum American democracy. Scholars have yet to comment on the goals of his original structure or on the changes that culminated in the first published version.

It is worth explaining in detail why Whitman's works are badly in need of the ongoing reediting they are receiving. *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, an NEH-funded project, was begun in the mid-1950s with the goal of compiling all of Whitman's writings in an "absolutely 'complete'" edition that was to include his various volumes of poetry and prose, along with his correspondence, notebooks, daybooks, manuscripts, journalism, and uncollected poetry and fiction. As indicated, the *Collected Writings* now consists of twenty-five volumes. New York University Press, the original publisher, issued six volumes of correspondence, six volumes of notebooks and unpublished prose manuscripts, three volumes of daybooks and notebooks, two volumes of published prose, one volume of early poetry and fiction, a three-volume variorum of the printed poems, and one volume of a reader's edition of the poetry.

Despite the impressive accomplishments of the New York University Press edition, four decades of energetic work by a team of eight scholars (supported by six additional scholars on the editorial board) left many of the original goals unrealized. Whitman's journalism, for example, which appeared from 1834 to his death in 1892, was intended to be a key part of the *Collected Writings*, but, because of delays in preparing the manuscript, the projected six volumes were abandoned by New York University Press altogether. Only in the last few years have the first two volumes appeared, issued by Peter Lang; it is doubtful that the remaining volumes will ever be published. Edwin Haviland Miller's magisterial five-volume edition of Whitman's correspondence appeared over an eight-year period in the 1960s, and by the time volume five came out, it already contained an "Addenda" of sixty-five letters discovered during the

eight years the earlier volumes had been appearing. The letters were now forever out of order, out of chronology, stuck at the back of the set, a permanent mar on the collection. Nine years later, New York University Press issued a slim sixth volume of correspondence, this time called a "Supplement," with a hundred more letters, and fourteen years later the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* published a hundred-page "Second Supplement" with nearly fifty more. Professor Miller is now deceased, and Ted Genoways has published a third and fourth supplement of nearly a hundred letters with the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, and he recently edited these as a supplemental volume seven of the *Correspondence*, published by the University of Iowa Press. That volume came out last year, and now, only a few months later, several more letters have already surfaced.

Such stories could be repeated across the range of the materials the *Collected Writings* set out to collect: poetry, prose essays, autobiography, fiction, notebooks, prose manuscripts, poetry manuscripts, and journalism. In all cases, Whitman remains, as he once described himself, "garrulous to the very last." It is almost as if he were continuing to generate letters and other manuscripts today at the same rate as when he was alive. Whitman's writings are such a mass and scatter that any "complete" print edition is doomed to become increasingly incomplete, patched-together, more difficult to use—eventually as chaotic as the materials it sets out to organize. New York University Press has issued no volumes in the Whitman edition since 1984, and the project has sputtered to a close, occasionally coming back to life in the anomalous though important additional volumes from other presses. Meanwhile, it has become ever more apparent that the *Collected Writings* will always remain woefully incomplete.

A major goal of the *Whitman Archive* has been to supplement the *Collected Writings* by gathering from numerous archives and electronically editing the many materials that were not included in it. The *Archive* has already made great strides in presenting material excluded from the *Collected Writings*: four of the six editions of *Leaves of Grass*, with the other two in progress (the *Collected Writings* printed in full only the final edition); all 131 photographs of Whitman, with scholarly annotations; an annotated bibliography of scholarship covering the last thirty years; an integrated item-level finding guide to his poetry manuscripts held at more than thirty repositories; and full transcriptions of nearly one hundred of

these poetry manuscripts accompanied by high-quality digital images of the manuscripts (with an additional 250 poetry manuscripts in various stages of editing and encoding before receiving final vetting). We have also made significant progress in editing the 150 poems Whitman published in over forty different periodicals. Finally, we are in the process of making available Horace Traubel's invaluable set of nine volumes of conversations with Whitman collected in his *With Walt Whitman in Camden*.

The editors of the *Collected Writings* excluded nearly all of this material because of their emphasis on a single authoritative text, yet emphasizing a single text skews and falsifies Whitman's writing. He was the ultimate reviser, continually reopening his poems and books to endless shuffling, retitling, editing, and reconceptualizing. *Leaves of Grass* was Whitman's title for a process more than a product: every change in his life and in his nation made him reopen his book to revision. Earlier editors omitted Whitman's marginalia, his incoming correspondence, his writings developed in conjunction with John Burroughs and Richard Maurice Bucke, his conversations with Horace Traubel, and his many interviews with reporters and friends. The theoretical model underpinning the *Collected Writings* contributed to these omissions, but so did the medium of print. It was not feasible for previous editors to include all versions of all editions of Whitman's works and to include his collaborative writings because of reasons of space and economy. Electronic textuality, on the other hand, is better able to represent the fluidity of Whitman's writing process. We deliver images of the original source material to our users so that they can witness Whitman's process of composition, and so that they can do their own transcriptions, if they wish, and challenge our interpretations of hard-to-decipher passages. Making the source material available enables teachers to demonstrate that a poet like Whitman achieved his often majestic phrasing not through a magical process that led to perfectly etched final products, but through multiple drafts, innumerable false starts, and bungled lines. His pasted over, heavily deleted and interlineated manuscripts bear witness that, for all his praise of spontaneity, his best writing was achieved through laborious and often brilliant revision. There is a democratization of scholarship at work as we open locked rare book rooms to students and the interested public. Through our work we are providing high quality images of all of his manuscripts and all of his printed pages. Whitman was trained as a printer and was fascinated

by book design. The *Archive* allows users to examine his choices as to typeface, layout, margins, and ornamentation and to consider how these nonverbal textual features contributed to his meanings.

Whitman's writings, including those that *were* in the *Collected Writings*, need to be reedited in a coherent fashion, making use of a team of dedicated editors, talented staff, and top-level technical consultants. The *Archive* has made real progress toward this end, though that progress has been interrupted several times because of the loss of key staff people paid through "soft" money, a problem we are addressing with this We the People Challenge Grant application. The *Archive* will be a resource that will be more than three times the size of the *Collected Writings* in terms of total number of words, and we are providing digital images of a vast amount of manuscript source material. The *Collected Writings*, in contrast, reproduced source material only for the purposes of an occasional illustration. The *Archive* combines databases, texts, and bibliographies to allow for the kind of research in Whitman's work and his times that has not been possible before. Over seventy libraries now house approximately 70,000 Whitman manuscripts. Library holdings range from the vast collection in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress's Feinberg-Whitman collection (over 30,000 items) to repositories that possess single manuscript fragments. No scholar has ever been able to examine everything; the *Archive* will provide the first opportunity for researchers to access Whitman's entire known corpus.

Strengthening and Improving the Understanding of U.S. History, Institutions, and Culture

The NEH We the People Challenge Grant funds will support the continuing development of a freely available cultural resource dedicated to the poet whose goal was to create a work commensurate with American life and democracy. In 1855, at the outset of his poetic career, Whitman saw himself as founding "a school of live writing . . . consistent with the free spirit of this age, and with the American truths of politics." In his "backward glance" at the end of his life in 1892, he repeatedly affirmed the historical basis of his work, declaring, for example, that "'Leaves' could not possibly have emerged or been fashion'd or completed, from any other era than the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, nor any

other land than democratic America." *Leaves of Grass* is by any account Whitman's most important work, though his contributions to American culture extend far beyond this achievement.

Democratic Vistas, for example, his post-Civil War prose work ruminating on the condition of American democracy, has been read more and more as one of the great articulations of the nature of democracy as an evolving and never fully realized condition. It is a work that, like all of Whitman's writing, reminds us that the founding principles of this nation were actually a set of goals that have not yet been realized, and that American history is the story of trying to measure up to those ideals, even as they continually get redefined and reshaped by new historical circumstances. *Democratic Vistas* is as much about America's failure to live up to the founding principles as it is a reaffirmation of those principles, and Whitman continually reminds Americans of their need to keep those principles in mind as their nation's material wealth increases. In works like *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman is one of the toughest critics of American history, and the severity of his critique derives from the depth of his belief in the founding democratic ideals of the United States. He is not a naïve apologist for American democracy but rather he casts a skeptical eye on his culture, always keenly aware of and quick to point out the many shortcomings of the current state of the American democratic experiment. He is also aware of dangerous tendencies built into the very fabric of democracy, as when he notes that "a majority or democracy may rule as outrageously and do as great harm as an oligarchy or despotism," and so he works hard to instill *affection*, or what he sometimes calls "camaraderie," at the heart of American principles. Democracy, he believed, would require new forms of affection, a fervid friendship that would bind citizens to each other and balance the tendency toward greedy individualism that would always be one of democracy's dangers. He was under no illusions that America would fully achieve its goals easily or quickly, and his work can be read as an attempt to construct a democratic voice that would serve as a model for his society—a difficult task, since he was well aware that his nation and his world were still filled with antidemocratic sentiments, laws, customs, and institutions, and he knew that no writer could rise above all the biases and blindnesses of his particular historical moment.

During Whitman's lifetime, the Civil War was the greatest threat to the American democratic experience, and so it's no surprise that the War—with brothers killing brothers, fathers sons, friends other friends—also struck at the heart of Whitman's new democratic poetics, which were based on union, on containing contradictions, on resolving conflict with a unifying affection. The way that Whitman dealt with the Civil War and its aftermath becomes a kind of painful case study of the way the nation dealt with its founding principles when they had been shattered by historical circumstances, and the way that the nation could reclaim them again.

An example, then, of the *Archive's* role in advancing knowledge of Whitman's contribution to our understanding of the nation's founding principles is the next planned phase of the *Archive's* development: a section on Whitman and the Civil War, scheduled to be completed in 2011 on the 150th anniversary of the start of the War. Not only was *Leaves of Grass*, the first masterpiece of American poetry, profoundly shaped by the War, but Whitman repeatedly depicted and analyzed the Civil War in journals, notebooks, letters, essays, journalism, memoirs, and manuscript drafts. We will electronically edit, arrange, and publish, often for the first time, the hundreds of documents that give voice to Whitman's experience of the War.

The results of our work will offer students of American history an incomparable record of a major American author's War experience. Whitman predicted that the Civil War would never get into the books, that the "real war" would elude historians. In *Memoranda During the War* (1875-1876), he tried to correct that wrong, in part, by giving an account focused on common soldiers. With an ordinary man's vantage point on the War and an extraordinary artist's sensibility, Whitman focused on what often escaped attention: the War experiences of the common soldier, the stoicism and heroism of otherwise average individuals, and—above all—the suffering, dignity, and enormous courage he saw in his hospital visits to approximately 100,000 wounded men, Northerners and Southerners alike. At the end of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," his great elegy for Lincoln, Whitman's scope expands beyond the martyred President to encompass the "debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war." This poem balances the individual and the en masse, the President and innumerable common soldiers, or, as

Whitman might have said, the "supreme" Lincoln and "unnumbered supremes"—the countless ordinary Americans who were sacrificed in a war that Lincoln ultimately turned into a test of the country's commitment to its own founding principles. Whitman's meditations on democracy came to a head with the Civil War. He had in effect predicted the emergence of a Lincoln-type leader from the West, he elegized the slain President, and he concluded his career further memorializing him in a series of famous Lincoln lectures.

Our Civil War work will include editing the correspondence of Whitman and the Whitman family between 1861 and 1865, a task for which we will gather and transcribe digital images of all correspondence. We will make available, for the first time, those letters Whitman wrote for soldiers who could not write for themselves because of injury or illiteracy. These digital images of the original letters and transcriptions will be linked to a useful guide that will be searchable by correspondent, date, place, and subject. Our guide to Whitman's dispersed Civil War manuscripts will contextualize this correspondence by bringing it together with the Civil War materials that we have already begun to gather as part of other ongoing initiatives within the *Archive*: electronic texts of his volumes *Drum-Taps* and *Sequel to Drum-Taps*, transcriptions of Whitman's poetry manuscripts from the Civil War era, and photographs of Whitman taken during the War.

Besides producing a new collection of previously unavailable materials on the web, "Whitman and the Civil War" will serve as a demonstration case for cross-disciplinary scholarship, for scholar-archivist collaboration, and for rigorous treatment of historical materials in a digital environment. We will host a symposium on Whitman, Lincoln, and the Civil War in 2011, and the volume of essays we produce will appear both in print and on the *Whitman Archive*.

Institutional History

Given the magnitude of our undertaking, the technical challenges inherent in it, and the unparalleled complexity of the textual record Whitman left, we are fortunate to enjoy extraordinarily strong local institutional support. The *Whitman Archive* is a cornerstone of UNL's Center for Digital

Research in the Humanities (CDRH), formerly the Electronic Text Center. Co-directed by Price and Katherine L. Walter, CDRH emerged out of careful strategic planning that specifically emphasized Whitman, Lewis and Clark, and Willa Cather as vitally important figures in American culture. CDRH features the electronic publication of Gary Moulton's thirteen-volume edition of *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, a major scholarly achievement of the late twentieth century and the most accurate, inclusive, and thoroughly annotated edition of the journals ever published. It also features the *Willa Cather Electronic Archive*, which is digitizing and providing access to the full range of archival materials, scholarly edition texts, reference works, and criticism devoted to a leading American novelist. The *Walt Whitman Archive* and CDRH are harnessing the power of electronic technology to advance the study of vital American cultural materials; to bring the highest scholarly standards to web publishing; and to establish models of collaboration among archivists, librarians, humanities scholars, and publishers.

In addition to benefiting from strong local support the *Whitman Archive* has benefited from the generosity of three federal granting agencies and a private foundation. Continuous grant support since 1997 has in fact fueled the rapid growth of the *Archive*. From 1997-2000 the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) supported development of *The Classroom Electric: Dickinson, Whitman, and American Culture*. Our ongoing effort to collect, transcribe, and encode Whitman's poetry manuscripts received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities divisions of Collaborative Research (2000-2003) and from Preservation and Access (2003-2005). To support work on the poetry manuscripts, we concurrently developed an integrated finding guide to Whitman's manuscripts. This guide was supported initially by start-up funds from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation (2001) and then via a major grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2002-2005).

One of our important services to the humanities involves our work with major electronic editing standards. The *Whitman Archive* has been at the forefront of innovation in humanities computing, providing new models for bringing current computer technologies to bear upon the needs of humanities scholars. For example, our application of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standard of eXtensible

Markup Language (XML) has advanced the ability of that standard—which was developed with printed texts in mind—to treat manuscripts. (TEI is a particular implementation of XML and the de facto international standard for sophisticated electronic scholarly editions.) Similarly, our creation of the *Integrated Guide to Whitman's Poetry Manuscripts*, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is a groundbreaking application of Encoded Archival Description (EAD), a standardized XML-based way of making finding guides to archival collections. The use of XML makes possible a project such as our *Integrated Guide*, a comprehensive, annotated, and searchable index to all Whitman manuscript materials—one place where a scholar, or any user, can go to search through the myriad of documents and find exactly what is needed.

Developing the *Whitman Archive* as a fully realized digital thematic research collection will advance Whitman scholarship and help numerous related undertakings that will benefit from what we learn, document, and accomplish. The *Archive* is being built with open standards, meaning that our data is not dependent on any particular piece of software to be readable and useful. We do not allow any commercial interest to have control over the format in which our data is stored. We have already begun negotiations with the Modern Language Association and the Association for Documentary Editing about posting guidelines for best practices in the development of thematic research collections. As always, we highlight the importance of building electronic editions with future interoperability in mind.

Early in the history of our work, especially from 1995-2000, Price engaged in outreach and in developing the pedagogical potential of the *Whitman Archive*. He traveled to high schools from Virginia to Nevada to work with teachers and share knowledge of this resource, and to discuss how it might be further developed to increase its usefulness. Price also co-directed with Martha Nell Smith of the University of Maryland *The Classroom Electric: Dickinson, Whitman, and American Culture*, a project that produced freely available online teaching-oriented sites that make use of two parallel archives devoted to Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. The *Archive* remains guided by lessons learned from these efforts. The current emphasis on research and editing results in part from an awareness that the most exciting pedagogical aims we wished to address are dependent on having more content integrated

into the site. Thus, as the plan of work below indicates, we will adjust the balance of our efforts somewhat more toward outreach and pedagogy after major parts of our editorial work have been completed.

Use of Endowment Funds

The *Whitman Archive* and UNL will leverage support from NEH to build an endowment that will provide long-term financial stability for our work. The *Whitman Archive* will effectively transition from existing on a temporary patchwork of financial resources to an endowed and self-sustaining entity that can plan confidently for the future. Annual income of \$100,000 will be used to fund personnel, namely the project manager position (\$45K) and two graduate research assistants (\$40K); consultants (\$5K); travel to collections and relevant conferences (\$5K); and some equipment and the reproduction and copyright permissions fees for digital images from other institutions (\$5K).

As staff members develop invaluable expertise with the *Whitman Archive*, their roles become increasingly important. One individual, Brett Barney, has progressed from being a graduate assistant to being project manager, developing skills and a base of knowledge crucial to the long-term health of the *Archive*. A Ph.D. in American literature, Barney is our resident expert on a wide range of technical questions and a lynchpin for much of what we do. The *Archive* is currently vulnerable because his advanced knowledge in both literature and humanities computing makes him the kind of expert that many universities want to hire. At the moment, the project manager position is funded through soft money. From past experience, we know that losing staff members with history on the *Archive* is disruptive, leaving knowledge gaps that delay the progress of the work and compromise efficiency. NEH funding will help us create the necessary endowment to make this pivotal position a permanent one, and will help provide funds for graduate research assistants.

Endowment income will include some funds for remunerating consultants who are experts in technical matters. Further, the University of Iowa—especially the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies—has been extremely generous in supporting Folsom's work on the *Whitman Archive*. It is

expected that endowment funds will at times help offset costs associated with the University of Iowa's contributions to the *Archive*.

Endowment income will help keep desktop computer workstations, scanners, and related hardware and software up-to-date. More expensive equipment will be provided by the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities at UNL. Further, due to the scattered nature of Whitman manuscript materials, some funds for travel to collections and relevant conferences, and for procuring digital scans (reproduction and copyright permissions fees) are also included in the plan for the use of endowment income.

It is important to address what happens if for some reason the *Whitman Archive* goes dormant. In that case, endowment monies would be funneled into digital projects in American literature at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or into supporting collections in American literature. It should be emphasized that even though some aspects of our work will one day be completed, the overall *Whitman Archive* itself *cannot* be completed for at least four reasons: First, new Whitman discoveries continue to be made at such a steady rate that we see no reason to expect this pattern to abruptly stop. Second, the *Archive* includes some components that require annual updating, specifically the annotated bibliography of scholarship. Third, we include important contextual criticism, and the connections that can be made have no absolute limit. Fourth, the *Archive* reaches beyond textual editing: more than a project, it is an institution for the advancement of Whitman studies in areas that include the ongoing editing of a journal and newsletter, the development of pedagogical sites, and assorted efforts in outreach. Whitman—like Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Edison—will always remain important to American culture, and we foresee endowment monies being used over the longest term to foster the new scholarship made possible by the *Whitman Archive*. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln will become a center for Whitman studies. Price already serves on the editorial advisory board of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, and Folsom plans to center the *Quarterly*'s electronic operations at the *Archive* and the Nebraska CDRH. We have additional plans to host symposia and international seminars to further work in this field.

Enhancement and Sustenance of Humanities over the Long Term

As the *Archive* has grown, it has become obvious that this undertaking will involve more than one generation of scholars. We are consciously developing future generations of researchers even as we go about our current work. For example, Matt Cohen, a former editorial assistant on the *Archive* (today, an Assistant Professor of English at Duke University), is undertaking the electronic editing of Horace Traubel's nine-volume work, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*. This set of volumes is a treasure trove of Whitman's opinions on all things both trivial and important. Making these volumes available in an electronically searchable form will be a great benefit to Whitman studies since few libraries have a complete set, and they are cumbersome to use because of their inadequate indexing. The long-term nature of the *Archive* means an increasing number of American literature and humanities computing scholars get involved and interested in contributing to its growth. With endowment funding, the *Archive* will have the economic stability to support necessary development and expansion.

We have worked for ten years and have accomplished a great deal. In the next twenty years we will post to the website or otherwise meet the following goals:

2006—six authorized editions and "deathbed" printing of *Leaves of Grass*; interviews

2007—Whitman's poetry in periodicals

2008—Whitman's annotated copies of *Leaves of Grass* 1855 and 1860 (the so-called "blue book"); two-way correspondence

2010—poetry manuscripts; nine volumes of *With Walt Whitman in Camden*

2011—Whitman and the Civil War completed; symposium on Whitman, Lincoln, and the Civil War

2012—printed texts published in Whitman's lifetime: *Franklin Evans*; *Democratic Vistas*; *After All, Not to Create Only*; *Passage to India*; *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free*

2013—additional printed texts published in Whitman's lifetime: *Two Rivulets*; *Specimen Days & Collect*; *Complete Poems & Prose*; *Democratic Vistas, and Other Papers*; *November Boughs*; *Good-Bye My Fancy*; *Complete Prose Works*

2014—direct NEH summer seminar for teachers; symposium on pedagogical and scholarly use of the *Archive*

2015—symposium proceedings

2016—selected critical texts from the University of Iowa Press Whitman series

2017—*Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*—full text of entire run of back issues

2018—expand critical library with selected out-of-copyright texts

2019—major conference at UNL celebrating the bicentennial of Whitman's birth

2020—prose manuscripts

2022—complete journalism

2024—complete marginalia; proofs

2025—collaborative works

In the years following 2025, UNL and the endowment funds will continue to develop the *Archive* as a model for humanities research, teaching, and outreach in the twenty-first century.

Assessment

Two main types of assessment will be undertaken. First, we will assess the success of the *Archive* in meeting pre-determined goals. Second, we will evaluate the impact of the *Archive* on the public.

We continually monitor our work and measure our progress against established yardsticks. A manuscript tracking database allows us to measure whether our document-editing goals are being met by the various staff members who work on each document as it passes through our process of transcription and encoding, multiple proofreadings, and final posting to the web.

The second type of assessment is difficult to accomplish because of the need to gauge the impact on a varied universe of users, including teachers, students, lifelong learners, and the general public. User statistics indicate that the *Whitman Archive* is very heavily used. In the month of October 2004, we received approximately 500,000 hits, or 16,000 hits per day. The *Archive* receives the most traffic of any literary site hosted at IATH. An analysis of web sites indicates that over 400 academic institutions' web sites link to the *Whitman Archive*. Not surprisingly, middle schools, high schools, and colleges are heavy

users of the *Archive*. Whitman—along with Shakespeare and Robert Frost—regularly rates anywhere from the highest to the fifth highest in studies of the most taught poets in U.S. high schools. As the *Archive* adds content, tools for analysis, and pedagogical aids, its usefulness will steadily increase.

The *Whitman Archive* impacts scholarship in various ways. It is the first stop for most scholars working on a project because of our collection of primary texts, images and transcriptions of manuscripts, and bibliography of criticism. New scholarship is beginning to emerge that has been made possible by the *Archive*. Ted Genoways, for example, has relied heavily on the *Archive* and on electronic finding aids in locating more than one hundred previously unknown Whitman letters. He is also writing a monograph that meticulously reconstructs Whitman's life and literary career near the time of the 1860 *Leaves of Grass* in a way that is only possible because of the resources made available by the *Archive*. Folsom and Price have led in the practice of retaining electronic rights to their recent books that have emerged out of their work on the *Archive*. Price's monograph *To Walt Whitman, America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004) will appear on the *Archive* in 2006. In that same year, Folsom and Price's co-authored critical study, *Re-Scripting Walt Whitman: An Introduction to His Life and Work* will also appear concurrently in print and on the site. This latter book aims to make the most advanced knowledge of the poet accessible to the widest possible audience and is fundamentally related to our editorial work with the *Whitman Archive*. The book could be thought of as providing a guide and introduction both to Whitman's career and to the *Archive* itself. Finally, Folsom, Price, and Susan Belasco, co-directors of the sesquicentennial conference on *Leaves of Grass* held at Nebraska in the spring of 2005, will also publish a volume based on the conference papers, and the volume will be reproduced in full on the *Whitman Archive* one year after print publication. Like all other work on the *Archive*, these studies will be made available free of charge and without password protection. The editors of the *Archive* encourage other Whitman scholars to retain electronic rights to their work so that knowledge can be included on the *Archive* and freely shared so as to benefit the public.

Qualifications of Key Personnel

Co-editor Kenneth M. Price, Hillegass Professor of Nineteenth-Century American Literature at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is the author of *Whitman and Tradition* (Yale UP, 1990) and *To Walt Whitman, America* (U of North Carolina P, 2004) and the editor of two other books on Whitman. Price also served as co-director of the U.S. Department of Education-sponsored project *The Classroom Electric: Dickinson, Whitman, and American Culture*. Price's essays on Whitman and reviews of Whitman scholarship have appeared in numerous journals and books.

Price serves on many advisory boards for electronic editorial projects including those on Charles Brockden Brown, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, and Willa Cather. He also serves on professional committees concerned with electronic publishing including the Council of the Association for Documentary Editing and the Committee on Information Technology of the Modern Language Association. In addition, Price serves on the steering committee of NINES, the Networked Interface for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship. NINES is a scholars' advocacy group addressing some of the challenges in digital scholarship—lack of peer review, absence of established publishing outlets, difficulty and expense of obtaining copyright and permissions, responses from tenure and promotion committees to such scholarship, etc. Since its inception, Price has served as the head of the Americanist editorial board of NINES and in that position is actively working to ensure that nineteenth-century electronic projects adhere to international standards so that we do not preclude the possibility of future interoperability. Because of Price's dual role both as a co-director of a leading digital edition and as a co-director of an increasingly influential Center for Digital Research, he is very much part of the ongoing discussions that are shaping the future of humanities computing. Over the last two years, for example, he participated in a workshop jointly sponsored by the Association for Documentary Editing and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission on the future of electronic editing, participated in a humanities computing summit meeting for center directors held at the University of Illinois, spoke with a Mellon Foundation interviewer on the current state and future needs of American digital projects, and participated in a scholars advisory ad-hoc committee meeting of the Digital Library Federation. The

Whitman Archive, in short, is positioned to benefit from the most advanced thinking occurring in the international humanities computing community.

Co-editor Ed Folsom, Carver Professor of English at the University of Iowa, is the author of *Walt Whitman's Native Representations* (Cambridge UP, 1994) and the editor or co-editor of four books about Whitman. Since 1983 he has served as editor of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*. As director of the NEH-sponsored "Walt Whitman: The Centennial Project," he organized the 1992 "Whitman Centennial Conference" at The University of Iowa and the 1992 symposium on "Whitman in Translation." He recently directed a conference held in Beijing, China, "Whitman 2000: American Poetry in a Global Context," and edited a volume of selected papers from that conference, *Walt Whitman East and West: New Contexts for Reading Whitman* (U of Iowa P, 2002). Folsom's essays on Whitman and his reviews of Whitman scholarship have appeared in numerous journals and books.

Collaboration

The University of Iowa, in particular co-editor Ed Folsom, contribute to the *Whitman Archive* from a base located in the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. Folsom and a team of two graduate students focus primarily on the annual annotated bibliography of Whitman criticism, the presentation of images of Whitman (currently 131 photographs later to be expanded to include drawings and paintings done from life), and the editing of Whitman's notebooks.

The University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) serves as one of our key sources for high-level technical consultancy. IATH currently acts as one of the four sponsoring institutions for the TEL. IATH hosts the *Whitman Archive* on a server at the University of Virginia.

Other institutions that have participated as partners on Whitman grant projects include New York Public Library, Duke University, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Maryland, and the Research Libraries Group.

A Sustained Endeavor in the Study of Significant National Heritage Themes and Events

Since 2000, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has demonstrated strong support for the *Whitman Archive* and a deep commitment to its long-term financial health. The depth of that support is clear from the *Whitman Archive's* dramatic growth in the last four years: in 2000-2001, only one graduate student assisted Kenneth Price, the co-director of the *Archive*; in 2004-2005, the *Archive* is supported by four graduate students, one full-time specialist from the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, and contributions of time from the UNL Libraries, including the Digital Initiatives Librarian, the Chair of Digital Initiatives & Special Collections (DISC), and an archivist.

The Department of English has demonstrated its support by assigning one permanent Research Assistant to the *Archive*, and offering Professor Susan Belasco's editorial expertise. Kenneth Price has exclusively dedicated the funding available through his endowed professorship to the *Archive*. That is, his professorship provides him with an annual research budget—originally \$15K per year and recently increased to \$22.5K per year—and he has devoted this budget entirely to *Whitman Archive* work and will continue to do so. Graduate students have demonstrated increasing interest in the *Archive* and in digital research broadly through enrollment in Price's course (now part of the regular department offerings), "Electronic Texts: Theory and Practice," independent studies, and research assistantships.

The University of Nebraska has signaled its lasting commitment to the *Whitman Archive* and digital research in several ways. Over the last four years, various internal UNL Research Council grants have been awarded to fund graduate and undergraduate student employees. This year, Richard Hoffmann, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has made the *Whitman Archive* one of the division's fundraising priorities.

Further evidence of the seriousness of the University's commitment to Whitman studies is in the generous investment that has been made in "Leaves of Grass: The 150th Anniversary Conference" to be held in Lincoln, March 31-April 2, 2005. The University of Nebraska has invested approximately \$80,000 in the sesquicentennial celebration of the first publication of *Leaves of Grass*. This will be an

international event with prominent poets (including Galway Kinnell and Ted Kooser of the UNL English Department, Poet Laureate of the United States), musicians, and eighteen of the world's leading Whitman scholars giving papers.

Most importantly, however, the University has given the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities Programs of Excellence Funding totaling \$1.1 million dollars over the next four years—a commitment that will develop an even larger concentration of talent in digital research at UNL, provide state-of-the-art equipment for long-term storage of large computer files, and supply funds for licenses, software, and development of open source programs. The CDRH is an increasingly prominent resource, and the *Whitman Archive* is a centerpiece of its portfolio.

Both the UNL Libraries and the Department of English have donated space and desktop computer workstations to the *Archive*. An office for graduate students with equipment and files is located in Andrews Hall, and computer workstations devoted to the *Archive* are located in the Archives/Special Collections and the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities. The UNL Libraries are creating a mirror site for the *Whitman Archive* on a fast, new architecture computer as a disaster prevention measure.

Plan for Long-Term Stability

In coordination with Price and University leadership, the University of Nebraska Foundation will execute plans for raising funds to meet the NEH matching requirement. For UNL's prior challenge grant, the University of Nebraska Foundation raised over \$1.8 million to endow programming and research in UNL's International Quilt Studies Center. The University of Nebraska Foundation is a private, nonprofit corporation designated by the Board of Regents as the primary fund-raiser and manager of private gifts to support the four campuses of the University of Nebraska.

The 2004 fiscal year market value of the foundation's assets closed at \$1.143 billion, a 12.5 percent increase over the previous year. The foundation's main endowment fund total return for the 2004 fiscal year was 19.1 percent, placing it in the top 18 percent of the institutional endowments tracked by

Cambridge Associates. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004 the foundation transferred a record \$70.9 million to the University of Nebraska.

The University of Nebraska Foundation secured over \$727.7 million in gift commitments during Campaign Nebraska, a seven-year fund-raising initiative for the University of Nebraska. The campaign started July 1, 1993 and ended December 31, 2000, and over 65,000 individuals, corporations, and foundations donated. The total endowed and expendable dollars raised for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln were \$423,820,000. Forty-six new professorships and chairs in every college of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln were established through the campaign.

Commitment to the *Whitman Archive*

University leadership and the Foundation strongly support the *Whitman Archive*, and the growth of digital research in the humanities at UNL. Since 2000, when Price moved to UNL, donors have shown commitment and interest in the *Archive*. Endowed funds totaling \$500,000 secured by the Foundation and designated for digital humanities support his work on the *Whitman Archive*. The donors of these funds are top prospects for future leadership gifts to fulfill the NEH matching requirements. In 2002, the Foundation quickly raised one-time funds of \$12,500 to complete the match for another NEH grant supporting the *Whitman Archive*. An additional expendable fund was established in April 2003, solely to benefit the *Whitman Archive*.

The Director of Development for the UNL College of Arts and Sciences will solicit *lead gifts* (see table below for gift breakdown) from individual and family prospects. The Director of Development will also work with the Foundation's President, Executive Vice President, UNL Campus Director of Development and Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts and Sciences and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources to identify appropriate *major gift* prospects outside of her constituency to support this initiative. These prospects will be long-time supporters and friends of the University of Nebraska with demonstrated philanthropic capacity.

The Department of Foundation Relations will solicit lead and *major gifts* from Nebraska family foundations and national foundations with an interest in the humanities and literature, digital scholarly materials, and foundational American figures such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation. The Mellon Foundation in particular has an interest in "Research Universities and Humanities Scholarship."

The Department of Corporate Relations will solicit *major gifts* and *annual gifts* from local corporations and branches with aggressive marketing of employee matching funds and matching funds from corporate headquarters.

The Director of Annual Giving will coordinate a *direct marketing solicitation* with the Director of Development. Gifts and leads from this mailing will assist the Director of Development to identify a broader base of gift prospects, and also to communicate advances in the *Whitman Archive* over time, in an efficient manner.

	Range Needed	Number Needed	Total Dollars
Lead Gifts	\$500,000	1	\$500,000
	\$250,000	1	\$250,000
Major Gifts	\$100,000	2	\$200,000
	\$50,000	4	\$200,000
	\$10,000	9	\$90,000
Annual Fund /	\$5,000	12	\$60,000
Direct Marketing	Other	Many	\$200,000
	Fundraising Goal		\$1,500,000

This campaign will allow us to increase the commitments of donors who are already considered major prospects as well as attract *major gifts* from donors who might currently be *annual gift* prospects. Preliminary discussions with such a prospect have led to a verbal commitment of a \$150,000 gift to support the *Whitman Archive*. The *Archive* has a direct connection to the passions and spirit of many people and offers them the opportunity to be part of a revolution in literature. Their gifts will shape how Walt Whitman, the poet of democracy, is taught, presented, studied, and transmitted. Their gifts help advance a process vital to our cultural health and development: the responsibility of each generation to remake democracy as we strive to realize it.