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Ted Genoways and Ed Folsom

Abstract

Reprints a recently discovered photograph of Whitman taken by William S. Pendleton in Brooklyn in the early 1870s.
AN UNPUBLISHED EARLY 1870s PHOTOGRAPH OF WHITMAN

The photograph appearing at the beginning of this issue of the Walt Whitman Quarterly Review and reproduced here is a previously unknown image. It is printed courtesy of Kendall Reed, who recently added the photograph to his collection. The photo is on a card stamped "Pendleton, 297 Fulton Street, Cor. of Johnson, Brooklyn." The New York City Directory lists Pendleton at this address starting in 1869, and advertisements for William S. Pendleton's studio at this address (as "a practical photographer" who directly imports "the best stereoscopic views," with "a large assortment of New York and Brooklyn views") appear in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1870. In 1872, G. Frank Pearsall opened a studio next door to Pendleton's, at 298 Fulton. Whitman had several photos taken by
Pearsall, including the portrait Whitman used as the frontispiece to *Two Rivulets*, which he labeled “Phot’d from life, Sept., ’72, Brooklyn, N.Y., by G.F.E. Pearsall, Fulton St.” The newly discovered photograph shows Whitman wearing the same (or very similar) suit and tie, and perhaps the same shirt, as in the Pearsall photos and also in photographs taken around the same time at J. Gurney and Son in New York.

The only time Whitman mentions Pendleton is in a notebook (“D. W. Wilder”) in which entries range from 1866 to 1877; the entries surrounding this particular one date from the early 1870s. The entry reads simply, “Pendleton, photo, 1164 Broadway” (*NUPM*, 817). A few pages earlier in this notebook, Whitman records “G. Frank Pearsall 298 Fulton st Brooklyn,” and a few pages later he records “V. W. Horton at Gurneys, cor 5th av. & 16th st.,” later identifying Horton as the “photo operator” at Gurney’s studio (*NUPM*, 814, 822, 826). The proximity of these entries may indicate that the three photographic sessions took place within a very short period of time.

The association of Pendleton (1833–?) with a Broadway address is at this point still a mystery. He is listed in *Craig’s Daguerreian Registry* as having a studio at 5 Chatham Square in New York from 1857 through 1860, and a number of his portraits of Civil War soldiers still exist (they all bear his imprint with the Chatham Square address, suggesting he may have been there through most of the 1860s). In 1888 and 1889 directories, Pendleton is listed at 336 Fulton, and in 1890 at 436 Fulton.

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