



On the Back Cover: A Circular Announcing Whitman's 70th Birthday Testimonial Dinner

Ed Folsom

ISSN 0737-0679 (Print)

ISSN 2153-3695 (Online)

Copyright © 2013 by The University of Iowa.

Recommended Citation

Folsom, Ed. "On the Back Cover: A Circular Announcing Whitman's 70th Birthday Testimonial Dinner." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 30 (2013), 166-166.

Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13008/2153-3695.2071>

NOTES

On the Back Cover:

A CIRCULAR ANNOUNCING WHITMAN'S 70TH BIRTHDAY TESTIMONIAL DINNER

Whitman's seventieth birthday was celebrated with a large testimonial dinner in Camden, New Jersey, on May 31, 1889. Whitman, in poor health, did not attend the dinner but did appear for the remarks afterwards and ended up staying for over two hours. In the past, *WWQR* has printed the program and the menu from that dinner along with the recipe for the main course (see Louis Szathmary, "The Culinary Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 3 [Fall 1985], 28-35). Horace Traubel edited an entire book devoted to the event, *Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1889), containing the addresses that were delivered that night, Whitman's response, and testimonials by letter and wire from many writers, family members, and friends, including John Addington Symonds, William Dean Howells, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Morris, and Mark Twain. But few celebrities from the literary world were present that night in Morgan's Hall; the idea from the beginning had been to create a local celebration of Camden's most famous personality. In *Camden's Compliment*, Traubel describes the preparations for the event, including the naming of a large planning committee. Traubel reports that "a circular, describing the purpose in view, was signed by H. L. Bonsall and Thomas B. Harned, and liberally issued, indistinguishably to near and remote parties." It is this circular that is reprinted on the back cover of this issue of *WWQR*, courtesy of Joel Myerson, in whose Whitman collection it resides.

—Ed Folsom