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From the Canonical to the Non-Canonical: Editing, the *Walt Whitman Archive*, and Nineteenth-Century Newspaper Poetry

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This paper draws on my experiences at the *Walt Whitman Archive* as I begin thinking about my own digital editing project that will treat nineteenth-century newspaper poetry. Until recently, I have imagined my project as a fairly straightforward digital documentary edition of newspaper poems, one in which a selection of newspaper poems would comprise the primary texts for editorial treatment. The edition also would accommodate the surrounding text of the newspapers in some capacity, whether with page images or within a critical apparatus. As I have become more familiar with the texts I want to recover, edit, and present—the number and variety of them, their participation in larger newspaper contexts, and their fluidity in the process of reprinting—I have started to question this plan: Can documentary editing meet my goals for digitizing and presenting these materials? If so, what might a digital documentary edition of these texts look like, and how might it function?

Background

In 2005, I began working with Susan Belasco to edit first periodical printings of Walt Whitman's poems for the *Whitman Archive*. Prior to our work, these poems had never been systematically gathered and edited. *Walt Whitman's Poems in Periodicals*, which went live in the spring of 2007, is a documentary edition of the more than 160 poems that Whitman published in forty-five different newspapers, magazines, and journals from the late 1830s until his death in 1892.[1] Along with facsimile page images, we provide encoded transcriptions for every poem, the mark-up of which conforms to the TEI guidelines for text encoding.[2]

[1] *Whitman's Poems in Periodicals*, edited by Susan Belasco and assisted by Elizabeth Lorang, is available at http://whitmanarchive.org/published/periodical/index.html

[2] The poems originally were encoded according to the Text Encoding Initiative's P4 Guidelines. As of writing, the *Whitman Archive* is in the process of converting the files to the most recent version of

While working on the edition, I became interested in the pieces that Whitman published in the *New York Herald* late in his life and career. Although scholars had studied Whitman's associations with the periodical press for some time, they had neglected the *Herald*, despite the fact that Whitman published more poems in the *Herald* than in any other magazine or newspaper. My intensive work with the *Herald* poems for the *Archive*—transcribing, encoding, annotating, and publishing them—led to an article in which I argue that understanding Whitman's poems in the *Herald* depends on recognizing their function as newspaper poetry and studying newspaper poetry as a distinct genre.[3] This article then led to my dissertation, "American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper from the Rise of the Penny Press to the New Journalism," which is the first literary study of nineteenth-century American newspaper poetry and which I am currently revising as a book project.[4]

"American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper" examines the relationship of poetry and the U.S. daily newspaper in the nineteenth century and begins the process of recovering and reevaluating newspaper poetry of the century. In doing so, it draws on and participates in current discussions about the role of poetry and poets in society, the importance of periodicals in the development and dissemination of American literature, and the value of studying non-canonical texts. Rarely considered in histories of American literature or studies of poetry, newspaper poems emerge as a key element of nineteenth-century American poetry, both because of their presence and participation in the daily lives of the people and because of their impact on literary culture.

The relationship between poetry and newspapers in the nineteenth century was multifaceted. Many kinds of poems were published in many types of newspapers, and they appeared within a variety of contexts. Newspapers featured not only original poems, which could vary widely in subject matter and treatment, but also poems read at public events that were later printed in the newspaper, poems reprinted from other newspapers, as well as from magazines,

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the guidelines, known as P5. For more information, see the TEI Guidelines, http://www.tei-c.org/Guidelines/

[3] Elizabeth Lorang, " 'Two more throws against oblivion': Walt Whitman and the *New York Herald* in 1888," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, 25 (2008): 167–91.

[4] Elizabeth Lorang, "American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper from the Rise of the Penny Press to the New Journalism" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2010). Since delivering an early version of this paper as a talk at the annual meeting of the Association for Documentary Editing in October 2009, I have learned of another scholar who is in the early stages of studying newspaper poetry since the Civil War. Mike Chasar, an assistant professor at Willamette University, edits the *Poetry and Popular Culture* blog and writes about popular uses of poetry in the United States, including in daily and weekly newspapers. See http://mikechasar.blogspot.com/

other periodicals, broadsides, and books. Poems appeared in daily, semiweekly, and weekly commercial, mass-market, and literary newspapers that were local, regional, and national in scope and distribution. They appeared as stand-alone pieces, within news stories and editorials, in advertisements, and in death notices. In short, for much of the nineteenth century, poems of one form or another were ubiquitous in American newspapers and performed a range of functions.

The terms "newspaper poetry" and "newspaper poem" appear in a variety of usages in nineteenth-century texts. Both terms could refer, most broadly and simply, to poems published in newspapers, whether original verse, occasional poems, or reprinted works. More specifically, however, the terms describe a subset of poetry and poems: those written for and first published in newspapers. Throughout my study, then, I emphasize poems first published in, and often written exclusively for, newspaper publication. This emphasis is in keeping with the most common definition of newspaper poetry that existed in the nineteenth century. Before they were known as fireside or schoolroom poets, for example, William Cullen Bryant and John Greenleaf Whittier were popularly called "newspaper poets" because they published so much of their verse originally in the papers. At times, newspapers even cultivated resident poets who sometimes were established writers, staff members, or informal correspondents. In other instances, "newspaper poetry" more specifically described the work of local writers, often unknowns, who hoped to see their poems in print and circulated in the daily press. Their poems might treat current events or local customs, but these aspiring poets also were responsible for innumerable poems on unrequited and young love, the changing seasons, and children. In critical discourse and popular understanding, "newspaper poetry" became associated primarily with such poems, although newspaper poetry as a form included socially engaged verse that addressed timely topics and concerns, as an example from the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* illustrates.[5]

On January 4, 1840, the editors of the *Picayune* begged correspondents to stop sending poetry. They wrote, "If you only knew what uninspired, plain, every-day sort of folks are we of the Picayune, you would never condescend to indulge us . . . for the fact is we are so dull that we can't for the soul of us comprehend poetry."[6] Yet, less than two weeks later, the *Picayune* published the first of nearly 200 poems written for the paper by the poet "Straws"—Joseph M.

[5] For further discussion, see Lorang, "American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper from the Rise of the Penny Press to the New Journalism."

[6] "To Correspondents," *Daily Picayune* (January 4, 1840).

Field.[7] Straws's poems appeared in the *Picayune* regularly from mid-January 1840 through June of 1841. The *Picayune*'s treatment of poems in 1840–1841 appears related to the function of the Straws poems as original, local, socially oriented newspaper poems. Rather than the "admirably intricate . . . most mysteriously profound efforts of the most moon-inspired poetical prodigies of the present day," the Straws poems were for the "plain, every-day sort of folks" crucial to the success of the penny press, and the newspaper was central to the cultural work of the poems. Neither the penny press nor its poetry should replicate distant, old models and values. New Orleans in 1840 required a current, regular, local, urban yet also regional, humorous newspaper and newspaper poetry.

In order to be successful, daily newspapers, and particularly penny dailies, needed to develop a sense of inclusiveness and build readership within the civic community. Newspaper poems could participate directly in this work. They might help advertise and define the personality of the newspaper; share and editorialize the news; provide entertainment; provoke discussion locally and nationally; and build a community of readers. To do so, newspaper poems had to use a language appropriate for the newspaper context that would also appeal to a broad range of readers. For the Straws poems, Field used an immigrant dialect. While dialect verse was not the only possibility for appealing to a broader audience—increasingly working-class, immigrant, or the children of immigrants—it did stand in contrast to conventional poetic language and demanded a different kind of material, as well as a different treatment of its subject matter. In addition, although Field's dialect verse is complicit in many of the same problems as poems by white authors written in a "black dialect" later in the century and should not be understood to be representative of any real immigrant group's manner of speaking, it did in some capacity embody the social reality of New Orleans in 1840. New Orleans had emerged as the second largest port of entry for immigrants to the United States by the 1840s.[8] Although most immigrants who entered the U.S. via the Port of New Orleans moved to the Midwest or elsewhere, the population of the city doubled to more than 102,000

[7] A popular actor, playwright, theater manager, poet, and newspaperman from the early 1830s until his death in 1856, Field is perhaps best known today as the father of journalist Kate Field. For more on Joseph Field, see Hennig Cohen and William B. Dillingham, *Humor of the Old Southwest*, third edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 98–99; Lorang, "American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper from the Rise of the Penny Press to the New Journalism," pp. 16–69; Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868); Charles S. Watson, *History of Southern Drama* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), pp. 54–63; and Lilian Whiting, *Kate Field: A Record* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899), pp. 3–56.

[8] James M. Bergquist, *Daily Life in Immigrant America, 1820–1870* (Westport: Greenwood, 2008), p. 85.

during the period 1830 to 1840, and foreign immigration played a significant role in this population increase. In 1840, approximately 10,000 inhabitants were German immigrants, the largest immigrant population in the city.[9] Almost certainly in response to these numbers, and despite his own ties to Ireland, Field adopted a dialect suggestive of a German immigrant to the United States for his Straws poems.[10]

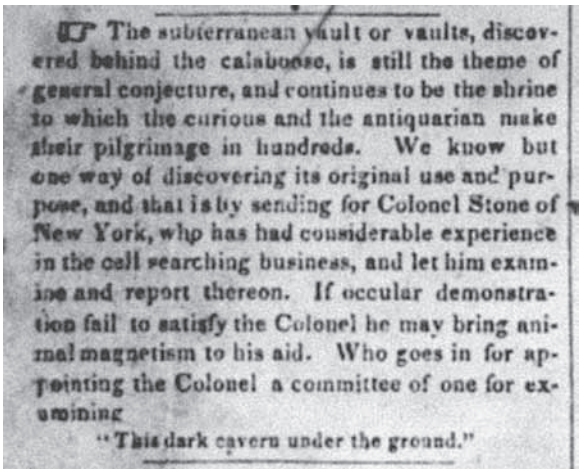
Like the conversational frame employed in many of the poems, the dialect suggested an inclusiveness. Further, by employing a dialect understood to represent a local manner of speech, Field reversed a major poetic tendency: rather than universalize themes or treatment of themes, the Straws poems depended on localization. A sense of the local was important to the penny dailies, including the *Picayune*; treatment of the local experience was significant in the community-building work of daily newspapers. The dialect poems amused readers, and their humor hinged on the juxtaposition of standard English elsewhere in the paper and the non-standard English of the poems. Spelling, pronunciation, and malapropisms provided frequent opportunities for humor. Indeed, throughout the poems the use of dialect allowed Straws to address serious and timely topics, including yellow fever, slavery and abolition, temperance, and politics more generally, but to do so with a degree of levity. In their employment of dialect and the pairing of serious topics with a "low" rhetorical treatment, the Straws poems were an early voice in the tradition of Southern ironic humor.[11]

From the beginning, Straws's poems treated timely material or current events, often local to New Orleans. One of the major news stories of early 1840 was the discovery of subterranean vaults in New Orleans, and Straws wrote several poems on the vaults, which appeared alongside articles and editorials on the subject (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Yet as close as they are connected to New Orleans of 1840–1841, the Straws poems are not without their troubling aspects, as poems such as "Amalgamation" and "The Bloodhounds" illustrate.

[9] Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States: With Special Reference to Its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), p. 483; Kevin Fox Gotham, *Authentic New Orleans: Tourism, Culture, and Race in the Big Easy* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), p. 26.

[10] Field's German dialect shares conventional features of German dialect literature, including confusion in pronunciation of "w" and "v." Unlike other writers of German dialect poetry, however, Field did not employ any German vocabulary in his poems. For more on the characteristics of German dialect literature, see Holger Kersten, "Using the Immigrant's Voice: Humor and Pathos in Nineteenth Century 'Dutch' Dialect Texts," *MELUS*, 21 (1996): 3–17.

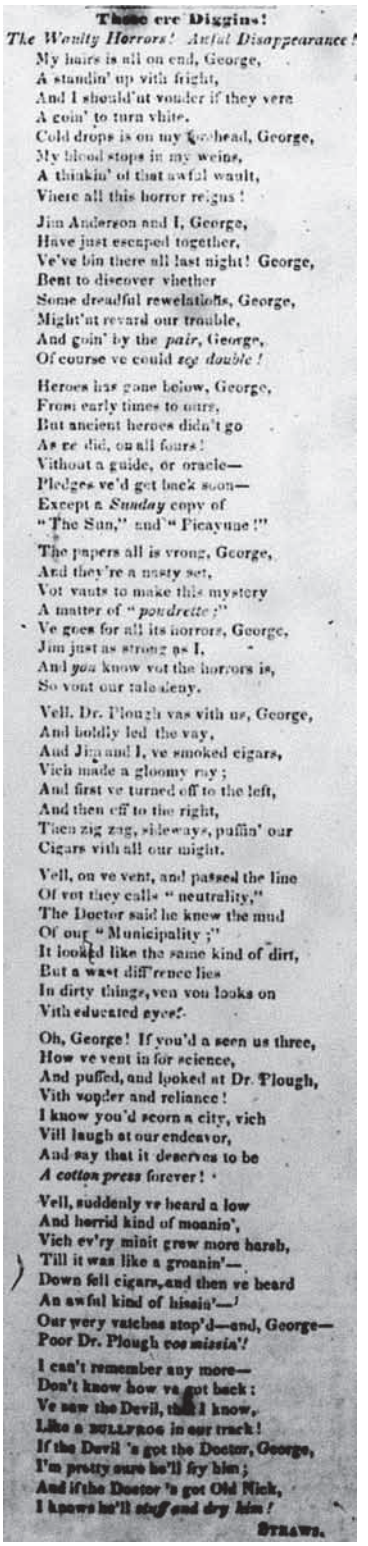
[11] In fact, Joseph Field is recognized as one of the major early voices of Southern humor. Mark Twain is known to have read some of Field's work, although it is unlikely he would have encountered the Straws poems.



☞ The subterranean vault or vaults, discovered behind the calaboose, is still the theme of general conjecture, and continues to be the shrine to which the curious and the antiquarian make their pilgrimage in hundreds. We know but one way of discovering its original use and purpose, and that is by sending for Colonel Stone of New York, who has had considerable experience in the cell searching business, and let him examine and report thereon. If occular demonstration fail to satisfy the Colonel he may bring animal magnetism to his aid. Who goes in for appointing the Colonel a committee of one for examining

"This dark cavern under the ground."

Figure 1 (above): Short piece about the recent discovery of subterranean vaults in New Orleans, published in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* on February 20, 1840.



These ere Diggins!

The Wonity Horrors! Awful Disappearance!

My hairs is all on end, George,
A standin' up vith fright,
And I should'nt vonder if they vere
A coin' to turn vhite.
Cold drops is on my forehead, George,
My blood stops in my veins,
A thinkin' of that awful vault,
Vhere all this horror reigns!

Jim Anderson and I, George,
Have just escaped together,
Ve've bin there all last night! George,
Bent to discover vhether
Some dreadful revelations, George,
Might'nt reward our trouble,
And goin' by the *pair*, George,
Of course ve could *see double!*

Heroes has gone below, George,
From early times to ours,
But ancient heroes didn't go
As ve did, on all fours!
Vithout a guide, or oracle—
Pledges ve'd get back soon—
Except a *Sunday* copy of
"The Sun," and "Picayune!"

The papers all is vrong, George,
And they're a nasty set,
Vot vants to make this mystery
A matter of "*poudrette*;"
Ve goes for all its horrors, George,
Jim just as strong as I,
And *you* know vot the horrors is,
So vont our tale deny.

Vell, Dr. Plough vas vith us, George,
And boldly led the vay,
And Jim and I, ve smoked cigars,
Vich made a gloomy ray;
And first ve turned off to the left,
And then off to the right,
Then zig zag, sideways, puffin' our
Cigars vith all our might.

Vell, on ve vent, and passed the line
Of vot they calls "neutrality,"
The Doctor said he knew the mud
Of our "Municipality;"
It looked like the same kind of dirt,
But a vast diff'rence lies
In dirty things, ven you looks on
Vith educated eyes!

Oh, George! If you'd a seen us three,
How ve vent in for science,
And puffed, and looked at Dr. Plough,
Vith vonder and reliance!
I know you'd scorn a city, vich
Vill laugh at our endeavor,
And say that it deserves to be
A cotton press forever!

Vell, suddenly ve heard a low
And horrid kind of moanin',
Vich ev'ry minit grew more harsh,
Till it was like a groanin'—
Down fell cigars, and then ve heard
An awful kind of hissin'—
Our very vatches stop'd—and, George—
Poor Dr. Plough *vos missin'!*

I can't remember any more—
Don't know how ve got back:
Ve saw the Devil, that I know,
Like a BULLDOG in our track!
If the Devil 's got the Doctor, George,
I'm pretty sure he'll fry him;
And if the Doctor 's got Old Nick,
I knows he'll *stuff* and dry him!

STRAWS.

Figure 2 (right): Straws's "These ere Diggins!," a poem about the subterranean vaults, published on page two of the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* on February 21, 1840. On the same page, the editors called attention to Straws's piece, writing: "Just read 'Straws' account of his visit to the subterranean vaults, in the neighborhood of the old Calaboose. He elucidates the thing to our satisfaction."

"Amalgamation" depicts Straws's fears of the blending of whites and blacks, and in "The Bloodhounds" he explains the failure of dogs to capture Native Americans in Florida as a result of the dogs being, in his view, inhumanely muzzled.[12] One does not have to approve of Straws's sentiments to acknowledge the poems' function within the newspaper. In commenting on timely issues as both editorial and entertainment, the poems participated in an ongoing conversation about human rights and the South. Through his poems Straws rallied local readers and antagonized critics as he championed the *Daily Picayune*, his poetry, and New Orleans and its ways of life.

[12] Straws, "The Bloodhounds," *Daily Picayune* (March 11, 1840), and "Amalgamation," *Daily Picayun*e (December 25, 1840).

Editing Newspaper Poems

To extend further the study and understanding of newspaper poems, including the Straws poems, I plan to digitize and digitally present a substantial body of the poems. I have two major goals for this work: first, to increase accessibility, particularly by moving the newspapers and their poetry out of archives, out of special collections rooms within libraries, and out of electronic formats that do not meet the needs of most researchers interested in studying newspapers, and second, to increase understanding of newspaper poetry and the study of the poems. Increasing understanding of newspaper poetry requires more than simply making the poems readily available, and the prevailing models for the editorial treatment of periodicals in digital projects cannot meet the goals for my project.

A common model for the editorial treatment of texts published in periodicals is the extraction of the primary text for study from the rest of the periodical text. In the case of *Whitman's Poems in Periodicals*, for example, only Whitman's poems have been transcribed and encoded. Such an extraction of poems or other texts from the rest of the newspaper can work for a project like the *Whitman Archive*, where what is most important is presenting Whitman's body of writing. The participation of the poems in the newspaper, and particularly to the extent that the poems may engage in and thus promote an in-print conversation with other texts in the newspaper, can be elucidated in editorial notes, knowing that the major frame of reference is always Whitman. This model has utility for author-centered editions as well as for thematic editions where there is a clearer overarching and organizational narrative. For my project, however, I have come to the conclusion that I necessarily have a bifurcated object of study—that I need to study both the poem and the newspaper in which it appeared. They are mutually dependent.

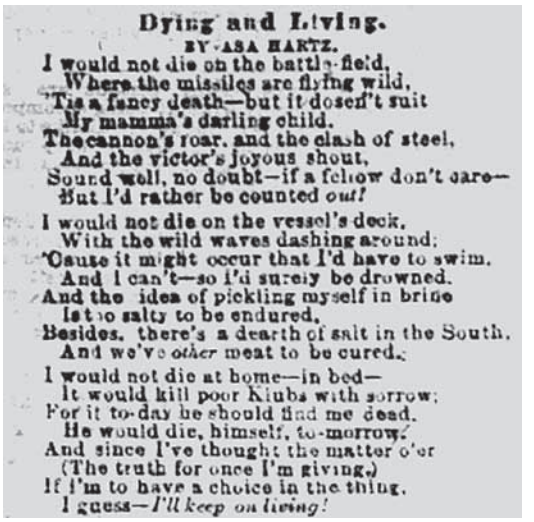
In addition, conceptualizing my project around authorship would be almost meaningless; such an approach may work well for a prolific newspaper poet such as Straws, but it could not accommodate the thousands of anonymous works. In my examination of poems published in ten different newspapers during the period January 1 through August 31, 1863, I have calculated that authorship for as many as two-thirds of the poems may never be known. (In the study, I examine newspaper poetry written and published during of one of the most volatile periods of the Civil War.[13]) Further investigative work may

[13] Lorang, "American Poetry and the Daily Newspaper from the Rise of the Penny Press to the New Journalism," pp. 123–173.

uncover names of some of the authors. In 1863, some of the pseudonyms and initials would likely have had immediate significance in their local communities, particularly for some of the smaller newspapers publishing original verse. In other cases, even unsigned poems may have been known to be by a newspaper's editor or a local writer. I do not want to overstate the significance of attribution for nineteenth-century readers, who accepted anonymity as part of their reading culture, but we naturally have lost some of the information readers of the newspapers would have had about authorship in 1863. More of the poems are figuratively anonymous today, whether unsigned or signed with pseudonyms, initials, or even full names. An edition centered on authorship would not illustrate particularly effectively the cultural work of poems in newspapers.

Another potential model for my project is the *Whitman Archive*'s presentation of three months of the *New York Aurora*, a daily newspaper Whitman edited from February through late April, 1842. In the case of the *Aurora*, the *Archive* has decided to present the entirety of the newspaper because there is some debate over what items during Whitman's tenure as editor are Whitman-authored; moreover, all contributions may bear his editorial mark in some way. Not yet publicly available, the *New York Aurora* is a facsimile edition. Page images for each issue can be "turned" and allow for reading the entire issues. This model works well for the *Aurora*, and the *Archive*, because the *Aurora* has never been microfilmed and only one library, the Paterson Free Public Library of Paterson, New Jersey, is known to have a complete print run of the paper. Simply making the page images widely available, then, is a significant contribution to Whitman scholarship.

For my project, however, the benefits of a facsimile edition do not outweigh the limitations. As I worked on my dissertation and cataloged newspaper poems, I moved from digitally imaging single pages of newspapers to imaging complete issues of newspapers. I could therefore begin building a facsimile edition almost immediately. But a straightforward facsimile edition has extremely limited potential for my project. Certainly, it would increase access to the texts on a basic level and help to achieve one of my goals, including moving the newspapers and their poems out of a special room in the library. But it would not go very far with the second goal, increasing understanding of newspaper poetry. An edition of digital images derived from original newspapers and microfilm copies would not allow the newspapers or their poems to be machine-readable for searching, text analysis, and more sophisticated functionality. Eventually, transcriptions of the pages might sit behind the digital images to allow for searching and analysis, but the challenges of creating clean transcriptions of a significant number of newspapers—to say nothing of critically edited transcriptions—are monumental.



Dying and Living.

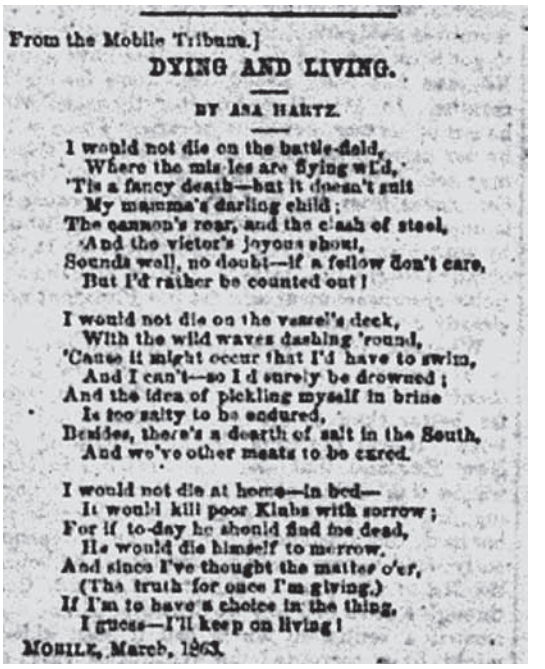
BY ASA HARTZ.

I would not die on the battle-field,
Where the missiles are flying wild,
'Tis a fancy death—but it doesn't suit
My mamma's darling child.
The cannon's roar, and the clash of steel,
And the victor's joyous shout,
Sound well, no doubt—if a fellow don't care—
But I'd rather be counted *out!*

I would not die on the vessel's deck,
With the wild waves dashing around;
'Cause it might occur that I'd have to swim,
And I can't—so I'd surely be drowned.
And the idea of pickling myself in brine
Is too salty to be endured,
Besides, there's a dearth of salt in the South,
And we've *other* meat to be cured.

I would not die at home—in bed—
It would kill poor Kiuba with sorrow;
For if to-day he should find me dead,
He would die, himself, to-morrow.
And since I've thought the matter o'er
(The truth for once I'm giving,)
If I'm to have a choice in the thing,
I guess—*I'll keep on living!*

Figure 3 (above): Asa Hartz's (George McKnight's) "Dying and Living" as published in the *Vicksburg Daily Whig* on April 7, 1863.



From the Mobile Tribune.]

DYING AND LIVING.

BY ASA HARTZ.

I would not die on the battle-field,
Where the missiles are flying wild,
'Tis a fancy death—but it doesn't suit
My mamma's darling child;
The cannon's roar, and the clash of steel,
And the victor's joyous shout,
Sounds well, no doubt—if a fellow don't care,
But I'd rather be counted out!

I would not die on the vessel's deck,
With the wild waves dashing 'round,
'Cause it might occur that I'd have to swim,
And I can't—so I'd surely be drowned;
And the idea of pickling myself in brine
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Besides, there's a dearth of salt in the South,
And we've other meats to be cured.

I would not die at home—in bed—
It would kill poor Kiuba with sorrow;
For if to-day he should find me dead,
He would die himself to-morrow.
And since I've thought the matter o'er,
(The truth for once I'm giving,)
If I'm to have a choice in the thing,
I guess—I'll keep on living!

MOBILE, March, 1863.

Figure 4 (right): Hartz's "Dying and Living" as published in the *Memphis Daily Appeal* on April 23, 1863. (The *Appeal* reprinted the poem from the *Mobile Tribune.*) Although the poem was titled "Dying and Living" in both printings, there are several small differences in the *Daily Whig* and *Daily Appeal* versions, including in punctuation and the use of italics.

Further, the social function of the texts is something I want to illustrate dynamically, not simply descriptively. What I am most interested in is an edition that holds within itself a text-analysis tool that allows for conceptual and word-pattern linking of the newspaper poems with the rest of the newspaper, and not necessarily limited to a single issue. A proof-of-concept project I am currently collaborating on with Brian Pytlik Zillig of the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln seeks, for example, to compare patterns of words between issues of the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* during the Civil War, as well as between poems that appeared in the paper and the rest of the newspaper content. Building on this project, an edition of newspaper poems and an embedded tool should also make it possible to follow poems through reprinting and recreation in different newspapers. For example, when the poem "The Defense of Vicksburg" appeared in the *Memphis Daily*

Appeal on February 23, 1863, the final line read, "And Southern colors proudly flying / Defiant in the breeze." When the poem was reprinted in the *Vicksburg Daily Whig* three days later, "defiant" in the final line was changed to "defiantly," ostensibly so that it paralleled "proudly" from the previous line, although the interpretation becomes perhaps slightly different. In what other ways may the poem have been changed, and what are the possible implications of those changes, as it circulated in daily newspapers throughout the first half of 1863?

A more provocative example may be the transmission of the poem "Dying and Living," written by Southern soldier and prisoner of war George McKnight under the pseudonym "Asa Hartz." Apparently first published in the *Vicksburg Daily Whig* on April 7, 1863, "Dying and Living" circulated in the local Southern press in the spring of 1863. It appeared in the *Memphis Daily Appeal* and the *Mobile Tribune*, and other newspapers likely also carried the poem (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). At some point—I am not sure where—the title was changed to "Living and Dying." The poem appeared under this title in Beuhring H. Jones's *The Sunny Land; or Prison Poetry and Prose* (Baltimore, 1868), and twentieth-century scholarship identifies the piece by the revised title. But written by a soldier in one of the most heavily contested areas of 1863, and published within the pages of newspapers daily mediating the local experience, "Dying and Living" means something quite different from "Living and Dying." In what context, and when, did the title change? Ideally, over time my project will have the capacity to "ingest" *accurate* transcriptions of newspapers and their poems, and thus allow researchers to follow a poem's transmission and uncover reprintings, revisions, and recreations.[14]

In order to do the kind of work I am imagining, my project will require carefully transcribed texts, but what texts, exactly—the poems themselves are not enough, but what then? Entire newspapers with poems? Or do I also include

[14]The project I envision is one that may start with a selected corpus, but would have the technical capacity to take in other accurate transcriptions, whether from the on-going work of a scholar or from a repository that has digitized newspaper content. Once the tool has taken in or, as I phrase it, "ingested," these additional texts, they would be available to be queried and electronically analyzed. Nineteenth-century newspapers have been, and are being, mass-digitized in a number of efforts, among them those led by private companies, such as ProQuest and Gale, and by the Library of Congress's National Digital Newspaper Program. Transcriptions of newspaper text produced in mass-digitization efforts, however, have extremely limited use for a project like the one I imagine, because of the number of errors in transcription. For more, see Kenning Arlitsch and John Herbert, "Microfilm, Paper, and OCR: Issues in Newspaper Digitization," *Microform & Imaging Review*, 33 (2004): 59–67; Tracy Powell and Gordon Paynter, "Going Grey? Comparing the OCR Accuracy Levels of Bitonal and Greyscale Images," *D-Lib Magazine*, 15 (2009), www.dlib.org; and Simon Tanner, Trevor Munoz, and Pich Hemy Ros, "Measuring Mass Text Digitization Quality and Usefulness: Lessons Learned from Assessing the OCR Accuracy Rate of the British Library's 19th Century Online Newspaper Archive," *D-Lib Magazine*, 15 (2009), www.dlib.org.

entire newspapers without poems? Scope is one major issue I need to confront, and decisions I make for scope will have implications for what I am actually able to do with the edition. I am also wondering how my project can deal with the timeliness, locality, and community of the poems as well as their transmission and fluidity. Current technology and practices place a number of constraints on the project, and the availability of time and money inevitably do as well. Perhaps the fundamental question is one of how best to do justice to the poems and the newspapers given my intellectual concerns, the intellectual concerns of our current moment, and the technological capabilities and limitations we now have.