

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)



Vision Statement

To transform how people experience the past — not by simply reading history, but by meeting it on the streets they walk every day.

We envision a world where every street name sparks a story, every block holds a voice, and every resident feels connected to the rich, layered history around them.

Mission Statement

The AGJ Heritage Project LLC teaches local history through the lens of street names, walking tours, and oral history — offering communities the chance to meet history where it lives.

We engage young people and residents alike in exploring their neighborhoods as living textbooks. By uncovering the stories behind street signs, listening to voices of the past and present, and walking the paths of those who came before us, we preserve memory, strengthen identity, and empower future storytellers.

Walt Whitman's Brooklyn Walking Tour-- presented by The AGJ Heritage Project LLC.

A walking tour for undergraduate students required to read, *I hear America Singing*, *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*, & *O' Captain My Captain*.

"I loaf and invite my soul..."
— Song of Myself

Introduction

This walking tour traces the footsteps of Walt Whitman across Brooklyn, exploring the locations that shaped his work, his identity, and his groundbreaking poetry. Students will engage with the physical and cultural landscape of 19th-century Brooklyn through the lens of Whitman's experiences.

Tour Overview

Stops: 5

Estimated Time: 2.5 hours.

WHEN: TBA

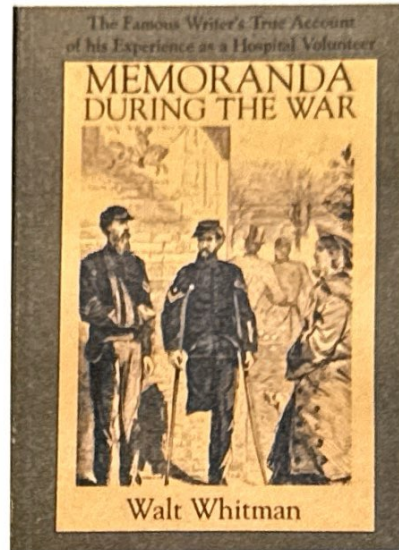
Where to meet: 28 Old Fulton Street next to L & B Spumoni Gardens (Pizza)

1. 99 Ryerson Street

Walt Whitman was born on Long Island, NY May 31, 1819. He moved to Brooklyn as a child. Early on in his life, he worked for the government and later as a reporter. He enjoyed journalism and became editor (1846-1848) of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. From 1850-1854 he began work on, his most noted work, *Leaves of Grass*, where he lived at **99 Ryerson Street**. The home remains and may be visited. In December 1862, Walt Whitman traveled to Fredericksburg, Virginia, after learning his younger brother, George, had been wounded in the Battle of Fredericksburg during the Civil War. Eventually, he found his brother alive and well, but the experience deeply affected him, leading him to become a nurse for wounded soldiers during the war. Since so many soldiers were illiterate, Whitman drafted letters to communicate to many families about the status of their loved one. This led to *Memoranda During the War* (1875) (picture in next column) his anecdotes of soldiers' experiences during the Civil War.

2. Site of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle Office—28 Old Fulton Street

Although the building is gone, this is the site of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. Here we offer students a historical description of Whitman's America pre/Civil War. The Instructor will read, *O'Captain, My Captain*. Activity, discussion about the elegy's themes and meaning.



3. Fulton Ferry Landing

Inspiration for '*Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*'. Reflect on Whitman's vision of time and humanity. Quote: 'What is it then between us? What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?' Activity: Instructor led discussion about the themes of '*Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*'.



(above picture) Location of Fulton Ferry landing.

Students will meet at 28 Old Fulton Street next to L & B Spumoni Gardens (Pizza)

4. The River Café Park

Here students will discuss the elements of poetry and understand Whitman's free verse style. The quaint park is a wonderful location to also process Whitman's poems.

5. Brooklyn Navy Yard Overlook

Symbol of labor pride. Instructor will read, *I Hear America Singing*. Quote: 'Each singing what belongs to him or her and to no one else.' Activity: Discuss, through observations, the current scene of workers and write from a Whitmanian perspective.

*Walk in the steps of Whitman's Brooklyn
Old Fulton & DUMBO Map

