



# Walt Whitman in Washington, D.C.: The Civil War and America's Great Poet

*Garrett Peck*

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Walt Whitman was already famous for *Leaves of Grass* when he journeyed to the nation's capital at the height of the Civil War to find his brother George, a Union officer wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg. Whitman eventually served as a volunteer "hospital missionary," making more than six hundred hospital visits and serving over eighty thousand sick and wounded soldiers in the next three years. With the 1865 publication of *Drum-Taps*, Whitman became poet laureate of the Civil War, aligning his legacy with that of Abraham Lincoln. He remained in Washington until 1873 as a federal clerk, engaging in a dazzling literary circle and fostering his longest romantic relationship, with Peter Doyle. Author Garrett Peck details the definitive account of Walt Whitman's decade in the nation's capital.

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