College Buys 2 Whitman Portraits

Painting of Walt Whitman by his friend, Charles Hine. A likeness of the author painted by G. W. Waters.

Two portraits of Walt Whitman, one showing the poet while still vigorous, but aging, and the other in earlier life, were purchased recently by Brooklyn College. They will be unveiled Thursday at the dedication of the college's new music and arts center, which will be known as Whitman Hall.

The portrait of the younger Whitman, painted by Charles Hine, a friend of the poet, in 1860 when Whitman was 41 years old, was purchased through contributions of faculty and students of the college's English Department. The other portrait, of 1877, by G. W. Waters was bought with the proceeds of a loan. Both formerly were owned by Harold Johnston, a son of H. J. Johnston, a Brooklyn merchant who had been a friend of Whitman.

The Hine portrait, painted five years after Whitman had published his "Leaves of Grass," is one of about eight in oils done from life and is said to be the only one of an early period.

The new college center will have classrooms as well as exhibition galleries, a 500-seat theatre named after the late George Gershwin, and a 2,500-seat Walt Whitman Auditorium.