Ralph L. Fansler was an alumnus of Northwestern University and a Walt Whitman enthusiast. Besides collecting Whitman material, he researched and wrote a biography of the poet. In the course of this project he became acquainted with Whitman's niece, Jessie L. Whitman. She gave him some of her signed first editions and other Whitman material. Fansler donated his entire collection including books, manuscript of the biography THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL, notes, and correspondence to Northwestern University in 1942.

The Fansler/Whitman Collection consists of the archival material in Ralph Fansler's collection. Included are the manuscript of his Walt Whitman biography, THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL, and any notes and correspondence pertaining to it; correspondence with publishing companies in attempts to get it published; correspondence with Jessie L. Whitman and others regarding the poet. Much of this material is addressed to "Garrett Newkirk", a pseudonym Fansler used. Original Walt Whitman correspondence has been cataloged separately. Information about Fansler's donation and acceptance by Northwestern University can be obtained from departmental files.

Box 1
F. 1  Notebook: Ralph Fansler (Garrett Newkirk) interview with Jessie L. Whitman. 48pp.
ALS from Jessie L. Whitman answering questions about Whitman family history, March 6, 1939. 2pp.

F. 2  Correspondence of Jessie L. Whitman, St. Louis, Missouri, to Ralph Fansler/Garrett Newkirk.
ALS  11/14/1939  2pp & typed poem
ALS  12/18/1939  2pp.
ALS  1/28/1940  3pp.
ALS  4/16/1940  4pp.
ALS  8/5/1940  4pp.
ALS  10/6/1940  3pp.
ALS  12/18/1940  2pp.
F. 2
ALS 2/20/1941 4pp.
ALS 3/11/1941 1p.
ALS 4/1/1941 4pp.
ACS Dec. 1941 Christmas card
ANS 12/19/1942 1p.
ACS 12/19/1942 Christmas card
ALS 2/14/1943 3pp.
ALS 3/31/1943 2pp & article on Walt Whitman

Christmas card from Fanslers to Jessie L. Whitman returned "unclaimed" December 18, 1944. Note by Fansler "We lost touch with Miss W. She was 87 then."

F. 3
Miss Whitman's letters to Fansler were originally attached to pages in this notebook.

F. 4
Correspondence. Martha Lippincott Davis, Walt Whitman House, 330 Mickle Street, Camden, N.J. to Ralph Fansler/Garrett Newkirk.
ALS 10/2/1939 64pp.
ALS 1/27/1940 5pp.
ALS 2/20/1940 1p.
ALS 5/22/1940 10pp.
ALS 10/7/1940 5pp.
ALS 9/12/1946 5pp.
Notes n.d. 3pp. "from Horace Traubel book on Whitman"

F. 4A
Correspondence. Dr. Clara Barrus to Jessie L. Whitman. March-April, 1930. 4 pp.
Re: Horace Traubel books on Walt Whitman.

RF TLS 4/7/1939 3pp. Fansler's TLS carbon reply
ALS 5/24/1939 3pp.
ALS 8/24/1939 1p
RF TLS 8/27/1939 4pp. Fansler's TLS carbon reply
ALS 8/28/1939 1p.
ALS 9/5/1939 7pp.
ALS 9/8/1939 1p.
RF ALS 9/8/1939 1p. Fansler's ALS draft reply
ALS 9/18/1939 3pp.
RF TLS 9/26/1939 2pp. Fansler's TLS carbon reply
ALS 10/2/1939 1p.
ALS 11/2/1939 1p.
ALS 8/7/1940 1p.

F. 6 Miscellaneous correspondence. 15 letters responding to requests for information about Whitman or his family. 41pp.
Map of Bellefontaine Cemetery.

F. 7 Miscellaneous correspondence. 8 letters responding to requests for copyright information or permission to publish material in THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL. 24pp.
Includes typed list of Whitman materials for sale.

F. 8 Receipts of expenses incurred in conducting research on biography, 1938-1941. Includes expense account log.

F. 9 Exhibit of Fansler's Whitman Collection in Detroit Public Library in March, 1942. Includes list of materials on display, photographs, and letters about the exhibit.

F. 10 Northwestern University.
Northwestern University Alumni News, November, 1942 (pages 10-11 highlight Fansler's Collection)
Northwestern University News, v. 1#1, February 15, 1943.
(p. 12 Fansler's donation is mentioned)
F 11 Ephemera. Miscellaneous information about Walt Whitman, Whitman scholars, or Whitman exhibits.

F 12 Photographic plates of Hannah Whitman, George and Louisa Whitman, and Manahatta and Jessie Whitman. Made from original photographs for Fansler.

Box 2

F 1 THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL. Typescript (incomplete), pp. 37-321 and table of contents.

F 2 THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL. Typescript (incom.), pp. i-xix, 1-376, with collation information.

F 3 Typescripts. "Section three. Preliminary Drafts of Poems in 'Leaves of Grass'" With corrections. 2 copies Includes: "First draft of Leaves of Grass" "Glossary of words, phrases used by Walt Whitman" "A concordance to the seventy-two leaves of grass" "Walt Whitman, wound dresser" 44pp.

F 4 Fansler's research notes
Spiral notebook, #760-S, 37pp.
Binder, 145pp.
Spiral notebook, #40, 98pp.
Loose notes, 29pp.
Legal pads, 63pp. & 63pp.

F 5 Publishing correspondence

F 6 Bill of sale of manuscript of THE PASSWORD PRIMEVAL and full rights for royalties to Ada S. Fansler, 1/15/42.