



American Legends: The Life of Edgar Allan Poe

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures of Poe and important people and places in his life.

*Discusses the inspiration for Poe's most famous works.

*Explains Poe's relationships with the various women in his life.

*Discusses the mysterious circumstances of his death and possible explanations.

*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"He was an adventurer into the vaults and cellars and horrible underground passages of the human soul. He sounded the horror and the warning of his own doom." – D.H. Lawrence

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Edgar Allan Poe was one of America's first native-born professional authors, but he nevertheless embodied the now-common archetype of the artist — dark, tortured, brilliant and tragic. Born into troubled conditions, Poe's life hardly improved over the years, and when it did, his happiness or triumph was always brief. His work was lauded during his lifetime, but his lifestyle never came close to matching the legacy that would swell in the decades following his death. And that untimely end, so mysterious and pathetic, was an event that only Poe or Fate could have been macabre enough to script.

However, in spite of (or perhaps because of) all of his suffering, Poe remains one of the great forces in American literature, particularly during its formative years. He was a pioneer of multiple literary traditions, including the gothic, horror, dark Romanticism, detective, satire, hoax and science fiction genres. Poe is best known for his tales of mystery and the macabre, and Poe was one of the earliest American practitioners of the short story. Long before Sherlock Holmes became famous, Poe invented the genre of detective fiction and contributed to science fiction.

Had Poe simply pioneered genres, he would have left a worthy legacy, but Poe also happened to master them, and the imagery of his stories remains unsurpassed. His portrayal of insane protagonists and antagonists, horrific situations like being buried alive, supernatural phenomena, and vivid descriptions of the physical and mental effects of sickness and death continue to amaze and bedevil subsequent generations of readers, most of whom come to admire his genius and wonder about his sanity at the same time.

American Legends: The Life of Edgar Allan Poe profiles the dark life and works of one of America's most famous and influential authors, examining his stories and analyzing his lasting legacy. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Poe like you never have before, in no time at all.

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