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The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe

This collection of specially commissioned essays by experts in the field explores key dimensions of Edgar Allan Poe's work and life. Contributions provide a series of new perspectives on one of the most enigmatic and controversial American writers. The essays, specially tailored to the needs of undergraduates, examine all of Poe's major writings, his poetry, short stories, and criticism, and place his work in a variety of literary, cultural, and political contexts. They situate his imaginative writings in relation to different modes of writing: humor, Gothicism, anti-slavery tracts, science fiction, the detective story, and sentimental fiction. Three chapters examine specific works: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Raven," and "Ulalume." The volume features a detailed chronology and a comprehensive guide to further reading, and will be of interest to students and scholars alike.

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For Myung-Sook

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KAREN WEEKES, Assistant Professor of English at Penn State Abington, has published essays treating nineteenth-century American literature in the *Georgia Review* and *Southern Literary Journal*.

CHRONOLOGY OF POE'S LIFE

- 1809 Edgar Poe is born 19 January in Boston, where his parents, Elizabeth Arnold Poe and David Poe, Jr., both actors, are performing.
- 1811 Elizabeth Poe dies 8 December in Richmond, Virginia. Since David Poe had abandoned the family prior to his wife's death, Edgar, his brother William Henry, and sister Rosalie enter different foster families. Frances and John Allan take Edgar into their family – without legally adopting him, however.
- 1815 John Allan moves his family to London, where he established a branch office of his mercantile firm, Allan and Ellis.
- 1816 Edgar enters a London boarding school run by the Misses Dubourg.
- 1818 Edgar becomes a boarding student at the Manor House School, Stoke Newington, run by the Reverend John Bransby, which would later serve as the model for the school in “William Wilson.”
- 1820 His London business venture proving unsuccessful, John Allan takes his family back to Richmond, Virginia, where Poe begins studying with Joseph H. Clarke and also writes much poetry.
- 1823 Poe transfers to a Richmond school run by William Burke.
- 1825 John Allan inherits much of the immense fortune of his uncle, William Galt.
- 1826 In February, Poe enters the University of Virginia, where he studies ancient and modern languages. He incurs considerable gambling debts, which John Allan refuses to honor. Poe leaves school in December and returns to Richmond.
- 1827 Frequently bickering with Allan, Poe leaves Richmond for Boston, where Calvin F. S. Thomas publishes his first collection of verse, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. Using the name Edgar

CHRONOLOGY OF POE'S LIFE

- A. Perry, he enlists in the US Army and is ordered to Fort Moultrie, South Carolina.
- 1828 Rising to the rank of sergeant major, Poe begins to seek appointment to US Military Academy at West Point. To that end, he becomes reconciled with John Allan, who helps him obtain the appointment. Frances Allan dies 28 February.
- 1829 Hatch and Dunning publish Poe's second collection of verse, *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* at Baltimore.
- 1830 Poe enters West Point in May. John Allan remarries in October 1830.
- 1831 Though endearing himself to fellow cadets, Poe generally dislikes life at the Academy, deliberately disobeys orders, and is court-martialed and expelled from West Point. Before leaving, however, he solicits subscriptions for his third collection of verse, *Poems*, which is published at New York by Elam Bliss and dedicated to "The US Corps of Cadets." He relocates to Baltimore, where he lives with his aunt and cousin, Maria and Virginia Clemm. His brother Henry, who also lives with the Clemms, dies on 1 August.
- 1832 Poe submits five tales to a contest sponsored by the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*: "The Bargain Lost," "A Decided Loss," "The Duke de L'Omelette," "Metzengerstein," and "A Tales of Jerusalem," which publishes all of them.
- 1833 In October, "MS. Found in a Bottle" wins the first prize of \$50 in a literary contest sponsored by the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, which also publishes "The Coliseum" this year. The contest serves to introduce Poe to John Pendleton Kennedy, who would prove to be an important literary connection.
- 1834 "The Visionary" (later, "The Assigination") appears in January. John Allan dies 27 March, yet leaves Poe nothing.
- 1835 Kennedy recommends that Poe begin contributing to the *Southern Literary Messenger* and encourages its proprietor, Thomas W. White, to hire Poe in an editorial capacity. In August, Poe moves to Richmond, where he joins the *Messenger* staff. His uncompromising reviews attract the attention of literati throughout the nation. The stories he contributes to the *Messenger* this year include "Berenice," "King Pest," "Lionizing," "Morella," and "Shadow: A

CHRONOLOGY OF POE'S LIFE

- Parable." In October, Maria and Virginia Clemm join Poe in Richmond.
- 1836 Poe weds Virginia Clemm on 16 May. His contributions to the *Messenger* this year include the two-part "Autography" and numerous important critical essays including the "Drake-Halleck Review." Poe's editorial freedoms, combined with occasional drinking bouts, alienate him from White.
- 1837 Poe resigns from the *Messenger* in January and then moves his family to New York, where he unsuccessfully seeks employment. Maria Clemm manages a boarding house to help make ends meet. One tenant, bookman William Gowans, befriends Poe and initiates him into the world of antiquarian books.
- 1838 Poe moves his family to Philadelphia early in the year. Harpers publishes *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* in July. Late this year he contributes "Ligeia" and "The Psyche Zenobia" (later, "How to Write a Blackwood Article") to the Baltimore *American Museum*.
- 1839 Poe helps Thomas Wyatt compile *The Conchologist's First Book* and *A Synopsis of Natural History*. He becomes an editor of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, to which he contributes most of its reviews and several tales including "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Man That Was Used Up." "William Wilson" appears in *The Gift*. Lea and Blanchard publish Poe's first collection of short stories, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* in December at Philadelphia. Also in December, Poe begins contributing cryptographic puzzles and miscellaneous articles to *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*.
- 1840 Poe continues contributing puzzles and essays to *Alexander's*, and, besides his editorial writings, contributes to *Burton's* "Peter Pendulum" (later, "The Business Man"), "The Philosophy of Furniture," and "Sonnet – Silence." The serial, "The Journal of Julius Rodman," which had begun in the January issue of *Burton's*, ends unfinished after Burton discharges Poe, who had been making plans to found his own literary magazine, the *Penn Magazine*. Unable to generate sufficient support for his proposed magazine, Poe delays his plans. George R. Graham buys *Burton's* in November and unites it with *The Casket* to form *Graham's Magazine*,

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- to which Poe contributes "The Man of the Crowd" in December.
- 1841 Poe accepts an editorial position with *Graham's*, to which he also contributes several tales: "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," "The Descent into the Maelström," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "Never Bet the Devil Your Head."
- 1842 "Life in Death" (later, "The Oval Portrait") and "The Masque of the Red Death" appear in *Graham's*, yet Poe resigns from the magazine partway through the year. "The Pit and the Pendulum" appears in *The Gift* and the first two installments of "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" appear in Snowden's *Ladies' Companion* the last two months of the year.
- 1843 "The Tell-Tale Heart" appears in *The Pioneer* in January, and the final installment of "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" appears in the February *Ladies' Companion*. Poe arranges with Philadelphia publisher Thomas C. Clarke to issue his ideal magazine, now titled *The Stylus*, and Clarke publishes a lengthy biographical essay on Poe in his *Saturday Museum*. Plans for the magazine fall through, however. In March, Poe visits Washington, DC, to seek a position with the Tyler administration, yet he gets drunk and ruins his chances for the job. In June "The Gold-Bug" wins a \$100 prize in a literary contest sponsored by the Philadelphia *Dollar Newspaper*. The tale is widely reprinted and also dramatized on the Philadelphia stage. In July William H. Graham issues *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe*, which contains "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Man That Was Used Up," the first and only installment of a planned, serialized collection of Poe's stories. In November Poe delivers his first public lecture, "Poets and Poetry of America," a means of income he would frequently resort to during the remainder of his life.
- 1844 In April Poe and Virginia move to New York City, where his "Balloon-Hoax" dupes New Yorkers into believing that the Atlantic had been successfully crossed by balloon. In May and June, Poe contributes the essay series, "Doings of Gotham," to the *Columbia Spy*. In October he obtains employment with the *New York Evening Mirror*. Tales published this year include "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.," "Mesmeric Revelation," "The Oblong Box," "The Premature Burial," "The Purloined Letter," "The Spectacles," and "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains."

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- 1845 In January, "The Raven" appears in the January *Evening Mirror*, is an instant sensation, and brings Poe newfound popularity and critical acclaim, which prompt his inclusion in the prestigious series, "The Library of American Books," published by Wiley and Putnam. *Tales* appears as part of the series in July and *The Raven and Other Poems* in November. Early in the year, Poe begins contributing to the *Broadway Journal*, becomes its editor in July, and, on borrowed money, then becomes its proprietor. This year, Poe revises and republishes many of his earlier stories in the *Broadway Journal*. Original tales first published this year include "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," "The Imp of the Perverse," "The Power of Words," "Some Secrets of the Magazine Prison-House," "Some Words with a Mummy," and "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether." The periodical battle Poe wages with Longfellow contributes to his notoriety.
- 1846 Poe ends publication of the *Broadway Journal* in January. Periodical publications this year include "The Cask of Amontillado"; "The Literati of New York City," a lively series which generates much controversy and additional notoriety; and "The Sphinx."
- 1847 Virginia dies 30 January, and Poe himself is beset with illness through much of the year. "Ulalume" appears in the *American Review* in December.
- 1848 In February, Poe delivers a lecture on "The Universe," which forms the basis of his cosmological treatise, *Eureka*, which Putnam publishes in June.
- 1849 Poe lectures much this year. His periodical publications include "Eldorado," "Hop-Frog," "Mellonta Tauta," "Von Kempelen and His Discovery," and "X-ing a Paragrab." Visiting Richmond, he becomes engaged to boyhood sweetheart Elmira Royster Shelton, now a widow. On 3 October, he is found semi-conscious and delirious in Baltimore. He dies on 7 October. "The Bells" and "Annabel Lee" appear posthumously before the year's end.

SHORT TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CH</i>	<i>Edgar Allan Poe: The Critical Heritage.</i> Ed. I. M. Walker. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.
<i>Collected Works</i> (Mabbott)	<i>Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe.</i> Ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott. 3 vols. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969–1978.
<i>Complete Works</i> (Harrison)	<i>Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe.</i> Ed. James A. Harrison. 17 vols. 1902. Reprinted, New York: AMS, 1965.
<i>E&R</i>	<i>Edgar Allan Poe: Essays and Reviews.</i> Ed. G. R. Thompson. New York: Library of America, 1984.
<i>Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe.</i> Ed. John Ward Ostrom. 1948. Reprinted, with supplement. 2 vols. New York: Gordian Press, 1966.
<i>Log</i>	Thomas, Dwight and David K. Jackson. <i>The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe 1809–1849.</i> Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987.
<i>P&T</i>	<i>Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry and Tales.</i> Ed. Patrick F. Quinn. New York: Library of America, 1984.
<i>Recognition</i>	<i>The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe</i> Ed. Eric W. Carlson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966.