

## THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

*The Cambridge History of American Literature* addresses the broad spectrum of new and established directions in all branches of American writing and includes the work of scholars and critics who have shaped, and who continue to shape, what has become a major area of literary scholarship. The authors span three decades of achievement in American literary criticism, thereby speaking for the continuities as well as the disruptions sustained between generations of scholarship. Generously proportioned narratives allow at once for a broader vision and sweep of American literary history than has been possible previously, and while the voice of traditional criticism forms a background for these narratives, it joins forces with the diversity of interests that characterize contemporary literary studies.

The *History* offers wide-ranging, interdisciplinary accounts of American genres and periods. Generated partly by the recent unearthing of previously neglected texts, the expansion of material in American literature coincides with a dramatic increase in the number and variety of approaches to that material. The multifaceted scholarly and critical enterprise embodied in *The Cambridge History of American Literature* addresses these multiplicities – the social, the cultural, the intellectual, and the aesthetic – and demonstrates a richer concept of authority in literary studies than is found in earlier accounts.

This volume is the first complete narrative history of nineteenth-century American poetry, ranging from the revolutionary period through the Civil War and the surging pluralism and emerging mass society at the turn of the century. Barbara Packer explores the riches of the neoclassical and satiric forms mastered by the early Federalist poets; the creative reaches of once-celebrated, and still compelling, poets such as Philip Freneau, John Greenleaf Whittier, and the distinctive lyric forms developed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendentalists. Shira Wolosky provides a new perspective on the achievement of female poets of the period, as well as a close appreciation of African-American poets, including the collective folk authors of the Negro spirituals. She reveals the virtuosity and historical force of the “genteel poets,” from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. to George Santayana. And she offers a fresh and illuminating analysis of the major works of the period, from Poe through Melville and Crane, to the poetic giants of the century, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. The authors of this volume discuss this extraordinary literary achievement in both formal terms and in its sustained engagement with changing social and cultural conditions. In doing so they recover and elucidate American poetry of the nineteenth century for our twenty-first-century pleasure, profit, and renewed study.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF  
AMERICAN LITERATURE

Volume 4  
1800–1910

THE CAMBRIDGE  
HISTORY OF  
AMERICAN LITERATURE

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1800–1910

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Here as in several previous volumes, the Introduction is divided into two parts. The first part (pp. 1–5), describing the design and aims of this multi-volume project as a whole, was written by me. The second part (pp. 5–8), describing the organization and contents of this particular volume, was a collaborative effort, written jointly by me and by an outstanding representative of the current generation of Americanists – representative, that is, of the type of reader for whom this *History* is ideally intended. I was most fortunate to enlist Neal Dolan (now an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto) for this task. He turned out to be the main author in our collaboration, and I am grateful to him for all he did, both in this matter and in his compiling of the Chronology.

*Sacvan Bercovitch*  
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### AMERICAN VERSE TRADITIONS, 1800–1855

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