

THE ACOLYTE

AN AMATEUR MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND THE SUPERNATURAL

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THE ACOLYTE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE
H. P. LOVECRAFT BY A SINCERE ACOLYTE.

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING.

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THE ACOLYTE STARTS ITS SECOND YEAR with this issue, but aside from a few
extra pages, I'm making no particular effort to celebrate. Fancy anni-
versary issues are all right for fanzines which come out more frequent-
ly, but it would be silly to make a great to-do over a mere four issues.
However, if The Acolyte is able to continue for that long, I guarantee

HOMES AND SHRINES OF POE

by H. P. Lovecraft

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(Note: This article originally was published in the Winter 1934 issue of The Californian, an NAPA magazine, and is reprinted here through the courtesy of Hyman Bradofsky and August Derleth.)

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Because of Poe's migratory life, the number of houses and sites associated with him is very great. Many are known, but only a few are properly marked or restored as shrines. The site of the cheap boarding house in Boston's South End, where in 1809 he was born to a pair of strolling players, bears a bronze tablet with the simple facts; and at one time the junction near it--Broadway and Carver Street--was named "Edgar Allan Poe Square".

In 1811 Poe's mother, then acting in Richmond, died and left him to be adopted by the wealthy local merchant John Allan. She was then stopping at a small brick cottage in the rear of the theatrical boarding-house on the northwest corner of Main and 23rd Streets. This cottage (and the boarding-house as well) is still standing though unmarked. The district, inhabited by negroes, is very squalid. Mrs. Poe was buried in St. John's churchyard at Broad and 24th Streets, and her grave was suitably marked in 1929.

The Allan home into which the child was taken, a three-story brick house at 14th Street and Tobacco Alley, is still standing, though long ago converted into a shop and now deserted and unmarked.

The Poe sites in England and Scotland, where young Edgar was taken by his foster-parents and where he remained from 1815 to 1820, are not marked or generally known. The school at Stoke-Newington, so vividly described in the story William Wilson, has long been demolished.

When the Allans returned to Richmond, their first permanent home--after a summer at the bygone and uncommemorated house of Mr. Allan's partner at Franklin and Second Streets--was at Clay and Fifth Streets. This house has vanished, and the site is unmarked. In 1895 Mr. Allan purchased the mansion called Maldaria at Main and Fifth Streets, and it is there that the most important crisis in Poe's life occurred. This house also is demolished without the marking of the site.

Poe's brief period at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville is, fortunately, well commemorated. His room at 13 West Range is fitted up as it was during his tenancy, and above the door is a plaque reading "EDGAR ALLAN POE--MDCCCXXVI--DOMUS PARVA MAGNI POETAE".

After Poe's breach with his guardian, he entered the army as a common soldier; and many of the military landmarks connected with him--Fort Independence in Boston Harbour, Fort Moultrie or Sullivan's Island in Charleston Harbour, and Fortress Monroe, Virginia--survive, though without Poe tablets.

Discharged from the army, Poe stayed for a time with his blood-relatives in Baltimore. The house was in Mechanics Row, Milk Street, and has vanished without commemoration. In 1830, after a brief reinstatement in the Allan home, Poe went to West Point; but no marker remains to record his sojourn in Room 28, South Barracks. After he prematurely left the Academy he returned to the Milk Street house in Baltimore. Hence, in the autumn of 1832, he removed with his relatives to a corner-windowed brick house at 3 Amity Street, which is still standing though unmarked.

In 1835 Poe went to Richmond with his aunt Mrs. Clemm and her daughter Virginia, having married the latter. The family lived at a boarding-house in Bank Street, Capitol Square, which has disappeared

and whose site is unmarked.

Early in 1837 Poe and his family migrated to New York City, living at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Waverly Place in Greenwich Village, where no trace of his tenancy remains. In the spring he moved to 13^{1/2} Carmine Street, a site still commonly associated with him, though neither house nor marker exists.

In August 1838, the family began its six years' residence in Philadelphia. The first two stopping places were boarding-houses situated respectively at Twelfth Street above Arch, and on the northeast corner of Fourth and Arch; neither site now possessing the original house or any tablet. In September they moved to a small house--also gone and uncommemorated--in 16th Street near Locust. Late in 1839 or early in 1840 another move was made--to a brick house of three stories at the junction of Coates Street and Fairmount Drive, overlooking the Schuylkill. Though without a marker, this building is still standing, unless very recently destroyed.

Some time before the end of May 1842, Poe transferred his household to the cottage now restored and opened as a shrine. Here, amidst an environment then village-like and semi-rural, he performed considerable work of importance. When he left it in the spring of 1844, it was to go to New York once more for the final phase of his tragically brief career.

The first haven in Poe's second New York period was Morrison's boarding-house on the northwest corner of Greenwich and Albany Streets; an ancient brick building which had once been the Planters' Hotel, favored by Southern visitors. This structure still exists in good condition as a restaurant; though there is no tablet to indicate Poe's connection with it. The poet himself soon resigned the Greenwich Street quarters exclusively to his wife and aunt; taking a room of his own at 4 Ann Street, where all traces of his presence are swept away.

When summer came the family was reunited in the rustic Bloomingdale region then far north of the compact town; boarding at a farmhouse which stood on a knoll near what is now the busy intersection of Broadway and 84th Street. The house has of course long since vanished, nor does any marker amidst the babel of shops and apartments attest the fact that The Raven was completed on that spot.

In November Poe left the country and took quarters in a Greenwich Village rooming-house at 15 Amity Street. Neither the house nor any marker exists at present. In May 1845, a removal to 195 Broadway was effected. Here the whole family lived in extreme poverty, sharing a single back room in a run-down tenement long ago destroyed and forgotten. By midsummer a change for the better was made--a return to Amity Street, this time at No. 85, which like so many other Poe abodes has sunk without trace. In the spring of 1846 the family returned briefly to the Bloomingdale farmhouse, moving later to another rural boarding-place at Turtle Bay, where the present 47th Street meets the East River. This was a large farmhouse, of which no vestige or memorial now survives.

The next and final move--near the end of May 1846--was to the famous Fordham cottage. This small but shapely farmhouse, of an early 19th century type common in the region, was in Poe's time situated amidst a countryside of the greatest possible beauty. Here, early in 1847, Poe's wife died; and it was still the family home when the poet himself expired in 1849. In time the expanding metropolis engulfed the district, and the cottage was hemmed in by new buildings. In 1913 the city purchased the edifice as a public museum and moved it northward about 450 feet to the crossing of the Grand Concourse and Kingsbridge Road, in a small park named for Poe. By 1931 its restoration was complete, and the surrounding landscape was made to resemble its original setting as closely as possible. It is furnished just as it

was in Poe's time; three articles--a rocking-chair, a bedstead, and a mirror--being actually the ones he owned and used. Various relics of Poe are present, and there is a notable collection of different editions of his works.

Poe died in Baltimore October 7, 1849, and two days later was buried among his relatives there in a corner of Westminster Presbyterian Churchyard. A stone prepared by a cousin was accidentally destroyed before being set in place; so that for 35 years the poet's grave remained unmarked. In November 1875, a marble monument was placed beside the grave by admirers; this forming the first of Poe's public shrines. Today the churchyard is in a decaying section, but within its walls dignity still reigns. The grave is adorned with green vines, and those who come to pay tribute feel that this last of the weary, wayworn wanderer's many homes is not in the least inappropriate.

In Richmond, which he always regarded as his real home, Poe's memory is perpetuated through a shrine unconnected with any actual dwelling of his, though not far from where his mother died. The nucleus of this shrine is a venerable stone house on Main Street near 19th, undoubtedly the oldest building in Richmond. Just east of it is a fire-proof structure in the ancient manner, having built into it two architectural features--the staircase and the mantel of Poe's room--from the old Allan home at 14th Street and Tobacco Alley. Behind the house is an exquisite garden with a loggia built of bricks from the demolished magazine office where Poe worked. The shrine as a whole contains one of the best Poe collections in existence.

The newly opened Philadelphia house is unique in being the only Poe dwelling on its original site to become a memorial museum. It is a pleasant brick cottage of three stories in the rear of a larger house at 530 North Seventh Street; evidently built early in the 19th century and perhaps originally forming servants' quarters. Around it is a small and tasteful garden, now restored as in Poe's time except that a great pear tree which he loved is missing. The front yard opens on an alley extending in from Seventh Street, with the dreary width of Spring Garden Street just beyond. It is hard to visualize the secluded, almost rustic neighborhood that the poet knew.

Once in the garden or house, however, we step out of the present. The cottage has lasted well, and no structural alterations have ever been made. The small-paned windows, harmonious mantels, and panelled doors all bespeak the quiet grace of Georgian architecture. There are only two rooms to a floor, and all are furnished just as during Poe's tenancy; though only a desk and chair are actual Poe relics. Eastward on the ground floor is the parlour with its attractive fireplace, piano, forte, sofa, and book-closet. Across a narrow hall is the kitchen, where the family also ate. On the second floor is Poe's bedroom, with a neat black slate mantel; while across the hall is a smaller study. Here can be found his desk, with appropriate books of the period along the top. On the low-ceiled third floor are the rooms of Poe's wife and aunt, with modest fireplaces and small casement windows. Everything is neatly kept--curtains, flowers, plants, pictures, china, and linen--just as it was in Poe's time.

In the large adjoining house, which has a connecting door, is a notable Poe collection. Here are copies of magazines containing the first appearance of most of the tales and poems, and other associative items too numerous to record.

Of the Poe houses still standing, none comes to life more vividly as a typical home than this unpretentious cottage. Though heretofore surprisingly little known, this shrine is likely to become a leading place of pilgrimage for those who revere genius and admire one of the greatest and unhappiest of its exemplars.