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Bittinger, Lucy Forney, "The Westminster Graveyard, Baltimore, Maryland," (this is a small, anonymous and undated pamphlet of 10 pages, printed in Baltimore by Kohn & Pollack, Inc. The date is probably 1924, based on a Nov. 13, 1924 letter from J. H. Whitty to Kenneth Rede requesting a copy of the pamphlet. The original letter is in the special collections of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Kenneth Rede Collection, folder 4. The pamphlet, with a slip of paper stating "Mr. J. H. Whitty with the compliments of Kenneth Rede" is in a private collection. Another copy of what appears to be the same pamphlet is in the May G. Evans collection at Johns Hopkins University, bearing the inscription "with the compliments of the author" and signed Lucy Forney-Bittinger. Although some sources give her dates as 1859-1907, and she was indeed born in 1859, she was still alive as late as 1930, and is listed in the Federal Census for that year as living in Baltimore and noted as a Deaconess. She was a missionary to China as late as 1921, and was a member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church. According to her tombstone in Hanover, PA, she died in Baltimore in 1955.) Bready, James H., "Westminster Presbyterian Church Marks Two Milestones This Year," Baltimore Evening Sun, September 22, 1950, p. 31. (The portion relevant to the discussion of the Poe Toaster follows: "The anonymous citizen who creeps in annually to place an empty bottle (of excellent label) against the tomb of Poe, on the anniversary of his death, is a jokester, Mr. McDonald figures." Rev. Bruce H. McDonald was the minister for the Church in 1950. Mr. Bready, who died in 2011, admitted in personal conversations in the 1980s that he was probably in error in citing the event as occurring on the anniversary of Poe's death rather than his birth, as the event was not as well-known at the time as it was to become in later years. Whether by "empty" Rev. McDonald meant "fully empty" or merely "partially empty" must remain a matter of conjecture at this point.) Didier, Eugene L., "The Grave of Poe," Appleton's Journal, VII, Jan 27, 1872, p. 104. Didier, Eugene L., "Account from Baltimore of Monument to Be Erected Over Poe's Grave," Appleton's Journal, XIII, May 15, 1875, p. 629. Dugdale, Jennie Bard, "The Grave of Edgar Allan Poe," Poet-Lore, XI, 1899, pp. 583-595. French, John C., "The Day of Poe's Burial," Baltimore Sun, June 3, 1949, p. 14. Miller, John C., "The Exhumations and Reburials of Edgar and Virginia Poe and Mrs. Clemm," Poe Studies, December 1974, pp. 46-47. Poudler, G. H., "Poe of Baltimore," Baltimore, Vol. XLII, No. 11, September 1949, pp. 16-22. Rice, Sara Sigourney, Edgar Allan Poe: A Memorial Volume, Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1877. Wilson, Jane Bromley, The Very Quiet Baltimoreans: A Guide to the Historic Cemeteries and Burial Sites of Baltimore, White Mane Publishing Company, 1991. (See the chapter "Westminster Burying Ground" on pp. 1-6, preceded by a full-page map of the cemetery.) It was a raw, windy afternoon in Baltimore on October 8, 1849, when a small group of men in a single carriage followed a hearse down the cobbled streets carrying the body of Edgar Allan Poe to his final resting place. Poe, who had died under mysterious circumstances the day before, was finally at peace. For four days he lay in a hospital bed in and out of consciousness after he was found incoherent and wearing someone else's clothing outside a Baltimore tavern, according to Smithsonian. In attendance at the graveside service were his cousin Neilson Poe; Zacheus Collins Lee, Poe's college friend; Dr. Joseph Snodgrass, a physician and acquaintance of Poe; and Henry Herring, Poe's uncle by marriage, per "Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography," posted by The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. Herring had paid for a cheap unlined mahogany coffin and Poe's grave was to be a crude hole in the ground. Rev. W. T. D. Clemm, the minister of the Caroline Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore and cousin of Edgar Allan Poe's deceased wife, Virginia, gave a brief eulogy before two gravediggers lowered the casket and then unceremoniously began filling in Poe's grave, per "Exquisite Wickedness: Two Murders and the Making of Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart,'" A passerby, J. Alden Weston, witnessed the funeral, which he called "cold-blooded and unchristianlike," lasted all of three minutes, and provoked in him "a sense of anger difficult to suppress," according to "The Poe Log," posted at The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. He believed that had they waited until Poe's death had become common knowledge, the poet's many admirers would have come to the funeral. They buried Poe at the Westminster Presbyterian Cemetery (now known as Westminster Hall and Burying Ground) at West Fayette and North Greene Streets in downtown Baltimore. His grave was close to that of his grandfather, General David Poe, but unlike that gravestone with its marble headstone, Poe had nothing to mark where his body lay, per "Poe's Memorial Grave," also via The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. It would stay that way for more than two decades even as Poe's posthumous fame grew, like the weeds that soon covered his final resting place. Neilson Poe, Edgar Allan Poe's cousin, finally got around to purchasing a marble headstone for the grave in 1860, but, strangely, a runaway train jumped its track and smashed into the yard of the mason who was carving the headstone and destroyed it, per "Poe's Memorial Grave." Poe's cousin never had another one made. But Sara Sigourney Rice, a Baltimore school teacher who was a huge fan of the poet, took it upon herself to spearhead a fundraiser to have a memorial made for Poe, paid in part through pennies donated by local schoolchildren. That was erected in 1875, per the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. Poe finally got a headstone worthy of his greatness, but because it was so imposing — more than six feet tall and four feet wide — it meant moving his remains to the front of the cemetery, per "Poe's Memorial Grave." Poe's Memorial Grave." Poe's grave soon became a destination. For 60 years, from 1949 until 2009, a mysterious person or persons, known as the Poe Toaster, would leave three roses and a bottle of cognac on Poe's grave on the poet's birthday, according to Smithsonian. All the United States Maryland Baltimore Edgar Allan Poe's Grave Despite a prolific body of work, when Edgar Allan Poe died in 1849, he was originally buried in an unmarked grave. When the grave was in danger of disappearing into the weeds for good altogether, George W. Spence undertook naming the spot with a simple sandstone marker—not with the famous writer's name, but with the simple and inexplicable number 80. As rumors of the unmet grave began circulating throughout Baltimore and pressure grew to remedy the site, Edgar's cousin Neilson decided to order a proper marble headstone and promised to maintain the grave. However, while it was under construction, the original stone was destroyed in a freak train accident and he did not order another. The original stone only survives in the form of a paper sketch. It was many years before a proper stone for the poet and author was erected to mark his passing. Donations had been collected for years before half the cost was donated by a Philadelphia man named George Childs in 1874. Shortly thereafter, a prestigious monument was designed by George Frederick, the same architect who designed Baltimore's City Hall. 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Kyoto, Japan Hōnen-in Temple The cemetery houses the remains of Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, one of Japan's most famous novelists. Charlotte, North Carolina Hilton Sisters Grave Conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton were stars of the vaudeville circuit. Lowell, Massachusetts Jack Kerouac's Grave According to legend, Bob Dylan sneaks in twice a year to eat dinner with Jack. Questions or Feedback? Contact Us Author, Poet. Most remembered for his influence on other writers and poets through his imaginative use of literary style and for his near flawless use of rhythm and sound in his poetry. He is considered the father of the modern detective story and the psychological thriller. Born in Boston, the son of touring actors David Poe Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold Poe. When he was three years old, his parents died, and he was taken into the home of John Allan, a wealthy merchant in Richmond, Virginia, who renamed him Edgar Allan Poe. In 1826, he entered the University of Virginia, staying only one year, and running up large gambling debts that John Allan refused to pay. Allan pulled him from college and broke up his engagement to Elmira Royster. Lacking means of support, Poe enlisted in the Army, but had his first book, "Tamerlane and Other Poems," published at his expense, and was able to pay off his debts. Reconciled with Allan, his adoptive father paid for his release from the U.S. Army and secured an appointment to West Point for Poe (USMA Class of 1834), but he dropped out after six months. His fellow cadets paid for a publishing of his book, "Poems" (1831), which contained his famous poem "To Helen." Taking up residence with his aunt, Maria Clemm, in Baltimore, he supported himself with writing stories, which he sold to the Philadelphia Saturday Courier and other newspapers. In 1835, he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, who was 13 years old, and moved to Richmond, where he became the editor of the Southern Literary Messenger. He was highly praised for his reviews of contemporary writers, but this also brought him criticism from those offended, who complained to the magazine's owners. In January 1837, the owners fired him as editor, but continued to publish his poems and stories. He moved to New York City, then to Philadelphia and back to New York, each time looking to establish himself in the literary world, but with only moderate success. In January 1847, Virginia died, and he became a heavy drinker. In 1849, he revisited Richmond, and was able to become engaged to his first love, Elmira Royster. Returning to Baltimore, he was found unconscious on a Baltimore street, and died "of congestion of the brain" according to the local newspapers. Popular lore states that he died of alcoholism, however, some claim that he died from exposure or from encephalitis. In 1875, a group of local school children donated a grave stone for him. In 1949, he was honored on a 3 cent U.S. postage stamp. Author, Poet. Most remembered for his influence on other writers and poets through his imaginative use of literary style and for his near flawless use of rhythm and sound in his poetry. He is considered the father of the modern detective story and the psychological thriller. Born in Boston, the son of touring actors David Poe Jr. and Elizabeth Arnold Poe. When he was three years old, his parents died, and he was taken into the home of John Allan, a wealthy merchant in Richmond, Virginia, who renamed him Edgar Allan Poe. In 1826, he entered the University of Virginia, staying only one year, and running up large gambling debts that John Allan refused to pay. Allan pulled him from college and broke up his engagement to Elmira Royster. 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Horror writer and poet, Edgar Allan Poe was buried (twice) on the grounds of Westminster Hall. His body was first deposited in an unmarked grave behind the church after his unfortunate death in 1849. In 1875, his remains were moved to the northwest corner of the property, where they are now marked by a sturdy four-sided monument. The unveiling of the new site was attended by Walt Whitman and letters from Lord Alfred Tennyson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow were read out. Later the remains of Poe's wife, Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe who died of tuberculosis two years prior to Poe, were exhumed and buried with him. Tombstone inscription The tombstone is inscribed with a quotation from "The Raven," but as with everything about Poe, the placement and content of his tombstone has not been without controversy. Even the engraved birthday on the tombstone is incorrect. Poe was born on January 19, not January 20. But how did Edgar Allan Poe die? There are many theories on what was the cause of Edgar Allan Poe's death at the age of 40 in October 1849: murder, flu, alcoholism, mercury poisoning.... The official cause listed on his death certificate is phrenitis or swelling of the brain. The reason he was suffering from it, plus the delirium tremors and hallucinations in the days leading up to his passing, remain the source of continued speculation. < prev 4 of 18 next > |Return to thumbnails Edgar Allan Poe was originally buried in another part of the Westminster graveyard without a headstone towards the rear corner of the churchyard. A headstone of white Italian marble was destroyed before it reached the grave when a train derailed and plowed through the monument yard where it was being kept. Instead, it was marked with a sandstone block that read "No. 80". Poe was reburied on October 1, 1875, at the current location close to the front of the church. A celebration was held at the dedication of the new tomb on November 17. His original burial spot was marked with a large stone donated by Orin C. Painter, though it was originally placed in the wrong spot. Read More > < prev 4 of 18 next > |Return to thumbnails Galleries: Portraits of Edgar Allan Poe The Raven Illustrated by Dore Poe's Grave in Baltimore, MD Poe's House in Baltimore, MD Poe Museum in Richmond, VA Poe's Cottage in New York City Edgar Allan Poe Art Edgar Allan Poe book from 1882 Illustrations by Manet Random Poe Westminster Burial Ground, originally Westminster Presbyterian cemetery, was established in 1786. In 1852, the church was constructed on brick piers above the graves, creating remarkable catacombs. The Burying Ground is the grave site of many notable individuals, most famous for the burial place of Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was originally buried in an unmarked grave towards the back of the cemetery. In 1875, the school children of Baltimore raised money through a "Pennies for Poe" project and a monument was dedicated to Poe at the entrance of the cemetery. Poe is buried with his wife, Virginia Clemm Poe and mother-in-law Maria Poe Clemm. The Burying Ground is also the final resting place for a number of generals and heroes of the American Revolution and War of 1812 including General Saml Smith. Other patriots buried here are John Hollins, Robert Gilmer, John Stricker, Nathaniel Ramsey, James Stirling, John McDonogh, Robert Calhoun, Paul Bentloot, James Henry and James Buchanan. The Burying Ground features Maximilian Godefroy's Egyptian Revival Gates located at the Greene Street side of the cemetery. The gravestones throughout the Burying Ground includes decorated tablets, slabs, and granite vaults. As the resting place of nearly 300 veterans of the American Revolution and War of 1812, many of whom were civic and political leaders, as well as literary legend Edgar Allan Poe, Westminster Burying Ground is a historical and cultural treasure of local, state, and national significance. The church was completed in 1852 and remained in active use until 1977. In 1974, Westminster was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites. In 1977, Westminster Preservation Trust, Inc. was established under the leadership of University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. The Trust completed a renovation of Westminster Hall in 1983 to preserve and restore the historic features and adapt the church for contemporary use. Westminster Hall is now used for weddings, receptions, lectures, conferences, and other events. For more information on those buried at Westminster Burying Grounds please see the Cemetery Guide. Media: The Catacombs, WMAZNews My Experience At Westminster Hall and Burying Grounds, The Greyhound Visiting the Catacombs and Edgar Allan Poe's Grave in Baltimore, The UMB Pulse Podcast Catacombs, Graves and Edgar Allan Poe's Final Resting Place, Baltimore Post - Examiner All the United States Maryland Baltimore Edgar Allan Poe's Grave Despite a prolific body of work, when Edgar Allan Poe died in 1849, he was originally buried in an unmarked grave. When the grave was in danger of disappearing into the weeds altogether, George W. Spence undertook naming the spot with a simple sandstone marker—not with the famous writer's name, but with the simple and inexplicable number 80. As rumors of the unmet grave began circulating throughout Baltimore and pressure grew to remedy the site, Edgar's cousin Neilson decided to order a proper marble headstone and promised to maintain the grave. 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Charlotte, North Carolina Hilton Sisters Grave Conjoined twins Daisy and Violet Hilton were stars of the vaudeville circuit. Lowell, Massachusetts Jack Kerouac's Grave According to legend, Bob Dylan sneaks in twice a year to eat dinner with Jack. Questions or Feedback? Contact Us 100 Edgar Allan Poe, one of the most renowned poets and writers in American history, is known for his deeply melancholic and gothic works, such as "The Raven," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Fall of the House of Usher." His influence on literature and culture has been profound, cementing his legacy as one of the founding figures of modern horror and detective fiction. However, despite his fame, the story of Edgar Allan Poe's death and burial remains shrouded in mystery and controversy. Where did edgar allan poe die and where was he buried? This article will explore the events surrounding his death, the circumstances of his burial, and the lasting impact of his final resting place. Edgar Allan Poe's Mysterious Death Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, Massachusetts. Throughout his life, Poe faced significant personal struggles, including the death of his parents at a young age, poverty, and personal losses. He battled mental health issues and struggled with alcohol addiction, which were often reflected in the dark themes of his works. Despite his personal challenges, Poe's literary genius was undeniable, and he gained recognition for his writing during his lifetime. However, his life would come to a tragic and mysterious end on October 7, 1849, at the age of 40. Poe's death has been the subject of much speculation, as the exact cause remains unknown. He was found delirious and in a state of distress on the streets of Baltimore, Maryland, on October 3, 1849. He was taken to Washington College Hospital, where he was placed under the care of Dr. Joseph Snodgrass. Despite efforts to save him, Poe died just a few days later. His final words, according to some accounts, were "Lord help my poor soul," but the circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear. Several theories have been proposed regarding the cause of Poe's death. One popular theory is that he died from complications related to alcohol abuse. During his lifetime, Poe was known to have struggled with alcoholism, and some have suggested that his death could have been a result of acute alcohol poisoning or withdrawal. Others believe that Poe may have died from rabies, as some of the symptoms he exhibited, such as agitation and delirium, are consistent with the disease. Additionally, some have speculated that Poe may have fallen victim to "cooping," a practice in which individuals were forcibly drugged and made to vote multiple times in an election, leading to confusion and distress. Regardless of the cause, Poe's death marked the end of a life full of literary achievement, yet it left many questions unanswered. His burial, however, would only add to the mystery surrounding his final days. Poe's Initial Burial and the Disputed Future After Poe's death, his body was buried in an unmarked grave at the Westminster Hall and Burying Ground in Baltimore, Maryland. At the time, Poe's passing did not immediately generate the widespread recognition that his later works would achieve. His funeral was modest, and his grave lacked a proper headstone, making it difficult for future generations to pay their respects to one of the most influential American writers. For years, Edgar Allan Poe's grave went unnoticed and unmarked. In fact, many visitors to the cemetery were unaware of the location of his final resting place. The lack of a proper monument to honor his memory remained a source of frustration for many admirers of Poe's work. However, this would change in the early 20th century. The Effort to Honor Poe's Memory In 1875, nearly 30 years after his death, an effort was made to properly commemorate Poe's grave. A monument was erected to mark his resting place, but the grave still lacked an inscription indicating his name. For many years, the monument remained the only indication of his burial site, but it was far from sufficient in paying tribute to the writer's immense legacy. The quest for a more fitting memorial to Edgar Allan Poe gained momentum throughout the early 20th century. This led to the creation of a more prominent monument in 1913. The Baltimore Poe Society, along with various other civic groups, spearheaded efforts to erect a new headstone and memorial. The new monument featured a large, ornate marker with an inscription that read, "Quoth the Raven, Nevermore," a famous line from Poe's best-known poem. The new memorial became a symbol of respect and reverence for Poe's literary contributions. One of the most notable efforts in honoring Poe's grave occurred in 1909, when Poe's remains were moved from the original unmarked grave to a more prominent location within Westminster Hall and Burying Ground. This was part of a larger campaign to properly recognize Poe's legacy and to place his remains in a more easily accessible and recognized area within the cemetery. The remains were relocated to a spot near the original location, and a new headstone was placed at the site. Poe's final resting place was now marked for all to see. The Mystery of the Poe Shrine Edgar Allan Poe's final resting place became a place of pilgrimage for countless fans, researchers, and literary enthusiasts. However, another mystery soon arose regarding the burial site. In 1949, nearly 100 years after Poe's death, a man named Thomas W. R. Moffatt began to call attention to the possibility that Poe had been buried in the wrong location. Moffatt, a Baltimore native, claimed that Poe had actually been buried in a different plot, one that was much more prominent and visible. Moffatt argued that Poe's remains had been mistakenly relocated and that the true location of his grave was a few yards away. He made the claim based on the fact that, when Poe's remains were moved in 1913, a number of inconsistencies had emerged in the records and mapping of the cemetery. While Moffatt's theory was never definitively proven, it became a point of contention for years. Today, the location of Poe's final resting place remains a matter of debate, but the original burial site and the 1913 relocation both stand as markers of his legacy. Poe's Influence on Baltimore and Beyond While the mystery of Poe's burial remains unresolved in some respects, there is no doubt that his influence on Baltimore and the literary world at large has only grown with the years. The city of Baltimore, where Poe spent the last years of his life, has embraced its connection to the writer. In addition to the Westminster Hall and Burying Ground, other landmarks in Baltimore pay homage to Poe's legacy, including the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum. Poe's work continues to captivate audiences, and his impact on literature and culture has only deepened over time. His poetry, short stories, and works of literary criticism have inspired generations of writers, filmmakers, and artists, and his status as a master of the macabre and the gothic endures. Poe's final resting place in Baltimore has become a symbol of the enduring power of his writing and the lasting impact he has had on American literature. Conclusion The story of Edgar Allan Poe's death and burial is one marked by mystery and uncertainty, but it is also a testament to the enduring nature of his influence. From his sudden and unexplained death to the challenges surrounding his burial, Poe's final days and resting place have remained a subject of intrigue. Despite the controversies and unanswered questions, Edgar Allan Poe's legacy continues to shine brightly, both in Baltimore, where he spent his final days, and around the world. Today, visitors to the Westminster Hall and Burying Ground can pay their respects to the writer whose works have transcended time and remain as relevant as ever. Poe's final resting place, with its monuments and memorials, serves as a reminder of the power of literature to shape cultures and inspire future generations. As long as people continue to read and admire his work, Edgar Allan Poe's legacy will live on—immortalized not only in his poetry and stories but also in the place where he was laid to rest.