

Self-Guided Tour

Welcome to the Edgar Allan Poe Museum, the world's largest museum devoted to the exploration and study of the life and work of the American author who terrified and delighted us with such classic works as "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Raven." Generations of readers have been thrilled by Poe's dark visions, and countless writers have been influenced by his literary innovations, which include the invention of the modern detective story, the first true science fiction tales, and literary theories that helped define the modern short story.

As you explore the Poe Museum today you will have the opportunity to meet the man behind the murder and madness. You will meet the literary genius and learn how his many years here in Richmond, Virginia helped shape his life and work. This map will locate you within the Museum complex and provide a brief description of each building. Please ask a staff member if you have any questions.

Which of these buildings was Poe's house?

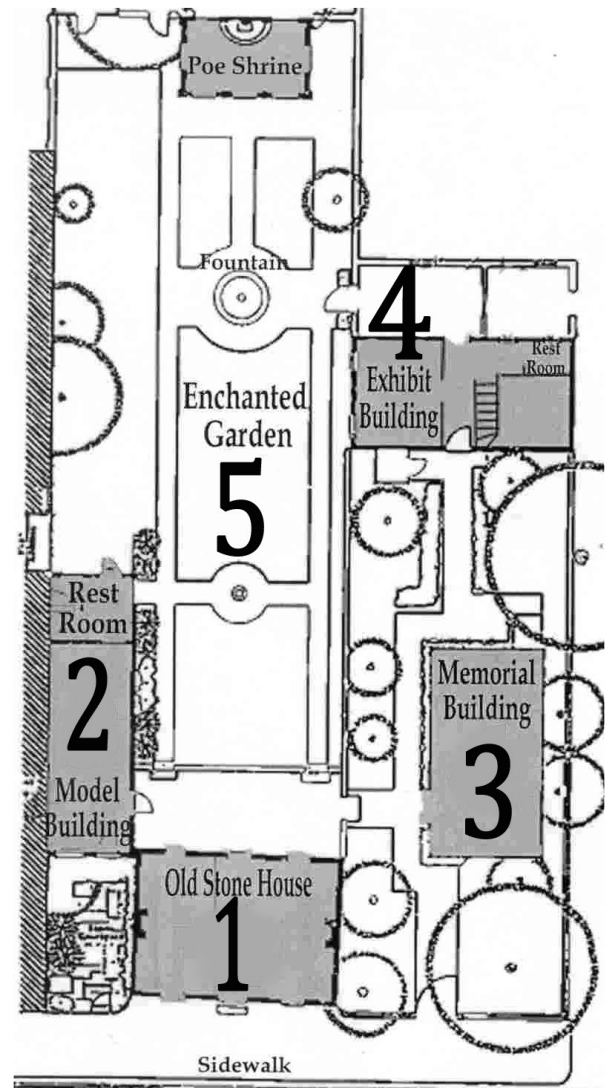
The Poe Museum houses the world's largest collection of Edgar Poe's artifacts and memorabilia, but the author never lived in any of the Museum's buildings. Poe's homes in Richmond have been demolished in the more than 150 years since his death. Many of these were demolished in the 19th century, well before the founding of the Poe Museum, but the Museum has collected such elements as bricks from the office in which Poe worked as editor of the Southern Literary Messenger, a staircase from one of Poe's houses, his bed from another, and furniture he once used in still another home. Poe lived in Richmond for thirteen of his forty years, and he lived in as many as nine different houses in this city. The Old Stone House is the only building on the complex to date from the author's lifetime. The others date to after Poe's death, but some incorporate building materials from his homes. The model of Poe's Richmond in the Model Building will show you where some of Poe's homes once stood in relation to the Poe Museum.

1. The Old Stone House

During Poe's lifetime, this building was home to the Ege family, which purchased one of the original lots of land in Richmond. The Eges probably built the house around 1750 and were living here during the American Revolution when Samuel Ege served as Commissary to the Marquis de Lafayette, the French general who helped Washington defeat the British.

Almost five decades after that war began, Lafayette returned to America and visited this house to thank the Ege family for their help. At fifteen, Edgar Allan Poe was on the junior color guard that escorted the general to this house, and Poe would have waited outside while Lafayette visited the Eges. The west room of the Old Stone House contains the piano forte Poe's sister, Rosalie Poe, once played. While Poe moved from city to city in search of publishing opportunities, his devoted sister stayed in Richmond and served as a vital link between Poe and the city of his childhood.

This room introduces you to the young Poe who grew up in Richmond in the home of John and Frances Allan,



Poe's foster parents from the time of his mother's death when he was two. Upon entering this room, you will find furniture and artifacts from one of Poe's early homes called "Moldavia." These furnishings and paintings give some indication of the luxury to which Poe became accustomed as a child. His foster father, John Allan, inherited a fortune from an uncle and became one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. To the left is Poe's own boyhood bed used while the poet was living with his foster parents.

2. The Model Building



The model of Richmond featured in this room represents the city as it appeared during Poe's lifetime. During this time the population grew from ten thousand to about twenty thousand. The marked buildings are landmarks associated with Poe. During his childhood, Poe lived at both #10 and #1. As an adult, Poe lived at Yarrington Boarding House (#6) and spent time at Swann Tavern. Poe's mother is buried at Saint John's Church (#16), and he visited his fiancé Elmira Royster Shelton at her house (#17) across from the church on Grace Street. As a boy, Poe worshipped in the Allan family pew in Monumental Church (#9). The mantle from his bedroom in the Allan home at 14th and Tobacco Alley (#10) can also be found in this room.

3. The Elizabeth Arnold Poe Memorial Building



Named in honor of Poe's mother, this building was constructed in 1928 to house the Poe Museum's growing collection. Bricks were taken from other buildings, including the *Southern Literary Messenger* Building and the Ellis and Allan Firm, which was co-owned by Poe's foster father John Allan. The staircase and some of the woodwork were salvaged from the home in which Poe lived from 1821 until 1823. On display in this room are selections from the Dr. John Robertson Collection of Poe first editions and first printings. Dr. Robertson, a California psychiatrist, wrote the book *Poe: A Psychopathic Study* and compiled a bibliography of the first printings of Poe's works. Robertson donated his vast collection to the Poe Museum in 1933. Other objects in this exhibit were donated by Poe relatives as well as by the descendants of Poe's literary executor Rufus W. Griswold. While in this room, be sure to take a close look at Poe's tiny but very neat handwriting.

4. The Exhibits Building



This building was constructed in the late nineteenth century and acquired by the Poe Museum in 1927. The Poe Museum originally used it as a tea room, but, after a recent series of renovations, the building now houses two floors of changing exhibits exploring Poe's influence on popular culture. We encourage you to explore this building to learn more about some of the ways Poe's life and work still impact us today.

5. The Enchanted Garden



Landscaped in 1921, as a memorial to Poe, this garden was designed to recreate the garden described in Poe's poem "To One in Paradise." Seventy-two years after Edgar Allan Poe's death, a small group of the author's admirers gathered here to celebrate the opening of a shrine dedicated to America's first internationally influential author. Of those present, only one survived who was old enough to have seen Poe in person. Several of the others were either descendants or scholars who had studied Poe's works. Among them were W.G. Stanard, a descendant of Poe's "Helen," Jane Stanard; Edward V. Valentine, a cousin of Poe's foster mother Frances Valentine Allan; James H. Whitty, a writer and historian who had amassed the world's largest collection of Poe memorabilia; and Mr. and Mrs. Archer Jones, who helped restore the eighteenth century stone house that would become the oldest part of the Poe Museum.

The bricks and granite in the Poe Shrine and most of the bricks throughout the rest of the garden, were salvaged from the offices of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the magazine at which Poe began his career in journalism. The bust of Poe displayed in the Poe Shrine in the back of the garden is a copy of one donated by the Bronx Historical Society. The lock on the green gate near the Shrine was taken from the infamous Libby Prison. Many of the flowers planted here were mentioned in Poe's writing. Notice the broken glass atop the garden wall—a security device borrowed from Poe's tale "William Wilson."