



# American Legends: The Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures of Hawthorne and other important people and places in his life.

\*Explains how Hawthorne's friends and family influenced his classic works.

\*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"The bubble reputation is as much a bubble in literature as in war, and I should not be one whit the happier if mine were world-wide and time-long than I was when nobody but yourself had faith in me. The only sensible ends of literature are, first, the pleasurable toil of writing; second, the gratification of one's family and friends; and, lastly, the solid cash." – Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1851.

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Nathaniel Hawthorne needs no formal introduction for any American who took a literature course in high school. It's impossible to avoid reading one of Hawthorne's classics, particularly *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. Hawthorne could trace his family roots back to the Puritans of the 17th century colonies, and he was clearly qualified to produce some of America's greatest historical fiction. In fact, people have long believed he changed the spelling of his last name to avoid association with an ancestor who had been involved in the Salem Witch trials, and his inclinations were on display with the way he portrayed Puritan Massachusetts in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Given the fact that his home was Salem and he was a Transcendentalist, it's no surprise that much of Hawthorne's writing centers on New England, and his works were imbued with moral allegories that often featured the Puritans. With themes like evil, sin, and humanity, Hawthorne created unusually deep and complex characters in an era where it was rare to flesh out characters' psyches.

Most Americans are roughly familiar with some of Hawthorne's life and work, but few are truly aware of just how prodigious Hawthorne was. In addition to his classic novels, Hawthorne wrote nearly 100 short stories, including classics like *The Birthmark*, and he rubbed elbows with men like Ralph Waldo Emerson, President Franklin Pierce, and other writers like Herman Melville.

*American Legends: The Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne* profiles the life and career of one of America's greatest writers. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Hawthorne like you never have before, in no time at all.

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