

POE AND THE FAMOUS POE COTTAGE

A Bronx "Monotone"

by Randall Comfort

If anyone were to ask me what is the most famous historical landmark in all Bronxland, I would select the Poe Cottage, in Poe Park, Fordham.

Back in bye-gone days our family knew a delightful old lady-- a Miss Sarah Miller, who, as a young girl knew the Poes very well.

They all lived in lower New York City, and "little Sally Miller" well recalled seeing Poe out rowing on the East River, close to his home.

Miss Miller also clearly recalled when Poe and his wife moved up to bask in the pure country air of a rural place called Fordham.

I have in my album a very good photo of that little cottage in its original site, before it was moved to Poe Park. The photo clearly shows the famous Cherry Tree, which the poet often climbed to throw down the luscious fruit to Virginia, eagerly standing below.

A water-hydrant and a lamp-post also kept strict watch over the Poe family.

As soon as the Poes were settled in their "New Eden", they sent a cordial invitation to little Sally Miller and her mother to come and dine with them, which was promptly accepted.

One thing that little Sally vividly recalled, was that she had to sit on a box at the dining table, as the supply of chairs in the Poe family was insufficient for everybody.

Another "notable event" was that Poe gave little Sally a curiously carved ivory Chinese Puzzle that delighted little Sally very highly.

The next act to this Drama is that, many years later, Miss Sally Miller--now grown into Miss Sarah Miller--and a prominent New York City School Teacher--presented me formally with the curious Chinese Puzzle with all its elaborate carvings.

I take pleasure in presenting a photo of the unique, odd little puzzle to Mrs. Nelson, Librarian of the Tremont Public Library. I took the photo in 1910.

If I may add a personal touch to this "Narrative", I would say that I am keeping in touch with several former residents of the "Tremont of Yesteryear", namely Dr. and Mrs. Guy H. Turrell, now living in Smithtown, Long Island; also Dr. and Mrs. W. W. Postwick, of White Plains; (I used to go to school with "Will Postwick"). Also, I am in close touch with Mr. and Mrs. Ernest W. Seward, of Bayside, N. Y.; while Mrs. Arthur Stoughton, whose husband designed the graceful Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument at Riverside Drive, Manhattan, still resides at Hastings.

Now may I insert a personal reference and mention a most charming evening spent many, many moons ago, at the old historic Jacob Lorillard Mansion, standing in the grounds of the Saint Barnabas Hospital at Third Avenue and 182nd Street.

One quiet evening, Edgar Poe appeared at the old residence and entered and recited every word of "The Raven" to the delight of all; and disappeared just as suddenly into the darkness.

Another "Historic Recital" occurred at the old Jacob Lorillard Mansion, when a literary club meeting was in session.

It was just when the famous novel of "Trilby" delighted the public.

Among those present was the noted musician Walter Damrosch, who rose to make a short "salutation".

..."I have read so much about the small size and deftness of Trilby's feet and ankles", said Mr. Damrosch.

"Now let me prove that my own 'foot-pedals' are just as small and 'deft' as Trilby's. Look for yourselves, everyone!"

And he raised one foot so high that all could plainly see what was written on the sole:

It read:

"NUMBER 138"