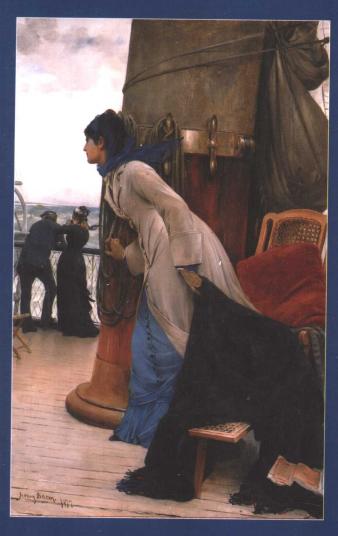
# The American Tradition in Literature



Volume I

George Perkins Barbara Perkins

Ninth Edition

## THE

# American Tradition in Literature

**NINTH EDITION** 

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The Perkinses are founding members of the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, which created its annual Perkins Prize for the Best Book in Narrative Studies in their honor. Their books together include Contemporary American Literature; Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature (with Phillip Leininger); Kaleidoscope: Stories of the American Experience; Woman's Work: An Anthology of American Literature (with Robyn Warhol); and The Harper Handbook to Literature, second edition (with Northrop Frye and Sheridan Baker).

#### ZAOKARIOUVIZZOKARIOUVIZZOKARIOUVIZ

# Preface

#### ZAOKARIOMVIIZAOKARIOMVIIZAOKARIOMVIIZ

With this ninth edition, *The American Tradition in Literature* enters its fifth decade of leadership among textbook anthologies of American literature. In 1956–1957, the first edition established the scholarly standards for selections, general introductions, biographical and critical discussions, bibliographies, and format imitated ever since by competing textbooks of American literature. In 1974, the fourth edition pioneered an expanded canon of American literary study that substantially increased the representation of women, Native American, and African-American writers. In 1985, the sixth edition introduced a larger format that allowed more selections and a still broader canon in volumes designed to accommodate the full range and diversity of the American literary tradition without increasing the number of pages to an unwieldy bulk. In 1994, the eighth edition was enriched by color plates and refreshed in contents to include narratives of exploration, extended representation of women and minorities, a selection of twentieth-century drama preeminent among anthologies of American literature, and a reaffirmation of the enduring centerpieces of the American literary heritage.

The ninth edition continues this tradition of leadership. Highlights of the new edition include:

THE GLOBALIZATION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE. With this section, the ninth edition breaks new ground for American literary study by providing substantial recognition of a major historical change—the recent increase in significant contributions by Americans of foreign birth. Nobel Prize winners Isaac Bashevis Singer, Czeslaw Milosz, Saul Bellow, and Joseph Brodsky, as well as many other authors—including Vladimir Nabokov, Denise Levertov, Charles Simic, Bharati Mukherjee, Isabel Allende, and Jamaica Kincaid—have revived for students of American literature the enduring questions, What is an American? and What is American literature? Following its long history as the textbook anthology that best meshes tradition with innovation, The American Tradition in Literature, for the first time in any anthology, provides selections from all these writers in a separate section to facilitate thought and discussion.

FULLY REVISED INTRODUCTIONS, HEADNOTES, FOOTNOTES, AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES. The period introductions have been extensively rewritten to meet the needs of students of the twenty-first century, and the order of the selections has been revised to clarify the important relationships between literature and the social or historical conditions in which it was written. In addition to the material in the introductions and bibliographies for writers new to this edition, earlier headnotes, footnotes, and bibliographies have been carefully updated. Thorough revisions of the general bibliographies at the end of each volume ensure their continued value as guides to reliable sources of further information.

EXPANDED CANON. In Volume I, we have increased our representation of early American diversity with descriptions of Native American life and of a famous quarrel with the Puritans taken from Thomas Morton's New English Canaan; with selections on politics and women's issues from the letters of John and Abigail Adams; and with chapters on the author's experience as an American slave taken from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano. In response to increased interest in New England witchcraft, we have added selections from Cotton Mather's The Wonders of the Invisible World to supplement the overview of the trials previously included in "The Life of His Excellency Sir William Phips" from Magnalia Christi Americana. Selections from Catherine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie display a fine woman novelist wrestling with questions of Indian and European confrontation at the time of the Pequot War. To provide space for these and other additions, Cooper's The Pioneers has been abridged to facilitate student engagement with his major social, legal, and ecological themes-land ownership, land use, conflicts between the ideal of individual freedom and the rule of law in a just society, and the relationships between Indians and Americans of European origin. The southwestern humorists Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, T. B. Thorpe, and George Washington Harris have been reintroduced as early exemplars of local color and American colloquial humor. Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" has been introduced as an example of early feminist thought, and Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills" as a solid contribution to early American realism. For Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, the inclusion of a new chapter, "The Jealous Mistress," provides a picture of the precarious sexual position of the female slave as a prelude to her later trials. Finally, the return of Melville's "Benito Cereno" to these pages reintroduces a literary work and cultural document many find important for our time.

We have revised Volume II especially to include those writers of foreign birth grouped under the heading "The Globalization of American Literature," as noted above. The ninth edition has also been enriched by the addition of selections from Louisa May Alcott's Little Women for that book's important place in the development of women's writing and American literary realism, and by the inclusion of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" for its advancement of this thread in the general turn to social and psychological commentary. Twentieth-century literary history has been further augmented by selections from Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God and from the poems of Cathy Song.

BLACK AND WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS. The colored plates introduced in the eighth edition have been augmented with reproductions in black and white as additional reminders of the ways in which visual contexts can contribute to full understandings of literature.

Although the changes in this edition reflect changing critical attitudes and new scholarship, the broad aims that have established for this work a tradition of its own within the American literary community have remained constant. Major authors continue to be presented more fully than less significant writers, who are represented by their best and most characteristic work. Literary merit remains foremost in the criteria for selection, with serious attention given to the continuing critical discussion of the nature of that merit. Connections between literature and social and intellectual history, or between literature and biography, are discussed in introductions to periods and authors. In shaping the book, we have suppressed idiosyncratic opinions in favor of the

consensus of informed critical thought. The selections have been liberally annotated to facilitate understanding, but interpretative footnotes are avoided in order to allow students to develop their own critical powers and strategies.

Providing selections more than sufficient to enlarge the understanding of a college class and to allow the instructor a wide choice of assignments, we have continued to avoid the confusion invited by a proliferation of peripheral texts. The arrangement is generally chronological, with departures from the strict order of birth highlighting the ways in which authors are frequently related to one another and the ways in which they have been subject to regional influences, social forces, dominant ideas, historical events, and changing aesthetic values.

We have attempted to provide in each instance a faithful copy of the text that in our judgment provides the best reading. The following guidelines have been applied: The source of each text, unless it is obvious, is stated in the bibliographical note accompanying the author introduction or in a footnote to the text. Texts of early writers are treated according to the level of difficulty presented. Some, like Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation, in which archaic spelling, punctuation, and abbreviations present a mechanical handicap to many readers, have been normalized in accordance with present practice, but the language has not been altered or modernized. The texts of colonial poets are generally untouched and, like most of the prose, have been clarified only by annotation. Significant dates appear at the end of a selection: that of first publication in a volume by the author at the right margin, preceded by the date of first serial publication; an established date of composition, if significant, in the left margin. In all instances the omission of text has been indicated by three asterisks. Titles are those of the originals except where printed between square brackets.

The ninth edition owes much to the sponsorship and assistance of Phillip A. Butcher, Sarah Moyers, and Alexis Walker of McGraw-Hill. Phillip Leininger has continued as a valued consultant whose efforts stretch back over a quarter of a century. Once again, we owe a great debt to scholars, teachers, students, and friends, too numerous to name, whose advice through many editions has helped shape this one, and for this edition, especially to Peg Norris, Massasoit Community College; Joseph Costellano, Queens College; Charlene M. Murphy, Massachusetts Bay Community College; Amy Susan Porche, Chattahoochee Valley Community College; Bill Burns, Boise State University; Patrick Mathias, Itasca Community College; Kenneth Kuiper, Calvin College; David A. Moreland, Louisiana State University-Eunice; Paul Cook, Arizona State University; Joan Baker, Massasoit Community College; T. P. Elliott-Smith, Massasoit Community College; Albert Wilhelm, Tennessee Technological University; Jon Byrne, Itasca Community College; James J. Pacchioli, Santa Monica College; W. Dale Brown, Calvin College; Thomas Wortham, University of California at Los Angeles; Mike Burduck, Tennessee Technological University; D. Gray Maness, University of South Carolina-Sumter; Robert Olafson, Eastern Washington University; Susan Martelli, Massasoit Community College; Allan Kohrman, Massasoit Community College; Josephine A. McQuail, Tennessee Technological University; Helen R. Deese, Tennessee Technological University; Wendy Piper, University of Maine at Farmington; Brent Keetch, California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo; Alan Slotkin, Tennessee Technological University; Richard Lundquist, Boise State University; Harold Schechter, Queens College; Matt Djos, Mesa State College; James Jolly, Shelton State Community College; James G. Janssen, Arizona State University; Stephen Tooker, Massasoit Community College; John Philibert,

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> George Perkins Barbara Perkins

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