Easement MAGI #040050030 4 B-50

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE: Maryland
COUNTY: Baltimore (City)
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Edgar Allan Poe House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Clemm-Poe House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 203 Amity Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Third	
STATE: Maryland	CODE 24	COUNTY: Baltimore	CODE 510

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☒ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Baltimore

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore	STATE: Maryland	CODE 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Recorder of Deeds; Baltimore City Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Lexington and St. Paul Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore	STATE Maryland	CODE 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Building Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER: Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE 11

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Baltimore

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☒ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed	
	(Check One) ☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered	(Check One) ☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (*if known*) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Edgar Allan Poe House is a two-bay, two-and-a-half story structure with a tin gable roof. The doorway is in the left bay of the front, or west, elevation. The simple wooden stoop once had box seats, which were removed during the 1930's.[1] There is one gabled dormer in the roof, and an interior end chimney at the southern end of the main section. The north side of the building's main section is contiguous with modern housing. The south elevation has no windows. A two-story ell projects from the southern portion of the rear of the building, and has an interior chimney near its southeast corner. The roof of this ell slants toward the north.

The front entrance opens into a living room, which contains a brick fireplace with a simple wooden mantel believed to be original. Behind (and two steps below) the living room is the dining room. Its rear wall, which dates from the period 1939-1949, contains a false fireplace flanked by cabinets. Behind this wall is a modern lavatory, which can be reached only through an exterior door opening on the court formed by the ell. Inside the lavatory is the rear chimney, which appears to have been once connected into it from the adjoining building.

From the dining room, narrow stairways lead down into the earth-floor basement and up to the second floor, on which are two bedrooms. The master bedroom faces Amity Street, and has a fireplace matching the one in the living room. The smaller chamber has one window opening to the rear and one in the court. From this room, stairs lead to a small garret often conjectured to have been occupied by Poe himself.[2] His ailing grandmother was probably quartered in the master bedroom, while the rear chamber was perhaps used by Mrs. Clemm and her daughter Virginia, the poet's future wife.

The floors, woodwork, and window sashes are believed to be largely original. The house was built in the early nineteenth century, and functioned as a private residence until 1939, when it was acquired by the City of Baltimore. It was originally part of a double house, the northern half of which was removed by the City authorities. It is believed, however, that the original bricks of the north wall of the Poe House were retained. Perhaps at this time, a doorway at the rear of the ell was bricked up. The house was leased to the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, who opened it as a museum in 1949. The interior is furnished with simple furniture dating from the 1830's and 1840's, and contains a collection of works by and about Poe. For a small charge, the public is admitted to the house between 1:00 and 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays.[3]

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[1]Evans, p. 366.

[2]This is the view of Mr. Alexander G. Rose, President of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore. A contrary opinion is expressed by Evans, p. 366.

[3]The information pertaining to the history and interior of the house was provided by Mr. Rose, in a telephone conversation with the National Survey, June 3, 1971, as well as by the Evans article.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

[(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maryland	B-50
COUNTY	
Baltimore	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description: (1) Edgar Allan Poe House

Boundary Information and Justification

The Edgar Allan Poe House, 203 Amity Street, sits on the east side of Amity Street facing west. To the north is an apartment type building built in very close proximity to the Poe house. To the south is a short access alleyway which bounds the house also to the west (rear). The lot is approximately 30 feet by 40 feet. The boundary is coterminous with the dimensions of the lot.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian
- ☐ 15th Century
- ☐ 16th Century
- ☐ 17th Century
- ☐ 18th Century
- ☒ 19th Century
- ☐ 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Aboriginal
  - ☐ Prehistoric
  - ☐ Historic
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Commerce
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Conservation
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Invention
- ☐ Landscape Architecture
- ☒ Literature
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Religion/Philosophy
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Sculpture
- ☐ Social/Humanitarian
- ☐ Theater
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Urban Planning
- ☐ Other (Specify) _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Edgar Allan Poe has been called "one of the very few great innovators in American literature."[1] He created a body of poems of timeless value and great historical significance. Through Baudelaire, for example, he cast a formative influence on French Symbolism, which in turn enriched the work of such American poets as T. S. Eliot.[2] As a prose writer, Poe virtually invented the detective story, and his tales helped to spawn other popular genres as well as affecting such profound writers as Dostoievski.[3] He was also a brilliant critic, and propounded literary theories which continue to command respect. As Arthur Hobson Quinn has written, Poe was "the one writer in the English language, who was at once foremost in criticism, supreme in fiction, and in poetry destined to be immortal."[4]

Poe lived in the house at 203 Amity Street with his paternal grandmother, his aunt, Maria Clemm, and her daughter, Virginia, whom the poet later married. This family group was definitely living in the house in the spring of 1833, and perhaps were there as early as the previous spring; Poe himself remained here until the summer of 1835, when he departed for Richmond.[5] During his period in Amity Street, he is said to have accomplished the works numbered seven to twelve in the collection of his writings edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn.[6] It was during this period that Poe's prose tales began to attract attention, and the Amity Street house is also presumed to be the scene of his courtship of Virginia. The house possesses a high degree of integrity, and memorializes an important phase in the career of one of America's greatest writers.

Biography

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809. As both his parents died while he was an infant, Poe was brought up in the household of John Allan, a Scottish merchant residing in Virginia. He accompanied the Allan family to Britain in 1815 and returned with them to Richmond in 1820.

[1] Spiller, p. 342.
[2] Op. Cit., p. 341.
[3] Op. Cit., pp. 341, 631.
[4] Quinn, p. 695.
[5] Evans, p. 364.
[6] Information provided by Mr. Alexander G. Rose.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

During the following years, the boy did well as school and began to write verse. Also at this time, Poe discovered the marital infidelity of his foster father, which caused a continuing strain in his relations with the older man. In 1826, Poe entered the University of Virginia, but left after a single term because Allan was unwilling to assume debts which his foster son had incurred. Poe now broke with Allan, and determined to seek his fortune independently. In Boston, he brought out a small book of verse entitled Tamerlande and Other Poems (1827), which foreshadowed his later powers. Because of financial distress, Poe soon enlisted in the Army. He so distinguished himself that he became a regimental sergeant-major and in 1829 received a recommendation to West Point. Poe now became at least formally reconciled with Allan, and was honorably discharged. After an interlude during which he published a second volume of poetry, he entered West Point, but was dismissed early in 1831. The same year, he published a third volume, which contained early versions of some of his best poems, such as "To Helen," but which attracted little notice. For some years he lived in dire poverty in Baltimore, residing with his grandmother Poe, his aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm, and her daughter Virginia. In 1832, his relations with Allan, and his hopes of a legacy from him, came to a definite end.

Although he had published several short stories as well as poems, Poe did not achieve recognition until, in October of 1833, he won a prize for "A MS. Found in a Bottle." He now became a contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger, and in 1835 went to Richmond to join its staff. Although for a time this employment was suspended because of his drinking, Poe performed brilliantly as assistant editor and was married to his youthful cousin, Virginia. He now attempted to broaden his literary horizons by going to New York, but was unable to find editorial work there and eventually moved to Philadelphia. Here he was more successful, and greatly increased his reputation, especially after January of 1841, when he became literary editor of Graham's. Due to ill health, alcoholism, and a desire to publish his own magazine, Poe left Graham's in the spring of the following year and plunged into a new period of poverty. During this time, however, he perfected the mystery story form. In 1844, he went to New York, where the great popular success of the poem, "The Raven," made him a truly famous man. He published more volumes of his works, and for a time was proprietor of the Broadway Journal. In 1846, however, he was forced to give up his enterprise because of debt, drink, and the failing health of both himself and his wife. With Mrs. Clemm, the Poes moved in great penury to Fordham, where Virginia died early in 1847. The poet's next years were spent in a state of mental unbalance in which he engaged in frequent bouts of drinking and several impetuous courtships. For a time during the summer of 1849, he gained control of himself, and was engaged to be married to a widow of Richmond. He set out for the north to escort the faithful Mrs. Clemm back to the wedding, but disappeared for several days in Baltimore. An old friend found him semi-conscious in a tavern, and took him to a hospital, where he died four days later. Despite the fragmented circumstances of his life, Poe had created a

(Continued)

8. Statement of Significance: (2) Edgar Allan Poe House

body of great works and had set in motion a profound influence upon the literature of the western world.

B-50

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Evans, May Garrettson, "Poe in Amity Street," The Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 36, No. 4, Dec., 1941.

Malone, Dumas, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935. Vol. XV, pp. 19-28.

Quinn, Arthur Hobson, Edgar Allan Poe, N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc. 1941.

Spiller, Robert E., et. al., Literary History of the United States, N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1962.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES	
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "
NE	° ' "	° ' "		UTM 18.359200.434960	
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Joseph S. Mendinghall (Original form prepared by Edmund Preston)

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service
DATE:

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington
STATE: D.C.
CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Title

Date (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation — date

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register — date

Date

Landmark Designated: 11/11/71

Boundary Certified: 3-19-

Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys — date

Acting Keeper, NHP — date

B-50

Form No. 10-301
Rev. 7-72

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Baltimore	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Edgar Allan Poe House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Clemm-Poe House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 203 Amity Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Maryland	24	Baltimore	510

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: U.S.G.S. Map 7.5' series Baltimore West Quadrangle

SCALE: 1:24,000

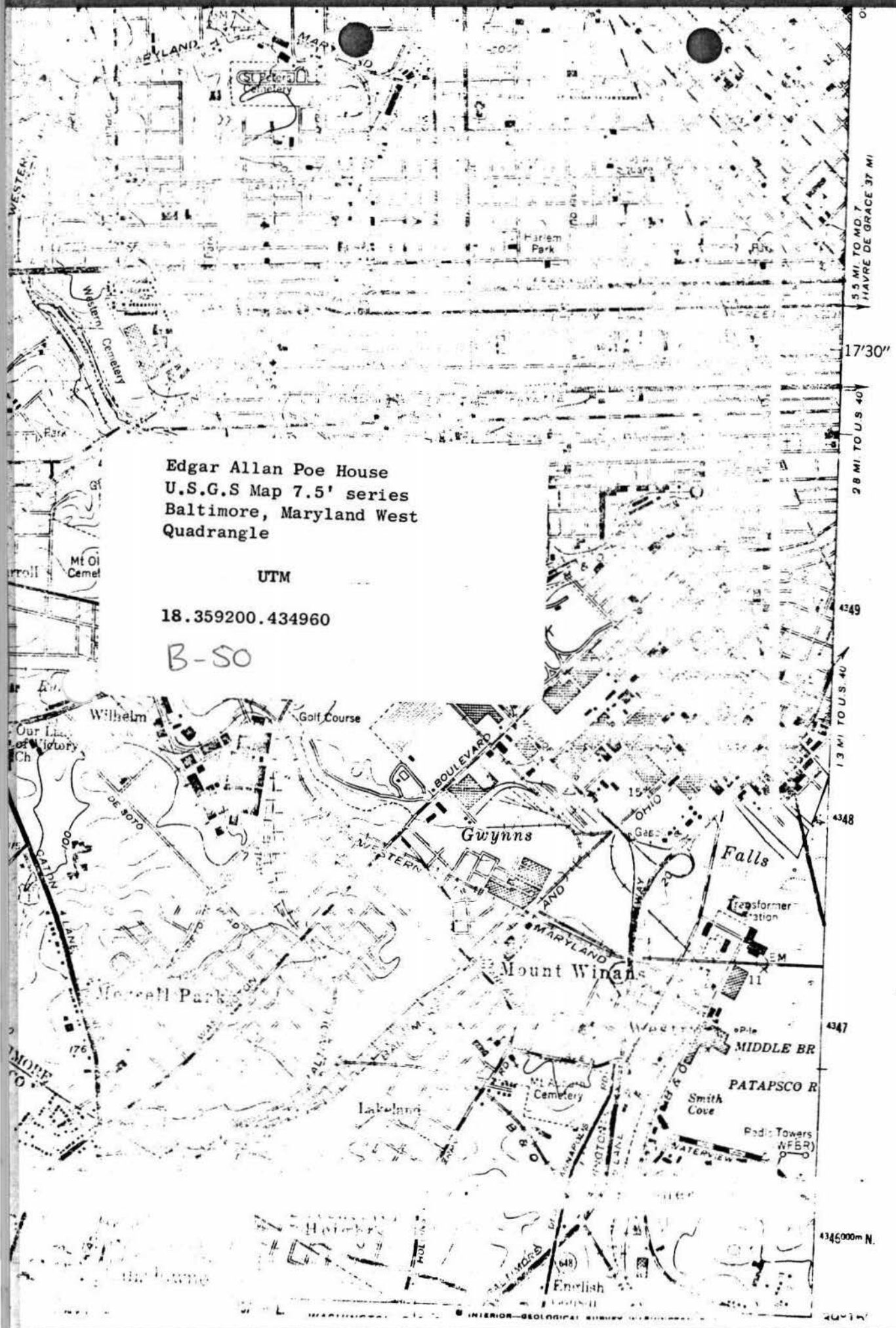
DATE: 1953 (Photorevised 1966)

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1973-729-148/1441 3-1


Edgar Allan Poe House
U.S.G.S Map 7.5' series
Baltimore, Maryland West
Quadrangle
UTM
18.359200.434960
B-50
Harlem Park
Western Cemetery
Wilhelm
Golf Course
BOULEVARD
Gwynns
Falls
Transformer Station
Mount Winans
Morrell Park
MIDDLE BR
PATAPSCO R
Smith Cove
Lakeland
Cemetery
Radio Towers
(WFBR)
English
17'30"
5.5 MI. TO MD. 7
HAVRE DE GRACE 37 MI
2.8 MI. TO U.S. 40
1.3 MI. TO U.S. 40
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