

Moran's account of Poe's coffin

Selected passage from John J. Moran's *A Defense of Edgar Allan Poe* (1885), pp. 76-77; PDF leaves 84-85. Includes the certificate dated December 10, 1881 as printed in Moran's book; no original certificate manuscript is supplied. Ends after witness William Jas. Dew. Not the complete chapter or book. Retrospective account, not independent confirmation of coffin details.

AI-assisted reading transcription, visually compared with each selected scan page. No independent human proofread. Historical wording retained; line breaks and typography regularized. Bracketed page and scope labels are editorial. Consult the scan for typography and ambiguous punctuation.

[Printed page 76] After Poe's death his body received the usual care and attention. He was clothed with a suit of black, a white cravat, and a collar about his neck. It may be of interest to the readers to know how this suit of black was obtained. I therefore take pleasure in recording the facts and giving credit to whom credit is due. A resident student at the hospital named George McCalpin, from Alabama, gave the pants; Albert Grey, a student from Leesburg, Va., gave the coat; the writer a vest, neckcloth, etc. His coffin was a plain one. To hide it from the gaze of his numerous visitors and to avoid unpleasant criticism, my wife, with a few ladies in the neighborhood assisting her, made a very neat muslin covering for it. This was spread over it and the body laid thereon. At night its folds served as a covering for his person. The coffin, as I have said, was a plain one, simple in structure, void of cushion for his head, and without lining, plated handles, or plate for his name. The material of which it was made was not what it appeared to be. It represented walnut, but it was not; it was simply a poplar coffin, stained to imitate walnut. I was not able then, out of my limited means, to furnish a better one. This

[Printed page 77; sentence continued] I paid for out of my own purse, as you will learn from the certificate of the undertaker who made it.

BALTIMORE, December 10, 1881.

This is to certify that I made the coffin for the body of EDGAR ALLAN POE, and furnished the same by order of Dr. J. J. Moran, the resident physician of the Washington University Hospital, on Broadway, Baltimore City, for which he paid me out of his own pocket. I was employed as the undertaker for the institution during the time he had charge of the same, which was upward of six years. I made it out of poplar wood and stained it in imitation of walnut.

FREDERICK T. NEMUTH, Undertaker. Witness: WILLIAM JAS. DEW.

[End of selected passage. Moran's narrative continues below the certificate in the preserved original.]