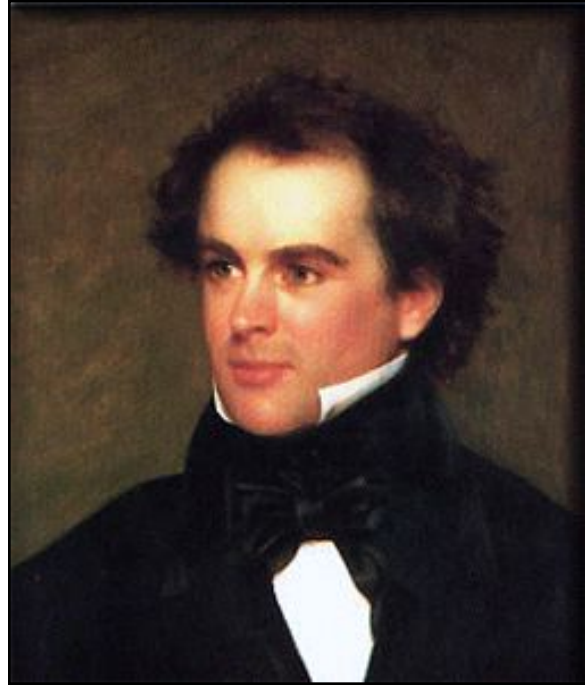


Nathaniel Hawthorne's New Hampshire Stories

While Nathaniel Hawthorne neither lived nor was born in New Hampshire, like many New Englanders, he did have close connections to the Granite State. Most notably, Hawthorne was a dear friend to Franklin Pierce whom he had met while they were fellow students at Bowdoin College. Hawthorne maintained this friendship to his death — which occurred at the Pemigewasset House in Plymouth, New Hampshire, while he was on a trip with Pierce. Clearly it wasn't his first trip into the region, for his notes and sketches allude to the White Mountains. Included on [our site](#) are three Hawthorne stories set in the White Mountains along with a non-fiction sketch; here are a few follow-up questions to accompany the stories.



Nathaniel Hawthorne

All Stories

Does the setting function as an additional character. How does setting advance the story?

“The Great Stone Face” (1850)

Hawthorne's story focuses on the Old Man of the Mountain, the longtime state symbol that finally tumbled from its mountain perch in May 2003.

- According to Hawthorne's story, what prophecy about the Great Stone Face has awaited fulfillment for generations? How is it fulfilled at last?
- What pursuits of life are represented by each of the following characters:



Pemigewasset House, Plymouth (c. 1857)

- Mr. Gathergold,
- Old Blood-and-Thunder,
- Old Stony Phiz,
- The poet.
- Why might others think of these men as fulfillment of the prophecy?
- What seems to be Ernest's walk of life? How has his life made him a suitable fulfillment of the prophecy?

“The Ambitious Guest” (1835)

This story centers on an actual event, the Willey House Disaster of August 1826, though the family is never named in Hawthorne’s story, and of course, Hawthorne takes liberties both with what could be known about the family’s last night and with the facts, as they are known.

- Point out examples of foreshadowing* and irony* in the story as they relate to each character:
 - The old mother
 - The husband and wife
 - The girl
 - The young boy
 - The guest
 - The passing wagoners

“The Great Carbuncle: A Mystery of the White Mountains” (1837)

In his “Sketches from Memory: The Notch of the White Mountains,” Hawthorne describes the legend of a wondrous gem — a great carbuncle — that hangs below a rock above a lake near the summit of Mount Washington. In the story, the setting seems to match one of the Lakes of the Clouds, which lie in the col between Mounts Washington and Monroe above the Ammonoosuc Ravine.

- How do the members of the party plan to use the carbuncle when they find it? In what way do their plans reflect their various personalities?
- What in fact happens to each member of the party as a result of their search?
 - The Seeker
 - Dr. Cacaphodel
 - Master Ichabod Pignort
 - Unnamed person (sneerer with spectacles)
 - Unnamed poet
 - Lord de Vere
 - Matthew and Hannah

* **Foreshadowing** refers to statements in a story that hint at what is to happen. It may be linked with **irony** in its sense of a reader’s knowing the meaning of characters’ words and actions beyond what the characters themselves understand.