



# Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times

*James R. Mellow*

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"Reads like a superbly crafted novel filled with fascinating characters. A brilliant piece of storytelling." -- John Gardner

Winner of the 1983 National Book Award, James R. Mellow's magisterial biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne places America's first great writer in the midst of the literary and cultural turmoil of the early republic. Mellow draws on Hawthorne's letters and notebooks, as well as on perceptive readings of his fiction in recreating the details of Hawthorne's life: the long apprenticeship of the reclusive young author, his romantic courtship of Sophia Peabody, and his travels to Europe at the height of his literary career.

More fascinating still is Mellow's portrayal of Hawthorne's stimulating, complicated relationships with his fellow pioneers in the creation of a uniquely American literature -- Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Louisa May Alcott. Hawthorne was also a lifelong friend of President Franklin Pierce, and Mellow follows the fortunes of Hawthorne's political career which brought the writer into contact with the era's great politicians -- Daniel Webster, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Sumner, and Abraham Lincoln. An unparalleled panorama of nineteenth-century American intellectual life, *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times* convincingly traces Hawthorne's literary concerns -- the unspeakable secret guilt, the fall of man, the yearning for a lost paradise -- to the events of his enigmatic life.

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