THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

This Companion contains thirteen new essays from leading international experts on William Carlos Williams, covering his major poetry and prose works – including Paterson, In the American Grain, and the Stecher Trilogy. It addresses central issues of recent Williams scholarship and discusses a wide variety of topics: Williams and the visual arts, Williams and medicine, Williams’s version of local modernism, Williams and gender, Williams and multiculturalism, and more. Authors examine Williams’s relationships with figures such as Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, H. D., and Marianne Moore, and illustrate the importance of his legacy for Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, Robert Creeley, Robert Lowell, and numerous contemporary poets. Featuring a chronology and an up-to-date bibliography of the writer, The Cambridge Companion to William Carlos Williams is an invaluable guide for students of this influential literary figure.

Christopher MacGowan is Professor of English at the College of William & Mary. He is the author of Twentieth-Century American Poetry and William Carlos Williams’s Early Poetry: The Visual Arts Background and editor of numerous books, including The Letters of Denise Levertov and William Carlos Williams and The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volumes I (with A. Walton Litz) and II.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
WILLIAM CARLOS
WILLIAMS

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CONTENTS

List of contributors ............................................. ix
Acknowledgments .................................................. xiii
Chronology ......................................................... xv
List of abbreviations .............................................. xix

1 Introduction: the lives of William Carlos Williams .......................... 1
CHRISTOPHER MACGOWAN

2 William Carlos Williams and the local ........................................ 8
ERIC B. WHITE

3 Williams and his contemporaries .............................................. 24
GLEN MACLEOD

4 Williams and the visual arts ............................................. 37
PETER HALTER

5 “No confusion – only difficulties” in Williams’s Spring and All .......... 53
LISA M. STEINMAN

6 Williams and politics ............................................... 66
MILTON A. COHEN

7 William Carlos Williams and the prose of pure experience ............ 82
ALEC MARSH

8 Paterson: an epic in four or five or six parts ........................... 101
ERIN E. TEMPLETON

9 Pictures from Brueghel: looking backward, pointing forward ........ 115
CRISTINA GIORCELLI

10 Williams in the American grain ....................................... 130
IAN COPESTAKE
CONTENTS

11 Williams and women 143
   KERRY DRISCOLL

12 Reading Carlos: baroque as straight ahead 161
   J. A. MARZÁN

13 Williams, science, and the body 176
   T. HUGH CRAWFORD

14 Williams: the new poetries and legacy 188
   JOHN LOWNEY

Further reading 207
Index 215
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CHRONOLOGY

1883  September 17. Born in Rutherford, New Jersey. Oldest son of William George and Raquel Hélène Rose Hoheb Williams.

1884  Birth of brother Edgar Irving Williams.

1889–1896  Attends local schools in Rutherford.

1897–1899  First trip to Europe. Both brothers attend a year at Château de Lancy near Geneva. They then spend some months in Paris.

1899–1902  Commutes to attend Horace Mann School in New York City.


1906–1908  Interns at French Hospital, New York City.

1908–1909  Interns at Child’s Hospital, resigns on principle.


1909–1910  Studies pediatrics in Leipzig from September to February. Travels include France, Italy, Spain, and England – where he meets up with Pound in March.

1910  Begins medical practice at 131 West Passaic Avenue, Rutherford, in September.


1913  The Tempers published in London by Elkin Mathews. In August publishes only medical article, in Archives of Pediatrics: “The Normal and Adventitious Danger Periods for Pulmonary Disease in Children.” In November Williams and Florence move to 9 Ridge Road, where Williams sets up
home and medical practice. Begins publishing regularly in *Poetry* and *The Egoist*.

1914 Birth of first child, William Eric Williams.


1916 Birth of second child, Paul Herman Williams.

1917 *Al Que Quiere!* published in Boston by The Four Seas Company.

1918 Christmas Day. Death of his father.

1919 July, edits last issue of *Others*.

1920 *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* published. With Robert McAlmon edits *Contact*. Death of grandmother, Emily Dickinson Wellcome.

1921 Publishes *Sour Grapes*.

1923 *Spring and All* and *The Great American Novel* published in Paris. Begins a sabbatical year in the summer. Begins writing *In the American Grain*.


1925 *In the American Grain* published by Albert and Charles Boni, first commercial publication.

1926 Wins the *Dial* award for “Paterson” a precursor of the longer poem to come.

1927 September, final trip to Europe, with family. Returns end of the month while Flossie stays with the boys for their school year in Geneva. While in Paris Williams meets Gertrude Stein. *Voyage to Pagany* published.


1931 Zukofsky guest edits the “Objectivist” number of *Poetry*, and includes Williams. With Flossie takes trip down the St. Lawrence to Newfoundland. Wins *Poetry*’s Guarantors Prize.

1932 Edits a revival of *Contact* with Nathanael West. Publishes *The Knife of the Times*, short stories.

Chronology

1935
Publishes *An Early Martyr and Other Poems* with Alcestis Press, 165 copies printed.

1936
Publishes *Adam & Eve & The City* with Alcestis, 167 copies printed.

1937
Begins publishing with James Laughlin’s New Directions, starting with the first novel of the Stecher trilogy, *White Mule.*

1938
*LIFE ALONG THE PASSAIC RIVER* (stories) and *The Complete Collected Poems.*

1939
Ford Madox Ford starts *Les Amis des William Carlos Williams.* Sees Pound on his visit to the United States.

1940
Publishes *In the Money,* second novel of the Stecher trilogy.

1941
*The Broken Span* pamphlet, visits Puerto Rico.

1942
Meets Marcia Nardi, the “Cress” of *Paterson.*

1944
Publishes *The Wedge.*

1946
*Paterson (Book One)* published.

1948
Heart attack. Publishes *Paterson (Book Two),* wins the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ Russell Loines Award.

1949
*Selected Poems, Paterson (Book Three),* death of his mother Hélène Williams. Son William Eric starts to take over the medical practice.

1950

1951

1952
Completes Stecher trilogy with *The Build-Up.* Serious stroke in August. Appointed as Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress but runs into opposition because of political pressure.

1953
Hospitalized for depression. Forced to give up Library of Congress appointment. Wins Bollingen Prize, shared with Archibald MacLeish.

1954
Publishes *The Desert Music, Selected Essays.*

1955
Publishes *Journey to Love,* undertakes reading tour across the country.

1956
Writes the introduction to Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl and Other Poems.*
Chronology


1958 Paterson (Book Five) published, and I Wanted to Write a Poem. Third stroke.

1959 Publishes Yes, Mrs. Williams. The Living Theater produces Many Loves Off Broadway.

1961 Starts a sixth book of Paterson but has to give up writing because of strokes.

1962 Publishes Pictures from Brueghel.


1970 New Directions publish Imaginations, first reprinting of full texts of Kora in Hell, Spring and All, and “The Descent of Winter” since the 1920s.

1975 William Carlos Williams Newsletter (subsequently William Carlos Williams Review) begins publication.

1976 Florence Williams dies.

1983 To celebrate Williams’s 100th birthday National Poetry Foundation publishes William Carlos Williams: Man and Poet, includes an interview with Robert Creeley and essays by Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Pound, and Marjorie Perloff, among others.


1992 Inducted into The Poets’ Corner of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York City, October 25.
ABBREVIATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


