

lodging to vacationers, and housed soldiers from nearby military bases. Newark couple Florence and Archie McCorkendale then purchased the home mid-century and transformed the building into the "Hotel Florence," one of Asbury Park's many popular seasonal inns, although they never resided there full time.

As misfortune struck Asbury Park, the structure transitioned into a boarding house, then a subdivided apartment house, and by the early 1990s, the eldest McCorkendale daughter was the sole occupant of the house before her transfer to a nursing home. Years of neglect resulted in severe deterioration of the building, and by the mid-1990s, the dilapidated, boarded-up flophouse for homeless and animals alike was slated for demolition.

Rebirth and Restoration as a Museum

Enter New Jersey Natural Gas executive Thomas Hayes, who purchased the property, including the rear carriage house and barn, for a grand total of \$7,500. Hayes then embarked upon a massive restoration of the

cottage, and with help from his wife, Regina, and community volunteers, The Stephen Crane House opened its doors in 1996 as a museum dedicated to Crane's life and works.

Hayes' friend, former school teacher Frank D'Alessandro, purchased the property in 2001 and continued to restore the venue through monies raised by donations, including a sizable gift from Bruce Springsteen.

Over the past twenty years, The Stephen Crane House has transformed into a notable and respected venue for history and programming including film screenings, spoken-word events, writers' workshops, and meetings of civic groups including the Asbury Park Historical Society, of which D'Alessandro was a board member.

Visitors to the house have included respected Crane academics, United States Congressmen, award-winning actor Bryan Cranston, and 1950s cult-movie star Norma Eberhardt. In 2014, D'Alessandro announced his plans to donate The Stephen Crane House to the Asbury Park Historical Society to use as its headquarters.

In February 2015, years of research



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The Lecture Room Theatre, a "black box" performance space and screening room with seating for approximately forty people.

and upgrades by the Historical Society resulted in The Stephen Crane House/Arbutus Cottage gaining recognition by being entered into the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. The following August, the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The rear carriage house was completely renovated and converted into a private residence by D'Alessandro in the first decade of the new century.

Inside The Stephen Crane House

Many of the rooms inside are included on tours and used for public events. The entrance foyer leads to a front parlor where portraits of Crane, his common-law wife Cora Taylor Crane, and his family adorn the walls. The period furnishings and wall treatments create an authentic, nostalgic ambiance. One of the most striking artifacts in the room is a picture of Crane as a member of the baseball team at Syracuse University, the college co-founded by his uncle, Jesse T. Peck. "Stephen was a great baseball player and scouted by professionals. He was a catcher and caught fastballs bare-handed. He only spent one semester at Syracuse, but all



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The front parlor has an authentic, nostalgic ambiance.