

of his papers are archived there,” Chesek said.

A nineteenth-century coal stove stands in the house’s original kitchen with stovepipe holes still visible in the walls.

The centerpiece of the house’s public area is the Lecture Room Theatre, a “black box” performance space and screening room that has recently been fitted with enhanced lighting and expanded seating for approximately forty people. While the normally busy schedule of readings, plays, free film screenings, and lectures was postponed during the Covid-19 pandemic, plans are to once again phase in a slate of public offerings in 2021. The house is a “best kept secret” venue that has hosted theatrical works that have gone on to successful Off Broadway runs, and in 2019 hosted the New Jersey debut of the award-winning, one-man play *An Evening with Stephen Crane*.

The second-floor library, which was extensively renovated, contains antique volumes from Crane’s era and an illuminated bookcase showcasing various volumes of Crane’s works as well as period furnishings that belonged to one of Asbury Park’s early prominent residents, businessman Uriah White. A rare Stephen Crane autograph and framed portrait also hang on

the library’s walls. In addition, an archive room featuring access to maps and historic documents is among the second-floor areas currently open to the public. The Society is in the process of renovating another room into what will become part of the house tour as “Stephen’s Bedroom” upon its completion.

Inside the archive room is an ironing board discovered in the cellar during renovations that dates back to the late 1800s. “We like to think that this could have been Mrs. Crane’s actual ironing board,” said Chesek. “Although Helen was a busy woman

who lectured and traveled a lot on Temperance Union business...I bet she made Agnes do the ironing!”

While the old cottage’s attic, cellar, residential rooms, and office are not open to the public, that only makes the house more intriguing. “Although there’s a lot of interest in Stephen Crane and the general history of Asbury Park, we get just as many inquiries as to whether the place is haunted,” said Chesek. “I tell them yes...by me, since I’m here just about all of the time!”

Today at the Museum

Prior to the COVID-19 health emergency, The Stephen Crane House regularly hosted group tours for schools, clubs, and other historical societies, as well as for year-round drop-in visitors that have included history buffs and teachers from as far away as Hawaii, Australia, and numerous European countries.

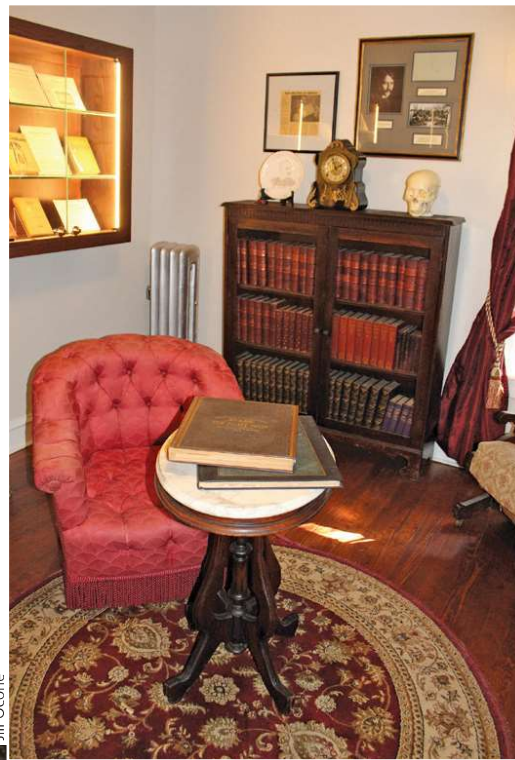
The house reopened for individual and small-group tours in the summer of 2020. Updated information on group tours and public-welcome events is available at the Asbury Park Historical Society’s website or by following The Stephen Crane House on Facebook.

Crane’s involvement in many a controversy may have led to his infamous reputation as a rascal, but his literary, poetic, and journalistic talents transcended his shenanigans. In fact, his notable contributions to the literary world and to the history of New Jersey were finally recognized in 2020 as he was posthumously inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

The Stephen Crane House remains a living Jersey Shore landmark that celebrates the poet/author’s life and legacy along with his enduring place in literary, local, and cultural history.

—Jill Ocone

The Stephen Crane House is located at 508 Fourth Avenue in Asbury Park. Open house tours are offered on Sundays from 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM or by appointment. For more information, call (732) 361-0189 or visit www.aphistoricalociety.org/history/welcome-to-the-stephen-crane-house.



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The library contains period furnishings, antique volumes from Crane’s era, and an illuminated bookcase showcasing various volumes of Crane’s works.