

...anything but a stroll through a rose garden.

Here in Badenweiler, in the first year of the 20th century, died a man whose creative achievements would make him one of the most important representatives of late 19th century American Literature.

Unfortunately, his life was too short and "...anything but a stroll through a rose garden." (Joseph Conrad)

Above all it was very eventful. In the eight years of his active literary life, Stephen Crane managed to rise from the slums of New York to the status of a world famous author.

With his first novel *Maggie*, written when he was only 22 years old, he laid the foundations for American Naturalism. No one before had dared to describe the living conditions of the American urban lower class in such an uncompromising manner.

At the age of 24, having no war experience at all, Stephen Crane wrote in a mere ten nights the first modern war novel. His most famous masterpiece, *The Red Badge of Courage*, was written in such a realistic way that readers in Great Britain believed the author to be an experienced veteran himself. It brought him not only international acknowledgement but also a job as a war correspondent for Pulitzer. During the following years Crane travelled to Cuba and Europe, survived with only two other crewmen the shipwreck of a gun-running boat, "lived in sin" with the author (and brothel owner) Cora Stewart-Taylor and counted people like H.G. Wells, Joseph Conrad and Henry James as his friends.

Selected Works

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893)

"There was no other slum so settled of speech and habit." - Conrad (friend of Crane) about the Bowery people of NY.

"Sometime or other somebody or other might buy some." - Crane

An Experiment in Misery (1894)

The Red Badge of Courage (1895)

"I have spent ten nights writing a story of the war on my own responsibility (...)"

"His mind had gone swinging back to war in the recoil from failure in realities." - Conrad.

The Open Boat (1897)

"When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and deeply hates the fact that there are no bricks and no temples"
(excerpt)

The Monster (1897)

"A study of popular stupidity"- Conrad.

The Blue Hotel (1899)

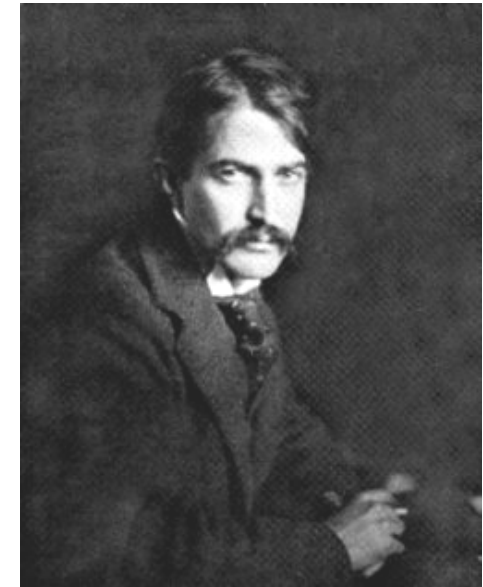
War is Kind (1899)

"Mr. Crane's sense of humour is of a mystifying kind"- bewildered Bostonian reviewer.

The O'Ruddy (1900/03)

Literary Stroll

Kurhaus - Chekhov Salon -Badstrasse 2



American novelist, poet, short-story writer and journalist:

Stephen Crane

* 1. 11. 1871 Newark, N.J., USA
+ 05. 06. 1900 Badenweiler, Germany

A man said to the universe:
'Sir, I exist!'
'However,' replied the universe,
'The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation.'

(*War Is Kind*, 1900)

Biography

- 1871** Stephen Crane is the last of 14 children born to Mary Helen Peck Crane and Dr. Jonathan T. Crane, a Methodist clergyman, on 1st November, in Newark, New Jersey.
- 1878** Crane attends school in Port Jervis, New York. Port Jervis and its surroundings later become settings of Stephen Crane's narratives (*The Third Violet*, *The Monster et al.*).
- 1880** Stephen Crane's father dies. From there on his mother has to support the family. To gain money she starts to write articles for Methodist newspapers.
- 1888** Crane enrolls at Hudson River Institute and Claverack College, New York. His history teacher, a former General, tells him of his experiences in the civil war. Stephen Crane uses this information for his later work *The Red Badge of Courage*. He helps out in his brother's press agency in Asbury Park.
- 1890** Crane starts his studies in engineering at Lafayette College just to leave it again.
- 1891** At Syracuse University he plays baseball and writes newspaper articles. He moves to New York City, where he tries to make a living as a free-lance writer and journalist. This year his mother dies.
- 1892** Stephen Crane's efforts to get regular employment as a journalist fail. He succeeds in publishing his first works: *Sullivan County Sketches*.
- 1893** Crane prints his first work *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* at his own expense under the pseudonym *Johnston Smith*. Only few copies are sold at the price of 50 cent - today a copy of this edition is worth \$17, 000. Nevertheless the book attracts the attention of established critics and writers, most notably William Dean Howells

and Hamlin Garland, who help Crane receive backing for his next works.

- 1894** Crane starts to write poetry and *George's Mother. An Experiment in Misery* and *An Experiment in Luxury* are published. *The Red Badge of Courage* appears in newspapers as a serialized novel.
- 1895** Crane starts to report and travel in the West. In New Orleans he finishes the final version of *The Red Badge of Courage*. The volume of poetry *The Black Riders* appears. With *The Red Badge of Courage* Crane gains international popularity.
- 1896** *George's Mother* as well as other short stories and poems are released, and *Maggie* is republished with greater success. He travels to Jacksonville, Florida to report about the revolt in Cuba. There he meets Cora Taylor.
- 1897** Crane embarks for Cuba on the steamer *Commodore*, which is on a mission to bring weapons and equipment to the rebels there. The ship sinks on the way; but Crane and two others survive and manage to reach the shores of Miami in a little dinghy. The short story *The Open Boat* is based on this adventure. Accompanied by Cora Taylor he is sent to Greece to report about the Greek War of Independence against Turkey. Together with Cora, now "Mrs. Crane" (even though nothing is known about a marriage), he goes to England, writes *The Monster*. There he also meets Joseph Conrad.
- 1898** *The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure*, a book of short stories, is released. Crane works for Pulitzer as a war correspondent. Cuba is still under Spanish occupation when he enters it illegally but without hindrance and witnesses military actions on San Juan Hill. The letters Steven writes to Cora and his friends never arrive and he drops out of sight for a couple of months.

1899 Crane returns to England, where Cora, deeply in debt, awaits him. To settle their debts, Crane writes articles and novellas, some of minor quality. *War is Kind*, *Active Service*, *The Monster and Other Stories* are released. Already having tuberculosis for a long time, Crane suffers a serious bleeding.

1900 Stephen starts to write the novel *The O'Ruddy*, but is no longer healthy enough to complete it (it will be completed by Robert Barr in 1903). As his condition worsens, Cora desperately looks for someone to help out with the expensive trip to the Black Forest. Via Dover (goodbye to Joseph Conrad: "I am tired...") and Basel (Hotel Trois Rois), he finally arrives at Dr. Fraenkel's *Mansion Eberhardt* in Badenweiler (today's Badstraße 2) on May 28th. Crane is constantly haunted by the experience on the *Commodore* (Cora: "It is awful to hear him try to change seats in *the open boat!*"). He dies in Badenweiler on the 5th of June. His body is transported to London and, accompanied by Cora and his niece, is finally shipped to the USA. On the 28th of June Crane is buried at the Evergreen Cemetery in Hillside, New Jersey. The inscription on the gravestone says:

"Stephen Crane - Poet - Author - 1871 - 1900".

For Further Information

The Crane Log. A Documentary Life of Stephen Crane 1871-1900. S. Wertheim & Paul Sorrentino. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994.

The Stephen Crane Society:

www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/crane

Crane Project University of Freiburg:

www.stephencraneinbadenweiler.de.vu

Syracuse University NY:

www.syr.edu/index.html