



# A Stephen Crane Encyclopedia

*Stanley Wertheim*

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The publication of *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1895 brought Stephen Crane instant fame at age 23. At 28, he was dead. In the brief span of his literary career, Crane enjoyed a significant measure of renown as well as notoriety, but his reputation rested almost entirely upon his war novel, and he felt that his talent had ultimately been misjudged. From his adolescence until his death, Crane was a professional journalist. To this day, most educated American readers know him only as the author of the most realistic Civil War novel ever written, three or four action-packed short stories, and a handful of iconoclastic free-verse poems. Crane was befriended and admired by some of the most important literary figures of his time, such as William Dean Howells, Willa Cather, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and H. G. Wells. He has also been called a realist, a naturalist, an impressionist, a symbolist, and an existentialist. This reference book provides a more complete picture of Crane's short but furiously creative life and encourages a more extensive appreciation of his works.

The volume includes hundreds of entries for members of Crane's immediate and extended family; close friends and associates; educational institutions that he attended; places where he resided; publishers and syndicates by whom he was employed; literary movements with which he is usually associated; and the works of fiction, poetry, and journalism that he wrote. Thus the book shows that he was a pioneer in the development of a number of genres in modern American fiction and poetry; that he was the first literary chronicler of the burgeoning slums of urban America who refused to sentimentalize his materials; that his Western stories reveal the steady retreat of the American frontier before the encroachments of a modern Europeanized civilization; and that his short stories and poems engage a number of enduring themes. Many of the entries cite works for further reading, and the volume includes a chronology and a bibliography of the most important studies of his life and writing.

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