

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**JOIN UP OR
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**

See Page 4 for Details!

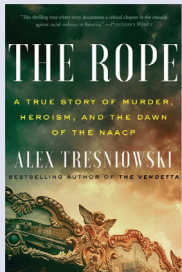
*Where the Past
Meets the Future*

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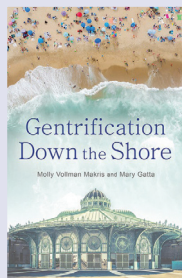
© 2021 Asbury Park Historical Society **Winter 2021 - 2022**

Buried treasures, rediscovered gifts

*Celebrate Asbury Park in words,
at our virtual January meeting!*



Is there another town of the same small size as Asbury Park that continues to inspire so many written words each year? This past milestone year of 2021 has seen the publication of numerous books on topics related to the city and some of its most famous personalities — from studies of 19th century true crime, Jim Crow, and African American activism (*The Rope*, Alex Tresniowski) and 21st century social trends (*Gentrification Down the Shore*, Molly Vollman Makris and Mary Elizabeth Gatta), to big-picture perspectives on the tides of change in this seaside city (Helen Pike's *A Century of Change*; Daniel Wolff's expanded *Fourth of July Asbury Park*).



There are memoirs by musical movers and shakers (Stevie Van Zandt's *Unrequited Infatuations*; Norman Seldin's *You Don't Know Me*); biographical studies of Stephen Crane (*Burning Boy* by Paul Auster; a new edition of *Badge of Courage* by Linda H. Davis) and still more forthcoming additions to the ever-growing library of Asbury-centric works — and on Thursday evening, January 21, 2022, the trustees of the Asbury Park Historical Society will be your guides for a virtual Book Tour through some of the most outstanding volumes of recent seasons.

Open to the public, and hosted via Zoom as our annual January meeting program, the presentation finds several of our organization's board members and supporters reading from and discussing their favorite published works on subjects that are close to the heart of anyone with a passion for all things Asbury Park. It's a great introduction for interested readers, and a possible first step toward the establishment of regularly scheduled Historical Society Book Club sessions.

Check our official website (aphistoricalsociety.org), social media, and email blasts for updates on the January 21 Virtual Book Tour event — and feel free to share your own thoughts and recommendations on the printed legacy of "little but loud" Asbury Park!

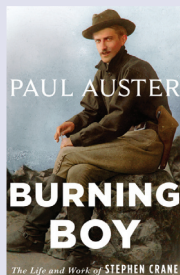


Photo by Diana Moore

**Join us on Dec. 19, for the dedication
of Asbury Park's Time Capsule**

Books and periodicals detailing everything from sweeping societal changes, to municipal street sweeping schedules. Essays offering the big-picture take-away on the challenges of the 21st century, and take-out menus representing the city's richly diverse smorgasbord of dining experiences. Souvenirs of the waterfront's celebrated tourism attractions, and mementoes of year-round living in the neighborhoods of this city of summers. Official proclamations and communications from City Hall, and offerings from local students on their favorite activities and diversions. All of it representing contemporary life in the 150th anniversary year of Asbury Park's founding — and all of it scheduled for rediscovery by a future generation of Asbury Parkers, following a special **Time Capsule Dedication and Burial** on the afternoon of Sunday, December 19, 2021.

Scheduled for 2:00 pm at the Asbury Park Historical Society's **Stephen Crane House** headquarters at 508 Fourth Avenue, the public-welcome ceremony marks the culmination of a project designed to cap a busy Sesquicentennial Year of special events and activities. Here in an interlude that's seen its share of challenges and sea-changes — from the coming of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing effects of climate change, to the local hot-button issues of gentrification, affordable housing, education, transportation, and shifting demographics — the idea is to present a portrait to the people of the city's bicentennial year of 2071, of a vital community that came together to forge solutions, find its collective voice, and face toward a future that worked to the benefit of all who made their home here.

In the words of **Time Capsule Committee** chair and Historical Society officer **Susan Rosenberg**, the project "belongs to all Asbury Park residents... past, present, and future."

Continued on page 4

Visit us online at aphistoricalociety.org

There's no such thing as an "off season" in Asbury Park



Manning the "outreach table" during October 2's **Monmouth County Archives and History Day**...the annual gathering of local historical organizations in Manalapan...Asbury Park Historical Society Secretary **Susan Rosenberg** maintained her own personal tradition of meeting, greeting, and introducing the public to all that our unique city (and our busy nonprofit) has to offer. In addition to chairing the Sesquicentennial Time Capsule project, the ever-energetic Susan staked out a highly visible presence at such seasonal events as September's weekend-long **AsburyFest**, during which the APHS tent rang up more than \$1,200 in sales of books, postcards, holiday ornaments, and other Asbury Park-themed merchandise and memorabilia. Thanking her fellow volunteers (including APHS board members **Jim Henry**, **Dolly Sternesky**, **Teddy Chomko**, **Andy** and **Susan Skokos**) for a "great big successful team effort," Rosenberg kept up the pace throughout the fall, whether supervising the refreshments table at various sponsored events, or simply lending her support to happenings like the October 15 **Sesquicentennial Roctober Clambake**, the downtown evening of seafood and swingin' sounds coordinated by **Celia Morrisette**.



Photo courtesy Ira Kreizman

Ten notable graduates of Asbury Park High School joined an elite group of their peers on the evening of Thursday, October 14, when the **Asbury Park High School Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame** held its ninth induction ceremony at the Eatontown Sheraton Hotel. Newly honored were retired attorney and music historian **Douglas E. Friedman** (Class of 1960), USAF defense contractor **Tyshawn Jenkins** (2000), inventor of card and board games **Joli Quentin Kensil** (1960), retired pediatric orthopedist **Dr. Samuel (Skip) Laufer** (1961), actress-producer-director and educator **Marilyn Michaels** (1952), athlete and coach **Henry James (Hank) Nonnenberg** (1962; deceased), restaurateur and chef **John Piancone** (1977), honored war hero **Gen. Harry Rockafeller** (1934; deceased), attorney **Melvyn Ruskin** (1957), and college professor and author **Rasheda Young** (1995). The Committee, which consists of Mayor Carl Williams, Judge Ira Kreizman, Janice Keener, Oliver Jones, Lorraine Nonnenberg, Marilyn Tomaino, Judge Paul Chaiet, Stanley Smith, Rita Abrams, Joseph Crudup and Historical Society trustee Susan Skokos, plans to induct another class of Distinguished Alumni in 2023.



Photos by Susan Rosenberg



He entered this world in 1871, the same year in which the place called Asbury Park was founded...and on the night of Wednesday, October 27, **Stephen Crane's** own "sesquicentennial" was officially recognized by **Mayor John Moor** and members of the Asbury Park City Council. The internationally renowned storyteller, poet, and journalist best known for the classic novel *The Red Badge of Courage* had the 150th anniversary of his birth (November 1, 2021) declared **Stephen Crane Day** by formal proclamation...an effort spearheaded by APHS trustee and councilwoman **Eileen Chapman**, and an honor extended only once before, when in 2018 the city officially proclaimed Danny De Vito Day for a beloved favorite son. NJ Natural Gas executive **Tom Hayes**...who, as onetime private owner of the Stephen Crane House, rescued that historic home from abandonment and neglect in 1995...accepted the proclamation in memory of Crane, who lived at 508 Fourth Avenue as a young man between 1883 and 1892.



Photo by Kay Harris

The normally hushed rows of the **Asbury Park Public Library** resonated with the spirit of marvelous music on the evening of Thursday, November 4, when Historical Society members **Charlie** and **Pam Horner** hosted a special presentation and book signing event keyed to the release of *You Don't Know Me: the Memoir of Stormin' Norman Seldin*. A pivotal figure in the evolution of The Sound of Asbury Park, the veteran musician/bandleader/producer/record label owner shared vivid recollections from his 60-plus years career, joining co-author Charlie and a roomful of enthusiastic supporters that included some genuine legends of the East Coast musical landscape. Pictured here left to right are songwriter and producer **Billy Terrell**, doo wop star (and longtime frontman for The Earls) **Larry Chance**, singer and guitarist **Pam McCoy**, guest of honor **Norman Seldin**, the Horners, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame drummer **Vini Lopez**.

Follow the Asbury Park Historical Society and The Stephen Crane House on Facebook

...when our diverse and dynamic community gets busy!



It was a modestly scaled but momentous occasion...one that represented the first public-welcome event at The Stephen Crane House since February 2020...when on Sunday, November 7, our in-house Lecture Room Theatre hosted actor-playwright and longtime friend of the house **Marjorie Conn**, in a premiere performance of her new play *Cora & Stevie: Heaven and Hell*. Commissioned by Crane House programmer **Tom Chesek** in observance of Stephen Crane's 150th birthday, and funded in part by a grant from **MonmouthArts**, the one-woman show found Marj (whose numerous previous projects at the house have included explorations of figures ranging from Eleanor Roosevelt to Lizzie Borden) illuminating the vivid real-life character of Cora Crane, Stephen's common-law "wife" and constant companion in the latter years of his brief life. Observing all stated health and safety protocols, an audience that included former Crane House private owner **Frank D'Alessandro** enjoyed a piece that will be made available for additional stagings in months to come — as well as a first look at recent renovations that boasted enhanced lighting, expanded seating area, refinished floor, plus all-new paint, plaster work and window treatments.



The voices of Asbury Park's Gilded Age past...from the people who lived and fought on the front lines of entrenched racist Jim Crow policies, to the business leaders and opinion makers who resisted the societal sea-changes on the horizon...came to life on Sunday, November 14, when **Kay Harris** and her **Asbury Park Museum** team staged the multi-media presentation *A Segregated Seashore Retrospective* at the **Berkeley Oceanfront Hotel**. Drawn from 19th century accounts and the words of figures like Founder James A. Bradley and community activist Rev. James F. Robinson, the program employed the talents of volunteer performers that included actor and AP Museum officer **Lorraine Stone**, local clergy **Rev. Semaj Vanzant**, and former APHS president **Don Stine**. The live presentation inside the hotel's Johnny & June Room was keyed to the acclaimed "pop-up" lobby exhibit *Asbury Park: 150 Years of Change & Transformation*; a display that moves to the Guggenheim Memorial Library at funding partner **Monmouth University**. Continuing the relationship with the Museum, the Berkeley's lobby plays host to *One Voice is Not Enough*, a new pop-up exhibit celebrating the early years of Asbury Park's rich musical legacy.



The Asbury Park Historical Society was one of six city-based nonprofit entities joining forces on the evening of Friday, December 3, when **The Asbury Hotel** hosted authors **Daniel Wolff** and **Dr. Walter Greason** for a public-welcome conversation on the topic of *A Changing Asbury Park in Context*. Presented in partnership with **Asbury Book Cooperative**, **Asbury Park African American Music Project**, **Asbury Park Arts Council**, **Asbury Park Music Foundation**, and **The Asbury Park Museum**, the event coincided with the release of a newly updated edition of *Fourth of July Asbury Park*, Wolff's acclaimed study-in-snapshots of our city's complicated history, originally published in 2005. The journalist joined esteemed educator and former Monmouth University dean Greason (himself the author of *The Path to Freedom* and other works) for an interactive discussion on the challenges, old and new, affecting Asbury Park in the new millennium, as the ever-dynamic city takes the national spotlight again.



On Sunday, December 5, a favorite annual tradition returned after a one-year hiatus when the **New York City Christmas Lights Tour** set sail once more from Fireman's Park in Ocean Grove. The seasonal "fun"raiser (a co-presentation of the APHS and the Ocean Grove Historical Society) offered two busloads of sightseers a guided tour of several Manhattan sites in their full seasonal glory. Included were several of the city's best-dressed stores (Macy's Herald Square, Saks Fifth Avenue, Gucci), the holiday bazaar at Bryant Park, Greenwich Village, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and, of course, the tree at Rockefeller Center. A three-course Little Italy luncheon was also included with the tour reservation, while trustee **Teddy Chomko** (left, with **Joe Lemme**) served as "flight attendant, tour guide, and fearless leader" for the sold-out afternoon and evening of shopping, sightseeing, and trekking the lights fantastic!

Public Programs from the Historical Society

• **JANUARY 9, 2022:** Back in early 2020, prior to the pandemic-related restrictions on public events, the Crane House partnered with the nonprofit **Musicians on a Mission** organization to present a successful "Songwriters" house concert, as our contribution to the slate of **Light of Day Winterfest** events going on around Asbury Park. With Light of Day going live once again this coming January, the APHS welcomes back MoaM co-founder **Brenda Wirth** and her husband, singer-songwriter **George Wirth** (pictured), for an afternoon of acoustic music inside our Lecture Room theatre. Scheduled for 3 pm on January 9, the house concert from the creators of the acclaimed "Rosie's Cafe" series will feature George in performance with fellow artists **Regina Goldy** and **Jonathan Tea**... with proceeds dedicated to the Light of Day Foundation and its ongoing efforts toward the research and treatment of Parkinson's and other neuromuscular diseases. Seating is limited, with Covid-related safety policies observed and admission (\$15) reserved via rosies-cafe@comcast.net.



Distance, an autobiographical work based on his search for the woman who was his birth mother. Currently in discussion is a sneak-preview screening event (at the Crane House or an alternate local venue TBD), with details to be announced via our website, social media, and email blasts.

• An event that was originally announced (and necessarily back-burnered) during the pre-pandemic days of March 2020, **Margaret Widdemer: The Park, the Grove, and Other Things** was designed to celebrate the life and career of novelist and poet Widdemer (1884-1978), a daughter of Asbury Park who won an early Pulitzer Prize, and who used places like Asbury, Wanamassa and Ocean Grove as settings for her stories. Plans are for the Crane House to revisit the subject for Women's History Month in March 2022, with a program that includes a scholarly slideshow and a rare screening of a silent film based on her works.

• **IN THE PIPELINE:** Another artist who's enjoyed a long association with the Crane House (and whose plays have gone on to Off Broadway runs after being seen here for the first time), poet-playwright-rapper-musician **Rock Wilk** returns with his first film project: **The Center of**

• Also to be confirmed: a local appearance by novelist **Paul Auster**, author of **Burning Boy**, an acclaimed new study of the life and times of Stephen Crane, keyed to the release of the book's paperback edition... and a still-in-discussion Crane House collaboration with the city-based nonprofit **Asbury Park Arts Council**. Stay tuned!

Time Capsule From pg 1

Working remotely even during her recent travels to the Middle East, Susan consulted with her committee members...a group that also includes fellow APHS trustee and city councilwoman **Eileen Chapman**, as well as **Lisa Bovino** and **Elena Zazanis**...to select a carefully curated collection of donated materials, much of which was then transferred to archival-grade media. The group, a subcommittee of the Asbury Park Sesquicentennial campaign chaired by **Celia Morrisette**, raised funds for a professional quality, water-tight stainless steel container manufactured by **Heritage Time Capsules** of Buffalo, NY, as well as a custom plaque designed and installed by Beth and Pete Woolley of Monmouth County-based **Peaceable Kingdom Monuments**.

Volunteers from the **Asbury Park Little League** are scheduled to handle the interment of the capsule, at an easily visible site in front of the concrete Mayfair Theatre wishing well that sits just off the front porch of the Crane House. Guests are set to include **Mayor John Moor**, who drafted a letter to his future successor in office for the occasion — and

following the outdoor ceremony, attendees are invited to enjoy Asbury Park 150th Birthday Cake and other seasonal refreshments, during a reception inside the Crane House.

Sealed beneath cement and marked with its plaque, the capsule and its contents will occupy their appointed berth for the next half century, there on a property that has safely and successfully navigated its way through every epic storm, economic upheaval, and major current event of the past 143 years. From there, it's up to the people of Asbury Park 2071 to retrieve the buried capsule on schedule — and, in the process, discover some intriguing things about the lives of the people who crafted this snapshot of a revitalized, re-energized, ever-fascinating city, way back in 2021.

Reservations are not necessary to attend the outdoor portion of the Time Capsule ceremony on December 19, while masks and proof of vaccine or negative Covid test are requested for the indoor reception. Monitor the Asbury Park Historical Society website and social media for updates in the event of adverse weather conditions, and direct additional questions to Susan Rosenberg at susanrosenberg10@gmail.com.

The Asbury Park Historical Society

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Join up or renew your membership today!

Contact **SUSAN SKOKOS**, membership chair, at skokose@aol.com

Donations accepted via PayPal at aphistoricalociety.org

Call the Stephen Crane House at **732-361-0189**

to schedule a tour...and address correspondence to:

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