

# Minnesota State University, Mankato

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From the Selected Works of Heidi Southworth

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## Living Banned Books: Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

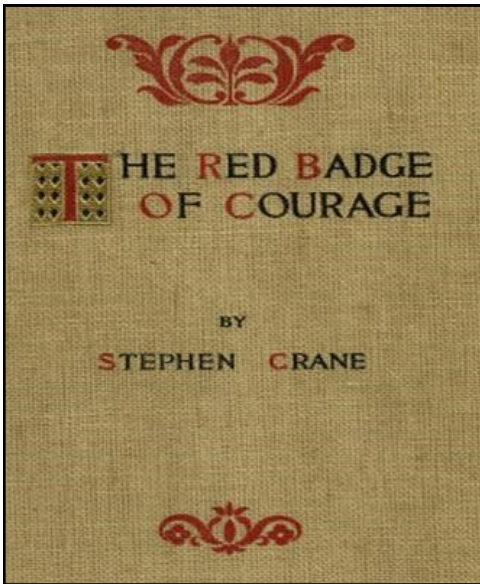
Heidi J. Southworth, *Minnesota State University, Mankato*



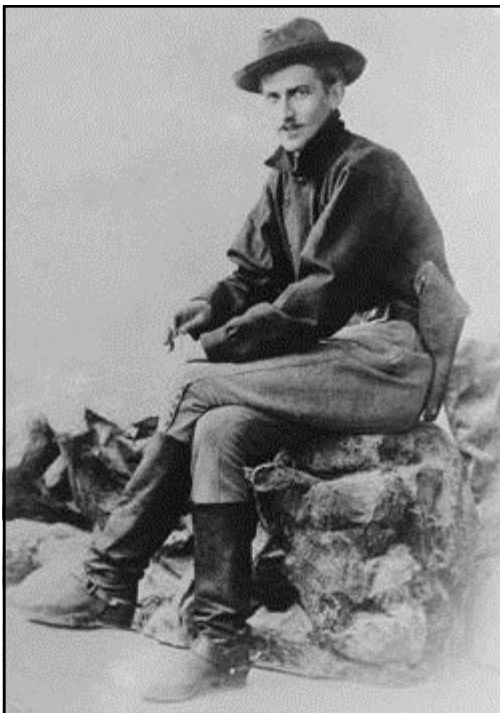
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Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/heidi\\_southworth/](https://works.bepress.com/heidi_southworth/)



- Vivid portrait of the American Civil War through the account of a young Union soldier's (Henry Fleming) experiences and emotions on the battlefield.
- Based on the Battle of Chancellorsville (Spotsylvania) in April/May 1863.
- In December 1894, the story first appeared in a truncated version in several newspapers. Crane sold it for \$90. It was later published in book form in late September 1895 by D. Appleton and Company. Crane was 24 years old. The Red Badge of Courage brought Crane fame in both the United States and England.
- Crane published a "sequel" - The Little Regiment and other Episodes of the American Civil War in 1896.
- In 1896, at the 6th Session of the Cleveland ALA Conference, the book was excluded from the 1893-1896 supplement to the Catalog of A.L.A. library because it: "abounds in profanity," was "not true," contained "objectionable English," and was "a vulgar book and nothing but vulgar."
- Most recently banned in Bay County Schools in Florida in 1986 because of "vulgarity." It was restored to school shelves along with 64 other books in 1991.



Stephen Crane poses in Greece during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. ©Public Domain. Original photograph and additional information on Stephen Crane available from the Syracuse University Archives (<http://archives.syr.edu/>)

### Stephen Crane—a Brief Biography

- Born November 1, 1871 in Newark, New Jersey.
- Attended classes at Claverack (N.Y) College-Hudson River Institute, Lafayette College in Pennsylvania and Syracuse University where he in his own words “did a little work at school, but confined my abilities, such as they were, to the diamond.” Crane was a catcher and played shortstop at Syracuse.
- His first major work Maggie: A Girl of the Streets was rejected by publishers. Crane paid for its publication and it was published under a pseudonym (Johnston Smith) in 1893. The work is an honest, brutally realistic portrayal of the seamier side of urban New York.
- As a journalist for several newspapers, Crane wrote about his adventures and experiences both in the United States and abroad. Crane also wrote poems (137 known) and a variety of short stories and sketches.
- Lived with Cora Taylor, owner of the nightclub/hotel/brothel Hotel de Dream. Never legally married, the couple settled in England.
- Beset with debt, Stephen Crane died on June 5, 1900 from tuberculosis. He was 28 years old. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in what is now Hillside, New Jersey.