

# INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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Fall 2015

## FROM SITE SUPT. MARTHA DOWNEY COMPLIMENTS AND THANKS

This has been the summer of compliments. Site visitors continue to be highly complimentary and surprised by the Site's excellent orientation DVD, exhibits, book store, and grounds. The credit for the appearance of the grounds goes to Matt Swanson and Knox County Master Gardeners Sylviane Sites and Jamie Yemm. Those three individuals and on occasion other Master Gardeners and volunteers have worked on Wednesdays to make sure the Site looks wonderful.

Matt Swanson has been working at the Site all summer, keeping the grass mowed and weeds trimmed. With all the moisture this summer that seemed to be a never ending task. He has been enjoying the Site's visitors, and they have been enjoying him. He even recruited at least one new member for the Association.

A fall clean-up date has been set for Wednesday, October 7, 9 am to 1 pm. Bring your garden gloves, rake, and favorite tools to help prepare the Site's gardens for winter.

The Knox County Master Naturalists have become involved with the Site. The southeast corner of the Site is now a Monarch Way Station thanks to this group. A couple of years ago a large dead tree was removed from that area. The corner changed from shade to sun, and suddenly weeds were growing. This year our Master Gardeners made a connection with the Master Naturalists. They have taken over responsibility for that corner. Cone flowers, goldenrod, milkweed, and other plants that provide food for the Monarchs have been planted. In July three Monarch caterpillars were spotted on leaves in that corner.

There were compliments galore following the first fall Songbag concert. Every seat was taken, and all the standing room was occupied as Mike Anderson, "The Dulcimer Guy," performed. In my memory no Songbag concert has ever had seventy-three attend. Applause to John Heasley, the Songbag Committee, and the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association for their work to make the Songbag concerts wonderful.

The September 26 Songbag concert will feature Phil Passen <http://www.philpassen.com>. Phil plays and sings

traditional American and Celtic music. "Few musicians play the hammered dulcimer. Fewer still sing while accompanying themselves on this fascinating instrument, whose name means "beautiful song. Phil Passen does both." Mike Hobbs will be our Sandburg Reader.

Halloween, yes, the October Songbag concert is on Oct. 31, and will feature David Berchtold [www.davidberchtold.com](http://www.davidberchtold.com). David will perform, "Toe-tapping soul food for the acoustically hungry." Blues, folk, rags, and original tunes will be performed.

The Site remains open Thursdays—Sundays 9 am-5 pm. Please stop by the Site to see how nice it looks, meet Matt, and perhaps purchase some reading material for fall. And do not forget the upcoming Songbag concerts. Most importantly, thank you to all those individuals that have worked hard to make this summer at the Site a good one.

## THE SANDBURG FAMILY'S "HAPPINESS HOUSE"

By Cheryl Harlan, Lopez Island, WA

*(Ed. Note: In early summer CSHSA Treasurer Rick Sayre notified me that Cheryl Harlan of Lopez Island, WA had joined the Association. At that time I was planning to visit my friend Bev Kjellander of Eugene, OR later in the summer. One of the places that Bev and I planned to visit in the Northwest was the San Juan Islands off the coast off Washington. Lopez Island is one of the San Juan's. I contacted Cheryl to see if Bev and I could meet her on Lopez, so that I could interview her for an I&I story about why she had joined the CSHSA. We met, had lunch, and talked about Sandburg. She gave us a nice tour of Lopez. Turns out she had written a story years ago about an experience she had regarding Sandburg when she was an eleven year old in Elmhurst, IL. Here is her story.)*

When I think back to my childhood in Elmhurst, Illinois, I remember the streets arched over by a high canopy of green in summer leaving the pavement dappled with sunlight and shadow and the sidewalks cracked and heaved with the pressure of the old trees' roots. When looking down each avenue, one would see a tall tunnel of branches and leaves growing ever smaller in the distance like a wedding walkway for the gods.

Summers were spent in thin cotton dresses or shorts, and everything was slow in the humid heat. We would walk on the shady side of the street and stay inside at midday when the house was cool with pulled window shades. I would ride my bike to the crosstown pool and leave soaking wet. Halfway home I would be completely dry, and when I arrived home, wet again with perspiration.

Mom worked part-time at the local historical museum, a great stone mansion at the end of our block. I grew up absorbing the local history through my pores. My mother always spoke of the pioneer founders of our town in awed and reverent tones. Thomas Barbour Bryan, the "Father of Elmhurst," was best known for promoting the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. When I looked up at the old castle-like homes I could almost see the people who built them and call them by name.

My mother's grasp of local history gave me a deep feeling of community that I treasure now. Back then I believe that I cared only for riding my bike and daydreaming about horses. It didn't bother me that we lived in a shabby rental house or that I always wore hand-me-downs. It was only as I grew older that I began to notice the disparity between our lives and the rest of the mostly affluent inhabitants of our town.

The summer after sixth grade I had a best friend my own age. Katie and I were restless and bored in the summer heat. There were fewer trees and therefore less shade each year, and we woke most mornings to the distant buzz of chainsaws as more trees fell, giving their ancient and dignified lives to stop the blight of Dutch Elm Disease.

In a mood both restless and reckless one afternoon we took off to explore behind Katie's house. Small town blocks seemed bigger back then, and we had to scale her fence and fight through underbrush before finally emerging into open space. I have a vague memory of being told to stay in the yard, but after disregarding the fence, like a Narnian wardrobe, the yard seemed to go on forever.

Emerging from the brush, we found a little, abandoned barn, askew with age, with gaping gray boards. It was cool inside, and in this venerable place we lingered and talked of the future, the horses we would own, the boys we would marry, in just that order of importance. I longed to climb up to the loft, but the little barn seemed so careworn that even my young girl's weight might topple it down, so we left the loft alone with its burden of sun-streaked dust and tramped off in search of more evidence of human habitation, though the tall grass and overgrown bushes indicated that no one had lived there in some time.

Wading through the vegetation beyond the barn, we approached a small house. It seemed almost as old as the historic mansions of our town but very humble. It was a farmhouse style, and it looked as if it had once been painted pale yellow. Its outside walls were sloped with age. The house was hidden from the street by trees and hedges, and though we could hear the traffic on the main road, it seemed very far away. We were surrounded by an unreal quiet.

The house was very obviously unoccupied, so we unsuccessfully tried the locked back door, and as we turned away, spied the cellar doors. I remember them as the kind that angle against the side of the house, the kind that you fling up and open if you are trying to escape a tornado. One of the doors was flung back and splintered. The opening to the cellar was dark, cool, and frightening. It was irresistible to two eleven year olds.

I think that at this point all reason left us, and we descended into the cool darkness. I remember being afraid of the cellar, but when I saw the long narrow stairs leading up into the house, I truly felt drawn up them. We didn't speak but moved together up the stairs into the brightness above.

We stepped into an empty and neglected dining room. It was pleasantly cool in the house after the heat outside. There were many leaded glass windows, so that as the sunbeams coursed their way through the room, they seeded the torn, antique wallpaper with rainbows. The shadows from the trees outside erased and renewed the sunbeams again and again as the branches moved in the breeze. Particles of dust hung in the rays of light, their slow movement reflecting the feeling that time had slowed in this place until it hardly moved at all.

Katie left the room to explore further, but I could only stand there with held breath. I know it sounds foolish, but there was a presence in that room, and with it a feeling that in this place, at this moment, and at all other moments, everything was peaceful and content and right.

I don't remember what frightened us. Perhaps Katie stepped on a rotten board, or there was a noise from upstairs or outside that startled us. I do know that we skittered like rabbits down the stairs and out the open cellar door, laughing with exhilaration as we ran past the old barn. I looked back only once, and the abandoned house stood bathed in sunlight and shadow as if lost in its own memories of happier times.

Years later on the occasion of my first visit back home after moving away to Seattle, I opened a book my mother had brought home from the museum where she had advanced to the position of curator. The book was a history of our Elmhurst, and as I turned a page I found a picture of that same farmhouse. My eyes grew wide as I read the caption to the photo and found that it had been Carl Sandburg's home during the years when his children were growing up. His daughters had attended Hawthorne Elementary the same as I had. In the picture the house looked more well-cared for, more newly painted, but it stood with the same combination of humility and pride that I remembered, and it stood with a sort of pioneer grandeur that had been lost as Elmhurst had become an affluent suburb.

The Sandburg's had called it their Happiness House, because it was during this decade or so, from 1919 to

1930 that Carl Sandburg's works began to be published in earnest. It was in this house, when his daughters Margaret, Janet, and Helga were young, that he wrote *The Rootabaga Stories* for them. It was during this decade that his two-volume *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* was published and also *The American Songbag*. Neighbors reported that they could hear his typewriter tapping away at all hours from that little barn out back. It was a place of dreaming, that barn. That same typewriter is on display at the Elmhurst Historical Museum today. All the while, he was working for the *Chicago Daily News*, taking the train into the city and strolling home down York Street under the same canopy of trees that later shaded my own walks.



Sandburg family's Happiness House, Elmhurst, IL. Thank you to Nancy Wilson, Elmhurst Historical Museum, for providing this photo & information for this story.

At eleven it never occurred to me how magical it was to be able to find such an oasis of untouched history at that point in time. Our town was growing. Distances were shrinking, so that we were becoming much less a small prairie town and more an extension of Chicago. Cul-de-sacs and apartment buildings were growing like weeds. It is amazing that we found overgrown trees and underbrush, much less an abandoned half-acre so close to the main road. In a year after our summer discovery, Sandburg's home, infuriatingly, had been demolished to make way for a parking lot.

In recording these memories I learned more about Carl Sandburg than I'd known previously. The result is that I respect him even more, and I have especially come to love his wife Paula. She stood by him when it seemed like his poet's dreams would never make a real living. She washed and hung clothes on the line in that yard. She leaned against the door jambs when she was tired and worried, when her children were sick, when her husband was late coming to bed because he was up writing. She listened to the train whistle heading west, approaching their house, bringing her husband home

from the city. I would love to have known both Paula and Carl Sandburg.

When Sandburg came to speak at the dedication of Carl Sandburg Junior High School in Elmhurst in 1960, he included this statement in his remarks, "You may become the witnesses of the finest and brightest era known to mankind. The nations over the globe shall have music, music instead of murder. It is possible. That is my hope and prayer--for you and for the nation."

His old house would still have been standing upon the occasion of that visit, and I would dearly love to know if he took the time to go back and see it. A few years later two young girls waded through tall grass to explore the empty house, and shortly after that the demolition crews came.

It was the summer of 1964 when Katie and I found the house. A friend at the Elmhurst Historical Museum tells me that she believes the house was torn down in 1965. It's likely that my friend and I were the last people, other than the demolition crew, to walk those floors, look out those windows. One thing is certain to me--the overwhelming sense of home and comfort in that place resonated in me for years, even before I learned that it was the Sandburg family's Happiness House.



Two Northwest U.S. CSHSA Members. Cheryl Harlan, Lopez Island, WA in foreground & Bev Kjellander, Eugene, OR.

## CARL SANDBURG AND WORLD WAR I

By Pierre Brackman, Lille, France

*(In the past few months several individuals from across the U.S. and Europe have submitted inquiries about Sandburg on our website sandburg.org. Webmaster Rick Sayre and other CSHSA members have communicated with them to answer their questions. The author of this story, twenty-nine year old Pierre Brackman of Lille, France, is one of the individuals who submitted inquiries. He is an English teacher. He wrote that he has a "passion for American literature and even more particularly American poetry and the tradition of free verse. He received a scholarship from a partner of Fulbright France, studied for a year at Amherst College, Amherst, MA, and received a Master of Arts Degree in American Literature and Civilization. Pierre likes how Sandburg stood up for the little guy in his poetry and prose. He is interested in what Sandburg wrote about World War I, since his part of France and nearby Belgium saw heavy fighting and destruction during that war.)*

One of the subjects that Sandburg wrote about is World War I. As I live in a part of Europe that was directly affected by the war, I was particularly moved by his poems about the war, about the soldiers, and about the places struck by destruction.



Pierre Brackman, Lille, France

What particularly struck me is how Sandburg focused on people even when writing about war. In "Killers" Sandburg writes:

*Under the sun  
Are sixteen million men,  
Chosen for shining teeth,  
Sharp eyes, hard legs,  
And a running of young warm blood in their wrists.*

When he saw soldiers, Sandburg did not see men born to kill. He saw young men whose eyes had seen love, whose teeth shined when he smiled, whose life's blood coursed through his veins. Can't we read in Deuteronomy 12:23, "blood is life"? I have the feeling that this sentence in the Bible is one of the sources that explains why blood is usually considered as a symbol of life. Mentioning that vital fluid, Sandburg reminds those who had forgotten it that these soldiers were not machines or lead soldiers. The war caused massive losses of human life.

Yet, in spite of the horror, Sandburg was able to see beauty and a glimmer of hope. In "Among the Red Guns" he wrote, "After waking at dawn one morning when the wind sang low among dry leaves in an elm" the melody of the wind could be heard and, among the guns, "dreams go on." In this place of pain and tears, there is the soft sound of the wind, nature is still present and consequently, life. This continuation of life is a theme in

Sandburg's war poetry. When we drive through places that used to be battlefields, nature and life are now back.

The very moving "Murmurings in a Field Hospital," the subtitle of which is "They picked him up in the grass where he had lain two days in the rain with a piece of shrapnel in his lungs." tells of a young soldier's dreams of

*A picture of a singing woman with blue eyes  
Standing at a fence of hollyhocks, poppies and  
sunflowers...  
Or an old man I remember sitting with children telling  
stories  
Of days that never happened anywhere in the world....*

The soldier, about to die, sees memories rushing back, a last modest consolation before passing away. This is also what moved me in Sandburg's poetry--in lots of cities, towns, and villages in the northern part of France you can see, usually located on the main square, a monument dedicated to the memory of those who died. You can read names. For Sandburg these young men were not only names on a list. They were particular individuals, who had feelings, who had loved, who had been loved, who had been children, and who were now dying far from home in the muddy and smelly trenches among rats and lice.

He undoubtedly chose to mention poppies for they may be considered as the Proustian madeleine that make these involuntary memories crop up. Indeed, poppies were the only flowers to grow on the barren battlefields. They are the famous symbol for Remembrance Day and are sung in the war poem "In Flanders Fields" written by Canadian army surgeon John McCrae in Ypres, Belgium.

In Sandburg's "And They Obey", while soldiers are ordered to "Smash down the cities. Knock the walls to pieces. Break the factories and cathedrals, warehouses and homes...", the workmen and citizens are commanded to "Build up the cities. Set up the walls again. Put together once more the factories and cathedrals, warehouses and homes...." The parallelism of the lines enhances the absurdity of the actions, insofar as men are depicted as a modern Sisyphus who build and destroy and build again. After all, the workmen became soldiers when there was a war and became workmen again after the war.

Mentioning this destruction of places where men worked, studied, lived, loved, makes much sense to me. I remember being quite astounded when I found out that there are in France villages that "died" for France. What is that? They are villages that were utterly destroyed by war and were never built again. They have this particularity to be on a map, but their official population is... zero. Let's mention them here: Beaumont-en-Verdunois, Bezonvaux, Haumont-près-Samogneux, Louvemont-Côte-du-Poivre, and Fleury-devant-Douaumont. When cities or towns were not completely destroyed, they suffered greatly. In the city where I live,

Lille, more than 1,000 houses were totally destroyed, and more than 11,000 were partly destroyed.

As Sandburg wrote in *The People, Yes*, "the first world war came and its cost was laid on the people." That is usually what happens in wars. Paradoxically enough, even war was a period in which Sandburg saw the unity of mankind. People suffered in many countries, whatever their nationalities were, and the people paid the price for that war.

The war caused much hesitation to Sandburg and to many other Socialists all over the world. Indeed, although he could see war was deeply linked to death, destruction, pain, sorrow, and horror, he also wrote for the victory of the United States and of France. As Penelope Niven wrote, his poem "The Four Brothers" "marks the turning point in Sandburg's attitude toward the war. Heretofore, his war poetry attacked the brutality and hopeless tragedy of war." The question had to be dealt with by all Socialists. The question was to know whether they should support the war on behalf of patriotism or fight against it out of class awareness. Should they join the war effort to defeat Germany, or should they stand for peace and oppose a war that was causing working-class people to kill other working-class people? The view shared by lots of Socialists was that capitalism was the reason for war, and the war was being fought solely for capitalist interests. Socialists in France had to deal with that issue and interestingly enough their view on the war completely changed as the war began. As Philip Yannella puts it, "when the United States formally declared war in April 1917, Sandburg's brave and fulsome devotion to the left's principle of opposing capitalist wars, and, as it would turn out, his devotion to most of the principles he had been proclaiming evaporated in a twinkling."

However, this was not an isolated attitude back then. The study of the case of the French Socialists can cast a relevant light on that change. In France, Jean Jaurès had relentlessly fought against the war before being murdered. Here is what the International Socialist Congress declared in Basel in 1912, "If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries involved supported by the coordinating activity of the International Socialist Bureau to exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and the sharpening of the general political situation. In case war should break out anyway it is their duty to intervene in favor of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilize the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule."

Yet, the Socialists joined the "Union Sacrée." Some became Ministers, as soon as the war broke out. Why? It is often explained that in the political conscience of the

Socialists there were two layers--an internationalist trend and an inclination for national solidarity. Their intensity could vary depending on circumstances. But war revealed the contradiction between the two. Therefore, while they had claimed in July "down with the war," the Socialists, along with the Proletarians, rushed to their ultimate shelter--their motherland. The second International Socialist Congress was subsequently a failure. The Socialist parties of Europe had not been united. Why? One of the reasons widely acknowledged is that no common watchword had been found between the French and the Germans. For instance, the Germans felt they had to defend their homeland for they were afraid of Russia, which was industrially less advanced and not democratic, while the French felt they had to defend their homeland born after a revolution against an imperial Germany. Both thought their positions were justified, because it was a defensive war.

The war revealed the contradiction between the sense of belonging of Socialists, belonging to the Socialist community on the one hand and to the national community on the other hand. It also revealed the contradiction between the class struggle and the struggle for peace. The international Socialist being a failure, the Socialist identity and its trends were watered down as World War I started.

## **GREGOR SIEBENKOTTEN ON ANNA IMROTH**

By Mike Hobbs

Another European who submitted an inquiry about Sandburg on our website is fifty-four year old Gregor Siebenkotten who lives near Cologne in Germany. He has worked as a scientist in molecular biology during most of his professional life. In late May he asked for information about the poem "Anna Imroth" contained in *Chicago Poems* (1916). He explained that his mother's maiden name was Imroth. He had learned that Anna Imroth had emigrated from Germany to the U.S. in the late nineteenth, that she likely was a distant relative of his, and that she had died in a Chicago factory fire in 1913 at the age of twenty eight.

Webmaster Rick Sayre replied to Mr. Siebenkotten that Sandburg was a reporter for *The Day Book* at the time of the coroner jury's examination of the cause of Anna Imroth's death and most likely covered the trial. In doing further research Mr. Siebenkotten found that Anna Imroth had worked at the T.G. Riordan factory at 2010 W. Kinzie Street in Chicago for 2 ½ years two and was paid \$8 per week. The factory had no fire escapes "because of a trick." Mr. Siebenkotten explains, "The city ordinance called for fire escapes on all building three or more stories high. The Riordan factory really was three stories high. But the first story was dropped about two feet below the level of the sidewalk, and was called a basement." Also, in violation of city ordinance, the

factory's doors opened inward. A co-worker said that she and Anna worked on the third floor. They ran down to the first floor when smoke was seen coming up the stairs. A fireman at the scene said Anna's body was found in thick smoke about two feet from an inward-opening door in the shipping room. He said, "She couldn't have lived in that smoke." He speculated that she was dead when her body was discovered. Mr. Siebenkotten thinks that "If the door had opened outward as required by law, she most likely would have been able to make her escape from the burning building."

Here is Sandburg's poem "Anna Imroth":

*CROSS the hands over the breast here—so  
Straighten the legs a little more—so.  
And call for the wagon to come and take her home.  
Her mother will cry some and so will her sisters and  
brothers.  
But all of the others got down and they are safe and this is  
the only one of the factory girls who wasn't lucky in  
making the jump when the fire broke.  
It is the hand of God and the lack of fire escapes.*

## **BASEBALL, SANDBURG, & DAVE BALDWIN**

By Mike Hobbs

Serendipity is a wonderful thing. It's cool how good things can happen by chance, especially when one good thing leads to another and another. This is the story of some recent serendipitous events. Baseball is the thread that ties them together.

Read in *Always the Young Strangers* what Sandburg had to say about baseball. He absolutely loved the game in his youth. As boys he and his Dirty Dozen pals played baseball on Berrien Street with a broom handle for a bat and a five cent rubber ball wrapped with grocery string. He religiously read baseball statistics in the newspaper and could tell you which players led in hitting, fielding, and pitching. He filled his head with baseball stats. He wrote, "...I now understand the Great American Ball Fan and all his follies. I was an addict and I know why pop bottles were thrown at umpires...."

Sandburg asked, "What is this fascination about making a hickory stick connect with a thrown ball and sending the ball as a high fly or a hot grounder for a safe hit? What is this fascination about picking up a hot grounder and throwing it to first for a putout—or running for a fly and leaping in the air for a one-handed catch and a putout? What is this peculiar shame of standing under a high fly and it falls smack in your hands and you muff it? What is this nameless embarrassment of being at bat with three men on bases and you fan the air three times with your bat and it's 'side out' and you hear someone say, 'You're all right only there was a hole in the bat'? These questions have gone round and round in the heads of millions of American boys for generations."

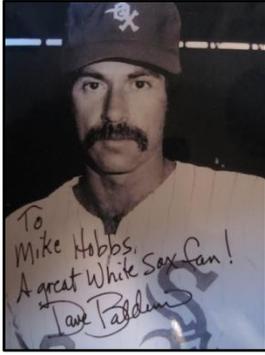
Sandburg confided, "An idea began growing in me that if I played and practiced a lot I might become good enough to get on a team where my talent was appreciated. Once on a minor-league team I would have my chance to show what I could do and I might end up in the majors—who knows about a thing like that? I didn't mention it. It was a secret ambition. I nursed it along...."

An incident occurred when he was sixteen that ended his "secret ambition." In a field north of the Lombard College campus he was running at top speed chasing a high fly ball off the bat of Skinny Seeley. He had a vision of making a "brilliant catch" when he caught his right foot in a hole with a broken beer bottle in it. He fell, looked at his right foot, and saw blood oozing from his sock. He limped about a block to the home of Dr. Taggart who applied four stitches to his wound. He wrote that, "Those four stitches in the right foot marked the end of my first real secret ambition. I began a hunt for new secret ambitions...."

My friend Bev Kjellander in Oregon isn't a big baseball fan. She never shared Sandburg's enthusiasm for it, but in late June, while visiting her longtime friend Valeria in her gift shop in coastal Yachats, OR, the game touched her life and mine. While speaking with Valeria a local resident walked into the shop. He wished to post a flyer about an upcoming fun community baseball game in which Yachatian rules apply—"Everyone is invited to play...no teams, no score, batters keep swinging until they hit the ball in fair territory, pitchers try to help the hitters, etc."

Valeria introduced Bev to the seventy-seven year old man named Dave Baldwin as "our local baseball guy," adding that he had once been a professional baseball player. Bev asked what teams he had played for. He said one of his teams was the Chicago White Sox. Knowing that I have been an avid Sox fan since 1959, she told Dave that she has a friend in Illinois who would give anything to meet a former Sox player. "Could I please get your autograph for him?" she asked.

He apologized that he didn't have anything appropriate with him to sign, but a few days later kindly provided Bev with his autographed baseball cards and a 1973 photo in his Sox uniform, plus a handwritten note which she mailed to me. She told me to expect a surprise in the mail, but she wouldn't tell me what the surprise was. When I saw the contents of her letter, I felt like a kid on Christmas morning. I e-mailed Dave to thank him for the cards, photo, and note. He replied that he had good feelings for the Sox, because at the end of his career they called him up from the minors, so that he could get thirty-seven days in to qualify for an MLB pension.

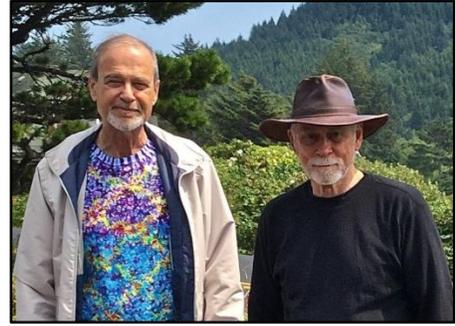


Dave Baldwin, 1973 Chicago White Sox Relief Pitcher

Dave pitched a two-hitter for the University of Arizona against Fresno State in the 1959 College World Series. He was drafted that year by the Philadelphia Phillies. Later he was a relief pitcher for the Washington Senators, Milwaukee Brewers, and Sox. In 1967 he had an ERA of 1.70 for the Senators. After his retirement from professional baseball Dave returned to the University of Arizona where he earned a Ph.D. in genetics and an M.S. in systems engineering. Following his retirement in 2003 he authored his baseball memoir *Snake Jazz* (2008) and a collection of his poetry *Limbic Hurly-Burly*. Many of his poems have appeared in *American Poetry Journal*. In addition, he is an artist. His painting "Fugue for the Pepper Players" is displayed in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

Having learned of Dave's ability as a poet, I told him that I live in the city where Carl Sandburg was born, am editor of the CSHSA newsletter, and would like to get his thoughts on Sandburg for a possible story in I&I. The next day he replied that his friend, Chicago mystery writer Barbara Gregorich, is married to musician Phil Passen who presents a program on the hammered dulcimer entitled "Songs from Carl Sandburg's 'American Songbag.'" Dave suggested "Perhaps Phil Passen should have a gig in Galesburg..." I immediately notified John Heasley, who so ably arranges our Songbag concerts, to see if he could book Phil.

Bev had arranged for us to meet Dave in Yachats on August 12 while I was visiting her. We met for lunch and talked about baseball and Sandburg. Dave especially likes *Chicago Poems* and "Fog," *The People, Yes* ("The people will live on..."), "River Roads," and "Grass." He added that, "I'm impressed by Sandburg's versatility. He was an accomplished musician—singing, playing the guitar, and collecting folk songs. As a writer, in addition to being a poet, he was a journalist, a prize-winning biographer, a novelist, a film reviewer, and a writer of children's books. He led a life to be envied."



Mike Hobbs & Dave Baldwin in Yachats, OR

During our conversation he said, by the way, about three weeks earlier, the time I had left Illinois for the Northwest, he had received an e-mail from his Chicago friend Barbara Gregorich that her husband would perform at the September Songbag concert. That blew me away. Here I was, 2,000 miles from Galesburg, and I learned who would perform at that event. The serendipity continued. Good things fell into place so fast.

Come hear Phil Passens' program "Songs from Carl Sandburg's 'American Songbag'" at the Songbag concert on September 26. Baseball made this concert possible.

#### **SANDBURG ITEMS DONATED TO HEWES LIBRARY**

By Rick Sayre

Twelve photographs and a certificate from Carl Sandburg's 1958 visit to Galesburg were donated to Hewes Library, Monmouth College, in June 2015, by Jeanne Robeson, daughter of Clarence K. Gittings, Cameron, IL. Gittings served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Prairie Years Banquet honoring Sandburg during the Centennial Celebration of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, October 7, 1958, organized by Knox College and the City of Galesburg. In addition to managing a farm in the Cameron area, Gittings was the News Director for KTVO-Ottumwa, IA as well as a Lombard College graduate.



Carl Sandburg being greeted on the steps of his birthplace, which had recently been restored. Left to right--Lucy (Davis) Larson, wife of State Senator Dick Larson and daughter of one of Sandburg's dearest Lombard friends, Sandburg, Clarence Gittings, & Mary Goff (identified by Chuck Bednar).

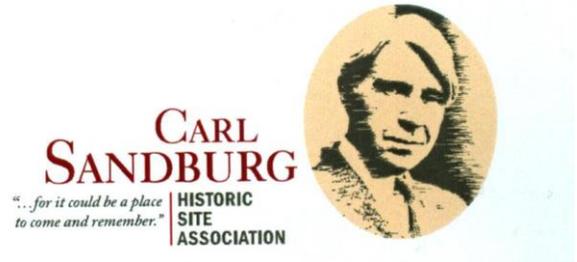
The October 1958 Centennial Celebration of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, sponsored by Knox College and the City of Galesburg, is still considered one of the important events in Galesburg's history. The eleven 8"x10" and one 5"x7" black and white glossy prints showed Gittings with many famous individuals who returned to Galesburg for the event, a Lombard Alumni Luncheon, and The Prairie Years Banquet celebrating Galesburg's native son, Carl Sandburg, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and biographer of Abraham Lincoln.

A description and links to the photos can be found at the following URL:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/l3e2dpcoof61cxm/Gittings\\_1958\\_Photos-Descriptions.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/l3e2dpcoof61cxm/Gittings_1958_Photos-Descriptions.pdf?dl=0).

A subsequent gift from Jeanne Robeson to Hewes Library includes a signed copy of a first edition *Remembrance Rock* and a reprint of a 1948 sermon from

Rev. Alan Jenkins on the significance of *Remembrance Rock*. Also, several signed copies of the works of 20th century poet, Don Blanding, were donated. For more information on this collection donated by Jeanne Robeson, please contact J. Richard Sayre, Library Director, Monmouth College, [rsayre@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:rsayre@monmouthcollege.edu).



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