

INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • P.O. Box 585 • Galesburg, Illinois 61402 • (309) 342-2361 • www.sandburg.org

Summer 2018

FROM SITE SUPERINTENDENT MARTHA DOWNEY FAREWELL!

May 31, 2018 was Matt Swanson's last day working at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. Leading up to July 1, 2015 staffing at the Site changed frequently. That ended when Matt started working at the Site. For the past three years Matt performed Site maintenance and interpretive duties. He did both exceptionally well.

To be close to his family, Matt has moved to North Carolina. His parents, Barry and Gail Swanson, are living there after Barry's retirement. His brother and sister and their families already live in North Carolina.

Matt took pride in the Site's appearance, indoors and out. He worked along with the Master Gardeners to see that the plantings and flower beds were well tended. His mowing and trimming kept the Site looking its best for visitors. In winter he shoveled the walks for visitors and Songbag attendees. Even though he was the only person at the Site, he always got the job done. He was unfailingly helpful, positive, and willing to do any and everything asked.

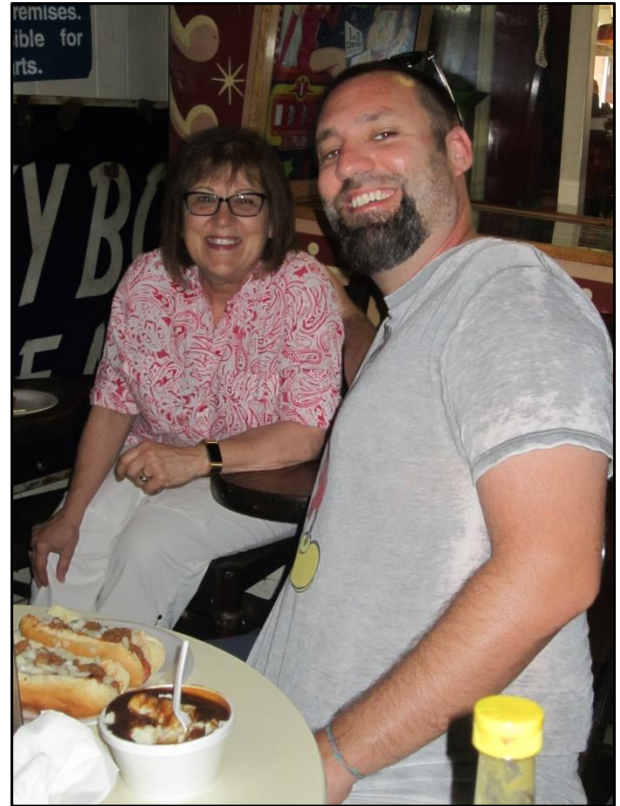
I believe Matt was surprised by how much he enjoyed learning about Carl Sandburg, then telling Sandburg's story to visitors, guiding them through the Site, sharing his knowledge of Galesburg, and visiting with them. Visitors let us know how much they enjoyed Matt by writing notes or posting comments online.

It is sad to say goodbye to Matt. However, he leaves Galesburg versed in Sandburg—he even mentioned that he sometimes uses a Sandburg quote in conversations with friends. He will be missed. I wish him all the best in North Carolina.

TEMPORARY SITE HOURS

The Carl Sandburg State Historic Site will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until a replacement is hired to fill the Site Interpreter position.

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CSHSA
MEMBERSHIP FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND FOR
TRANSACTION OF OTHER BUSINESS WILL BE HELD
JULY 10 AT 6 P.M. IN THE BARN.**



Matt Swanson & Pat Kane on May 31 at Matt's favorite Galesburg eating establishment—Coney Island.



Matt Swanson, parents, and friends at Coney Island, May 31.
Photo courtesy Tom Foley.

A VETERAN'S APPRAISAL OF SANDBURG

By Paul Appell

[Ed. Note: CSHSA member Paul Appell farms the same ground in northeast Knox County that his great grandfather farmed. He attended Galva, IL schools and graduated from Iowa State University. He served one tour in Vietnam as a U.S. Army 1st Lieutenant. He is active with Veterans for Peace and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.]

Carl Sandburg's most endearing trait for me as a reader is his history of only writing about that which he experienced or thoroughly researched. I don't have to be concerned about being conned with "alternative facts".

This trait was evident when I visited the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Connemara, North Carolina south of Asheville a few years ago. At Connemara one is free to hike around to see the same vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains that Sandburg saw when he wrote, as well as to see the offspring of the Sandburg goats grazing in the pasture next to their barn. One cannot see the inside of the house as it was when Sandburg lived there, however. At the beginning of the guided house tour the Park Ranger explained that when they received the home, one could barely squeeze between rooms because of documents piled to the ceiling. She said that they almost filled a gym when they removed them, so the public could tour the home. She went on to say that Sandburg felt the need to be able to get the supporting documents for what he had written in case there was ever a question about their veracity.

This abhorrence to lying and its close cousin, hypocrisy, is evident when I read what Sandburg has written about things, places, and events that I have experienced.

Though it is not by choice since I can't erase my memories of it, war thoughts are always around for me. Sandburg's war poems that he wrote during World War I are in sync with my own thoughts decades after my war experience. The poem "And They Obey" states the truth of my time in the military seventy-three years after Sandburg's time in the 6th Illinois Infantry as accurately as anything. Being in the military was as close as I will ever get to the slave experience.

Most emotionally impactful of Sandburg's war poems for me is "Grass." With fifty year anniversaries of events of the war that I was a participant in happening now, the words "Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor: What place is this? Where are we now?" are quite relevant. I am a member and active in the Vietnam veterans' group Vietnam Full Disclosure to truthfully answer those questions. Forgetting or rewriting the history of that war is not an option for us.

I am joined by many of my veteran friends in appreciating and agreeing with Sandburg's war poems. One of the older veterans is a highly decorated World War II vet, fellow member of Veterans For Peace, and former cell mate of mine, Jay Wenk. Jay describes his time in Germany during and after the war in his book

Study War No More: A Jewish Kid from Brooklyn Fights the Nazis. When asked in an interview what was his favorite anti-war poem, Jay said it was Sandburg's "Grass." I agree with reviews of the poem that call it calmly devastating. The personification of grass speaking about only caring about its work in covering up the bodies strikes at the sometimes overwhelming truth that war is the betrayal of the young by the old .

Thankfully, most can get moments of happiness doing what Sandburg described in his poem "Happiness." Last fall, not far from the Des Plaines river where Sandburg witnessed on a walk the happiness he wrote about in his poem, quite a few of my veteran friends and I gathered at the Vic Theatre to experience happiness with the three elements Sandburg recognized as providing happiness--family, beer, and music.

Living in the current society in which "fake news" is all too prevalent, Sandburg feels like a trusted observer of life that we, the people, can access without the fear of being conned. It's like he is family.

REMEMBERING A SANDBURG BOARD MEMBER

By Sally Peck Lundeen

[Ed. Note: A story appeared in the Spring 2018 *Inklings and Idlings* about Jesse R. Peck, a Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association board member in the early 1960's. Mr. Peck was Knox County Superintendent of Schools from 1935 to 1958. This story by his granddaughter Sally tells a little more about him. Sally Peck Lundeen, PhD, RN FAAN is Dean and Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee College of Nursing.]

Membership on the Sandburg Birthplace Association Board was one of many community service activities of Jesse R. Peck in Knox County. He worked for years as an advocate for the Knox County Museum (opened in 1960 or 61, I believe) and was either on the Board or served as curator--or both--in the early years. I used to go with him to the site on the second floor of the Knoxville Courthouse in the early years to sort through donations and set up exhibits.

Jesse Robertson Peck was a teacher in one-room schoolhouses in his youth. He had--over the years--taken or collected photos of every one-room schoolhouse in Knox County and was invited to many civic groups to give talks about the history of education in the area. He was still working on a book typed on writing paper on his old Remington typewriter--related to the history of education in Knox County, IL--when he died at age ninety-three.

J.R. Peck was a student of Abraham Lincoln and was particularly fond of the Sandburg biography of his life and times. He also was a poet himself and has left a legacy for the Peck family that documents key events in the life of our father Bob, his only son, and major historical events including World War I. As a little girl, I particularly remember his appreciation of Carl Sandburg as a poet through his quotations of poems such as "Fog" and "Chicago."

I remember my Grandpa Peck as a learned man of the highest character who was dedicated to God and country and devoted to family and friends. Despite his serious nature, he had a twinkle in his eye, could bang out a great song on the piano, and could play the spoons against his thigh as he danced a jig. He was a devoted student of history generally and specifically to that of Galesburg and Knox County, and was very proud of gravitas that Carl Sandburg, a son of Galesburg, lent to the area.

IDA TARBELL

By Barbara Schock

Ida Minerva Tarbell was born November 5, 1857 in the midst of a national depression. Her father Franklin was a woodworker and teacher. Her mother Esther McCullough had ancestors who came to America in the early eighteenth century. The family moved to Titusville, PA in 1860 because of the discovery of petroleum in that location.



Ida Tarbell

Mr. Tarbell built wooden oil storage tanks and also produced oil and refined it. Like other pioneers of the industry, Tarbell was forced out by the unfair business practices of John D. Rockefeller.

Ida grew to be nearly six feet tall. She was an ambitious young woman and attended Alleghany College in Meadville, PA. She studied biology and began teaching after graduation at the Poland Union Seminary in Ohio. The salary was minimal, and the subjects to be taught were many. After two years Ida returned to her family home.

Each summer the Tarbell family attended the Chautauqua Summer School in New York. Ida volunteered to annotate articles for a Chautauquan periodical. By 1886 she had become managing editor of

The Chautauquan. She learned about typesetting page layout, and other printing requirements while in the position.

In 1890 Ida and three other young women went to Paris to study. They lived on the Left Bank and survived on a very small amount of money. Ida began writing articles for syndication in American newspapers and magazines to support herself.

S.S. McClure had operated a syndication service for American publications and his own magazine. He became aware of Ida Tarbell's writing and hired her for the position of editor in 1893. McClure believed in publishing a lively and interesting publication. He also believed in being accurate and required that each article be rewritten three times before it was printed.

The 1890's saw much competition between the Hearst and Pulitzer newspaper chains. It was called "yellow journalism," because of the excesses and inaccuracies of the stories. McClure's magazine was in a position to publish sensational articles based on facts.

Miss Tarbell traveled to Kentucky and Illinois to research an article about Abraham Lincoln. She visited courthouses to find records about the Lincoln family. She interviewed people who actually knew the Lincoln family. The series of twenty articles doubled McClure's circulation. Because of the articles Tarbell became a nationally-known writer. The series was also published in a book.

In the early twentieth century, while living in Haddonfield, NJ, Carl Sandburg bought back copies of *McClure's Magazine* and read the Lincoln articles. He was very impressed with them.

In 1902 Ida Tarbell wrote a series of nineteen articles about the Standard Oil Company. Having grown up around her father's oil business, she had some knowledge of the industry. She set out to find every document available. She interviewed people in the oil business, experts, executives of oil companies, and government regulators but not John D. Rockefeller.

With this endeavor she invented investigative reporting. Additional articles about corruption in government, unsanitary practices in food processing, and the use of child labor written by other authors hired by McClure were also serialized in the magazine. They raised the awareness of the public to such conditions. Over the next decade legislation was passed by Congress to remedy some of the worst practices.

In 1906 President Theodore R. Roosevelt gave a speech at the dedication of a new Congressional office building in Washington, D.C. He referred to a quotation from *Pilgrim's Progress*, "...the men with the muck rake are often indispensable to the well being of society, but only if they know when to stop raking the muck." It gave a name to the era.

In 1915 Ida Tarbell became a freelance writer. She supported herself and other members of her family for the next several decades. She taught herself to use a typewriter at the age of eighty. She said she could compose as well on the typewriter as she had when using pencil or pen and ink.

When Sandburg was writing his biography of Lincoln, he used the writings of Ida Tarbell, and they began a correspondence. He would later write, "...it was a deep and genuine admiration I had for that tall keen gracious woman."

She was born in a time when a woman was expected to marry, have children, and keep a household for her husband. Ida considered domestic chores to be parlor tricks. Miss Tarbell went out into the world and used her abilities to help change the world. She became a good writer and a good historian.

Ida Tarbell died on January 6, 1944 (Sandburg's sixty-sixth birthday) in Bridgeport, CT. Her home in Easton, CT is now a National Historic Landmark.

CSHSA MEMBER PHIL PASSEN AT BISHOP HILL

By Mike Hobbs

CSHSA member Phil Passen, 2018 Illinois Humanities Road Scholar, presented the program "From Prairie to Farm to City: Music to Commemorate the Illinois Bicentennial" on April 14 in the Dairy Building at Bishop Hill. The program was sponsored by the Bishop Hill Heritage Association and the Illinois Humanities Council.



Phil Passen on the hammered dulcimer at Bishop Hill.

Phil sang songs, played the hammered dulcimer, and told stories about Illinois history to the big crowd that attended. Sandburg was featured in his performance. He sang "The Farmer is the Man," a favorite of Sandburg's that was included in *American Songbag*. He also sang The Eastland about the Great Lakes tour ship by that name that rolled over in the Chicago River in 1915 with the loss of 844 people. Rich Hanson's story about the Eastland Disaster and Sandburg's poem "The Eastland" follows.

THE "EASTLAND," A CHICAGO MARITIME TRAGEDY

By Rich Hanson

[Ed. Note: CSHSA member Rich Hanson was born in Minnesota and received degrees in English and teaching from the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a Food Service degree from Mississippi State University. He retired as a Supervisory Consumer Safety Inspector (USDA). He enjoys reading, writing, and autograph collecting.]

It was the morning of July 24, 1915, and the employees of Western Electric [Cicero, IL] were excited. Their firm had scheduled an excursion cruise that would take them from the Clark Street Pier to Michigan City, IN for a picnic, then back to Chicago. Some 2,500 people had crammed aboard The Eastland, the cruise ship that would transport them on a carefree day of fun. What happened next is still disputed, whether the ship was top-heavy or if the ballast tanks were improperly filled, but at 7:28 a.m. the ship began to roll over, and within two minutes it rested almost upside down in the mud of the Chicago River. 844 people died, including twenty-two entire families, most of the casualties being those trapped below decks as the ship rolled over

The disaster shocked the Windy City. A heart-wrenching picture of a a fireman with a horrified expression of grief on his face as he holds the body of a young girl, is one of the many poignant images that have been left to posterity. Another is the seemingly endless array of bodies laid out at the Second Street Armory waiting for relatives to come and identify them.



Jack Woodford was an eye witness to the disaster. He was interviewed by the Chicago *Herald Examiner*. Later, penning his autobiography after a successful writing career, he described the horrifying spectacle.

"And then movement caught my eye. I looked across the river. As I watched in disoriented stupefaction a steamer large as an ocean liner slowly turned over on its side as though it were a whale going to take a nap. I didn't believe a huge steamer had done this before my eyes, lashed to a dock, in perfectly calm water, in excellent weather, with no explosion, no fire, nothing. I thought I had gone crazy."

Carl Sandburg, working as a young reporter at the time, felt keenly the tragic aspects of the disaster. The poem he wrote about it though, "The Eastland," uses the sinking of the excursion boat and the massive coverage and outpourings of grief that the disaster prompted to call attention to a litany of everyday tragedies that Chicago residents seemed to be indifferent or blind to. The young reporter may sound hard-bitten and callous, but it's a calculated cynicism, employed to give vent to his frustration.

In the second stanza he signals the reader that he's going to take a different tack than most of those who had written about or discussed the then recent tragedy.

*Since you ask me about it,
I let you have it straight;
My guts ain't ticklish about the Eastland.*

*It was a hell of a job, of course
To dump 2500 people in their clean picnic clothes
All ready for a whole lot of real fun
Down into the dirty Chicago River without any
warning."*

Sandburg devotes the following section to the trucks bringing the "dripping dead" to the armory for relatives to find them, and then restates his opinion and expands upon it.

*Well I was saying
My guts ain't ticklish about it.
I got imagination: I see a pile of three thousand dead
people
Killed by the con, tuberculosis, too much work and
not enough fresh air and green groceries...."*

A little further he continues...

*If you want to see excitement, more noise and crying
than you ever heard in one of these big
Disasters the newsboys clean up on,
Go and stack in a high pile all of the babies that die in
Christian Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and
Chicago in one year before aforesaid babies haven't
had enough good milk;*

*On top of the pile put all the little early babies pulled
from mothers willing to be torn with abortions rather
than bring more children into the world.*

*Jesus, that would make a front page picture for the
Sunday papers."*

He wrote on to paint word pictures of young boys rubbing sleep out of their eyes as they plod wearily to work, of bedraggled whores selling themselves for the few dollars they could get, of factory workers mutilated by machinery, their unsympathetic bosses yelling... "Speed-No slack-go to it!" He wrote of the impoverished ones who have to dig through garbage barrels in order to find something to eat, and then drew his poem to its conclusion with an observation that mingles disgust, cynicism, and rage at the plight of Chicago's downtrodden. Sandburg had a social conscience and no doubt was seething with frustration as he penned...

*By the living Christ, these would make disaster
pictures to paste on the front pages of the
newspapers.
Yes, the Eastland was a bloody, dirty job—bah!
I see a dozen Eastlands
Every morning on my way to work
And a dozen more going home at night.*

Sandburg's poem was judged to be too harsh for publication when it was written. It was set aside, and eventually found its way to the public in a collection of poems printed in 1993.

The Eastland Disaster has been all but forgotten, quickly overshadowed by the war in Europe, the sinking of the Lusitania, and America's eventual entry into World War I. The efforts of some dedicated historians and researchers are working to preserve the stories and images from that cataclysmic day. For more information, and some gripping pictures, go online and access the excellent Eastland Disaster Historical Society website.

"CELEBRATE ILLINOIS" IN PEORIA

By Rex Cherrington

[Ed. Note: "Celebrate Illinois: 200 Years in the Land of Lincoln" was exhibited at the Peoria Riverfront Museum from February 3 to June 3. According to Lottie Phillips, curator of "Celebrate Illinois," the exhibit "is a unique collection of artifacts that provides a broad overview of the state's history, with a special focus on the individual people who have helped to create a state of which every resident should be proud."]

As I sit down to write this, it brings back memories of grade school field trips and writing little essays about what we found most interesting. If the theme had been about what was most enjoyable, the honesty in me would have resulted in turning in a paper with two words, "cutting classes," but the teacher likely had made that mistake before and asked about what we found interesting. Some of our trips were to Lincoln's Home in Springfield, The Illinois State Museum, Lincoln's New Salem near Petersburg, and others were closer, such as Carl Sandburg's Birthplace, Meadow Gold Creamery, the Register-Mail, and the Galesburg Central Fire Station. The trips were always in the spring of the year, presumably as a reward for being almost good for almost one whole academic year.

So, in March 2018 Mike Hobbs and I took a field trip to see the wonderful exhibit "Celebrate Illinois: 200

Years in the Land of Lincoln.” This exhibit made its debut appearance at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. I guess Mike and I decided we had been almost good for almost a year, so we could treat ourselves to a little trip, and besides, it was Galesburg Day, and anyone from Galesburg got free admission.

I had some idea what to expect, since I had heard Cathie Neumiller, former Galesburg resident, Knox College graduate, and now V.P. of Marketing and Communications for Peoria Riverfront Museum, speak in an interview on WGIL Radio, and from her I learned a bit in advance. We even put in a small promotion for this when I was interviewed by WGIL about George W. Brown, his inventions, and his business. It had already been announced that a Brown Corn Planter would be exhibited in Peoria.

The experience of the exhibit far exceeded my expectations, and I was especially taken by how well Galesburg was represented in an exhibit about what a number of experts had decided were some of the more important aspects of Illinois history. There, prominently displayed as it could be displayed no other way, was the George W. Brown Corn Planter on loan from the Western Illinois Museum in Macomb, Illinois, a slightly different variation from the one in the Galesburg Historical Society Museum.

The Galesburg Historical Society had loaned a signal lantern and a few railroad books to have an exhibit representing railroading. While the Ronald Regan exhibit didn't mention Galesburg, we know of the Galesburg connection. The Ferris Wheel was featured prominently in the exhibit, because it was the main attraction of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, but the life of George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr was included in the exhibit, and even if Galesburg hadn't gotten mentioned, again we know the connection. For this exhibit Knox College loaned a silver match safe with the Ferris Wheel on one side and the World's Columbian Exposition on the other, as well as a cabinet photo of the great wheel with its technical specifications printed on the reverse.

Knox College loaned a copy of *Incidentals* by Charles (later Carl) Sandburg, published by the Asgard Press in Philip Green Wright's basement, a photo of Carl Sandburg and Frank Lloyd Wright taken by Archie Liebermann. From the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site were copies of *Corn Huskers* and *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and framed writings of Carl Sandburg in his own hand that he created and gave to Catherine "Kitty" McCarthy, who had been his editor at Harcourt, Brace, & Co. Carl Sandburg was well represented.

Among other Galesburg artifacts loaned by Knox College was a photo of Robert Hannaman Avery, and a spoon he had used when he was held captive in Andersonville Prison during the Civil War. Robert and his brother Cyrus went on to found Avery Manufacturing, once Peoria's largest employer.

So, what I found most interesting was the way this exhibit confirmed what I had always believed about the importance of Galesburg's contributions to Illinois and the nation.



Sandburg books on display at "Celebrate Illinois" exhibit in Peoria. *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years & Incidentals* in foreground, *Cornhuskers* in background.



Mike Hobbs standing by photo of Frank Lloyd Wright & Sandburg and framed writings of Sandburg poems, including "Prairie."
Courtesy Rex Cherrington.

GOT A STORY FOR *INKLINGS* AND *IDLINGS*?

We'd like to publish your Sandburg stories in *Inklings* and *Idlings*. Email your story to Editor Mike Hobbs at mhobbs@grics.net.

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.Go to www.sandburg.org to visit our CSHSA website. On it you will find information about our hours, membership, Songbag Concerts, gift shop items, "Sandburg's Hometown" stories written by Barbara Schock, past issues of *Inklings* and *Idlings*, and more.

THE GALESBURG PRESERVATION SOCIETY

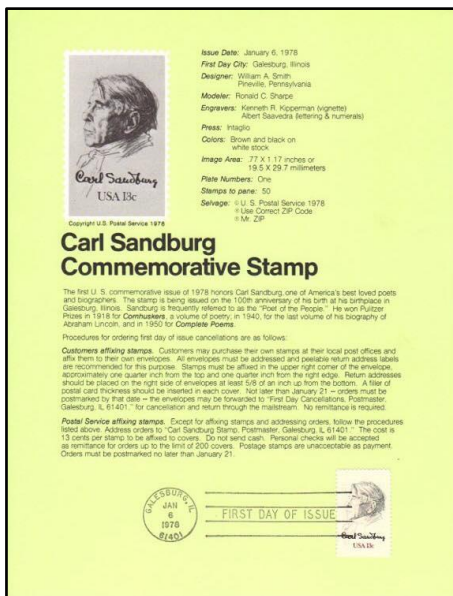
By Mike Hobbs

Ryan Cecil is administrator of the Facebook group page "The Galesburg Preservation Society." Many people with Galesburg connections view the page, and many post vintage photographs.

Recently, former Galesburg resident Frank Johnson, Jr. posted the Sandburg photo shown below on the Galesburg Preservation Society page. A caption reads, "Sandburg visited Lombard Junior High School [in 1958] for a tree-planting ceremony. The junior high school was constructed on the campus of the former Lombard College where Sandburg went to school and did some of his earliest writing."



Courtesy Frank Johnson, Jr.



Courtesy Ryan Cecil

Ryan Cecil posted the preceding photo on The Galesburg Preservation Society Facebook page on June 9. It is the U.S. Postal Service certificate for the Carl Sandburg Commemorative Stamp issued at "First Day City" Galesburg, IL on January 6, 1978, the 100th anniversary of Sandburg's birth.

It was the first U.S. commemorative stamp issued in 1978. The certificate describes Sandburg as "one of America's best loved poets and biographers" and notes that he is "frequently referred to as the "Poet of the People." Designer of the stamp was William A. Smith of Pineville, PA.

ROBERT YOUNG VISITS SANDBURG COTTAGE

[Galesburg Public Library Archivist Patty Mosher wrote this story that appeared in the library's newsletter in December, 2012.]

"On a Saturday afternoon in 1976, a famous actor came to town to visit the home of another famous person and one-time Galesburg resident, Carl Sandburg. Actor Robert Young was in Rock Island at the request of his friend Dr. Eduardo Ricuarte to speak at several meetings promoting a mental health referendum there. Young and Ricuarte had met ten years previously at a play Young was starring in. They were such good friends that the doctor's bag Young used when playing Dr. Welby on TV had belonged to Ricuarte. Dr. Thomas Tourlentes, the former director of the Galesburg State Research Hospital, was also there and invited Young to visit Galesburg so that he could see another part of Illinois. Young had been born in Chicago in 1907 but moved to California while still a boy.

"Young, accompanied by his wife Elizabeth, his daughter Kathy, Dr. and Mrs. Tourlentes, and Dr. and Mrs. Ricuarte arrived at the Sandburg cottage and were greeted by a surprised "official host" Lauren Goff and his wife Mary. Tourlentes had called the Goff's and asked if they would be able to give a tour of the cottage to a "very famous doctor," and they said they would be delighted. But the Goff's were quite surprised when Young, who played Dr. Marcus Welby on TV, walked in. He seemed to enjoy his visit and was interested in "everything." He mentioned the excellent job of restoration that had been done on the little cottage. Mrs. Goff said that he was "just as nice in person as he is on TV, and his family is too." She also noted that it said something about the Young's character that they had been married for 43 years in Hollywood.

"Mr. Young lingered in the birthplace after the others had left and surprised other visitors entering the home. One lady exclaimed, "Robert Young, is it really you?" to which the actor responded with a laugh, "You didn't think I was Carl Sandburg, did you?" Young ... was also known for the much-beloved television program "Father Knows Best" and for his role in his favorite movie, "The Enchanted Cottage." In fact, Young and his wife both loved the movie so much that they gave their own home that same name and years later made an enchanting visit to Galesburg's own special cottage."

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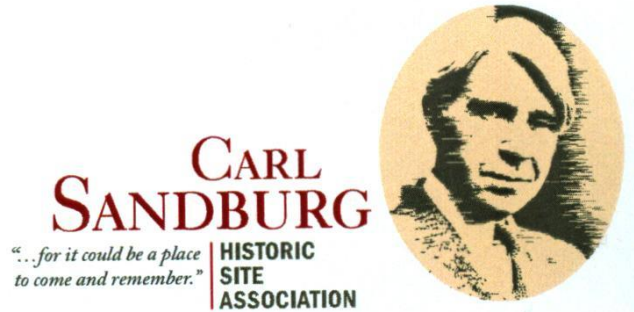
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