

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

SPRING 2021

FROM SITE SVCS. SPEC. BRYAN ENGELBRECHT SITE REOPENED AFTER COVID-19 MITIGATIONS EASED

After a two-month closure due to COVID-19 mitigations, Carl Sandburg State Historic Site reopened January 28. Our current hours are Thursday-Friday 1 pm-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm, and Sunday 1 pm-5 pm. Tour groups remain limited to ten people or less at a time. Wearing of a mask and other social distancing measures remain in effect while visiting the Site. A reminder that the images, poems, and letters of Carl and Lilian Sandburg from the Estate of Charles "Chuck" J. Bednar remain on display in our audio-visual room throughout this year.

As the vaccine becomes more widely available and new cases of COVID-19 remain steady or decline, we look forward to getting back to more of our "normal" activities. After a one-year hiatus we have resumed volunteer activities. Volunteers are always needed to help with tours, events, and the gardens, among other activities. If you are not yet a volunteer and interested in becoming one, please contact me at (309) 927-3345 or bryan.engelbrecht@illinois.gov. We also are hoping to resume events such as the Songbag Concert Series. Please continue to visit www.sandburg.org or follow the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association on Facebook to keep abreast of the resumption of events.

LETTER FROM ESTHER (SANDBURG) WACHS ADDED TO SITES'S COLLECTION

By Bryan Engelbrecht

Thanks to the generosity of Christine (Holly) Newman, we recently acquired a letter from Carl Sandburg's sister Esther (Sandburg) Wachs. The fifth child born to August and Clara Sandburg joined the family on May 23, 1888. Possessing musical talent, she attended Lombard College as a music major. In 1913 she married Arthur Wachs. They had one daughter and operated a general merchandise store in Gibson City, IL. The Wachs retired to Chatsworth, CA in 1968. Esther passed away in 1974. Arthur died in 1980. Both are interred at Galesburg's Linwood Cemetery.

While attending high school in Louisiana, Christine Holly completed a paper on Carl Sandburg. As part of the assignment, she wrote to Carl Sandburg's family. In

response to some questions she asked, Esther wrote her on February 17, 1961. In the letter Esther advised Christine that Lombard College, the railroad, and Galesburg itself influenced Carl Sandburg's life and art. She also credited the importance of Illinois' river systems and Abraham Lincoln with further influence. Responding to a request for what to purchase of Sandburg's works, she suggested *Complete Poems* and *The People, Yes*. She also listed some of her favorite poems by him including "Chicago," "Fog," "Phizzog," and "The Abracadabra Boys" among others. Showing her wonderment at her brother's work, Esther wrote, "Poetry, I am asking, where does it come from?" She also commented on Sandburg's reaction to his fame stating, "So much has happened in Carl's life he himself barely knows what to make of it."

The letter is important to us for a variety of reasons. While our museum collection includes items related to Sandburg's parents, we have few artifacts related to Sandburg's siblings. This letter helps us rectify that. The body of the letter provides us valuable insight into how Esther viewed her brother. The different influences on Sandburg's life she listed are the same that scholars today list when writing on Sandburg. Her listing of poems shows what spoke to her from Carl's writings. Wonderment expressed on the origin of Sandburg's writings shows us that even those close to Sandburg expected amazement at what came from his pen. Esther's inclusion that Carl himself expressed surprise at all that occurred in his life shows us that even Sandburg could not at times comprehend all that encompassed his life and work. Christine Newman's donation of this letter has provided us a great window into both Carl Sandburg and Esther (Sandburg) Wachs. We thank her for her generosity and support of the Site.

2021 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

We are accepting membership renewals for 2021!
Please find a form with membership categories &
online options for paying dues on page 8 of this
newsletter. Thanks to all for your continuing support!

FROM PRINCE TO PRINTS: THE SANDBURG DOGS

By John W. Quinley

[Ed. Note: A retired college administrator and faculty member, John W. Quinley volunteers as a house docent for the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. His article "Sandburg Singing Across America" can be found on their website. He grew up in Maywood, IL—just a few blocks away from where the Sandburgs lived. During his professional career he taught college-level history, government, and humanities courses and was a director of planning and research for a graduate school, a national association, and for community colleges in several different states. His academic credentials include an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration and an M.A. in Humanities. John lives near Flat Rock, NC. He may be reached at jwquinley@gmail.com.]

FIRST HOMES IN CHICAGO SUBURBS

Carl and Paula Sandburg lived in rented spaces across Wisconsin during the first years of their marriage. In 1916 they borrowed \$500 for a down payment on a house in suburban Maywood, IL. The house had a yard, space for a garden and fruit trees and marked the arrival of a family dog. This first pet, an Irish Setter named Dan, was a gift from literary friend and dog breeder, Mrs. William Vaughn Moody. Carl swore that Dan had "as immortal a soul as any of us: he's a marvelous listener." The poem "Dan" in *Smoke and Steel* was written about him.

Dan

*Early May, after cold rain the sun baffling cold wind,
Irish setter pup finds a corner near the cellar door,
all sun and no wind,
Cuddling there he crosses forepaws and lays his skull
Sideways on this pillow, dozing in a half-sleep,
Browns of hazel nut, mahogany, rosewood, played off
against each other on his paws and head.*

A couple of years later after losing Dan, Carl wrote Mrs. Moody, "If you get hold of a setter, sheep dog, collie, German police dog, mastiff, Danish bloodhound, or any dog spotted or unspotted that growls at strangers and is good to children—bring him along."

Carl liked to write upstairs during evening hours in their next home in nearby Elmhurst. When the barking of the newest dog, Pooch, joined the squeals of laughter from the three Sandburg girls, Carl stamped on the upstairs floor boards and yelled, "Pipe down!" Carl had some success with this tactic. Pooch "learns; we can get him so he won't give long vocal performance." But "he will never learn to stop his passionate enjoyment of scaring people by rushing them with his terrible eyes and teeth; he must have seen himself sometime in a magnifying mirror so that he imagines he is six or seven dogs in one." Another dog acquired in Elmhurst had an interesting change of name, from Prince to Prints. Carl felt "we wouldn't be quite at home with royalty." The name Prints also seems appropriate for an aspiring newspaper reporter and poet who desires to always be in print.

LAKEFRONT HOME IN HARBERT, MICHIGAN

Carl's first two volumes of his Lincoln biography brought national acclaim and financial reward substantial enough for the family to move to the lakefront Michigan town of Harbert directly across the great lake from Chicago. Paula took steps to accommodate their canine

family members by hiring workmen to install linoleum on the floors so the dogs could run in and out freely. During a visit by her brother Edward Steichen, the world-famous photographer, Paula snapped a photo of some family members and one of their dogs on the beach, catching Helga, Uncle Ed, Bosco, Carl, and Janet "with tongues out panting and our paws, along with Bosco's, before us in the warm sand."



Helga, Edward Steichen, Bosco, Carl, & Janet

Bosco died from a car accident when Carl was away during one of his many performance tours. Paula agonized over telling her absent husband. She reported that "he was found four feet from US 12 near Harbert. No bones broken—no sign of blows or injury. He was found at 4:45 p.m. At 3:45 p.m. he was playing with Jojo and Frisco [Bosco's sons] in our yard. I am sending this news ahead, so we won't have to break it at your dear homecoming." When Paula wrote this to Carl, she said that "Helga is crying and will not stop and all because her daddy will be unhappy over the loss." Carl replies, "It's good we have Bosco's sons."

The dog tribe in Michigan waxed and waned in numbers. Two young red Irish Setters Carl called Dan and Cullie "go up into his study on the third floor and lie about there. And when he comes down in the evenings, singing on the stairs, he is preceded by their wild delighted barking." The dogs joined the family on their many walks, and they quickly learned to retrieve the sticks Carl threw.

Helga loved to include the dogs in her childhood fantasies. She writes in her family remembrance, *Where Love Begins*, "She is Tarzan (not Jane) and Jack (Cullie's son), Dan, Cullie, and the rest of the dogs are lions pacing at her side. Trotting through the woods again, she is Mowgli and they are Akela's clan of wolves hunting Shere Khan. She will join a circus and all the dogs now shake hands, roll over, jump through hoops, sit on pedestals or stand on tree branches."

In winter, Helga hitched the dogs in a tandem team to haul a toboggan over the ice floes of Lake Michigan. For Helga this is Jack London's frozen North and Jack is Buck. In a tribute to Jack London and the dogs London immortalized Carl wrote the following poem:

DOGHEADS

AMONG the grassroots

*In the moonlight, who comes circling,
red tongues and high noses?*

Is one of 'em Buck and one of 'em White Fang?

*In the moonlight, who are they, cross-legged, telling
their stories over and over?*

*Is one of 'em Martin Eden and one of 'em Larsen the
Wolf?*

Let an epitaph read:

*He loved the straight eyes of dogs and the strong
heads of men.*

In 1939 when Helga was a student at Michigan State College, Carl writes Helga about Jon, her great Dane puppy. "All reports as to Jon are good. Jon is coming strong, in color and grace and disposition." Carl shares that he walks Jon every day and notes that "when he comes down or goes up a stairs his legs and paws fumble and he waddles and waggles." Carl thinks that "Jon is going to rate as the best dog we have ever had."

CONNEMARA FARM IN THE MOUNTAINS OF FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA

The Sandburgs began raising goats in Harbert, and it was largely the desire to expand their goat herd that led them to the next home in North Carolina. They brought Jackson, their shaggy cocker spaniel, with them. The Connemara home in Flat Rock encompassed 245 acres with miles of hiking trails around lakes and up to Little Glassy and Big Glassy mountains. Granddaughter Paula in her memoir *My Connemara*, writes, "The children and the dogs circle us, climbing up and down the rock faces, as we climbed Big Glassy." Paula also recalled a visit by a famous folk singer with her dog, "Jean Ritchie coming through with a slender greyhound, Lady Gray, seemed a wonder to me alongside my amiable black cocker, Hannah."

A Doberman Pinscher puppy Lief was brought home from Florida, and for a while Helga raised this breed commercially. Lief was joined by a rescue dog from a local veterinarian—Christopher, a Great Dane. Helga recalls that the family "became fond of him and of his clownish way of climbing onto the leather sofa and stretching his lanky body its full measure." Christopher "was gentle, playful, and our Doberman Pinscher, Lief, accepted him with grace." The two were constantly at Helga's side, accompanying her to town and to the barn and the surrounding pastures as she rode or milked and fed the herd. But this union was not to last. "It was incredible to see one day in the autumn-blown buck pasture, a pattern of bodies strewn before her, necks broken and bleeding—and Christopher still pursuing the few survivors." The grandchildren, John Carl and Paula, watched as Helga beat Christopher and locked him up. The next day Christopher was returned to the veterinarian, and "Lief who had watched the killings with a puppy's fascination, was punished too, as if he had done the deed himself, so afraid

was Helga that he might be tempted to emulate what he had seen."

Carl understood the inherent potential of wildness that dogs inherit from their ancestor the wolf as well as the animalistic, spiritual life forces that reside inside humans. He writes in "Wilderness":

*There is a wolf in me . . . fangs pointed for tearing
gashes . . . a red tongue for raw meat . . . and the
hot lapping of blood—I keep this wolf because the
wilderness gave it to me and the wilderness will not let
it go.*

CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL SITE

Connemara became a national historic site a few years after the death of Carl Sandburg in 1967, so it has been over fifty years since the Sandburg dogs lived on the farm. But today, greater numbers of dogs are walked each day along the same trails previously enjoyed by the Sandburg family. All sizes and breeds come, and most owners and their pets enjoy greeting others—human and canine visitors alike. Some visit the park only occasionally, but many bring their dogs on a regular basis—a few so frequently that park staff and volunteers call them by name. Dan, Pooch, Prints, Bosco, Jojo, Frisco, Cullie, Jon, Jack, Hannah, Jackson, Lief, Christopher, and all the other Sandburg dogs would be happy to learn that the legacy of Sandburg and their dogs lives on.

"THIN PLACES"

By Harry Bulkeley

[Ed. Note: Retired Judge Harry Bulkeley is a CSHSA member. He grew up in Abingdon. In 1958 his mother was on the committee for the Centennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate. He went to the reenactment on a rainy day and thinks he remembers meeting Carl Sandburg. He definitely remembers eating in the Homestead Room at the Hotel Custer because there was a musket over the fireplace. He recalls the birthplace when it was dark brown and had the museum attached to it.]

Have you heard the expression "thin places?" It refers to those places on Earth where the spiritual world and the physical world are somehow closer together. It's often just a feeling or a vague awareness that there are things out there we cannot see or touch.

Examples of thin places are churches, particularly old ones, or cemeteries or battlefields. I once encountered one near the Burnside Bridge on the Antietam battlefield. But they can be anywhere. Some archeologists speculate that the placement of ancient monuments and shrines was based on locations where people sensed a thin place.

This is all by way of introduction to my awareness of thin places right here in Galesburg. Sometimes just walking down the street a feeling will sweep over me. It's a connection with or an awareness of the history of people and places that have been there before me. One of the things I like about living in the older part of town is there are reminders of our past everywhere. A little one is the stamps that concrete contractors used to put in the sidewalks they poured. It's not unusual to see a sidewalk that Nels Kling put down and proudly stamped "1915" on it

for me to see a century later. Somehow I sense the man in overalls and a Swedish accent who walked over to that wet cement and put that indelible mark on it.

In his autobiography *Always the Young Strangers* our local poet laureate identified many thin places all over his hometown. Carl told about going to work for Sam Barlow, the milkman. Every morning on his way to work, Sandburg would walk past Old Main where, he says,

Many times I read on a bronze plate words spoken by Lincoln and by Douglas some thirty-four years before I stood there reading those words. They stayed with me, and sometimes I would stop to read those words only, what Lincoln said to twenty thousand people on a cold windy October day: 'He is blowing out the moral lights around us, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to hold them.' I read them in winter sunrise, in broad summer day-light, in falling snow or rain, in all the weathers of a year.

That was a thin place for young Carl. He identified another thin place on the Public Square where Old First Church once stood. He explained that it had been

built more than forty years before by the First Settlers. The long oak beams holding it together had been hauled by horses from miles away and hewn by the axes of the old timers. The benches inside were black walnut. The old building could say, 'When I was built this town had only a few hundred people in it and you could walk across town in three or four minutes to the cornfields and the pastures.' In a few years they tore down Old First Church and sold the great oak beams and black walnut benches as used lumber. They could have moved that fine quaint antique of a building to some vacant lot to stand as a living memorial to the pioneer founders of the city, but there didn't seem to be enough care, sentiment, or imagination for such action.

Carl may not have known the term thin places, but he certainly would know exactly what it meant.

One of the most moving thin places for me involves another Sandburg story from a few years later. He says he was loafing at the Q depot when a man came in and reported that a mob over at the county jail was going to lynch Ed Jackson. Jackson was a Black man who had been arrested for murder after a fight in Danny Flynn's saloon that resulted in the death of a man. Carl said he'd never seen a mob or a lynching, and with his curiosity aroused he ran over to the county jail on South Prairie Street. He wedged in closer and saw men pointing a telegraph pole at the jail door. They told the sheriff that they were going to batter down the jail doors and give "the murderer" what he had coming to him.

The confrontation escalated with the sheriff ordering rifles to be drawn on the mob and town leaders trying to calm things down. During the confusion the sheriff was able to slip the prisoner out the back and take him to safety.

Sandburg closes the story this way,

Straight across the street from the Knox County jail was the Knox College campus. Straight west was the east front of the college where Lincoln and Douglas had debated. The howls and yells of the mob, 'Kill the n----r!' and 'We want the n----r!' could be heard across the same air where the words of Lincoln came clear in an October day 'He is blowing out the moral lights around us....'

Whenever I stand at that spot today, I can sense the presence of both Lincoln and Sandburg, and I know I am in a sacred thin place.

"A DREAM GIRL"

By Trish Forsyth Voss

[Ed. Note: New CSHSA member Trish Forsyth Voss is a Galesburg native who now lives in rural Knox County, IL. She earned an Associate Degree from Carl Sandburg College and a B.A. from Western Illinois University. Now retired, she worked for twelve years at OMC Gale Products in Galesburg and twenty-five years as a Public Aid Caseworker. Trish describes herself as a "poet, writer, and avid genealogist of Scots-Irish-English, Swede, and Native American descent, mother, wife, and perpetual student."]



Trish Forsyth Voss

"A Dream Girl" was an early poem written by Carl Sandburg and published later in his book *Chicago Poems* (1916). The poem expressed his longing to find his dream girl. *The Poet and the Dream Girl, the Love Letters of Lilian Steichen and Carl Sandburg*, edited by their eldest daughter Margaret Sandburg, is a compilation of the letters and poetry that were written between the two in the first six months of 1908 during their budding long-distance courtship. They married in June of that year. They met in Wisconsin in 1907 while Lilian was on Christmas break from her teaching job in Princeton, IL. Carl, going by Charles then, arrived in Milwaukee straight from his lecture circuit for a meeting with Carl D. Thompson, the state organizer for the Social-Democratic Party. Sandburg was there to become a member and an organizer for the party having been intrigued and seduced by the Social-Democratic movement. He wrote, "I had never made a

socialist speech, though I had read classics of socialism by Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, and had read for six months "The Worker," the leading journal of the socialist party of New York, and the *Social Democratic Herald*, weekly organ of the Wisconsin socialists." In addition to organizing in the Lake Shore and Fox River Valley district he wrote a weekly report on activities, printed in the *Social Democratic Herald*. On his second visit to Brisbane Hall in December 1907 he met Lilian Steichen who had stopped to visit with her dear friends on her way back to Illinois. Carl asked if he might write to her, and she, knowing how badly they needed organizers, wanted to encourage "a comrade in the movement," and so the letters began. Though working long hours, Carl continued to write poetry and prose and wrote "Labor and Politics," an article published by the *Social Democratic Press* and distributed at meetings. Carl wrote to Lilian, and she responded on January 7, 1908. (Some beginning letters were lost, but most of the original letters reside in the Rare Book Room of the University of Illinois, at Champaign-Urbana.)

The correspondence in *The Poet and the Dream Girl* traces the poetic and passionate sentiments, ideals, and growing commitment to their shared zeal for socialism, art, and literature. The letters demonstrate the mutual admiration of two sound, growing minds embracing their shared world. Carl wrote Lilian, "the coincidences of our ideas and plans and whims is something I would not have believed till--Wonder Woman came." Lilian had attended an academy in Chatham, Ontario and a year at the University of Illinois, transferring in the fall of 1901 to the University of Chicago where she graduated in December 1903 with a bachelor of philosophy (Phi Beta Kappa) and with honors in Latin and English. She took various jobs of translating from Latin and German. In September 1904 she took a teaching position in Valley City, ND for two years before moving to Princeton in 1906 to teach high school "Literature and Expression."

Lilian and Carl each had "a mind at work," and their letters show their growing esteem for each other. Their second meeting was on March 27, 1908 when Carl visited the Steichen farm in Menomonee Falls, WI the weekend of Lilian's brother Edward Jean Steichen's birthday. Edward was already becoming a famed photographer. Carl and Lilian's second meeting sealed their bond. He proposed, she accepted. They met for only the third time in Chicago in May 1908 before their June wedding; then they moved to Milwaukee. Lilian encouraged him to continue writing poetry and to go by his given name Carl, and he nicknamed her Paula.

Carl August Sandburg was born January 6, 1878 in Galesburg, Illinois, to Swedish immigrants, the second of seven children. His family called him Charlie. He delivered papers, then milk, worked as a janitor, bricklayer, porter, and shined shoes in Galesburg's Union Hotel. He traveled as a hobo and threshed wheat in Kansas. He volunteered in 1898 for service during the Spanish-American war and was stationed in Puerto Rico. He returned to "the Burg," attended Lombard College, and joined the Poor Writers Club. Lombard professor Phillip Green Wright, a scholar and political liberal, encouraged the talented, young

Sandburg to continue writing. Sandburg saw first-hand the contrasts between the rich and the poor, instilling in him a distrust of capitalism. His writing and political views were greatly impacted by his experiences working and traveling. He was influenced by muckrakers, reform-minded journalists of his day, and the hard living conditions of the masses in the days before child-labor laws when young children worked in unsafe factories for ten hours daily, seven days a week. He worked in Chicago as an editor and lecturer before joining the Socialist movement. He was a prolific author, poet laureate, journalist, historian, biographer, folklorist, folk-singer, and wrote children's stories. He was awarded two Pulitzer prizes for his poetry and another Pulitzer for his four-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. Carl was invited to the White House under four different presidents beginning with FDR. Sandburg was a statesman, but foremost he was a Thinker, a Dreamer, and a Lover of humanity.

Carl, Lilian, and their three daughters Margaret, Janet, and Helga (also an author) moved to Flat Rock, NC in 1945, with their small herd of prize-winning goats, that delightful residence now open for tours. Lilian, being the intellect she was, later gained world-renown as a leading expert in goat-breeding. Carl died July 22, 1967 in Flat Rock, North Carolina, but his and Lilian's ashes lie beneath Remembrance Rock, at E. 3rd St. in Galesburg. Lilian, born May 1, 1883 in Hancock, Michigan, of Luxembourgian descent, passed away on February 18, 1977. They were born into a much different time than today. Social standards have risen dramatically. Much has changed in our world. Two beautiful souls found each other, and the world was made better by their love, their ideas, their work, and their offspring. They made their mark upon this world which was vastly improved, because they, and others like them, lived and worked and dreamed it into manifestation. How might we do the same? A parting line from Sandburg's poem "YOU," "We will rest in the hearts of remembering men, who saw us as we passed."

ROOTABAGA STORIES

By Barbara Schock

Carl Sandburg is most widely known for his six-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln and his poetry collections. His children's stories are less well known but have great appeal to the young and the young-at-heart.

In a recent issue of *The Week* news magazine I read a list of six books which were chosen by author Andrew Solomon as his favorite books. On the list was *Rootabaga Stories*. He explained that his father had read the stories to him when he was a child. He described it as the best of the children's books. He wrote that it was "wildly imaginative, gently moral and quintessentially American, both in its diction and in a certain roughhewn but kindly common sense." He explained that rereading the book always carried him back to a very happy stage when he was more innocent than he knew.

Sandburg's family was experiencing a crisis in the early twenties. Daughter Margaret was having seizures for

which doctors had few answers. It was also a busy time as he was involved in the final publication work for *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, working on another collection of poems, writing movie reviews for a Chicago newspaper, working on *The American Songbag* collection of folksongs as well as performing on college campuses.

The stories are creative, funny, and full of nonsense language. The characters have names which are whimsical, to say the least. For example, Give Me the Ax has a son named Please Gimme and a girl named Ask Me No Questions. When they came to him he let each one name themselves and those were the first words the children had spoken. The names of other characters include Hot Dog the Tiger, Wind Blue Boy, Hatrack the Horse, Fire the Goat, and Any Ice Today. The Sandburg daughters also received whimsical monikers: Margaret was Spink, Janet was Skabootch, and the youngest, Helga, was Swipes.

The father was creating a world in which his daughters' minds could freely follow their curiosity and to inspire intellectual freedom. He had read the fairy tales from the Old World when he was young. Princes and princesses didn't fit into the American landscape, so he created an American landscape with very interesting characters.

To start with the title of the book, rootabaga is incorrectly spelled but is pronounced that way. A land of myth is created with no rules about language. The characters have names which fit the roles they play, or not. They are pure imagination.

The landscape included the zigzag railroad and the village of Liver and Onions. Events included the Wedding Procession of the Rag Doll and the Broom Handle and Who Was in it. The Potato Face Blind-Man sat with his accordion on the corner nearest the post office. His "eyes never looking and always searching in."

No doubt that scene was witnessed by Sandburg in his youth. Injured soldiers of the Civil War sometimes supported themselves in that manner. He remembered paying a small sum to have his name written on a piece of paper with fine scrollwork. The writing was done using the man's toes rather than fingers.

Gimme the Ax sells his household goods and buys tickets on the Over and Under Railroad which later becomes the Zigzag Railroad. The tracks go up into the sky. They see all kinds of characters along the way, balloon pickers on stilts and baked clowns. It is a journey into fantasy land.

The illustrations for the book were created by Maud (1890-1971) and Miska (1868-1950) Petersham, a husband and wife team who were known for their use of color and technical excellence. They created the art work for 120 children's book of which they wrote fifty. Their influence on the illustration of children's books is still recognized today.

There were two more books in the series which are just as enjoyable as the first one. There are a variety of offers on the internet selling copies of the books. They are

also available directly on the internet for reading. In these days of lockdowns, reading about an imaginary world just might cheer you up.



"The balloons floated and filled the sky."
Frontispiece of 1922 first edition of *Rootabaga Stories*.
Illustrated by Maud & Miska Petersham.

CARL SANDBURG—THE MAN, THE AUTHOR & PUBLIC EDUCATOR WHO COULD HAVE BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

By Tomas Junglander

[Ed. Note: This is the eighth installment of a Sandburg biography written by CSHSA member Tomas Junglander of Vadstena, Sweden.]

THE NOVELIST

Sandburg had been discussing with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer the idea for a full-length novel and feature film about American life. It was to "depict the courage, foresight and fortitude of the people who built up the nation" and those who followed. That novel was never written but was the germination of his big novel *Remembrance Rock*. The novel took almost five years to complete, and it ran over a thousand pages in length. It actually was broken into five independent parts, a prologue, and an epilogue—each narrative covering a different era in America's history, "what the American people, the American flag, the American citizen stand for in relation to the world scene and the widespread family of man over the earth." The Prologue, set in the 1940s during World War II; Book One, "The First Comers" about the Mayflower (1620), Pilgrims, and Puritan Years; Book Two "The Arch Begins" set during the American Revolution (1775-1783; Book Three "The Arch Holds" about the Civil War era (1861-1865); Book Three, "The Arch Holds," about the Civil War era (1861-1865); and the Epilogue "Storm and Stars" set at the end of World War II (1945).

Remembrance Rock was another form through which Carl Sandburg expressed himself, and it was yet another form through which he expressed his fascination with and devotion to America and her promise. It was a panorama of American history. He had sets of characters in each area of American history. Also this novel was written at the request of a film company, but *Remembrance Rock* was

never made into a Hollywood film. The fundamental reason, however, was the book itself—far too complex, too vast for adaptation, too ponderous and overwhelming to be reduced to a movie script. The novel is, like the Lincoln biography, full of proverb, anecdotes, and folklore. Sandburg was having serious difficulties with his huge often chaotic manuscript. The book slowly grew into proportions beyond expectation. Sandburg's friends and fans had flooded his mail with letters of praise for the novel when it came out in 1948. On the whole, however, critics were not enthusiastic, but it sold well on the strength of Sandburg's name alone.

The novel is a testament to Sandburg's love for his country and for the universal "Family of Man" It was his first and only novel.

SANDBURG WORKS FOR A MENTOR'S FREEDOM

By Rich Hanson

Ezra Pound has always been a controversial figure in American Literature. If he had confined his opinions to literature, this would not have been an issue. There was no writer who could be more supportive of emerging writers whom he admired than Ezra Pound. There could be no writer so scathingly dismissive of writers who had earned, deservedly or not, his scorn. Fortunately for Carl Sandburg, he was one of the former.

Pound admired Sandburg's work and said that he "might come out all right" despite the fact that he "needs to learn a lot about How to Write." Pound would assign himself the role of both champion of and mentor to writers that he admired, but this came with a price. Pound warned Sandburg that if he turned his poetry over to him to be published that "you might have to stand some of my own amical, severe and even caustic criticism, for what it's worth. I don't think you've got your 'form' yet in the athletic sense... certain phrasings leave me in doubt. I'm not sure whether your 'Chicago' wouldn't hit harder if it began six lines later and ended 5 lines sooner. I'm very much the grandma in these matters and numerous people dislike it."

Sandburg found him helpful, however, and sometimes implemented the changes he suggested. He admired Pound's work, and in 1916 in *Poetry* he wrote an appreciation of his friend and mentor,

You cannot write the history of twentieth century literature without giving Pound a starring role in the story.... All talk of modern poetry, by people who know, ends with dragging in Ezra Pound somewhere. He may be named only to be cursed as wanton and mocker, poseur, trifler and vagrant. Or he may be classed as filling a niche today like that of Keats in an epoch. The point is, he will be mentioned.... For those who care about poetry, Pound is either the sign of all that is wrong or the best thing going, but he cannot be ignored.

I like the pages of Ezra Pound. He stains darkly and touches softly. The flair of great loneliness is there. He is utter as a prairie horseman, a biplane in the azure, a Norse crag, or any symbol of the isolate, contemplative spirit of man unafraid and searching. He is worth having.

In *The Trial of Ezra Pound* by Julien Cornell, eminent lawyer Alan Dershowitz, in his introduction to the volume, sums up Pound's bizarre and perverse opinions about world politics, as "attributing the ills of the universe to a worldwide "Jewish Conspiracy." This led him to, while he was living in Italy during the Second World War, to pick up the microphone for Mussolini's regime and broadcast his anti-American, anti-Semitic, and pro-fascist opinions, as well as his bizarre economic theories. He voiced his scathing contempt for both Churchill and FDR as well. After Mussolini fell, Pound was arrested and charged with treason. He was ruled to be mentally incompetent to stand trial, and instead was incarcerated in 1945 in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington DC.

Although many of Pound's literary friends voiced concerns about his sanity, and at one point Sandburg wrote to a friend that Pound had made "an incredible ass of himself," they were concerned about his incarceration for a long length of time in a mental hospital and what effect it would have on him and began to agitate to have him released. Carl Sandburg added his voice to those urging so, and in Clinton, NY met with Pound's son Omar, who was on the faculty there during Sandburg's visit to the college.

It is greatly to your credit that you spoke up as you did, about my father, Omar said, thanking the poet, and I assure you that I appreciated it highly. I do so hope that you have found it possible to visit him in Washington D.C., for contact with the outside world is one of his main needs in these days.

In 1958 Sandburg, Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish, T. S. Elliot, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Marianne Moore, and W. H. Auden would speak at a concert urging Pound's release. From England a petition signed by prominent writers arrived, urging Pound's liberation as well. Robert Frost and Archibald MacLeish especially used their connections to eventually get the cantankerous, and, yes, probably half mad poet and critic, released.

Pound fled to the Europe that had always beckoned to and fascinated him, and arriving at Naples, asserted to a group of reporters that "All America is an insane asylum." He took residence in Venice, and remained there until his death, and is buried there as well, an expatriate even to the end.

Despite their stylistic and political differences, the friendship that Sandburg and Pound struck up in their early years led left both writers lifelong friends. In the Sandburg archives is a postcard from Ezra urging Carl to visit him at St. Elizabeth's. Carl Sandburg has left behind an unpublished fragment of a poem, entitled simply, "Ezra":

*O most excellent reading
It can easy pass over
Easy skip idiotics
Pedantics pomposities
Good reading sure sure
How to read Ez
He is my crazy brudder. ."*

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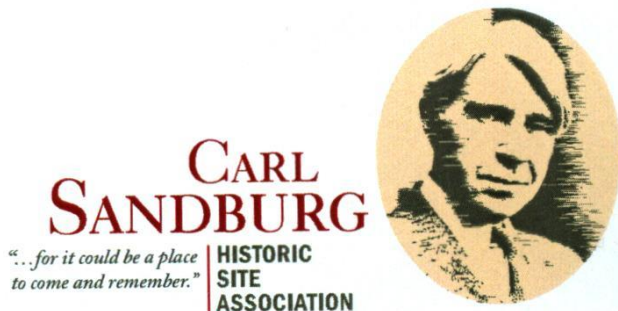
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The **Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association**, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, promotes awareness of the historical and cultural significance of Carl Sandburg and the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site in Galesburg, Illinois. We support a variety of educational programs and the collection, preservation, and display of materials which demonstrate the life, times, and achievements of Carl Sandburg.

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