

INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361

Holidays 2003

The Songbag Thursday, November 20th

For several years, the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association has sponsored musical evenings at the Site, which is located at 313 East Third Street, in Galesburg.

Since their beginning, they have been planned and coordinated by John Heasley. His success is evidenced by the extent to which they are enjoyed by the people who attend them.

Barry Cloyd, a Midwestern singer/songwriter, will appear at the last Songbag Concert of the fall season. He plays a variety of musical styles on guitar and weaves the genres of Blues, Folk, Celtic and Country into a unique blend all his own. He has written more than 200 original songs, two musicals of his own and six musicals written with his partner Brian Ellis.

Mr. Cloyd has also released two CDs of original music which feature Celtic/American songs. He has appeared in numerous television commercials and industrial films. He is also a writer of magazine articles.

The Songbag Concerts always begin at 7 p.m. in the Barn at the Site. Refreshments are served and a two dollar donation helps to defray the costs.

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Your Source for Books

The Museum Store in the Visitors'

Center of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site is a good place to go for books about Carl Sandburg, by Carl Sandburg, and the history of Galesburg.

No other place in Galesburg and its environs has as complete a collection.

There are big books and little books and fat books and thin books. There are all kinds of books.

There is no better gift than a book from the Museum Store. In addition, Sandburg T-shirts, refrigerator magnets, mugs and postcards are available. The inventory is full and complete.

Now is a good time to do some gift shopping for the interesting and interested people on whom you plan to lavish presents.

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Still Acting Site Manager

I'm just wild about Harry.

He doesn't want his name in print, nor public adulation. He shows up and does his magic (no, his surname is not "Houdini"), very much like a Swede's "Jultomte." But he is human-sized with an extremely large heart for the Sandburg Site. He has excellent concepts and wonderful manual skills.

I'm just wild about Harry.

HALLELUJAH! the west side brick walk has been resurrected. Ralston-Mangieri Landscaping did a terrific job in relaying the city walk on the west side of the Historic Site (Kellogg Street). The walk extends from the southwest corner of the lot to the northwest lot line. This uncovering and relaying project (sponsored by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association) will allow a much easier access, including wheelchairs, to the grounds and to the Barn, especially for special events. The arbor gate (thanks to Harry) will be a very welcoming entrance to the grounds. The gate and plantings are planned for a spring installation.

Thanks to John Heasley for scheduling Maurie Grafton and Mike O'Connell for the Songbag Concert performance on October 16th. An excellent program with a large attendance. I'm really looking forward to the November 20th concert with Barry Cloyd, as I hope all of you are too.

The evening of October 22nd, Carol Nelson and I presented a "Sandburg Biography" class for Carl Sandburg College's College for Seniors here at the Historic Site. We gave a slide presentation featuring Galesburg scenes from Sandburg's youth and text from his autobiography, *Always the Young Strangers*. That was followed by autobiographical readings, including poetry which I presented with taped musical background by the local group "Hammer and Pick." After refreshments in the Visitors' Center, a section of the performance documentary "A Song and a Slogan" was shown.

I'll be taking quite a few vacation days throughout the month of November, but the workers filling in at the Site will be able to tell you how to reach me.

- Steve Holden

The Scarey Crow

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association sponsored an entry for the Scarecrow Festival in Standish Park on October 4th and 5th. Steve Holden was the creator and artist of the crow who was scary, rather than being scared.

The variety of scarecrows created for the Festival was impressive. Some were friendly, some were funny and some were frightening. Children and adults alike seemed to enjoy visiting the exhibits.

This was the second year for the event and many people attended and seemed to enjoy seeing all the original and creative ways to display a scarecrow. There were no real crows to be seen in the park.



Our own John Heasley, a member of "Hammer and Pick," played music for the enjoyment of the crowd. The picture above seems to show a trio of musicians who were somewhat chilled as they performed on the outdoor stage. We hope it will be warmer next year.

The Scarey Crow was on display at the Visitors' Center until his ballbearing got rusty from the rain and he couldn't flap his wings anymore.

Below is a picture taken at the Scarecrow Festival of the "Scarey

Crow" ready to fly from his tall cornstalk.



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A New Children's Book

Penelope Niven, biographer of Carl Sandburg, has written her first children's book. The narrative includes poems and writings of Carl Sandburg which illustrate how he used his experiences to create them.

As the son of Swedish immigrants, Carl Sandburg knew poverty and heartache firsthand. With his sense of history, interest in people and love of music, he was able to create

meaningful and sensitive poems and stories that appeal to all ages.

The illustrations in the book were executed by Marc Nadel. They add an emotional dimension to the words written by the poet and the story of his life.

Carl Sandburg: Adventures of a Poet is now available in the Museum Store for \$17.00. It would make a lovely holiday gift for children between the ages of 6 and 9 years.

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Daily Hints for Housekeeping

By the late 19th century, newspapers began to publish many syndicated articles. These were pre-written materials that helped fill the pages of local newspapers. S.S. McClure, who graduated from Knox College in 1882, is considered by some authorities to have created the idea of syndication. He went on to found a national magazine which had great influence in the early part of the 20th century.

The Galesburg Evening Mail issue of November 25, 1896, published an article with the title shown above. It provided menus for two days and included two recipes. There is no indication of the author, but the article is copyrighted.

The Sunday menu included oranges, rice croquettes, broiled beefsteak, rolls, prunes and coffee for breakfast. The dinner menu was composed of fricasseed oysters, hot toast, celery, sliced ham, currant jelly, creamed potatoes, canned succotash, bread and butter, blanc mange and wafers.

Presumably still surfeited from the noontime repast, the members of the household were served lighter fare

at the evening meal which was called "lunch." The suggested menu included milk crackers, fruit, bread and butter and tea.

The large breakfast and noontime meals illustrate the eating patterns of those days. The variety of foods served at such meals may seem strange to us. There were few fresh foods. Oranges for breakfast would have been expensive.

Indeed, many of the items listed in the sample menus would have been too costly for the Sandburg table. While the members of the family enjoyed hearty meals, they were made up of less expensive foods.

Oysters, usually from Chesapeake Bay, were plentiful in those days and were frequently served in a great variety of ways. To fricassee means to fry in a pan and add a creamy sauce before serving. The term comes from the French tradition of cooking.

Creamed potatoes were common in many homes of the time. Leftover boiled potatoes were heated in milk which was thickened with flour and seasoned with butter, salt and pepper. Canned succotash was an early convenience food. We all know the Native Americans showed the Pilgrims how to make the dish. There are many variations in the kinds of ingredients used to make it.

Blanc mange is another French term and is typically a white jelly made with milk and gelatin to which is added almond flavoring. It has been served in Europe since Medieval times.

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Selling Views

In 1900 Carl Sandburg signed up with the Underwood & Underwood Company as

a traveling salesman. He was assigned the territory of Bureau County in which to make his sales calls. He rode his bicycle with suitcase and salesman's case from house to house during the summer. At the end, he had earned a hundred dollars, half of which he gave to his father.

Carl enjoyed the life so much that he did the same work for the next three summers and returned to it occasionally in later years. He liked the freedom of being on the road, he liked seeing different towns and he liked talking to so many different people. He also liked looking at the stereoscopic pictures he sold.

During the summer of 1903 he canvassed in New Jersey and Delaware selling stereoscopic views and viewers. He worked enough to "get by" and to do his thinking and writing. It was a time when he was preparing for his life's work.

When he returned to Galesburg at the end of a sales trip, he was expected to give a portion of his earnings to his father, who used it to help defray the expenses of a large family. As there was nothing to share, Carl did not come back from the East Coast for a year and a half.

The principle of stereographic pictures had been known since ancient times. When a picture is created from slightly different perspectives (about 2 1/2 inches apart), the eyes will blend the two to give the sense of depth or the third dimension.

After the invention of photography in 1839, the development of stereoscopic cameras increased rapidly. The earliest stereoscopic viewers were bulky table models. In 1861 Oliver Wendell Holmes, the poet, invented a handheld viewer

which became very popular. He never patented his idea so it was copied by many companies.

After the Civil War the number of companies producing stereoscopic pictures and viewers increased quite rapidly. The companies deployed scores of photographers to take pictures of everything. Scenes of the West and Native Americans were very popular. Photographs of the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and other fairs were enjoyed. There were pictures of famous persons of the time, including well dressed actresses and sober politicians. Scenes of historic places and foreign countries were appreciated by many viewers. The Panama Canal had a special appeal as it was being built by the United States.

Toward the end of the century, there were storytelling series of stereoscopic pictures and posed pictures of children and animals in comic or sentimental scenes.

The major companies producing stereoscopic views were the Keystone View Company of Meadville, Pennsylvania and the Underwood and Underwood Company of New York, as well as many local photographers. The Keystone company eventually absorbed the Underwood company and is still in business, providing optical testing equipment.

The Underwood company employed as many as 3,000 salesmen across the country. The company recruited college students as salesmen to work certain territories each summer. The salesman took the order and returned two or three weeks later to deliver it. The salesmen sometimes stayed overnight with families and paid for their board with more views.

Book and stationery stores as well as the Sears & Roebuck Company

catalog sold stereoscopes and pictures.

Stereoscopic views and viewers for use in the home gradually went out of fashion after World War I. Schools and colleges continued to use them as educational tools into the 1940s.

You can use a stereoscope and see some stereoscopic views of Carl Sandburg in the new exhibit area of the Visitors' Center. Why don't you stop by and try it?

* * *

S.H. Olson & Bro.

Grocery shopping today is much different than in the nineteenth century. In those days, there were between thirty and forty neighborhood grocery stores in Galesburg. Almost every household in the city was within two or three blocks of markets selling meat, staples, baked goods or fresh fruits and vegetables.

In his autobiography, *Always the Young Strangers*, Carl Sandburg wrote of Swan H. Olson, a red-haired Swede, who operated a store at 477 East Berrian Street (the northwest corner of Berrian and Chambers). Mr. Olson had been born in Sweden and came to America with his family when he was ten years of age. The family farmed in the Cameron area west of Galesburg for a number of years.

As a young man, Olson worked in a grocery store until he enlisted in the 102nd Regiment of the Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War. He had just observed his eighteenth birthday on August 4, 1862.

The regiment was involved in the

(continued on page 7)

Wrinklings & Wild Things

*We prairie folk are blessed with
the changing of the seasons...
turn, turn, turn.*

NEVER TWO SONGS THE SAME

the light on the leaves
in girlish early spring
the deep green of the matron leaves
in the stride of high summer suns
the colors of the turning oak and maple
when October crosses gold and brown
there is winter then to wait for
when trees wear frost of a morning
wear snow of an evening
when bare branches often reach out
saying they would be lonely
only for the wind coming
with never two songs the same
with changes always in the old songs

Carl Sandburg

from *Complete Poems*, page 698.

Atlanta Campaign and General Sherman's March to the Sea which helped to end the war. After marching through Richmond, Virginia, Private Olson participated in the Grand Review in Washington, DC, in May, 1865. He was just one of the thirty thousand soldiers to pass in review. He returned home to pick up his life.

Carl Sandburg estimated that Swan Olson and other soldiers of the regiment had walked more than two thousand miles during their three-year enlistment. When Sandburg was writing his classic books about Abraham Lincoln, he began to have a greater appreciation of the hardships endured by those citizen soldiers of the Civil War.

Swan Olson erected the building on the corner of Berrian and Chambers in 1876 in which to operate his own grocery. His brother, William, joined the business in 1882. Carl Sandburg remembered that William was the more sociable of the two and had a red mustache which was said to be the most elegant one possessed by any man in the Seventh Ward.

Swan H. Olson married Clara A. Burke on October 20, 1872, and they had three children, Clarence, Grace, who died as an infant, and Irene.

According to Mr. Olson's obituary, the couple was the first to be married in the Emmanuel Methodist Church. Their children later went to the First Methodist Church because of the English services.

Mr. and Mrs. Olson were active in the community. He was elected to the County Board for several terms. He was a member of the Galesburg Club, Modern Woodman of the World and the Grand Army of the Republic. Mrs. Olson contributed much time and effort to the Free Kindergarten for the children of working families.

Mrs. Olson passed away in 1917 and Mr. Olson died in 1923 after having suffered several strokes.

August Sandburg enjoyed an occasional cigar, but he seldom paid actual cash for one. On payday he would make his way to the Swan H. Olson and Brother Grocery Store. There he would settle up for the groceries charged by his family during the preceding month.

He and one of the Olson brothers would review his account. After they came to an agreement as to how much was owed, the appropriate sum was handed over. When the transaction was completed, August Sandburg was given a sack of candy for his children, and a five-cent cigar.

Every Sunday he would indulge himself in an inch of it, and then put it away for another week. Usually he was able to make the cigar last until the next payday.

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The City

In its Christmas Issue of 1887, *The Galesburg Republican-Register* printed a report on Galesburg's accomplishments. The article began with a list of city and school officials and then pointed out that Galesburg was the county seat of Knox County situated "on the rich watershed separating the Mississippi from the Illinois River. It is one of the important railroad centers of Illinois. It is 162 miles from Chicago, 100 from Quincy, 53 from Peoria and 43 from Burlington."

The paper said there were 26 manufacturing establishments in Galesburg and there was a large mercantile business because of the railroad.

The city had a street railway and electric street lights. There were 95 street lamps and 31 of the lights burned all night. The others were turned off at midnight. It cost \$9.75 a month to light the all-night lamps. The system had been in operation since September and it was expected that the city would spend \$8,000 a year for the electricity.

There was 13 1/2 miles of hard brick sidewalk in the city and much work had been done to upgrade drainage and improve street intersections. The Cedar Fork was to have new riprap placed on its banks during the next year. Its channel had been straightened already and it was hoped that this would solve some of the flooding problems.

The new public buildings included the Courthouse, the school and the C.B. & Q. depot. The new opera house was under construction and the Santa Fe Railroad was expected to build its new depot early in the next year.

A section on morals indicated the people of Galesburg were upright living individuals. Since December 1st, 1886, 664 persons had been arrested. Most of them for drunkenness, but the majority of those worked on the new railroad construction and weren't considered citizens of Galesburg. There were seventeen saloons in the city, each having to pay \$1,000 per year for a license to operate.

J.B. Holland was Director of the public library and there was a collection of 15,000 books and seventy periodicals. A new system for shelving the books had been instituted by Mr. Holland and it simplified finding materials. A catalog of the collection had been created which also helped in finding books and magazines.

It was estimated there were 14,831

inhabitants in the city of Galesburg in 1887.

In the section on the social aspects of the city, the newspaper said "Galesburg was an agreeable and pleasant place." There were more than forty fraternal and social organizations with at least 2,000 members. The article continued "There is here very little of that exclusive, caste feeling that spoils the society of so many cities. A kindly feeling prevails; to newcomers a hearty welcome is extended."

Perhaps, the Sandburg family and other foreign-born individuals might not have agreed with that last statement.

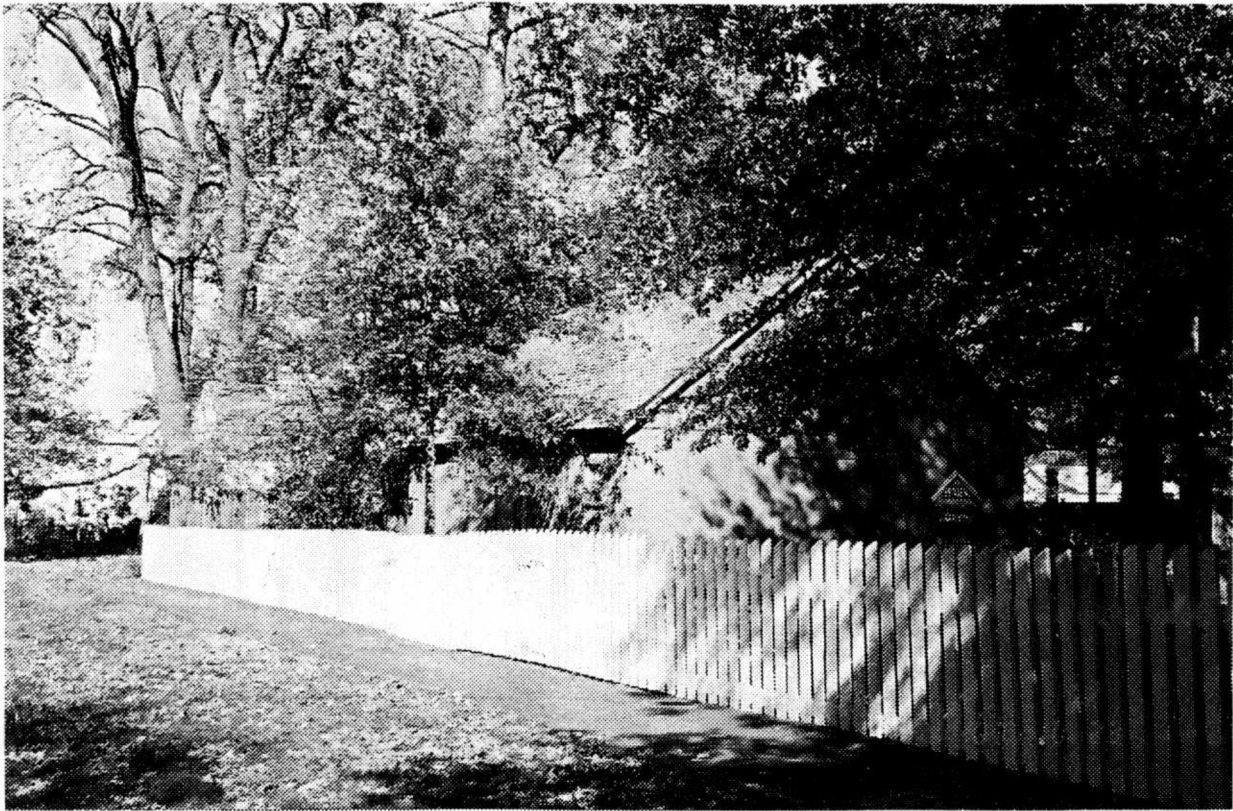
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The Brick Sidewalk

Steve Holden mentions in his report that the brick sidewalk on the west side of the Historic Site has been lifted and relaid. There had been a great deal of conversation over the years about the best way to handle the problem of a brick sidewalk being overgrown with grass. Many homeowners in Galesburg have had the same problem.

Some people spray the grass over the bricks with weedkiller and then dig out the dead grass. Others dig up the sod growing over the bricks which is hard labor of the worst kind. Others just let the bricks sink farther into the ground.

Another problem can be rainwater draining into the lawn and/or buildings. If the sidewalk is too low the rainwater can go one way and if the sidewalk is too high, the water can go the other way. The discussion of the problem can be mindboggling over time. What to do?



The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association gathered its mental and economic resources and hired Ralston-Mangieri to raise the level of the ground and reinstall the brick sidewalk.

The photograph shows the finished project. It definitely adds to the appearance of the Site and makes for easier access to the Barn and garden.

Completion of the gate for the arbor in the spring will make walking around the Site even more comfortable. This project has added a great deal to the grounds.

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Santa's Doll Factory

The drawing on page 10 was copied from *The Galesburg Evening Mail* of December 14, 1900. Santa would have to be quite an ambitious artist to paint the faces on so many dolls.

Dolls with china heads of this type were very popular in the late 1800s. The most beautiful ones were made in France and Germany and imported by the United States. The heads were usually attached to leather bodies filled with sawdust or horsehair.

Many of the dolls were sold in an undressed state. Doting mothers and grandmothers carefully sewed clothes for the doll to wear. Human hair wigs were common on the more expensive dolls. Others might have mohair glued to the head.

The importation of this kind of doll was curtailed with the entry of the United States into World War I.

Today there are many collectors of these dolls who would spend large sums of money to own one. If you have one in your old trunk, take good care of it. The doll would be treasured in years to come by your children and grandchildren, or, it might fetch a few dollars.



IN SANTA'S DOLL FACTORY.
HE PREPARES TO MAKE GLAD THE HEARTS OF GOOD LITTLE LADIES.

An Interview with the Poet

(This interview published in The Daily Register-Mail of December 7, 1939, was written by Paul Friggens, a Staff Writer for the NEA [Newspaper Enterprise Association] Service. It describes the enormous amount of time and effort Carl Sandburg put into his Lincoln books and the historical influence of Galesburg on him.)

In subsequent years, some details of Sandburg's biography of Lincoln were challenged by a few historians. In addition, they were unhappy about the work's lyrical quality. They preferred a drier style.

Interestingly, several of those questioned details have been demonstrated to be close to the truth, if not wholly accurate. Moreover, Sandburg's style continues to be fresh, and does more to make Lincoln real than other works which followed.)

"A lanky, unforgettable figure slouches in one chair, with his feet on another, and looks back on a writing job equal to the Bible plus Shakespeare--'in words anyhow.'

"Carl Sandburg is describing his life of Lincoln, that last four hefty volumes of which are at last off the Harcourt, Brace presses. They are The War Years and they follow The Prairie Years published in 1926.

"The bookmen can't remember when they've handled anything bigger as a single biography. Into it has gone a lifetime of study; 10 years actual writing time, 2503 pages, 1,500,000 words in the last four volumes alone, plus 350,000 words in The Prairie Years.

"No other biographer has gone so deeply into the thousands of historic facts about Lincoln and his

times. With completion of The War Years, it is probably safe to say the scholars need look no further for any known and authentic Lincolniana.

"Carl Sandburg, reaching for another stogie, squinting out at you with that studious left eye, from beneath a careless mop of white hair, tells the whole amazing story.

"Lincoln is a passion with the poet. He has some of the Lincoln characteristics.

"He first 'felt' Lincoln nearly 50 years ago when, as a boy of 13, he delivered milk across the campus of Knox college, at Galesburg, Ill., paused on the spot where Lincoln debated Douglas.

"The shadow of Lincoln was over Galesburg,' he recalls.

"But the time came when I decided that the Lincoln they were talking about was not real. Years passed. I had a viewpoint, an inquiry.'

"At 17, Sandburg left Galesburg where he was born 61 years ago, rode the 'blinds' west, scooped wheat in Kansas, washed dishes in hotels in Denver and Omaha, pushed trucks in a brickyard, blacked stoves for meals, sweated in Puerto Rico with the Sixth Illinois Infantry in '98, returned to Galesburg to work his way through Lombard college. He became a newspaper reporter in Chicago, World War correspondent for NEA service, nationally known poet.

"He decided to write a boy's life of Lincoln. Instead, he wrote the epochal Prairie Years. Those volumes left the Civil War president at the Illinois line, on his way to Washington. In the fall of 1928 Sandburg started planning The War Years.

"Sandwiched between some 600

biographies and hundreds of other books, documents, newspaper files, letters, records, which he had read, classified (with the help of his wife and three daughters) and re-read, Sandburg began the writing job in the attic of his lake shore home, a goat farm, at Harbert, Mich., a year later in 1929.

"Like Rubens, I worked eight hours a day, rain or shine."

"By the fall of 1934 he had reached January, 1864, halfway in *The War Years*, whereupon he rewrote hundreds of passages 'to get the feeling of scale and proportion,' telescoped one chapter into 'the longest sentence in American history--two and one-half pages.' He finished the first draft in the fall of 1938, promptly began a 'rigorous revision' of his 1,500,000 words.

"I let myself go a few times--on momentous things."

"And now the biography's finished; how does Sandburg feel about Lincoln?"

"Lincoln emerges stronger and finer. He grows on you. But he is a mystery in several realms which we shall never solve completely."

"Thirteen years ago, when he began planning *The War Years*, Sandburg said:

"I have long wanted to take Lincoln away from the religious bigots and the professional politicians, and restore him to the common people, to whom he belongs."

"Sandburg, son of the prairie, poet, stacker of words, Lincoln's greatest biographer, has tried to do precisely that."

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Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
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