

# 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

## WINTER 2020-2021

### FROM SITE SVCS. SPEC. BRYAN ENGELBRECHT "ALL RIGHT SO FAR"

In *Incidentals*, published in 1907 here in Galesburg by Philip Green Wright's Asgard Press, Carl Sandburg wrote, "I have never been in such hard luck that I could not smile at myself in reproach as I thought of the man who fell down one of these elevator shafts. It was a nine-story building. He was going headfirst and as he passed each floor, he called out, "All right so far!" At times in 2020 Site staff have felt like the gentlemen from the story. We started the year with a change in management as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources placed the direction of the Site underneath Scott Roman of the Black Hawk State Historic Site Complex after Martha Jane Downey retired. On March 15 the Site completely closed to visitors due to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. The grounds were sealed off, and at certain points staff worked from home. On May 29 we reopened the grounds to the public. On July 16 the buildings reopened to small groups of visitors. For a brief period the summer and fall returned to "normal" as visitors made their way back to the Site. We even opened an exhibition of items from the estate of Charles "Chuck" J. Bednar Jr. As of November 20, Barn, Cottage, and Visitor's Center closed again due to the implementation of Tier 3 COVID-19 mitigations in Illinois. As I write this, the buildings remain closed indefinitely. Visitors are welcome to stroll the grounds from dusk to dawn daily.

It has been a struggle at times to keep up with the changes wrought by the pandemic. There has been a learning curve over the course of the year as we learned more about the virus itself and how to protect ourselves and the public. We have had to adapt to different cleaning regimens and working together from a distance when projects arise. We have missed working with our volunteers and Master Gardeners, who have been sidelined as a precaution by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The possibility of budget cuts from the State of Illinois appear to loom into the future. We have tumbled down seemingly headfirst through these changes at times.

Like the man in Sandburg's story though, the Site staff and I have kept smiling and are operating with the "All right so far" attitude. We have continued to work on maintaining the Site in the face of these repeated temporary closures. We have even made a few improvements over the course of the year. We know that

at some point the pandemic will end, and we will return to our regular operations. Visitors and volunteers will return as they did before the Coronavirus became part of our lives. The pandemic will become simply a memory. We will be alright. We cannot tell exactly what will happen in the upcoming months, but we will continue to remain positive and continue our important work of preserving Carl Sandburg's birthplace and promoting his works. As Sandburg also wrote in *Incidentals*, "I am an idealist. I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on the way." We do not know where 2021 will take us, but we are on our way there now. We will strive to be idealistic in the face of adversity just as Carl Sandburg was in his life

### 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!

### WELCOME NEW CSHSA BOARD MEMBERS

By Pat Kane, CSHSA Board President

At the upcoming December 8 CSHSA Board of Directors meeting two new Directors will join the Board. Micaela Terronez and Joey Lucero were nominated and approved for Board positions 1 and 3 at the November 10 CSHSA Board meeting.

Micaela Terronez is an Augustana College graduate with degrees in history and anthropology. She received a Masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Iowa, serving in library and archival positions within non-profit, public, and academic institutions for the past five years. Micaela is currently the librarian for special collections at Knox College's Seymour Library where various Carl Sandburg-related materials and manuscripts reside.

"As the steward of these collections, a major responsibility of my position centers around encouraging engagement and outreach with these resources. I am happy to continue this responsibility in a community role as a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association." Micaela has seen first-hand how materiality and storytelling positively influence communities and is eager to share her "insights" with coordinating virtual activities and in-person programming. She is very excited to be involved in the Galesburg community.

Joey Lucero was born and raised in Galesburg and is currently the Box Office Assistant and Marketing Coordinator at the Orpheum Theatre. He has been an active member of the Galesburg arts community since a young age beginning as a student of the Performing Arts Academy. He toured as an actor in the CSHSA's production of "Spink, Skabootch, and Swipes in Rootabaga County!" which played at Railroad Days and all Galesburg and area schools in 2017. As a result of his role in the theater version of selections from Carl Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*, Joey developed a keen interest in Sandburg's life and importance in history. "Through working on staff at The Orpheum Theatre as the Marketing Coordinator, I have cultivated my skills in social media, marketing management, and graphic design,...live streaming and basic video production. As a member of the CSHSA Board of Directors, I would look to share my talents and knowledge to further the organization's mission and improve the experiences of all those that wish to learn more about Carl Sandburg's legacy."

Certainly Micaela's and Joey's fresh perspectives and energy will be valued additions to the CSHSA's mission. Welcome, welcome!

### "THE MURALS"

By TG Jamroz

[Ed. Note: This story by CSHSA member TG Jamroz is about his documentary "The Murals" which has a connection to Sandburg. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/themuralsdoc> to learn more about Mr. Jamroz's project and see a video with CSHSA member Rex Cherrington telling about Sandburg's life in Galesburg.]

Greetings, all you fellow Sandburg admirers! My name is TG Jamroz. I am a filmmaker and musician from Chicago. I have been working on a documentary over the last couple years that has a connection to Carl Sandburg. It's called "The Murals," and it is the story of the murals created during the Works Progress Administration (WPA) era that adorn the walls of Chicago's Uptown Post Office and the artists who created and inspired them. The murals are the work of Henry Varnum Poor, a noted 20th century artist who worked chiefly in New York. One of Poor's Uptown Post Office murals features an image of Sandburg, because Poor regarded Sandburg as a man whose life and work exemplified the spirit of the people of Chicago and the surrounding region.



Mural representation of Sandburg in Chicago Uptown Post Office lobby. Courtesy TG Jamroz.

A bit of backstory: I live only a few blocks from the house in Chicago where Carl Sandburg wrote *Chicago Poems*. About a dozen years ago I made a film called "Chicago Poems" with characters inspired by Sandburg's poems. The film had a screening at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago. The Uptown Post Office featuring the murals is a few blocks from that house. I also lived in Galesburg when I was a child. My father was a teacher and football coach at the old Costa Catholic High School. When it closed due to financial issues, my family moved on. I had not been back to Galesburg until recently when I had the opportunity to film at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site and meet with local historian Rex Cherrington and other experts. I have made two trips to Galesburg in recent years and have visited many Galesburg locations including the Sandburg Statue, Knox College, the Galesburg Railroad Museum, and even my old family home on North Broad St. I was fortunate enough to catch a Galesburg Labor Day parade.



Documentarian TG Jamroz by Sandburg bust, Carl Sandburg State Historic Site, Galesburg, IL.

"The Murals" project started when I was standing in line at the Uptown Post Office a couple of years ago. It was the holiday season, and the line was long and slow. I was looking at the murals above the lobby, and I asked myself, "Who made these?" A year and a half later I found myself standing in the living room of Poor's 90-year old son Peter's apartment in New York City's Upper East Side, as Peter had been kind enough to grant me an interview. The ensuing few years have had me immersed in research relating to Poor's murals. During this time I discovered a web of relationships between Poor, Sandburg, and famed Chicago architect Louis Sullivan.

"The Murals" covers the history of the artwork, including a government-sponsored contest for the winning designs, quite a bit about Poor the artist, and how Sandburg and Sullivan fit into the story. "The Murals" is not a comprehensive look at Sandburg's life; that has been done before with more money and quite good result, but "The Murals" does touch on Sandburg's life as a musician. As a musician myself, I was fascinated with the story of Sandburg's music, something most people

either aren't familiar with or at least doesn't come to mind first when thinking of Sandburg. *The American Songbag* was a collection of songs and poetry set to music that Sandburg wrote and collected in his travels. It was first published in 1927. It turned out to be a very laborious project for Sandburg.

Sandburg was one of the first folk musicians to perform these songs in public and private settings. Many young folk musicians from Pete Seeger to Bob Dylan were inspired by Sandburg and the songs in *The American Songbag*. Sandburg was not a particularly talented guitarist or singer, but he had his own style. Today, a simple internet search will produce recordings of Sandburg performing these songs.

Poor was a fan of Sandburg. Peter told me that he remembered his father listening to Sandburg's records. One of The Uptown Post Office murals features a figure of a man with a guitar. My research has revealed that the figure with the guitar represented both Sandburg and a poet and friend of Sandburg's from Springfield, Illinois named Vachel Lindsay. When Poor submitted his plan for the murals to the committee overseeing the installation through the United States Treasury's Section of Fine Arts, the committee complained that the figure with the guitar didn't accurately depict Sandburg's contribution to the culture of Chicago and the Midwest. Poor argued via letter that Sandburg's performance of poetry to music and Lindsay's often dramatic poetry readings (what might today be called slam poetry) were uniquely products of the Midwest and were important contributions to modern American culture.

Poor and Sandburg were kindred spirits. They were self-made artists whose fingerprints are all over 20th century culture. They were truly Americans and renaissance men. As an artist I have found that these men are people to look up to and emulate.

"The Murals" is currently in post-production. I was invited to screen a version of it at the Barn at the State Historic Site before this pandemic emerged. Hopefully, I will be able to screen "The Murals" in the Galesburg area in the near future and maybe as part of the show feature a live performance of some of the music from Sandburg's *The American Songbag*.

## SANDBURG IN THE GPL ARCHIVES

By Emily DuGranrut

[Ed. Note: Emily DuGranrut is originally from Lima, Ohio. She currently lives in Galesburg, Illinois where she is the Archivist at the Galesburg Public Library and a member of the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Prior to that, she lived in Des Moines and worked at the Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives. In her free time, Emily enjoys many outdoor activities, spending time with her cats, and reading. She is passionate about local and community history and making sure all people are part of it.]

For many writers, musicians, politicians, or public figures there comes a time in their careers when they begin to think about their legacy—how will I be remembered? Where? By whom?

In the case of Carl Sandburg his legacy is as far-reaching as his career. Many of his papers and materials related to his writing can be found at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Items relating to his birth and early life can be found in Galesburg at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. Still more materials can be found at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in North Carolina. All of these places hold a piece of Carl Sandburg's story, but no individual location or set of materials can tell the full story. There are also small collections relating to Sandburg throughout the country and world. As the archivist at the Galesburg Public Library, I get to oversee a small piece of his story.

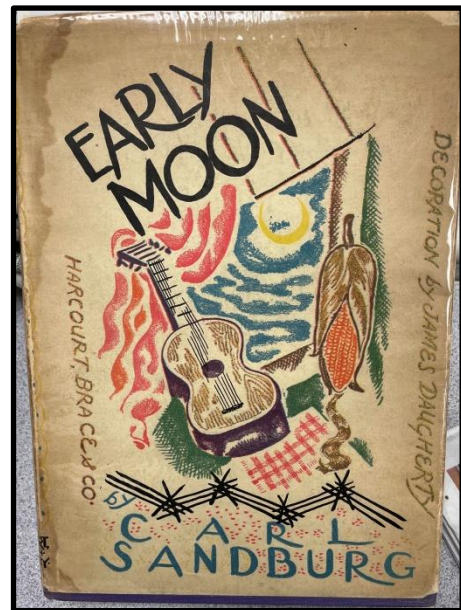
GPL is fortunate to have many editions of all of Sandburg's published works from fiction to non-fiction, short stories to poetry. Some of the items are signed, and some are first editions. We also have recordings of his music performances and several rare photographs. Here are a few of my favorites from our collection:

### *The Lombard Review*

We have a few editions of the *Review* in our collection. The September 1901 edition is in the best condition. In this issue Carl Sandburg is listed as the editor of the publication.

### *Early Moon*

The first edition of *Early Moon* has some of my favorite artwork featured in any Sandburg book. The cover was illustrated by James Dougherty.



First edition of *Early Moon* contained in GPL Archives.

Courtesy Emily Dugranrut.

### *Carl Sandburg, the Man and His Poetry*

This small publication was part of the *Little Blue Book* series published by the Haldeman-Julius Publishing Co, of Girard, KS. The books were small, staple-bound issues featuring literature, how-to manuals, and editorials on social issues.

This is just a small snippet of the materials on Sandburg available at the GPL. The collection is always changing. If you would like any more information on the materials in the collection, please contact me at [archives@galesburglibrary.org](mailto:archives@galesburglibrary.org).

## YOU PROMISED LINCOLN!

By Lawrence Webb

[Lawrence Webb, journalism professor emeritus at Anderson University, Anderson, SC, minister, former editor, and author of seven books is a new CSHSA member. This story is from his upcoming book with the working title *Carl Sandburg: Poet with a Social Conscience*. Rev. Webb lives in Anderson, SC with his wife Pansy. They have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and two grandchildren.]

My Carl Sandburg course description in the Elderhostel catalog called attention to his wide variety of literary genres: poems, Abraham Lincoln biography, children's books, one novel, autobiographies, and a collection of folksongs.

I could not do justice to that wide range of writing in the five hours of an Elderhostel week. So from the start, I have focused almost entirely on poems and usually pointed that out in the first session. One summer that narrowed emphasis caused a tempest in a teacup.

At the end of the first session a woman charged up to the lectern and asked, "When are we going to do Lincoln?"

I tried to explain the difficulty in covering the range of Sandburg's writing.

"Then aren't you breaking the contract?"

"Ma'am?"

"You didn't tell the truth in the catalog," she said.

I still wasn't with her.

"The course description in the Elderhostel catalog included Lincoln's biography and children's books," she said as her classmates seemed eager to hurry away from her loud speaking. "You got me here under false pretenses if you're leaving those out."

Then she hinted at some form of protest for deceptive advertising, even a lawsuit. I listened without argument until her lament lost its intensity, then tried again to explain the difficulty of doing justice to Sandburg's wide-ranging portfolio.

After a time the woman finished her complaint about Sandburg and began talking about her recent widowhood and how her children had encouraged her to find an Elderhostel as a way to get her mind off her grief. They knew of her long-standing interest in Lincoln, so when they saw that reference, our week became the week of choice. Another problem, her roommate in the dorm snored almost non-stop.

Our hostile Elderhosteler became less hostile after I spent some time listening and making no effort at rebuttal. Thinking of her most recent complaint — about her roommate's night noises—remembering we had two

or three unoccupied rooms in the dorm where we were housing the group, I asked, "Do you think your stay would be more pleasant in a private room?"

"Oh, that would be much, much better," she smiled. "Do you have one?"

"I think we can get you a room of your own by the time you finish lunch."

Her face brightened, and the smile lasted the rest of the week. And we revised our course description!

## CARL SANDBURG, BIG BILL HAYWOOD, & GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

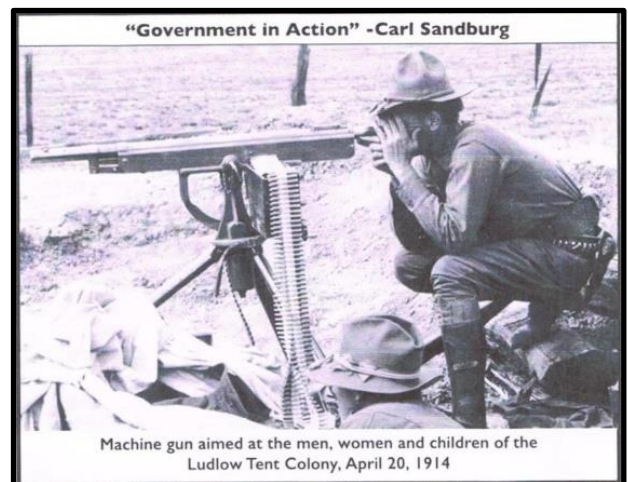
By Rich Hanson

It was to be expected that the journalist Carl Sandburg would be in sympathy with Big Bill Haywood (1869-1828), a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World and a member of the executive committee of the Socialist Party of America. Haywood had been involved in a number of important labor battles and had earned the enmity of corporate, its money, and its paid politicians. He was in the Cook County Jail, charged with participation in numerous crimes.

When it came to Government, Sandburg was skeptical. In an article written for the *International Socialist Review* in October, 1916, Sandburg wrote of going out to try to find "Government."

*I saw a policeman dragging a drunken man to the calaboose. It was the Government in action. I saw a ward alderman slip into an office one morning and talk with a judge. Later in the day the judge dismissed a case against a pickpocket who was a live ward worker for the alderman. Again, I saw that this was the Government doing things.*

*I saw militiamen level their rifles at a crowd of workingmen who were trying to get other workingmen to stay away from a shop where there was a strike on. Government in action.*



The Ludlow Massacre occurred during the Colorado Coalfield War when Colorado National Guard and Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. guards fired on a tent colony of 1,200 strikers killing twenty-one miners, wives, and children. Photo courtesy of Rich Hanson

*Everywhere I saw that Government is a thing made of men, that Government has blood and bones, It is many mouths whispering into many ears, sending telegrams, aiming rifles, writing orders, saying yes and no.*

*A government is just as secret and mysterious and sensitive as any human sinner carrying a load of germs, traditions and corpuscles handed down from fathers and mothers way back.*

Sandburg's headline for his Haywood interview was an immediate "attention-getter. "

#### HAYWOOD LONGS FOR 'OTHER BOYS' IN JAIL

Sandburg will lead his reader to an explanation for this sentiment while at the same time painting a sympathetic portrait of the labor advocate,

*Thru a steel cage door at the Cook County jail, Big Bill Haywood today spoke the defiance of the International Workers of the World to its enemies and captors.*

*Bill didn't pound on the door, shake the iron clamps nor ask for pity nor make any kind of play as a hero. He peered through the square holes of the steel slats and talked in the even voice of a poker player who may or may not hold a winning hand. It was the voice of a man who sleeps well, digests what he eats, and requires neither sedatives to sooth him nor stimulants to stir him up.*

*The man accused of participation in 10,000 separate and distinct crimes lifted a face checkered by the steel lattice work and said with a slow smile:*

*'Hello, I'm glad to see you. Do you know when they're going to bring the rest of the boys here? We'd like to have them from all over the country together here. It would be homelike for us all to be together.'*

Sandburg asked Haywood about the 10,000 criminal offenses that the I.W.W stood accused of.

*Ten thousand crimes! If they can make the American public, or any fair-minded jury believe that, I don't see how they'll do it. Why, they can't put their fingers on one single place where we have hampered the government in carrying out the war.*

*The I.W.W. has done nothing on the war one way or another. It is true we have called strikes, but they were not aimed at stopping the war. Look! In one industry where a strike was called they could have paid workmen \$10 a day and then made fat profits. The I.W.W. has been fighting and will keep on fighting for higher wages to pay for a higher cost of living.*

Haywood told Sandburg how the war has led to skyrocketing food costs, and that a flannel shirt cost a lumberjack a week's wages. He talked of families who couldn't afford the cost of milk for their children and said "read the testimony federal investigators took up in the Mesaba Range. It's conditions and not philosophy that makes the I.W.W."

Sandburg's column continues.....

*The checkered face in the steel slats and electric light kept a perfect calm. Where LaFollette is explosive and Mayor Thompson overplausible and grievous, Haywood takes it easy. He discusses the alleged 10,000 crimes with the massive leisure of Hippo Vaughn pitching a shut-out.*

*'You are charged with burning wheat fields,' he was reminded.*

*'I deny it absolutely. Why would workingmen burn up their own employment? They would be fools.'*

*'You are accused of driving spikes into spruce trees needed for war airplanes.'*

*'Deny it absolutely. And get this, boy: Not a dirty German dollar has ever come into our hands that we knew of. Go back through our speeches and literature and you will find that a year ago, two years ago and before the war ever started, we were in favor of slashing the Kaiser's throat. Every dollar we've got now and every dollar the organization will get comes from workingmen.'*

Despite Big Bill's adamant statements that he and the I.W.W. didn't work to impede the war effort, in 1918 he was convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to twenty years in prison. During appeals which stretched into 1921 he finally gave up any hope of seeing his conviction overturned. In desperation he fled to Soviet Russia. There he was welcomed as a hero. He served as a labor advisor to Lenin until his death. Haywood's cremains were placed in two urns, one of which is buried in Moscow's Red Square with other Russian heroes of the Revolution. He asked though that the other urn be brought back to the United States. It is buried near the Haymarket Martyrs Monument in Chicago's Forest Home Cemetery. Carl Sandburg certainly sympathized with those who died to earn us an eight-hour workday. Besides the five Haymarket Martyrs and Bill Haywood's ashes, Joe Hill's ashes and the gravesites of Emma Goldman and Lucy Parsons are nearby as well. It is a spot worthy of a pilgrimage.

#### NEWS FROM JANUARY, 1882

By Barbara Schock

In January, 1882 Carl Sandburg was celebrating his fourth birthday. No doubt, he was unaware of some of the happenings in Galesburg in that long ago time.

He would later attend the Mission Chapel on South Seminary St. with his brother and sister. This news article from January 7th tells about the good and bad at the Sabbath School.

*There was a magic lantern show at the Mission Chapel on Tuesday evening for the entertainment of the Mission Sabbath School children. Charles Waste was master of ceremonies, while Mr. Jas. Ayres showed the scenes. Only one thing marred the pleasure of the occasion, and that was that some unruly boys took with them their pockets full of corn, with which to pepper any one who was not looking at them. One grain of corn struck Mr. Waste on the nose, which mishap excited the*

*risibles (misspelled in the original text) of the whole school. The pictures thrown upon the screen consisted of Bible scenes and humorous sketches, with which the children were highly pleased.*

August Sandburg once bought a barrel of apples for his family to eat. He hoped they would last through the winter. Carl and his brother Mart figured out how to purloin a few apples at a time from the storage closet where the apples were kept. Perhaps there were enough left for Mrs. Sandburg to bake an apple bread pudding from this recipe published January 18<sup>th</sup>.

*Cut some slices of bread thin, toast and butter them. Cover the bottom of the pudding dish with some of these, slice in thick pieces, some apples over them, sprinkle with some sugar, and so fill the dish with alternate layers of bread and apples. Mix together one pint of milk, one egg, a little salt and nutmeg, and pour over the bread and apples. Steam or bake for half an hour. Eat with or without sauce.*

The *Republican-Register* of January 28<sup>th</sup> reported the following:

*Three of the prisoners in the county jail—Williams and Perkins, the burglars, and Higgins, the buffalo robe thief—nearly escaped Tuesday evening about seven o'clock. It seems that the prisoners had taken out one of the iron legs from a bed and had suspended it by a wire, wrapped with twine over the heavy iron door, so that when the turnkey opened the door, the piece of iron would fall down between the door and the sill and prevent the door's shutting. The iron leg was wrapped with rags to prevent a noise when the door was closed against it. The scheme worked admirably. When the turnkey unlocked the door and went on the inside, he slammed it again. Seeing that their little scheme might be discovered, the prisoners grabbed the turnkey and threw him back. They then escaped out of the door, and were making through the hall rapidly when Deputy Richey, being in the office, and hearing the racket, rushed out and caught the prisoners, and put them back in their cells, where they will be kept till their trials instead of being let out into the main room. If Mr. Richey had not been there the prisoners not doubt would have escaped.*

### **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 seventh installment of a Sandburg biography written by CSHSA member Tomas Junglander of Vadstena, Sweden.]

Sandburg did not originally intend to write about Lincoln the President. Further, he lacked support from universities or foundations to subsidize the massive research to cover the years 1861-1865 of Lincoln's life.

Sandburg took a breather from his Lincoln research but by 1928, "I made my decision, without telling it to anyone, that I would take my chances on doing the war years." He continued to work as a journalist at *Chicago*

*Daily News*, and at this time he received more lecture invitations than he could accept. He began to plan his lecture schedule with three purposes in mind, "to entertain his audiences, earn the much-needed money and put himself close to important sources of Lincoln material."

Whenever possible he arranged his trips to meet Lincoln scholars and to travel to American cities where there were libraries with primary Lincoln materials. It was long before the day of inexpensive photocopying. He had to make notes from documents or have expensive photocopies made.

### **THE WAR YEARS**

Sandburg gave up his job as a reporter in 1932 to have more time to finish the biography. He worked for several years before he showed his manuscripts to his publisher. Then he toiled on the four volumes of the Lincoln biography *The War Years* during most of the 1930's with strong support from his publisher. The manuscript of 3,400 pages was finally delivered to his publisher on December 1, 1939. The entire Lincoln biography consisted of six volumes and ends with the assassination of the President in 1865. The critical reception for *The War Years* was generally more favorable than for *The Prairie Years*. Again the language was poetic, but Sandburg refrained from fictionalizing. Some historians had their objections this time also, not least as regards the lack of footnotes. Other historians are lyrical, among them Henry Steele Commager who wrote in the *Yale Review*, "The poets have always understood Lincoln, from Whitman and Emerson to Lindsay and Bénet, and it is fitting that from a pen of a poet should come the greatest of all Lincoln biographies, one of the great biographies in our literature."

### **SANDBURG'S LINCOLN BIOGRAPHY**

By Mike Hobbs

With a lot of time on my hands during these pandemic times I decided to start reading Sandburg's six-volume Lincoln biography. After having finished the two-volume *The Prairie Years* I've started the first volume of *The War Years*. Here are some observations about the biography thus far. I like Sandburg's lyrical description of people, events, and places regarding Lincoln's life. Sandburg's writing style reminds me of James Fenimore Cooper's style in his *Leatherstocking Tales*, which includes *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Deerslayer*, which I read when I was twelve or thirteen years old. The protagonist in the *Leatherstocking Tales* was Natty Bumppo, a frontiersman skilled in survival in the forests of New York State in the early 1800's. While reading the *Tales* I was fascinated by Cooper's description of the primeval forest with its dangers and challenges. Many readers criticize Cooper for his attention to the smallest details, and they find reading his *Leatherstocking* books laborious, but his style interested me. It enabled me to get lost in another time and place as I put myself in Natty Bumppo's shoes treading the menacing forest with a constant eye out for hostile Native Americans and

wondering about my next meal and shelter for the night. Like Cooper's description of Bumpo's life, Sandburg goes into great detail describing Lincoln's life in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois against a panoramic description of events in the United States.

In the opening paragraphs of the preface to *The Prairie Years* Sandburg makes a connection between Lincoln and Galesburg and Knox County. He states that this book would be a sketch of Lincoln "who was intimate with the settlers of the Knox County neighborhood where I (Sandburg) grew up as a boy, and where I heard the talk of men and women who had eaten with Lincoln, given him a bed overnight, heard his jokes and lingo, remembered his silences and his mobile face." Sandburg goes on to mention Galesburg's mayor Henry Sanderson "who carried warm cistern water to a bathtub for Lincoln" while the senatorial candidate stayed at his home the night before the Lincoln-Douglas Debate at Knox College and Galesburg's Clark E. Carr, Lincoln's friend, who said about him, "He can make a cat laugh."

Sandburg's writes about Lincoln's unquenched thirst for learning at a young age, "...what he tasted of books in school was only a beginning, only made him hungry and thirsty, shook him with a wanting and a wanting of more and more of what was hidden between the covers of books." He quoted Lincoln, "...my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read." Lincoln's father thought books were overrated. Lincoln's thirst for learning and his father's disdain for books reflected Sandburg's own experience.

Here are more connections to Knox County. Sandburg mentions Zachariah Riney, Lincoln's first teacher in Kentucky. Zachariah Riney is an ancestor of former Abingdon resident Larry Riney, my schoolmate. The school that Riney taught Lincoln was two to three miles from the Lincoln family's Knob Creek farm. In 1832 a young Captain Abraham Lincoln marched his militia unit across Knox County during the Black Hawk War. In Knox County a white sow joined the unit as a mascot. The sow accompanied the men for several days until she met her inglorious end as a meal for the soldiers.

Sandburg is teaching me many things I didn't know about Lincoln. He writes that 20,000 people attended Lincoln's debate with Douglas in Galesburg, but that number was diminished, because a trainload of 2,000 debate-bound people from Peoria didn't arrive in Galesburg until the debate was over. The train had mechanical problems enroute, and the passengers "picked hazel-nuts and rambled hillsides" during the breakdown.

In 1859 Lincoln paid \$400 to become owner of the German language newspaper, the *Illinois Staats-Anzeiger*. Sandburg states that despite losing the senatorial election to Douglas, Lincoln had become "a seasoned and hardened player in the great American game of politics.... Without the cunning of a fox, without a wilderness sagacity, without natural instincts such as those guiding wild geese on thousand-mile flights, he would have gone down and under in stalking a

presidential nomination." He drew up a contract with the operator of the newspaper to publish articles favorable to the Republican Party. The wily, calculating Lincoln knew that with the growing German presence in Illinois a newspaper in their language would be beneficial to him. After he was elected president in 1860, he sold his ownership of the newspaper.

Some issues Sandburg discusses in his Lincoln biography have relevance to today, for instance, the president exceeding his authority. While he was a Whig Congressman in 1847, Lincoln attempted to prove with his "spot resolutions" that President James K. Polk had exceeded his authority in taking the United States to war with Mexico in 1846. Lincoln did vote to supply the troops in Mexico, but he was criticized for being unpatriotic for questioning the legal basis for going to war while other politicians wrapped themselves in the flag. He became a one-term Congressman.

Another example—people feared that electors would be hindered from certifying that Lincoln won in the chaotic days following the 1860 election. Today there has been talk about some state legislatures overriding the popular vote for president by appointing electors because of allegedly fraudulent voting. Bombastic Lt. General Winfield Scott, an early military advisor to Lincoln, had this solution, "I have said that any man who attempted by force or unparliamentary disorder to obstruct or interfere with the lawful count of the electoral votes...should be lashed to the muzzle of a twelve-pounder [cannon] and fired out of a window of the Capitol."

I look forward to further reading of *The War Years* to learn more about our sixteenth president..



This is the frontispiece of *The Prairie Years* Vol. I. Caption reads "Jackknife signature of Abe Lincoln on his ax handle, New Salem, Illinois, 1834." Original in Oliver R. Barrett Collections, Chicago."

2021 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP FORM		
Membership Categories		
<i>(Check one)</i>		
	\$10.00	Student / Senior (62+)
	\$20.00	Individual
	\$40.00	Family
	\$100.00	Donor
	\$250.00	Sponsor
	\$500.00	Patron
	\$1,000.00	Benefactor

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Receive *Inklings and Idlings*: Please check choice.

\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail    \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail

**Mail Checks to:**

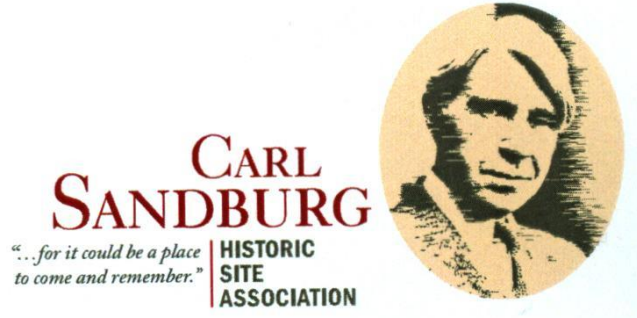
Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association  
P.O. Box 585  
Galesburg, Illinois 61402

**-OR-**

**Pay Online with PayPal or Credit Card:**

<http://www.sandburg.org/membership.html>

**Thank you for your support!**



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.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

