

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 2019

HELEN "TEDE" VERNER

By Mike Hobbs



Helen "Tede" Verner 1937-2019

Former CSHSA Board Member Helen "Tede" Verner passed away on February 1, 2019. A well-attended Celebration of Life was held for her at the Abingdon United Methodist Church on February 16 with psalms, spiritual songs, and heart-felt eulogies.

Tede touched the lives of many young people. One of them was Susan Strahler O'Brien who graduated from Abingdon High School in 1974. She now lives in the Atlanta area. Susan said that Tede was a family friend while she was growing up. Susan's parents Dr. Robert and Phoebe Strahler played golf with Tede at Lake Bracken. Tede visited the Strahlers at their farm, and she and the Strahler kids played golf and tennis, spent time at the Verner cottage at Lake Bracken, and canoed on the lake. While she was in high school, her class had Tede as a substitute teacher. She thought most of her classmates enjoyed Tede "because she was cool, funny and interesting." More recently they met at The Landmark for "lunch and laughter."

Susan speculates on how Tede got the nickname Tede. The story goes that Tede's father called her Tweedle Dee when she was little and called one of her brothers Tweedle Dum. Tede couldn't pronounce

Tweedle Dee. She pronounced it Tede. That name stuck with her throughout the rest of her life.

Susan wrote the following which appeared on the program for Tede's Celebration of Life:

Helen "Tede" Verner

Remember that school assignment when you had to take your name and use each letter to describe yourself? This is my attempt to describe Tede:

T—"Tenderly." Her favorite song. It was listed above her Abingdon High School senior picture.

E—Energetic. She could run circles around me.

D—Delightful. She was. She also used this adjective to describe other people often.

E—Educated. Knox College undergraduate degree and two masters degrees. She never stopped learning. She never stopped teaching.

V—Voracious. Reader and Writer. She wrote about me and the high school marching band halftime show in the 1970's—Parallelograms!

E—Extraordinary: a) Going beyond what is usual, regular or customary; b) exceptional to a very marked extent.

R—Ready. Always. For the next adventure.

N—Nonvisual. She was definitely nonvisual. We had countless discussions regarding visual v. nonvisual.

E—Exuberant. Her LAUGH! Her larger-than-life descriptions of her "People." Her day-to-day demeanor.

R—Rhythmical. She truly loved music and would burst into song at a moment's notice.

I was truly lucky to call her a friend. She will be greatly missed...

--Susan Strahler O'Brien

2019 PENNY PARADE

Festivities for Knox County students who participate in the Penny Parade will be April 25 at 1 p.m. at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. The Penny Parade is an important fundraiser for the CSHSA. Come to the Site during the April 25 festivities to make your donation.

FROM SITE SUPERINTENDENT MARTHA DOWNEY WELCOME SPRING!

In spite of chilly temperatures spring activities are beginning at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.

The wonderful Master Gardeners have set Friday April 5 as our annual spring clean-up of the Site's grounds with Wednesday April 10 as the rain date. We will begin at 9 a.m. and work until 1 p.m. Come join the work for an hour or the entire time. Your help is needed. Bring your gardening gloves and tools. There will be coffee, water, and snacks.

David G. Smith will begin the Carl Sandburg Songbag Concert Series on March 10. His concert is the first of nine concerts in this year's series. Mark your calendars for the upcoming concerts:

- April 14 Dan Zahn & Kate Moretti, folk duo.
- May 5 Ian Johnson & Manny Lopez III, funky guitar and keyboard.
- June 9 Last Acre - Mark & Molly Mathewson, a father and daughter duo.
- July 14 David Berntson, blues harmonica.
- Aug. 11 Andy Crawford & Harry Tonchev, jazz guitar and bass.
- Sept. 8 Barry Cloyd, full-time touring singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist.
- Oct. 13 Sally Weisenburg & Don Bernbaum, Blues & Jazz.
- Nov. 10 Jera Faraipanahi Scott and Carol Jean Trulson, acoustic guitar and keyboard.

This year the Carl Sandburg Songbag Concerts are possible thanks to a grant from the Mark & Celia Godsil Family Fund, a Donor Advised Fund of the Galesburg Community Foundation and the Community Impact Fund at the Galesburg Community Foundation.

Unfortunately, we begin spring without a staff person hired, so the Site remains closed. I have learned it is a long, slow process to hire someone. If you have any questions, please contact me at 309-927-3345.

THE UNIV. OF ILLINOIS SANDBURG COLLECTION

By Jensen Rehn

[Ed. Note: Jensen Rehn is the daughter of CSHSA members John and Jeralyn Rehn of Galesburg. A 2016 Galesburg High School graduate, she is currently a junior history major at the University of Illinois where she works at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library which houses the Sandburg collection.]

Growing up in Galesburg, I became accustomed to seeing Carl Sandburg's name and face everywhere. When I arrived at the University of Illinois in the fall of 2016, seeing Sandburg on posters around the Main Library surprised me. With time, I learned that the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois contains a collection of materials owned by Carl Sandburg or related to the author in some way. Started in

1956 with an acquisition from Sandburg himself, the collection continues to expand through new donations and purchases.

In the fall of 2017 I started working in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library where I search for materials requested by patrons and later reshelve these items. My coworkers quickly heard about my Galesburg connection to Sandburg. I always perk up when I get to retrieve a Sandburg item.

Through spending time in the stacks, I gradually gained a better understanding of what the Sandburg collection contains. Occasionally, I stumble across hidden gems while working with Sandburg material. Looking through a box of correspondence one day, I discovered a letter to Sandburg from President Franklin D. Roosevelt on White House letterhead. Another search led me to a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* inscribed by John Steinbeck to Sandburg with the message "in memory of a good day and a bad horse shoe game." My favorite folder of correspondence contains a "Carl Sandburg Pilgrimage" patch from 1961 and a Boy Scouts of America brochure describing the sixteen mile Carl Sandburg Trail through Galesburg.

Beyond books and correspondence, patrons to the library can also request the life mask of Carl Sandburg or a wooden locket containing a piece of fabric, a hair, and the message "To Carl Sandburg: A. Lincoln Blood Hair."



Jensen Rehn with the life mask of Carl Sandburg at the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

Other than the Sandburg collection, some of my favorite items in the library include the Book of Genesis from a Gutenberg Bible, M. T. Cicero's "Cato Major" printed by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, the Harwell collection of Civil War materials, and an extensive collection from Gwendolyn Brooks who succeeded Carl Sandburg as Poet Laureate of the State of Illinois.

Contrary to popular belief, individuals do not need to be affiliated with the University of Illinois to visit the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Anyone with a reader account can request items and visit between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make a reader account, go to <https://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/>. As a non-circulating unit, the Rare Book and Manuscript Library requires readers to use its reading rooms while working with materials from its collection. However, the RBML welcomes anyone to work with its collection, and scholars from around the world travel to Champaign-Urbana to study Sandburg's correspondence and books.

During a trip to the University of Illinois you can also visit the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections which are open to the public during the same hours as the RBML. Please feel free to contact me at jensenrehn@gmail.com with any questions about the collection or planning a visit. I hope to see some of you in Champaign-Urbana soon!

CARL SANDBURG'S TRIBUTE TO DANIEL BOONE

By Rich Hanson

In 2018 I had the opportunity to attend a "cemetery walk" at the South Henderson Church in rural Gladstone. This beautiful church built in 1855 sits in a serene vale of greenery, a verdant grove of trees on the Illinois prairie. The cemetery, lovely in its solitude, is the eternal resting place of many early Henderson County pioneers, two Revolutionary War soldiers, twenty-nine Civil War soldiers, and Elizabeth A. Robbin, a granddaughter of Daniel Boone by his son Nathan.

I couldn't help but think of Carl Sandburg's poem "Daniel Boone" as I listened to the woman who told Elizabeth's story. You'll find it in *Poems for the People*, a collection of seventy-two poems from the young reporter's early years in Chicago. It's written, as are a number of poems in this volume, as a personality sketch. Perhaps some of the impetus to write such poems is owed to the success of *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters, a friend of Carl's from the Windy City, although Sandburg does not choose to have his characters speak in the first person as Masters did.

The poem begins...

The Indians plucked out all his hair except a tuft on the crown of the head dressed out with feathers and ribbons.

They gave him a river water baptism to cleanse him of white blood.

Blackfish, the chief of the Shawanese, painted his face and spoke ancient rituals transforming him from a white to a red man.

He escaped and managed to make it back to Boonesborough, the settlement in the dark and bloody ground of Kentucky that bore his name, to warn of the impending Indian attack. Sandburg went on in the poem to compare Boone to his foes, noting how much like them he was in knowledge and spirit. He had earned his enemies grudging respect.

This was not the last time the red man tried to make a red man of him.

He knew the alphabets of wind and weather, the tricks of making fire in rain; he could read the footprints of men, deer, bear, buffalo, and had killed of each of them,

So, this was not the last time the red man said "Under his white skin he is red like us."

Such men as Daniel Boone blazed the trails that others would follow, founded settlements that took hold and prospered, and left their descendants a legacy of rich lands to work and heroic deeds to recount. He left an almost incredible legacy of progeny as well. Elizabeth Robbin was just one of sixty-eight grandchildren of Daniel and Rebecca.

Sandburg concluded his tribute to the great frontiersman by paying homage to his courage, homage that could be given as well to all of the early pioneers who risked death and endured hardship in order to carve livings and homes for themselves out of the wilderness.

When he died they found he had his coffin, made with his own hands, ready under his bed for the last, long sleep.

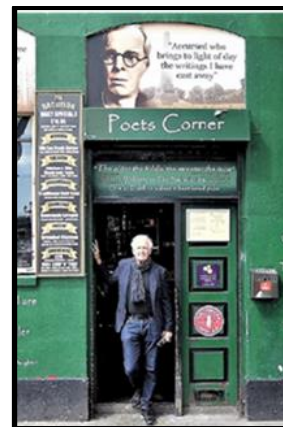
He was eighty-two and was laid alongside his wife who died seven years before him.

Of what rough travel and hard going in the next world can these two be afraid?

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 second installment of a Carl Sandburg biography written by CSHSA member Tomas Junglander of Vadstena, Sweden.]



Tomas Junglander. "Walking in the Footstep of James Joyce." Poets Corner, Dublin, Ireland.

HIS PARENTS

Carl got the interest in reading from his mother and the discipline from his father. His father, who had worked at various farms in Sweden, worked on a traveling CB&Q Railroad track gang in Illinois, and then worked for more than thirty years as a blacksmith helper for the CB&Q in Galesburg. The working time was ten hours a day, six days a week without holidays. He was rarely ill. In his spare time he handled his own house and the garden and eventually achieved the goal of being debt free. In half of the ten-room Berrien Street house his family lived; the rest was rented out. He did not smoke, did not go to bars, and tasted liquor only as medicine.

He could read but did not write, and important documents he signed with an X. The last years until his death in 1910 he worked as his own craftsman and then earned more than he ever had as blacksmith helper. August was very skilled in his profession thanks to everything he had learned as a farmhand on the farms in Sweden. August loved working, something Carl later in his life also kept in mind. Throughout his life Carl kept his father's Swedish hammer as an emblem of work, hope, and pride. The hammer is now visible at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site Visitor Center Museum.

Sandburg, who had a complicated relationship with his father, said later in life, "It is strange that I, who have written several books, had a father who had only a few weeks of schooling and never learned to write his name."

August changed his name from Danielsson to Sandberg and later to the more American Sandburg when he arrived in Galesburg. There were already many Danielssons in Galesburg, and sometimes he got the wrong paycheck.

Swedish intellectuals have sometimes been indignant of the fact that Sandburg had deliberately rejected his Swedish background and his lack of interest in Sweden. It is possible that it was like that during his most productive time, but the older he became, the more interest he showed in his parents' background in Sweden. We should remember that by this time, in the latter part of the 19th century, many moved from Sweden to avoid poverty, exclusion, and to create a better life. The old country fell into oblivion. Carl Sandburg had a dark picture of Sweden. His parents, August Danielsson from Åsbo in the Province of Östergötland and Clara Andersdotter from Appuna in the same province, told him very little about their background, and Carl rarely asked, something he regretted when he grew older, and his interest in Sweden increased.

Carl and his mother Clara were very close to each other throughout her life. His mother was a warm and intelligent woman who wanted her children to learn as much as possible. Her grandson, Richard Sandburg, has told that she pointed out to him and his friends how important it was to be good at school. Clara, who took care of the house and seven children, read everything the son wrote from school papers to the recent poetry collections. His first book with poems, *Reckless Ecstasy*

from 1907, Carl Sandburg awarded to his mother Clara, "I dedicate them to one who has kept a serene soul in a life of stress wrested beauty from the commonplace and scattered her gladness without stint of measure, MY MOTHER."

CHILDHOOD

In the 1880's, when Carl Sandburg grew up, demonstrations for the eight-hour working day (six days a week) began to be commonplace. Carl was allowed to accompany his father to these demonstrations, and he identified himself early with the workers and their conditions. Carl became aware of politics when he was very young, something that followed him throughout his life. He read a lot and was curious about what was going on in society. He often attended lectures on social issues. He went to trials and experienced how different people were treated depending on where in the community they belonged. And not least, he often went to the Auditorium, the theater of the city, usually free for helping with different chores.

From the age of eleven Carl started to contribute to his family's livelihood. A period in the late 19th century [Panic of 1893] led America to an economic downturn, and it was important that the contributions came from as many as possible in the family. As a result, Carl had to quit school while his older sister Mary was allowed to continue.

Carl Sandburg started his working life with low expectations. When he left school at the age of thirteen, his main goal was to find a fairly solid job that was not too boring.

He tells in his autobiography *Always the Young Strangers* that he had a long line of simple work in his hometown of Galesburg but also worked for a period around the middle of the United States. For several years Carl had typical boyhood jobs – delivering newspapers, shining shoes, working on milk routes. Later, when he worked full time, he was a barber's porter, window cleaner, painter, and in wintertime he harvested ice at Lake George.

Galesburg is a railroad junction out on the prairie southwest of Chicago, with engine sheds and blacksmiths' workshops. At this time, one third of the inhabitants were Swedes or Swedish descendants. It was the railways that made the world come to Galesburg. They did not have to travel but that was something Carl Sandburg needed.

At the age of nineteen, in June 1897, he decided to be a hobo for a while. The world around him attracted him. Carl wrote in his autobiography; "I walked out of the house with my hands free, no bag or bundle, wearing a black-sateen shirt, coat, vest and pants, a slouch hat, good shoes, no underwear, in my pockets a small bar of soap, a razor, a comb, a pocket mirror, two handkerchiefs, a piece of string, needles and thread, a Waterbury watch, a knife, a pipe and a sack of tobacco, three dollars and twenty-five cents in cash." Riding the rails became an important period in Carl Sandburg's life.

He collected impressions that he later used in his writing. He listened to songs, poems, and stories that he wrote down or remembered. He met all types of people who lived a wandering life, some voluntarily, but most of them had escaped from something. This was the beginning of the life that later came to contain constant travel. Carl Sandburg called himself "the eternal hobo."

When he came home from the journey that stretched around the middle of the United States and contained so many new impressions, he had difficulties returning to the quiet life of Galesburg.

In 1898, when the Spanish-American war broke out, he enlisted. He was shipped to Puerto Rico where he spent days battling only heat and mosquitoes. Sandburg wrote later; "Even if the war in Puerto Rico was not bloody, it was in every case an outing considered a dirty and sloppy story as long as it lasted."

From a historical point of view, the war was summarized by President Theodore Roosevelt as follows: "It wasn't much of a war but it was the best war we had."

Although Carl and his father had a complicated relationship, the father was now proud of his son, "My father gave me a rich smile that spread out and around his mouth and went up into his twinkling eyes. He gave me a handshake that wilted me."

With shop men and neighbors often asking him about Carl and the war, it made a deep impression on August Sandburg. Now he was sure he was an Americanized citizen with a son who had defended his country.

CARL SANDBURG AS A POLITICAL CANDIDATE

By Harry H. Anderson

[Ed. Note: This is a portion of a story written by Harry H. Anderson that appeared in the March 1990 issue of the *Swedish American Genealogist* which is published by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College. Mr. Anderson is a Milwaukee historian who served as Executive Director at the Milwaukee County Historical Society until 1998. His story is reprinted with permission of the Swenson Center.]

It is generally known that Carl Sandburg, the noted Swedish-American poet and author, was active in the Social-Democratic Party in Wisconsin early in the 20th century, and that he served for a time as private secretary to Emil Seidel, Milwaukee's first Socialist mayor. Yet none of the biographies of Sandburg, nor the studies of his involvement with the Milwaukee Socialists, contain any hint that he was ever a candidate for an elective position under the Socialist party banner. As a matter of fact, however, Sandburg did run for public office as a Socialist in the fall of 1910, losing in a three-way race for a seat in the Wisconsin State Assembly.

Born in Galesburg, Illinois of Swedish immigrant parents, Sandburg came to Milwaukee in 1907 to work as an organizer for the Social-Democratic Party, then rapidly becoming a power in Milwaukee municipal politics. The Socialists hoped to expand their appeal elsewhere in Wisconsin, and Sandburg labored for several years in the Fox River Valley and Lake Michigan shore districts,

seeking to attract voters to the party standard. He later returned to Milwaukee and was employed as a feature writer and reporter for several local newspapers, while keeping up his contacts with the Socialist movement.

In April, 1910, the Social-Democrats swept into power in the City of Milwaukee, capturing the mayor's office, most of the other important city-wide positions, twenty-one of thirty-five aldermanic seats, and two civil judgeships. Later that fall, the party elected a majority on the County Board of Supervisors, won twelve of sixteen seats in the State Assembly from Milwaukee County, and gained two of its three seats in the Wisconsin Senate. The voters of Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District also elected Victor L. Berger, the party leader and chief spokesman, as the first Socialist to sit in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In spite of these landslide successes, one of the few defeats suffered by Social-Democratic candidates in the 1910 races was the contest in which Carl Sandburg was the party nominee. He had earlier been chosen by mayor-elect Seidel as his private secretary. He also found time to write occasional feature articles for the party's weekly newspaper, the *Social-Democratic Herald*, on such topics as "The Muck Rakers" and "A Labor Day Talk."

In early July, 1910 the party referendum to select candidates for the state ticket resulted in Sandburg being chosen to be their standard bearer in the Seventh Wisconsin Assembly District. In this capacity he attended the Socialist platform convention in Madison late in September. On occasion he was referred to as "Charles" rather than Carl in newspaper reports, although the latter name was most often used.

The assignment given Sandburg by the Socialists was a difficult one. His candidacy was part of an effort to fill out the Socialist Party ticket for every race in Milwaukee County, even where chances of success were slim. The heavily Republican Seventh District was made up of the rural townships of Franklin, Greenfield, and Wauwatosa (Sandburg resided in the latter); the industrial communities of West Milwaukee and West Allis; and the City of Wauwatosa.

Sandburg's principal opponent in the contest was Charles B. Perry, a Republican attorney who also was the three-term mayor of the City of Wauwatosa. A Democrat, John J. Mulhaney, was also in the running. The outcome of the November election was not, therefore, unexpected. In the official final results, published in the Wisconsin Blue Book, Perry received 1,886 votes (48.7%), Mulhaney 1,033 (26.7%) and Sandburg 956 (24.7%).⁵

Sandburg remained a member of Mayor Seidel's staff until March, 1911 when he resigned, disenchanted with the mundane day-to-day demands of public service and hopeful of spending more time writing for the *Herald* and the Socialists' new daily paper, *Milwaukee Leader*. In September, 1912, he moved to Chicago, and except for occasional visits, thus ended his Milwaukee career. As

far as is known, Sandburg never again offered himself as a candidate for public office.

NIEL M. JOHNSON, TRUMAN, & SANDBURG

By Mike Hobbs

Niel M. Johnson has lived an active and interesting life. I have never met him personally. We have corresponded by email. Our correspondence was prompted by an inquiry he made with the Knox County Genealogical Society in 2018. I discovered from Niel that he had a connection with President Harry S. Truman. Copies of documents that he sent me from the Harry S. Truman Library indicate that Truman and Sandburg admired each other. Thank you to Truman Library archivist Randy Sowell for making these documents available.

Niel was born in Galesburg in 1931. He lived in Galesburg, on a farm near Viola, in Andover, and Moline where he graduated from high school in 1949. He graduated from Augustana College in 1953, worked for the Moline *Dispatch*, taught at Biggsville, and served as chief historian of the Army Weapons Command at the Rock Island Arsenal. In 1971 he received his Phd. in American history from the University of Iowa. His dissertation "George Sylvster Viereck: German-American Propagandist" was published by the University of Illinois Press. From 1967 to 1976 Niel served as a college instructor. In 1977 he became an archivist and oral historian at the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, MO. In 1992 he retired from the Library. A year later he co-authored the book *Rockford Swedes: American Stories*.

In 1993 Niel became a Truman impersonator and related the highlights of the life and career of the former president. He was often called upon to appear as Truman at events throughout the United States.

Niel and his late wife Verna Gail made several trips to Sweden to visit cousins on both sides of his family. Several Swedish cousins have reciprocated by visiting him in the U.S. In 1984 he became first president of the newly founded American Friends of the Emigrant Institute of Sweden conceived and organized by Lennart and Lilly Setterdahl who were noted for their research and writing about Swedish immigrants to America.

The earliest Truman/Sandburg document that Niel sent me is dated January 14, 1943. It is a record of a letter written by Ralph G. Newman that Sandburg had inscribed a first edition copy of *The People, Yes* that was sent to President Truman. The President sent a note of appreciation to Sandburg on January 24 saying "he was looking forward to reading this book very soon."

Sandburg wrote President Truman on Chikaming Goat Farm, Harbert, MI stationery on September 15, 1945 acknowledging the President's thank you letter to him for the six volume Lincoln biographies that he had sent him,

Your deeply moving letter about those Lincoln

volumes has been framed and put on a wall in our house because near twenty years in the house was given to those books and your words are a sort of attestation that the work has a living use.

From your public acts and speeches, beginning with those remarkable reports of the Truman Committee up to some of these latest hair-trigger decisions, along with private anecdotes...I have come to know you as I have known Lincoln and FDR, from a distance and in the perspective that the People sense a friend in office and high power. And I believe if Lincoln and FDR from the shadowland could be watching you now they would say something like, "He is of our fellowship, one of us, trying to keep close to the people in what they want done and keeping just a little ahead of them all the time." You are making your own style and shaping a tradition personal to you. I can reconcile your piety, prayer, profanity, piano playing and persiflage and it's all of a weave and makes for sanity and sagacity, from my seat in the bleachers. Your sense of timing, your solemnity and brevity, your devotion to duty and capacity for toil, your peculiar grasp of events in moments having no precedent to guide you—it all adds up to something distinctive and superb in our history. You are deep in many hearts and they speak prayers for you. May health and the good faith stay by you ever.

P.S. When in 1897 I was 19 and you were 13, I worked as a railroad section hand at Bean Lake, Missouri, not so far from where you were a 13 year old kid at Independence, Missouri which I knew then as merely the home town of Jesse James. How tempus shore do fugit!

Niel points out that Sandburg was incorrect in stating that Independence was the hometown of Jesse James. He says that Truman "did not glamorize Jesse; to a correspondent, he said Jesse was a thug, robber, and murderer, and that was all he could say about him."

Adda George, President of the newly formed Carl Sandburg Association, wrote Truman on September 25, 1945 asking that he become Honorary President of the Association. In a letter to Mrs. George dated October 2, 1945 he stated that, "...the President cannot become Honorary President, but...this in nowise minimizes the importance of the work they are undertaking. In fact, the President is a warm personal friend of the distinguished author in whom Galesburg takes such great pride."

The next document is a memo from a Jeanne Leggette to President Truman's Secretary Mr. Ross that Sandburg is in Washington and that he has never met the President. It is dated April 11, 1947. "[Sandburg] would like an appointment with the President today. 5 or 10 minutes. Nothing special." Truman's appointment file for that date lists "12.45 pm Carl Sandburg."

On May 8, 1950, while on a whistle stop tour for Democratic candidates in the upcoming mid-term election, the President made remarks in Galesburg. He

acknowledged that a Lincoln-Douglas Debate had occurred at Knox College, an institution from which his wife Bess's great uncle had graduated, and he noted Sandburg's connection to Knox. He went on to observe that this day—May 8—was the fifth anniversary of V-E Day when Germany surrendered, and he warned against the threat of Soviet communism to freedom and democracy around the world. He further warned against isolationism. He discussed his Fair Deal on this date, his sixty-sixth birthday.

At a news conference on April 26, 1951 (his 261st. news conference) the President got into a discussion with a reporter about the need to study history. He advised the reporter to read Sandburg's Lincoln biographies. On May 22, 1952 he advised a reporter to study history to understand the extent of the president's executive power. He used Lincoln as an example and told the reporter he could learn more by reading Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*.

As Sandburg approached his 75th. birthday, Margaret Ligon, librarian at Pack Memorial Library in Asheville, NC wrote this request to President Truman on November 20, 1952,

Carl Sandburg, our neighbor and your friend, is soon to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday, and we are planning an exhibition to honor him. Knowing how deeply it would please him, we hope you will send for our use some words of comment or tribute, together with your signature.

On December 31 Mrs. Joseph Short, Secretary to the President, replied to Miss Ligon that the President "is today sending a personal note to Carl Sandburg for his birthday."

The day before, Ralph G. Newman, Chairman of the Carl Sandburg's 75th Birthday Committee, which also included Adda George and Rev. Alan Jenkins of Galesburg, had written President Truman informing him of Sandburg's 75th birthday party on January 6, 1953 at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. Newman wrote,

We realize that you have been an admirer of Mr. Sandburg's writings and believe that Carl Sandburg, as a personality and by virtue of his great career, perhaps epitomized the great story that is America more than any other single individual with the exception of the president of the United States.

He requested that Truman send a "brief statement" which might be read at the birthday party, and continued,

I know personally how much Mr. Sandburg has admired you all these years, and you may recall my writing you in 1948 to tell you how Mr. Sandburg and I had listened to the election returns, and how in the early hours when your victory was assured, he quoted from his book, "The People, Yes". A message from you at this time would be a delightful surprise to Carl Sandburg and a fitting birthday gift from the nation you both served so well.



Carl Sandburg & Harry S. Truman

On White House stationery President Truman sent the following message to Sandburg on January 5, 1953.

It's hard to reconcile reports that you will be seventy-five years old January sixth with those of your ringing participation in the November Democratic rally at Madison Square Garden.

You have my congratulations, however, upon your birthday and my thanks for helping Americans see their forefathers, their cities, their farms and themselves a little more clearly.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR CSHSA MEMBERSHIP?

By Ann Mueller, Membership Chair

If so, thank you! By now, most of you should have received our annual membership appeal letter which includes 2018 highlights and our plans for 2019. You may mail your dues with the renewal form on the following page or pay them online, using PayPal or credit card at <http://www.sandburg.org/membership.html>.

If you're able, we invite you to consider a higher level of support for the Association.

Give a gift that keeps giving: Do you know someone who would enjoy or benefit from a gift CSHSA membership? If so, please use the form on the following page to send the recipient's contact information with payment for dues at the appropriate level. Select the level and also select "This is a gift from ..."

Create a legacy: Did you know you can create your own legacy by making a gift to the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association Endowment or including the CSHSA in your estate planning? For more information, place your check mark at the bottom of the following page.

2019 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP FORM

PLEASE JOIN US!

Membership Categories <i>(Check one)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00 Student / Senior (62+)
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$20.00 Individual
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$40.00 Family
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100.00 Donor
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$250.00 Sponsor
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Name(s): _____

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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

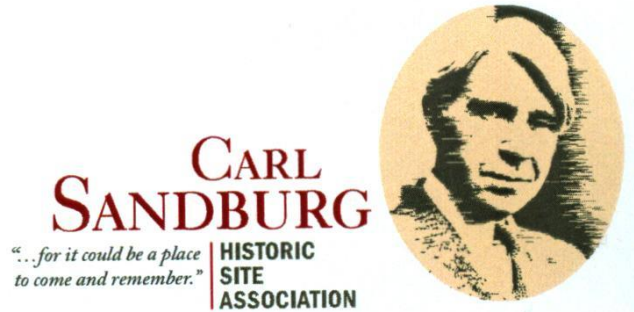
-OR-

PAY ONLINE with PayPal or Credit Card:

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

_____ I'd like more information about making a gift to the CSHSA endowment or including it in my estate plans.

Thank you for your support!



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