

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 2023

### FROM SITE SVCS. SPEC. BRYAN ENGELBRECHT

Excerpt from The People, Yes

A father sees a son nearing manhood What shall he tell that son? "Life is hard, be steel, be a rock" And this might stand him for the storms and serve him for humdrum and monotony and guide him amid sudden betrayals and tighten him for slack moments. "Life is a soft loam, be gentle, go easy" And this too might serve him Brutes have been gentled where lashes failed The growth of a frail flower in a path up has sometimes shattered and split a rock. A tough will counts So does desire.

Carl Sandburg The People, Yes, 1936

Since the Fall of 2009, James "Mike' Hobbs had served as editor of Inklings and Idlings. On March 15, Mike passed away at the age of 74. Although Mike worked 32 years for the BNSF railroad, history served as one of his life's passions. Mike held both bachelor's and master's degrees in history. A board member of both the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association and Galesburg Railroad Museum, Mike founded the Galesburg Civil War Round Table in 1995. A prolific writer, Mike wrote many Letters to the Editor to the local newspaper. He also contributed articles to the former weekly alternative newspaper The Zephyr. Published works featuring Mike's writings include Knox County, Illinois in the Civil War: A Collection of Essays. A member and past president of a variety of civic organizations, Mike's death leaves not only a void in the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, but also a void in the community of Galesburg.

Upon Mike's passing, Melissa Bednar has graciously stepped into the role as editor of Inkling and Idlings. The preservation and promotion of the life and works of Carl Sandburg runs in the Bednar family's blood. Melissa's grandmother Juanita served as a founding member and past president of the Sandburg Birthplace Association. She was instrumental in both securing the home and starting the popular Penny Parade fundraiser among many other activities. Charles "Chuck" Bednar Jr., Melissa's father, continued the Bednar's family work my serving as a board member and president of the CSHSA. Joining the CSHSA board in 2022, Melissa represents the third generation of her family who seeks to preserve the home of Carl Sandburg. We look forward to her contributions and continuance of I&I.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the upcoming spring events. . T. G. Jamroz will present a screening of his documentary **The Murals** at 2:00pm on May 21st. Highlighting Works Progress Administration murals in the Uptown Chicago Post Office, discussion with the filmmaker will follow. The Songbag Concert Series continues with folk singer/songwriter **Barry Cloyd** performing on June 11th, Barry Cloyd will present a special performance of his popular Carl Sandburg-Poet of the People program. We hope your spring plans will include a stop at Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.

### SPRING AT THE SITE

By Thomas Wallenfeldt, Site Interpretive Coordinator

Here at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site, Spring brings a breath of fresh air with more visitors showing up from everywhere and the blooming of flowers painting the enclosure will make anyone feel happily welcome. For instance, an antique car club with Packards is showing up in May that will fill the parking lot again. The last group here was the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America that came in 2021 and it was such a joy having them show off their classic vehicles on a beautiful day. It is wonderful when moving pieces of history show up at the museum, and it really sparks attention.



Vintage Chevrolet Club of America , May 2021

Even in the wintertime, an exciting activity happens just a block south which brings younger families to visit. There is a big hill next to the railroad yard overpass that is perfect for sledding. It is a magical site to see and you can hear sounds of jubilation fill the neighborhood.



Kids Sledding on Big Hill 4th Street RR Overpass

Speaking of sounds, the Songbag Concert Series kicks back into season this spring and it is a pleasure having Carl's legacy in music continue. Every second Sunday from March until November brings a packed audience to hear magical tunes from different genres and even walks of life. Last year we hosted an artist that calls Alaska home! Year round there is always something worthwhile happening at the museum, but spring truly brings a unique and rememberable experience. So please visit us soon and enjoy the warmer weather!

# THE JOURNEY TO DISCOVERING CARL SANDBURG

By, John W. Quinley (Hendersonville, NC)

Have you ever been so excited about something you knew a lot about that you wanted to share it with everybody? That's how I felt when I served as a docent at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in Flat Rock. North Carolina. I had forty minutes to conduct a tour-I wanted four hours.

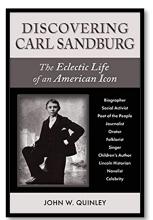
Most visitors to the Home know little, if anything, about Sandburg. When they hear about the extent of his fame and countless achievements, they are amazed. Some asked what they could read to learn more. There are many books about Sandburg, but most date from the 1960s and 1970s, and little is readily available today. I was able to purchase a number of them through secondary book markets, and take "notes and quotes" on what I read.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, I began giving presentations first on zoom (including a presentation for the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association) and later in person at various locations near Flat Rock, North Carolina. I also started writing articles: "Sandburg's Labor Day," the "Sandburg's Family Dogs," "Sandburg the Man of Spoken Word and Song" (which the Sandburg Home placed on their website), plus several others for the Historic Site Association Newsletter. Support from the Historic Association Newsletter editor. Michael Hobbs—as well as correspondence with other Association members-gave me confidence to continue this work.

At some point it became clear that articles for publications could become chapters for a book-just as Sandburg's newspaper articles became chapters for The Chicago Race Riots and the Home Front Memo. From the start, I wrote with two audiences in mind: visitors to the Sandburg Home in Flat Rock who wanted an accessible book to know more about Sandburg, and the readers of Inklings and Idlings who appreciated a well-sourced work.

I had experience in writing but didn't know anything about the publishing business. I soon learned: commercial publishing houses only correspond with independent authors through literary agents; university presses require extensive pre-publication work; and so-called vanity presses could be very expensive. I then got two lucky breaks. Former Historic Association President, Barry Lee Swanson, introduced me to a book assembling firm, who could guide me through the various steps needed to publish a print-on-demand book. Then I met Rick Rickerson, an accomplished editor and author, who offered to guide me through the editing process.

Discovering Carl Sandburg: The Eclectic Life of an American Icon, was published in August 2022. Michael Hobbs wrote the introduction and Rick Sayre, Historic Association bookstore manager, wrote a pre-publication review. I also purchased an independent, commercial review from Kirkus Book Reviews. They wrote:



... this accessible book packs a solid punch, providing readers with not highlight iust the of Sandburg's life, but also a sophisticated analysis of his passions, poetry, and influence on American culture... a well-written. concise examination of a literary legend.

I did not plan to write a book; and once it was published, I wasn't planning to promote it beyond a space in the Historic Association and Sandburg Home bookstores. Now several independent booksellers and Amazon carry the book. When I started to give historical libraries, museums, presentations at associations, and universities, I soon learned that talks could lead to sales. Similarly, after four newspapers and a magazine serving the Flat Rock/Asheville area wrote feature articles, there was a bump in sales.

I also didn't plan to write more about Sandburg, but this American icon won't let me go. A second edition is planned for some time in the future. As before, I will first try out subjects as articles, and then expand some into new chapters or extensions of existing chapters. The second edition will be kept "refreshingly brief," as one reviewer wrote about the first edition. Some potential additions include:

Carl Sandburg and social justice — a common theme throughout Sandburg's life and works.

Science, philosophy, and spirituality in Sandburg's poetry — His writings reflect the profound advances in science and changes in philosophy and spirituality during the first half of the twentieth century.

Aspects of love in Sandburg's poetry — he wrote about the complexity (and simplicity) of love from every aspect.

Paula Sandburg's articles for the goat industry — No one has taken a close look at these writings.

America in Sandburg's poetry — American historical figures, cities and town, movements, landscapes and more.

Brothers-in-law and spirit: Carl Sandburg and Edward Steichen — The American icon brothers have much in common and accomplished much together in their lives.

Helga Sandburg: a reflection of mother and father — Helga's adventures in agriculture and her literary efforts mirror the lives of both parents.

Sandburg's poetry and folk songs — Sandburg's poems are reflected in the folk songs he collected and vice versa.

I wrote Discovering Carl Sandburg because I became fascinated with Sandburg's life. I also thought, in this small way, to help others discover or re-discover him. Making a fortune from sales was never a motivation, although breaking even would be nice. Sandburg deserves to regain his place in American culture. As a reader of Inklings and Idlings, you are already helping to accomplish that.

### CARL SANDBURG, THE HORSEMAN

By Rex Cherrington

We generally think of horsemen and horsewomen as people who ride on horseback, using a saddle on the back of the horse and reins in hand. We envision them riding off somewhere. The relationship between a horse and a human is larger and includes people who care for horses in many ways, never to ride or drive a horse. Through the life of Carl Sandburg we can explore some of that larger scope.

Carl Sandburg's earliest childhood memory, as related in "Always the Young Strangers", is about the Krans family, their cousins, and his family and how they would trade Sunday visits and dinners. The Sandburg family would take their team and wagon out to Soperville to visit the Krans family. Another Sunday and the Krans would come to the Sandburgs with their team of gray horses and wagon. John Krans would take the lead strap attached to the halter and secure it to the well pump; the horses would enjoy water and rest. This happened at the Sandburg home on East South Street; that was the home demolished in 2022. Young Carl, estimated to be about three or four years old at the time, went out to the well pump, loosened the horses' lead strap and climbed onto the wagon. He got the horses in motion. The wagon was headed toward the garden and not the street, most fortunately. Carl had grabbed the reins and was about to say "Giddyap" when Mr. Krans and his father, August, grabbed him off the wagon. "Then came scolding and reproaches that Carl had not forgotten after seven decades. Carl summarized his memory of this event in this manner, "I have done many silly things in my life, and often taken incalculable risks, but none so suddenly on impulse and unaware of the danger."

Carl Sandburg lived in an era when the horse was still very important in the occupations and household duties as well as the recreations of many people. Carl was returning from the Spanish American War as the first automobile came to Galesburg. He would have many more interactions with horses, thankfully less exciting ones.

Again, from Always the Young Strangers we learn of his early jobs in Galesburg, at roughly age fourteen Carl was holding down a man's job in order to help feed the growing number of mouths in his family. The job he mentioned was driving a milk delivery route for George Burton. Mr. Burton seems to have been a rather sour person and Carl did not stay with him very long. When Carl started working for Burton it was the same time as Carl's two little brothers died of diphtheria; Carl and Mart had suffered milder cases. There were customers on Carl's route who knew of the diphtheria in the Sandburg home and questioned whether Carl should be delivering their milk? Carl explained to them he had explained the situation to Mr. Burton and Mr. Burton said nothing; Carl thought he should keep reporting to work to hold the job. When Carl was away from his job for his brothers' funerals, Burton had only cold and terse comments and not a sign of sympathy. Burton was himself, a horseman and had a couple of fast trotters he used for the delivery routes. Carl remembered how little time the man had for conversation with Carl, but Burton loved to talk for ten or fifteen minutes when one of the local horsemen came along with a fast trotter and sulky.

Carl took other jobs, which included working in the barber shop at the Union Hotel. He also worked at The Auditorium and for the druggist, Harvey Craig, son of Illinois Supreme Court Justice Alfred M. Craig. { As an aside to the main topic, It is worthy of note that two of these jobs were within a few hundred feet of where his statue of Carl Sandburg now stands in Central Park at Galesburg's Public Square.}

After working for George Burton and these other jobs, the teenage Carl Sandburg went to work for another dairy company, and again, as a horse-drawn route milk delivery driver. This time he was employed by Samuel "Sam" Kossuth Barlow; Sandburg's kind words for him describe a more pleasant man. On his way to Barlow's on Monmouth Boulevard he would go by Knox College's Old Main and on the northside of the building where numerous times he would read these powerful words of Lincoln on a bronze plaque" He is blowing out the moral flights around us, when he contends that

whoever wants slaves has the right to hold them." This would have a long and lasting effect on Carl Sandburg who went on to become America's most widely read Lincoln biographer.

Much later in life, Carl was in attendance at a social function in New York City, likely the 1950s, among those present was the widow of John Houston Finley. Mrs. Finley shared with Sandburg a memory of Carl's milk delivery days. She was most delighted to see Carl Sandburg and told him how she recalled that he had driven the milk route which included their 437 N. Prairie Street home in Galesburg. Carl was hearing this for the first time; she told Carl how he and his milk wagon had served as her husband's alarm clock. She explained that her husband slept until he heard the rattling and clanking of that old milk wagon and then he knew it was time to get up and start his day's work.

Carl Sandburg didn't record every memory he had of a horse, as we know there would have been many in the first twenty-one years of his life before the first automobile arrived in Galesburg. The experience with horses he wrote about at length was six weeks when he worked at the Galesburg District Fair; he was sixteen years old in 1894. The horseman of Galesburg encouraged and enabled the horseman extraordinaire Charles Warren Williams to leave Independence, lowa and come to Galesburg.

C.W. Williams, who like many men of that day, used his initials more than his whole name. Williams was a celebrity in the world of harness racing, which at that time was still the national sport but losing some ground to baseball. This may seem a bit long but it is important information to understand what Williams coming to Galesburg meant to many. Williams had owned and operated a very fast track known as a "kite track". A kite track has a third of mile front stretch, a third of mile long sweeping curve and then a third of a mile back stretch to the finish line. With the two long stretches and only one long, larger radius curve to traverse the horses could go faster. There had been major changes in harness racing around 1892, the sulkies were losing their tall wood spoke wheels and going with the ball bearing bicycle wheels, smaller in size and less rolling resistance. Another experiment in racing was the figure eight shaped kite tracks. In the contest between bicycle sulkies and figure eight shaped tracks the bicycle sulkies were winning and few of the kite tracks were built. Williams was a wealthy man who had bred, trained and raced two world's champion trotters. With his wealth was from breeding fees, winnings at the track and largely from \$105,000sale of Axtell, (this was incorrectly stated as \$150,00 in AYS) his first champion, he bought land, built the track, built himself a fine home and stable nearby and built a large hotel downtown along with a streetcar line that accommodated the guests at hotel wished to go to the track at the outskirts of Independence. Though he was still wealthy, Williams experienced a cash flow problem in the financial crisis of 1893. He was far from broke but had difficulty raising and for American breeders in Germany, Austria and Russia at that time.

We will get back to how Williams fits into the Sandburg story. Carl's job was for six weeks at the one-mile oval track managed by C. W. Williams. This was quite an experience for sixteen-year-old Carl. This track was also billed as the "Dead Level Track particularly after Williams was not in charge. The curves were banked alright as they had to be for both speed and safety. The level was measured by a man with a surveying instrument and another man with the target. These men would take readings across the track, from turn one to turn three and turn two across to turn four. Those readings would be within an inch. The same would have been true if a reading was taken from the start/finish line across to the middle of the backstretch. Carl described his activities as mostly carrying water, running errands and a few times sponged and dried down a sweating horse. It was an interesting social hierarchy around the track. There were the "barons" who owned the finest horses. After that came the full- time trainers and drivers who could make a good living if they were good at their trade. Then came the grooms who were routinely charged with their care to be sure the water was the right amount, hay was of the right kind and grain was enough but not too much. They made sure the stalls were clean and bedding was provided and after training or a competition event, they would have been in charge of walking and cooling down a horse and then sponging and drying it. These people would have had permanent employment through the barons with the approval of trainers. Then there were the Galesburg crowds who were treated to this sport at a level they had never experienced.

Often the grooms were black people and sadly in those times would have been referred to as the "niggers" but more about that in a bit. In the hierarchy of harness racing would have been those people and below all that would have been Carl.

Carl had an opportunity to earn and learn. He got his pay and he was close to the famous horses and close to those men previously mentioned.



### Trotting Queen Alix

One horse particularly captured his attention and that was "Alix" known to many on and off the track as "Sweet Little Alix". She was a light framed horse and pleasing to the eye, yet in spite of light build she was a great trotter. She had just graduated from filly to mare when she captured the world's record for any trotting horse, of any age. This was a mare who set the world's record, breaking the world's record of another mare, Nancy Hanks. This happened in Galesburg, Illinois while Carl Sandburg worked at the track. The experience apparently had a lasting impression as decades later he wrote a poem about this horse. I won't say it is the only one, but likely one of very few poems ever written about a fast-trotting horse. Please understand that Carl Sandburg was very sensitive about the race issues, especially his coverage of the Chicago Race Riots of 1919. Carl was the first white person to receive a Silver Award from the NAACP. If we erase Jim Crow and racism from our history then it is soon that Civil Rights doesn't make any sense. It is in this context and understanding I believe Carl Sandburg would want his poem, as written, printed here.

### Alix

by Carl Sandburg

The mare Alix breaks the world's trotting record one day. I see her heels flash down the dust of an Illinois race track on a summer afternoon. I see the timekeepers put their heads together over stopwatches, and call to the grand stand a split second is clipped off the old world's record and anew world's record fixed.

I see the mare Alix led away by men in undershirts and streaked faces. Dripping Alix in foam of white on the harness and shafts. And the men in undershirts kiss her ears and rub her nose, and tie blankets on her, and take her away to have the sweat sponged.

I see the grand stand jammed with prairie people yelling themselves hoarse. Almost the grand stand and the crowd of thousands are one pair of legs and

one voice standing up and yelling hurrah.

I see the driver of Alix and the owner smothered in a fury of handshakes, a mob of caresses. I see the wives of the driver and owner smothered in a crush of white summer dresses and parasols.

Hours later, at sundown, gray dew creeping on the sod and sheds, I see Alix again:

Dark, shining-velvet Alix, Night-sky Alix in a gray blanket, Led back and forth by a nigger. Velvet and night-eyed Alix With slim legs of steel.

And I want to rub my nose against the nose of the mare Alix.

We know that Alix made an impression on Carl and it was a lasting one. Also, these six weeks made a lasting impression on Carl in another way. He was a student of the human and of the human condition. This rags to riches story of Williams was bound to capture the imagination of Carl, as it did.

Going back to Always the Young Strangers, Carl remembering this half a decade later said this about Williams, "I saw him several times on the track and on Knoxville Road (now Grand Avenue) driving Allerton and other stallions he had 'placed at stud'. He was a medium sized man with an interesting face. I thought his face looked like it had secrets about handling horses yet past there was a solemn look that bored on the blank - I couldn't make it out. He made a great name in the horse world and breeders came from the country over to see him. The blood of his stallions ran for many years in winning horses." The last time I saw him was on a Q. (short for C. B &Q now BNSF) passenger train from Chicago to Galesburg. He sat quiet in a seat by himself. And I could no more read his face than I could twenty years earlier." Through addition and subtraction this would have placed this train ride about 1912, after Williams had moved to Aurora, Illinois. We can see by the way Carl wrote at some length that Williams made a lasting impression on him. We might think of Kenny Rogers' song "The Gambler " with the line, "Son, I have made a life out of reading people's faces". Carl Sandburg was an astute observer of the human and the human condition, but Williams was such a puzzle of man, cards close to his chest, that even Carl Sandburg, an expert on such matters could not solve.



Allerton at 4 years old

Carl Sandburg had two periods of employment for the City of Galesburg as a firefighter. In those days horses pulled the fire cart and any other equipment. Staying at the Central Fire Station or the Brooks Street Fire Station would have given more closeness to horses. Carl Sandburg visited the Brooks Street Fire Station in 1953 and commented how he missed the old horsey smell it used to have.

### 2022 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Thanks to all for your continuing support! If you have not renewed in 2022, find a form with membership options for paying dues on page 8 of this newsletter.

# Fun Facts About Carl SandburgAt age 13 Carl

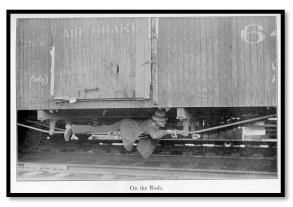
left school to help out his poor family.

- At age 17 Carl lived as a Hobo.
- Carl's parents emigrated from Sweden.
- The family's origin name was Danielsson, but there were many Danielssons in Galesburg and sometimes Carl's father, August, would get the wrong check. So, he renamed the family.

### What is a Hobo?

A "Hobo" is a person who is usually homeless and penniless. Someone who relies on the kindness of others for meals and shelter as he/she moves across the country looking for work. Many times moving by hopping on boxcars on the railway system.

Among them was eighteen-year-old Jack London, future author of *Call of the Wild* (1903). Carl Sandburg was a huge fan of London. In 1907 London wrote a book about his experience hoboing across America "riding the rails" entitled *The Road*.



Jack London demonstrates how he had ridden the rods of a boxcar as an 18-yr old for his book The Road.

Look for more fun facts in each edition of *Inklings and Idlings* to come.

## Vintage Car Clubs visit the Site Saturday, May 20, 2023

11:00 pm	Vintage Jaguar Club
2:00 pm	Vintage Packard Club



HIDDEN HILLS WINERY PARTNERS WITH CSHSA



CSHSA President Pat Kane receives the first donation check for \$624 from the 2022 sales of **Sandburg's Sangria** from Jennie Grove, Manager of Hidden Hills Winery.

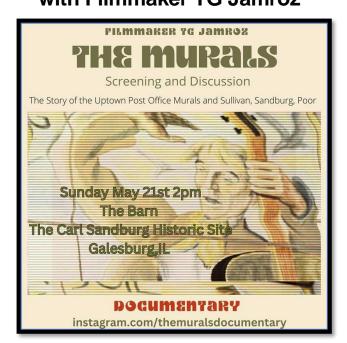
As many of our readers may know, Hidden Hills Vineyard & Winery of Knoxville, IL has partnered with the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association in a unique way. David Poland, along with his cousin Chancey amd Chancey's wife Holly, own and operate this beautiful little piece of vineyard.

In 2021 the owners offered to collaborate with CSHSA by creating and distributing a wine featuring our local historic site. *Sandburg Sangria* was created by their winemasters, released in the Summer of 2022 and has become one of their most popular wines. One dollar from each bottle of *Sandburg Sangria* sold goes to support our Carl Sandburg Historical Site Association in Galesburg.

The wine is a blend of blackberry,strawberry, raspberry, and cherry wines with other natural flavors.

You can order the Sandburg Sangria by visiting the winery at 120 Hidden Hills Drive in Knoxville IL. or online by going to their website *hiddenhillswines.com*.

# Upcoming Events Sunday, May 21, 2023, 2:00pm A Screening & Discussion of the Documentary Film The Murals with Filmmaker TG Jamroz



## Sunday, May 21, 2:00pm

**Director TG Jamroz** will present the Galesburg screening of the documentary,**THE MURALS** at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site 2 pm. The location is The Barn behind the visitors' center at 313 E. Third St., Galesburg, IL

## WGIL Radio Interview with TG Jamroz Friday, May 19, 8:40am WGIL Radio FM 93.7

Prior to the screening of THE MURALS Tom Meredith 93.7 will be interviewed by Tom Meredith of WGIL Radio. An audio recording of the interview will be available on WGIL's website (https://www.wgil.com)

## **Remembering Mike Hobbs**

Please enjoy the tributes to former Inklings & Idlings editor, Mike Hobbs, in the SUPPLEMENT to our Spring 2023 issue.



## **Barry Cloyd,** Sandburg Songbag Concert, Sunday, June 11, 2023, 2:00-4:00pm, at the Barn

Barry Cloyd is a Midwestern based, touring singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist, perform-ing over 200 shows per year, who has spent a lifetime creating a performance style that weaves the genres of Blues, Folk, Celtic, Original and Roots music into a unique blend all his own. A strong vocalist and multi-instrumentalist as well as a storyteller, theatrical performer and historian, Barry delivers his music on a multitude of guitars (6 & 12 string, Dobro, high-strung, etc.) and other stringed instruments, such as 5-string banjo, mandolin, requinto and bouzouki.

### Upcoming

## Sandburg Songbag Concerts Second Sunday of each Month 2:00-4:00pm

June 11, 2023	Barry Cloyd
July 9, 2023	Carol Jean & Jera
Aug 13, 2023	ТВА

Articles for future issues of I&I may be submitted to: Editor: Melissa Bednar, <u>mlbednar@icloud.com</u>

#### 2023 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Categories (Check one)		
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