FROM SITE SUPT. MARTHA DOWNEY

“SPRING GRASS”

Spring grass, there is a dance to be danced for you.

Come up, spring grass, if only for young feet.

Come up, spring grass, young feet ask you.

Smell of the young spring grass,
You’re a mascot riding on the wind horses.

You came to my nose and spiffed me. This is your lucky year.

Young spring grass just after the winter,
Shoots of the big green whisper of the year,
Come up, if only for young feet.

Come up, young feet ask you.

Carl Sandburg from Early Moon (1930)

This spring more than most we welcomed the spring grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers. Also welcomed was the opportunity to finally be outdoors in the sunshine tending to our yards and gardens. Here at the Site it was good to once again be outside.

That “big green whisper of the year” has come. We are fortunate and grateful that two of the Knox County Master Gardeners, Sylviane Stites and Jamie Yemm, are once again helping us with the Site’s flower beds. Along with volunteers and staff those two women are teaching us about maintaining the plantings that border the Site’s property and surround the cottage where Carl Sandburg was born.

Thursdays 9 am to 11 am Jamie, Sylviane, and volunteers work at the Site. If you are interested in helping with this work, come to the Site on Thursday mornings. Bring your garden gloves and tools you might use. The Site has a limited number of garden tools.

If you plan to volunteer, send me an email at bishophill@mymctc.net. I will let Sylviane and Jamie know you are coming. Your email will also allow us to confirm with you the day and time garden work will be done. As we move into June and summer, the schedule might change.

There are a number of skills and talents that could help with the garden work. Tools need to be kept sharp, minor repairs are needed for the fence and benches, plants need to be identified, tool shed organized, and more. We hope to develop signs for the garden so visitors can learn what plants are in the flower beds. If one of these projects intrigues you, and you would like to help, just email me at bishophill@mymctc.net.

I do want to take this opportunity to say “thank you” to Jamie and Sylviane and the other Knox County Master Gardeners that have volunteered to help at the Site. They have just published a wonderful cookbook From Our Community to Your Table. It is available at numerous locations in Galesburg, including the Association’s bookstore at the Site. Hope to see you in the garden.

VISIT CSHSA’S WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGE

Search sandburg.org to visit the CSHSA website for information about the Site, including upcoming Songbag Concerts and Barbara Schock’s “Sandburg’s Hometown” stories. Like the CSHSA on its Facebook page.
CARL SANDBURG’S FIRST BIG FAN: THE STORY OF C.L. EDSON
By Will and Luz Schick

(Ed. Note: This is the third and final installment by CSHSA members Will and Luz Schick about C.L. Edson. They are in the process of writing a book about Mr. Edson and his three brothers, country editors in small Kansas and Nebraska towns, and “their take on the America unfolding in their lifetimes in the early 20th century—rural socialism, the Great Depression, the Mexican and ‘Bohemian’ immigrants they encountered, the decline of the Mayflower Puritans who were their direct ancestors.” If any of you have information on the Edson brothers or know where other Sandburg letters to C.L. Edson can be found, please notify the Schicks.)

“There was something of the Carl Sandburg in me…”

Despite his awareness of his limitations, Edson was reckless and derailed his career in 1926 when he anonymously published an autobiographical novel, The Great American Ass. In the novel, which received generally disastrous reviews, he committed what we would now call career suicide: while still an active player in the high-pressure New York City newspaper scene, he wrote with reckless honesty about his hazing and other negative early experiences in New York. A particular target of his harshness was Franklin P. Adams, who at the time was still a popular, influential columnist and had graciously written a preface for The Gentle Art of Columning.

Edson did his best to shake off the bad reviews and soldiered on. He gradually absorbed the fact that his star was fading and finally returned to Kansas City in 1931. At first he had some success in the freelance markets, and worked hard on several book-length works that never attracted a publisher. But the Great Depression did him in, and he ended up taking a position with the Kansas Federal Writers’ Project in Topeka, Kansas, which is where he lived out his final days. Shortly after his FWP job ended, he wrote a desperate letter to Sandburg. It wasn’t the only desperate letter he wrote at the time. Among others, Don Marquis, H. L. Mencken, and Walter Winchell also heard from him.

And what was up with Carl Sandburg at the time? Most recently, he had been awarded the Pulitzer for the final installment of his landmark biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Edson’s last, sad letter to Sandburg was mailed from a shabby railroaders’ hotel near downtown Topeka on February 24, 1942. It was addressed simply “Poet Carl Sandburg, SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA.” He began by recalling, once again, the time he and Sandburg attended a baseball game in Chicago, then recounts a near meeting they had in Topeka in the late 1930s.

You lectured in Topeka in the last few years when I was here on Federal poor relief, the WPA Writers’ Project, and one of my new-found friends, R. R. Macgregor, an old friend of yours, went back stage to meet you. I didn’t barge in because things aren’t done that way. You could have done nothing for me, and I could only have weighed your spirit down with a new load.

Everything came out all right. You finished your monumental biography of Lincoln, and I continued living in John Brown’s Body Land until hell wouldn’t have me.…

I was a softie in many ways, but there was something of the Carl (Charles August) Sandburg in me, and now at 61, I am a rugged specimen. When you were slashing out Chicago poems and slabs of the sunburned west during the revolt against rhymed and formalized verse, you suggested that I was still a slave to convention because I still wrote in rhyme. Carl, old friend, rhyme comes so easily to me that I can’t escape it. Pope said: “I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.” As a baby he composed rhymed couplets. A somewhat similar fate was mine.

Edson devoted much of this three-page letter to typing out three poems he wanted Sandburg to critique for him, and perhaps recommend to a publisher. He also wanted Sandburg to have a look at more than one book-length collection of poems.

But there was little Sandburg could do. Times had changed, and the market for poetry was rapidly shrinking. In his biography of Ira Gershwin, Philip Furia described the literary landscape just before World War I, “Poetry in those years was everywhere, it seemed—even in the daily newspapers. All the big New York papers carried regular columns devoted to light verse; F.P.A’s [Franklin P. Adams’s] ‘The Conning Tower’ in the New York World was the most famous, but there was also Don Marquis’s ‘Sun Dial’ in the Sun and C.L. Edson’s ‘Always in Good Humor,’ in The Daily Mail.”
It wasn’t like that anymore, and Sandburg had to be the bearer of bad news. The only Sandburg letter to Edson of which Sandburg kept a copy was an undated response to Edson’s 1942 letter,

Dear Charley Edson

Your letter I have read more than once, some lines 6 times and more. It gathers a brooding human spirit that didn’t quite get into your anonymous autobiography which I read some years back. As I write this, out of the mood of having read your letter again, and roving across the years since you got out The Automobile and I edited The Lombard Review, I wonder about the several narrow shaves I had with Old Man Death and I can’t say for sure why I am not lingering along in some penitentiary cell for something done in a mental haze.

Now to your immediate points. First, my work schedule and commitments are such that I don’t see where I would get the time to fairly and decently read a book manuscript. And second, I wouldn’t dare make a guess as to what might be worth publishing in this hour by way of verse. What few recommendations I have made across the past ten years don’t look bright now from a publisher’s viewpoint. And in this particular hour—what the hell—who can say what is the poetry wanted for publication? Of course, there is always the portfolio poetry, written with no expectation that any audience might care for it: I have four books of that kind of poetry and I read it and know it’s good but it may be years and it may be never that it will get published.

This is a long letter, feller. Maybe we’ll meet sometime again, in Kansas, and talk it over further.

Carl Sandburg soon moved to North Carolina to raise goats, write his autobiography, and cement his well-deserved reputation as a national treasure.

Charley Edson remained in his Topeka railroaders’ hotel until it was torn down in 1963. The Associated Press picked up a local story about him at the time, but the sympathy and the brief flurry of renewed fame did him no good. After his Federal Writers’ Project job ended, he occasionally washed dishes to supplement his $91 monthly relief check, which he turned over to his landlady in exchange for room and board. Until at least 1954, when he was 73 years old, he still occasionally sold a poem, short story, or book review to some marginal publication.

In the late 1940s, a fire in his hotel destroyed some of his papers, which may be what happened to the letters Sandburg had sent to him. He spent the last several years of his life in a Topeka nursing home, where he died in 1975 two days before his 94th birthday.

LILIAN SANDBURG AND CARL SANDBURG’S SUCCESS
By Jerry Shea

Carl Sandburg’s accomplishments are in themselves remarkable, but without the help and stability of his wife it is certain Sandburg would not have been the same man we read about today. It was Lilian who kept the home a safe place for the writer to retreat to for privacy and quiet, spend time with his children, and grow.

By 1926 when Sandburg had published Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and produced four volumes of poetry, as well as the Rootabaga Stories, Lilian had been vacationing yearly in Michigan with their three daughters, leaving behind the hot and bustling Chicago area. The first site frequented by the family was in Tower Hill near Three Oaks, Michigan. With the windfall from the Lincoln book and serial rights Mr. Sandburg suggested they purchase something permanent which would also be close enough for him to escape
to join the family, and yet allow him to remain close to Chicago for his work at the Daily News. A small parcel was bought and Lilian hired a local carpenter to build a one-room dwelling for Carl to use solely for his writing undisturbed. It sat 100 yards from the main house. A stove for heating was added along with his typewriter and bookshelves.

It was a perfect fit for everyone, Sandburg could be away from the busy Chicago, find quiet, spend time with the children, and have that support Lilian could provide. Shortly thereafter a larger parcel of five acres was purchased nearby. Sandburg named it Paw Paw, and would refer to it often in a whimsical way.

In time a three story house was constructed. It was full of windows, and the top floor was divided into Mr. Sandburg’s bedroom and his writing space. A balcony was added where the poet could write in the sun and fresh air. One neighbor referred to the house as a “Swedish hotel.” An important addition was a concrete and steel vault to protect his growing manuscript collection. Neighbors were abuzz about the man who slept till noon and was rumored to write naked from time to time on the balcony. Carl Sandburg was fifty years old in 1928 when he was movie critic for the Chicago Daily News, Good Morning America was published, and he is invited to read at Harvard.

Lilian too was moving ahead with plans of her own. More land adjacent to the five acres was secured. She began farming. Trees were planted to stop erosion and form a windbreak as the beginning of an extensive orchard. A small shed was erected to process the bounty from her vegetable garden.

By September 200 quarts of string beans, corn, spinach, broccoli, lima beans, cantaloupe, and pumpkins were put up. Her orchards were complete with five varieties of pears, five varieties of apples, including McIntosh, Jonathan, Golden, and Fall Pippin, apricots, nectarines, plums, four varieties of cherries, and Belle of Georgia, Hale Haven, and Golden Jubilee peaches. Catwba, Niagara, and Delaware grapes were planted.

Shortly after, a pig was purchased, six geese, Peking ducks, rabbits, and chickens. Helga begged for a cow, but her father suggested a goat saying, "Have you ever tried getting a cow in a car?" That suggestion changed their lives and led to a more remarkable future for Lilian as she managed the children, provided a sanctuary for her husband, continued to encourage and support him, yet find her own path of success. Over the next years Lilian bred new lines of goats, winning blue ribbons nationally. She toured county and state fairs in the Midwest with Helga in summers and falls and became famous for her work with goats, building herds, and selling goat milk.

During this time Sandburg said, “[A]t home it is the nicest all around summer the gang has had.” Lilian Sandburg had set the standard for managing a home, providing for her famous husband while he was on his way to winning his first Pulitzer Prize, and finding fame of her own for her work.

For more insights read Where Love Begins by Helga Sandburg.

IDLE THOUGHTS ON FESTIVAL WEEKEND
By Jonathan Gillard Daly

(Ed. Note: Jon and Gale Daly of Milwaukee visited Galesburg in April to attend the Carl Sandburg Festival for the Mind. Jon is working on a performance piece about Sandburg.)

For the third time during this, my first full day in Galesburg, I sat in my idling auto, watching yet another procession of railroad cars courtesy of the BNSF Railroad. I am learning that in Galesburg these extended moments are frequent and inevitable, and that the best use of time is to take advantage of the opportunity to pause and ponder.

I am in Galesburg for the annual Carl Sandburg Festival For the Mind, and I’ve just enjoyed the first of what will be several splendid presentations by Penelope Niven, author of the inarguably definitive biography of Galesburg’s favorite son. At the end of her presentation she was asked a question that I was to hear several times over the weekend, “Is it true that Sandburg hated Galesburg?”

As I waited in my car for the train to pass along, I remembered Sandburg’s own words, "I hated my hometown and yet I loved it. And I hated and loved myself about the same as I did the town and the people. I knew then as I know now that it was a pretty good home town to grow up in. I came to see that my trouble was inside of myself more than it was in the town and its people."
Sandburg was such a gifted, restless soul that one town, however beloved, couldn’t possibly contain the entirety of his ambition. But the very core value that guided his work—a deep and abiding love and respect for The People—was developed and nurtured in Galesburg. And here I was with my wife Gale on a beautiful spring weekend, walking along streets where Carl had walked as a youth, looking up at the sky he saw, and enjoying the unique experience of meeting scores of people who share an appreciation for the life and work of one of America’s most beloved poets.

The weekend of the Sandburg Festival was quite literally a breath of fresh air, coming as it did after a long, harsh winter; and there was a rousing energy in that spring breeze, fueled by a communal love of poetry, by civic pride in Galesburg’s favorite son, and by the fellowship of a town that values its heritage and its place in American literary history.

I have so many wonderful memories of what I experienced in Galesburg that it hardly seems possible that it all took place over just a few days. Starting with the dedication of Lonnie Stewart’s magnificent sculpture on a rain-spattered afternoon, and moving on to Penelope Niven’s lectures, as well as a rare opportunity to hear a terrific reading of Norman Corwin’s The World of Carl Sandburg, and ending (for us, because we had to drive back to Milwaukee) with an inspiring writers’ workshop on Saturday morning, I was thoroughly moved, engaged, and energized from beginning to end.

I would be remiss not to mention all the fun that Gale and I had just taking in the town—dining at a wonderful shop just off Main Street (featuring a terrific salad with avocado and asparagus salad, that I know Carl would have loved), browsing through antique shops, enjoying a long walk through town, stopping to admire the houses on Berrien Street where Carl grew up, and spending an afternoon at Knox College, sitting on a park bench outside the library, enjoying the sunshine. I will be returning to Galesburg, and soon. My weekend at the Festival has been an important step in the journey that I’m on, to create a performance piece based on Carl Sandburg’s life, times, and work. After spending such a heady, exciting weekend with so many lovers of all things “Sandburgian,” I realize that the project I envision means much more to me than I even realized. Carl Sandburg is a great American treasure, a writer who is, to borrow a phrase from Penelope Niven, “too good and too important and too wise to ever be allowed to die.”

The process of creation can be a lonely business, and it’s a long, long road from inception to completion; encouragement and inspiration along the way is vital to the success of any creative endeavor. My weekend in Galesburg has been integral in making me realize the meaning, vocation, and importance in making sure that the work of Carl Sandburg is preserved for generations of readers.

Thank you, Galesburg, for showing Gale and me an unforgettable time. Robin Metz and Jeff Douglas were both so very generous with their time, helping me uncover yet more archival material. Chuck Bednar, Barry Swanson, Mike Hobbs and Robin Demott were all so encouraging and enthusiastic to hear of my project. Lonnie Stewart and Penelope Niven have inspired me with their own virtuosity. And Ryan and Martha sold me lots of books, which I am enjoying thoroughly!

I’m already looking forward to the next visit, and to making new friends in Galesburg.

With gratitude and affection,

Jon Daly

ELBERT HUBBARD
By Barbara Schock

During the nineteenth century American life came to Galesburg on the railroads in the the form of plays, circuses, politicians, opera stars, authors, and others. The men who invested their wealth in securing the railroads through the city accomplished more than they had expected. Their purpose had been to haul farm products to market and to ship and receive manufactured goods. Passenger traffic wasn’t uppermost in their minds. Over time the network of rails connected the entire country.

Young Carl Sandburg was a beneficiary of that network. He heard the speeches of William Jennings Bryan, Robert Ingersoll, Henry Ward Beecher, and Elbert Hubbard, among others. As a student at Lombard College, Sandburg attended...
lectures at Knox College, in the Auditorium north of the Public Square, and under the Chautauqua tent in Highland Park.

After hearing Elbert Hubbard, Sandburg and other students went backstage to shake his hand. He was impressed by the man and his lecture. Later Sandburg sent a copy of *The Cannibal*, the college yearbook which he had helped create, to Hubbard and received a complimentary letter in return.

Elbert Hubbard was born in Bloomington, Illinois on June 19, 1856. At the age of sixteen he began peddling from a wagon for his cousin's soap company. Several years later the company was divided between the partners. Hubbard became a partner in the Larkin Soap Company located in Buffalo, New York. They used direct marketing and offered premiums, innovations at the time, to buyers of the product.

In 1892 Hubbard decided to sell his portion of the soap company for $75,000 (almost $2 million in today's money). He had become interested in the Arts and Crafts Movement and wanted to be a writer. He visited William Morris in England who was a leader in the Movement. Upon returning home, Hubbard joined Henry Taber, a newspaper publisher, in publishing a small magazine, *The Philistine*. In 1895, Hubbard purchased the magazine and the Roycroft Press operation from Taber. The name Roycroft derived from two brothers named Roycroft who were bookbinders in seventeenth century England.

During the following years Hubbard embarked upon a successful lecturing career. At the same time the Roycroft Press began producing limited edition, handcrafted books. A furniture manufacturing operation was also established.

For the March, 1899 issue of *The Philistine* Hubbard wrote an editorial about the American work ethic. It became known as "A Message to Garcia." Hubbard took as an example the mission of Lt. Andrew Rowan. During the Spanish-American War, he had been entrusted with a letter from President William McKinley to Cuban General Garcia. Rowan was landed on the island with little information or knowledge of the terrain or General Garcia's whereabouts. General Garcia was the leader of Cuban resistance. Rowan delivered the message after a rather harrowing journey across Cuba. Hubbard described this as an example of the work ethic and initiative of American workers. Presidents of large companies printed copies of the article to be given to their workers to inspire them. Millions of reproductions were handed out across the United States, and Hubbard's name became a household word.

*The Philistine* had given Hubbard a soapbox from which he could broadcast his views on work and capitalism. He believed the path to spiritual and intellectual liberation consisted of dutiful service. It fitted quite well with the capitalist point of view held by the moguls of the time.

Carl Sandburg described Elbert Hubbard as "a first-rate businessman, farmer, horseman, huckster, poser, clown, smartaleck, fresh gazabo, wit, sage and seer—he was all of these."

On Christmas Eve, 1902 Sandburg was able to visit Roycroft. Hubbard took him on a tour of the shops. They also delivered turkeys to Roycroft workers. Sandburg came away from Roycroft feeling he could combine writing, oratory, printing, and arts and crafts in his own career.

In July, 1907 Sandburg was invited to Roycroft to give two lectures. The first was about his studies of Walt Whitman. The second lecture described the blunders of modern civilization. Both were well received. Sandburg hoped to get more oratorical opportunities as a result of them, but only two were received. During the rest of the summer, he sold stereoscopic views in Michigan.

In August, 1909 Hubbard published Sandburg's poem "The Road and the End." It illustrated the style of writing he had produced by himself from all of the study and struggle of the preceding years.

Elbert Hubbard and his second wife Alice Moore Hubbard were drowned on May 7, 1915, aboard the RMS Lusitania about 11 miles off the coast of Ireland. A German U-boat had torpedoed the pleasure ship, and 1200 passengers were lost. A son Elbert Hubbard II continued the Roycroft Company until 1938.
CARL SANDBURG, HIS AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS
By Rex Cherrington

Few men or women have received so much recognition in a lifetime as Carl Sandburg. I do not know of any other who received a wider array of such accolades for such a variety of worthy accomplishments. This is not by any means a complete list as I know there are more schools and prizes named in honor of Carl Sandburg all over this country and some abroad. Hopefully, this timeline-type outline of some of his awards and recognitions will be enough to persuade any who doubt the worthiness of this citizen of the universe, Carl Sandburg.

1899--As a result of his Spanish-American War service a scholarship was awarded to Sandburg to attend Lombard College in Galesburg. While this might not have been his first recognition for achievement, it was the earliest of his adult life and made a remarkable difference in the rest of his life. Since young Carl had been forced to drop out of school to help support his family, he had not finished high school, but the recognition of his talent moved the administration at Lombard to make an exception and admit him as a special student on September 21, 1898.

1899--Also as a result of his war service, Sandburg received an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1899. Due to his lack of formal education at that point in his life he was found deficient in math and grammar and was rejected on June 6. He returned to Lombard and pursued his education in Galesburg.

1914--Poems were published by Poetry Magazine and in that year he won a cash prize for his poetry.

1919--Shares the Poetry Society of America prize with Margaret Widdemer. This prize was the forerunner of the Pulitzer Prize that was not formally established until 1922. The work which won him this prize was Cornhukers.

1921--Shares the Annual Book Award of the Poetry Society of America with Stephen Vincent Benet.

1923--Honorary Litt. D. from Lombard College.


1931--Honorary Litt. D. from Northwestern University.

1938--Inducted into the Order of the Polar (North) Star of Sweden

1940--Pulitzer Prize for history for Abraham Lincoln: The War Years.

1941--Honorary Litt. D. from Syracuse University.

1946--Birthplace is dedicated as a historic site.

1948--L.L. D. from Augustana College.

1950--Honorary doctorate from Uppsala University in Sweden.

1951--Pulitzer Prize for poetry for his Complete Poems.

1952--National Institute of Arts and Letters gold medal for history and biography.

1953--Carl Sandburg Day held in Chicago with a banquet on his birthday.

1953--Commander, Order of the Polar (North) Star of Sweden.

1953--Poetry Society of America gold medal.

1956--Humane Award from Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

1956--Carl Sandburg Day proclaimed in November in Chicago.

1959--On February 12 Sandburg addressed a joint session of Congress on the occasion of honoring the 150th birthday of Abraham Lincoln. He was only the second person who was not a government or military official to address a joint session. Historian George Bancroft had been the first, also to honor Abraham Lincoln in 1866.

1959--The first year of the Grammy Awards, Carl Sandburg received a Grammy for the spoken word in the non-comedy category for his recording of Aaron Copeland's “Lincoln Portrait” with the New York Philharmonic.

1959--In Sweden King Gustav awards Carl Sandburg Litteris et Artibus, a gold medal.

1962--Poet Laureate of Illinois.


1964--Lyndon B. Johnson bestows the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon Sandburg.

1965--NAACP awards Sandburg the Silver Plaque. He was the first white person to receive it. It was received for his newspaper coverage and book about the 1919 Chicago race riots as well as his lifetime of commitment to the struggle to extend the frontiers of social justice.

1967--Knox-Warren Junior College had been created by a referendum a year earlier. The Board of Trustees solicited the public to submit names for the new college, and over 100 persons submitted the name of Carl Sandburg. The board voted to change the college's name to Carl Sandburg College approximately one month after his death.

1967--Sandburg died on July 22. A National Memorial Service was held in Washington, DC at the Lincoln Memorial to pay tribute to him. A crowd of 6,000 persons attended. Rarely does a private citizen receive a Presidential eulogy as that given by Lyndon B. Johnson on September 17. Archibald MacLeish and Mark Van Doren read selections from Sandburg's poetry.
HEDDING SCHOOL RECOGNITION

On May 20 the CSHSA recognized Hedding Elementary School in Abingdon for its exemplary efforts on behalf of the Penny Parade the past three years. During that time the school has donated nearly one third of total Penny Parade donations. To qualify to attend the recognition Hedding fourth graders were required to write essays about serving worthy causes in and around their community. Mackenzie James wrote about three worthy causes: Children’s Miracle Network, Salvation Army, and Carl Sandburg Birthplace. “The last one, but the last one’s the best one! Carl Sandburg’s Birthplace! CSB teaches us the history of this famous poet and writer. They just don’t get enough funding from other places, so that’s where we come in. We have a Penny Parade. We collect as many pennies as possible and give them to CSB. This helps them stay open and share the history.”