

# 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 2022

### FROM SITE SVCS. SPEC. BRYAN ENGELBRECHT

#### "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  
*Good Morning, America, 1928*

As the calendar turns to spring, we are gearing up for the tourist season to begin here at Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. Spring has brought a few changes and additions to the Site. As of February 28, the State of Illinois no longer requires the wearing of face masks or face coverings in a variety of settings. Masks are now optional at Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. As with all aspects of the pandemic, this policy is subject to change.

We are excited to announce that, pandemic permitting, a full season of the Songbag Concert Series from March-November will occur this year. Glory Days Garage Band from Kewanee, Illinois will open the Songbag Concert Series on March 13 at 2 pm. Featuring an acoustic set of 1960's era rock 'n' roll songs, we look forward to welcoming this group and many other artists from different genres to our Barn this year. The Songbag Committee is putting the finishing touches on the lineup for the year, so be sure to visit the sandburg.org webpage or follow the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association on Facebook to see the full lineup as it becomes available.

Throughout the winter we were fortunate to receive a variety of Sandburg items. John Brown donated a collection of books, photographs, and other Sandburg items his Uncle Terry Hogan collected. Thomas Arthur and Kathleen Giles-Arthur donated a typewriter that Carl Sandburg borrowed from his agent Mitchell Dawson to write the final chapter of *Remembrance Rock*. Rich Farrell donated Armed Service Editions of Carl Sandburg's *Storm Over the Land* for use in our staff and

volunteer library. His donation also included a copy of *Myths After Lincoln*. This work, written by Lloyd Lewis, whom Sandburg worked with at the *Chicago Daily News*, includes an introduction by Carl. We appreciate all these donors who have helped enhance our Site. Once these items are fully processed and integrated into our museum collection, we hope to rotate them onto display in the Visitor's Center. We thank these donors and all the members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association for your continued support. With a full return of the Songbag Series and the great possibility of the COVID-19 pandemic winding down, we hope you will visit us at Carl Sandburg State Historic Site this year!

### THE NEW GALESBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Noelle Thompson

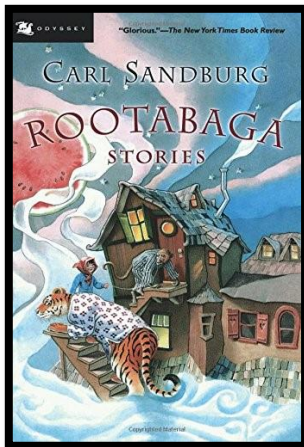
[Ed. Note: Noelle Thompson was born and raised in Galesburg. She attended Carl Sandburg College and Monmouth College before receiving a Master of Information degree from Rutgers University in 2019. She is the Director of the Galesburg Public Library, serves on the board of the Downtown Community Partnership, and in her spare time loves to participate in community events with her husband Robert and their three daughters.]

Construction is about to begin for the new Galesburg Public Library, scheduled for completion in December 2023. For nearly a decade library staff and trustees have worked with building consultants and architects from FEH Design to plan a building that serves each and every member of the Galesburg community. Among the features of the new building are a large community room with a serving kitchen, study rooms, enhanced archives, a skills lab with tools and equipment for lifelong learning, a technology lab, a fireplace alcove, and plenty of outdoor spaces.

The library serves people of all ages, so the needs of young people are especially considered in the design. A teen zone with a homework center and a hang-out corner is included, and a children's room will serve infants and children up to eleven years old along with their caregivers.

As a center for community, history, and art, the Galesburg Public Library seeks to remember the people who shaped our town and to celebrate the artists and thinkers who inspire us today. To keep the library distinct to Galesburg a custom Carl Sandburg playhouse will be constructed in the children's room. The topsy-turvy playhouse is modeled after Kurt Cyrus' 2003 cover of

*Rootabaga Stories*, a collection of children's stories written by Sandburg and originally published in 1922. The playhouse, actually a woodshed from the short story "Poker Face the Baboon and Hot Dog the Tiger," will sit at the entrance of the children's library and within view of the primary library entrance. Child-sized doorways and lighting features will make the kids-only house a desirable stop for the library's youngest patrons.



The cover by Kurt Cyprus is inspiration for the playhouse.



FEH Design has developed a custom design of the playhouse (right) as the entrance to the children's library.

Visitors to the new building can expect to see Sandburg's influence throughout other areas as well. Additional display cases will showcase Sandburg artifacts on a rotating basis, and a photo collage of Galesburg history and notable people is expected to feature Sandburg.

Earlier building renderings included a collection of writers' names engraved around the façade, and community input was sought to determine which names to include. The most popular suggestion was Carl Sandburg. The engraved names have been eliminated from the design, but staff will use the community's suggestions to showcase the writers inside the building.

The construction project is primarily funded by a \$15.3 million grant from the Illinois State Library. The library is responsible for raising the remaining funds locally and kicked off their capital campaign last year, setting a goal of \$3.75 million. The first major gift came from the G.L. Vitale Foundation, sponsoring the discovery

area in the children's library which includes the Sandburg playhouse. As of mid-February, the Galesburg Public Library Foundation has raised over \$2.9 million and expects to reach their goal by the summer of 2022. Two major giving campaigns are currently taking place. The Galesburg Community Foundation has offered a challenge grant, matching every \$2 given toward the community room with \$1, up to \$350,000. The library is also recruiting donors for the 100 Extraordinary Women campaign which challenges one hundred women to pledge \$1,000 over five years, collectively sponsoring the skills lab with the total \$100,000 raised.

To learn more about the features of the library or the capital campaign, like the Galesburg Public Library Foundation on Facebook or visit their website [thegplf.org](http://thegplf.org).

## A GALESBURG BOY REMEMBERS SANDBURG

By Donald Phillip Verene

I was born in Cottage Hospital in Galesburg, Illinois on October 24, 1937. I attended Silas Willard Grade School, Hitchcock Jr. High School, GHS (then located downtown near the public library), and Knox College. At some point I read Sandburg's "Fog," along with nearly every schoolchild in America, the difference being that Sandburg was from my hometown.

Sandburg came to Knox in October 1958 for the reenactment of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate the year before my future wife, Molly, and I graduated. He was an imposing figure for me, a young Galesburg poet, whose poem "No Roads" was to appear in the *Chicago Review* (Winter 1959, vol. 13, n. 4).

Growing up in Galesburg, Sandburg had a milk route. I had a paper route, delivering the *Register-Mail* summer and winter. One day in 1952, when I was fifteen, my mother, Eleanor Grant Verene, heard on the radio, WGIL, that Carl Sandburg was going to sign copies of a new book about Galesburg, *Always the Young Strangers*, in the O.T. Johnson department store on Main Street. I went to see him that afternoon. There were a few people there, and he was signing books. I did not have money to buy one, so I left quietly, having seen the person who wrote "Fog."

Sandburg's father, August Sandburg, worked as a blacksmith helper for the C,B,& Q Railroad. My father, P.N. Verene, began his working life in the C,B, & Q yards. My grandfather on my mother's side worked in the Roundhouse, walking back and forth to work every day. He never had a car. On my father's side, C.J. Verene ran a Purina Feed store on Main Street just west of the Square. I spent some afternoons listening to the talk of the Knox County farmers who came to order feed. It was the language of Sandburg's poetry. I heard that again when I worked one summer at the Tie Plant, 110 acres of stacked railroad ties, to be used as far away as Colorado.

In my senior year of high school Adda George, who led the move to restore Sandburg's birthplace, somehow learned of my interest in Sandburg's poetry and asked

me and my friend, Jim Symmonds, to act as young hosts on Sunday for visitors to the Sandburg Birthplace Site. At the end of the day she gave me a reproduction in Sandburg's handwriting of one of his poems. We did not have much to say to the visitors, but we did call attention to Sandburg's comment, when visiting the house, that the bathroom with a metal tub that had been installed was an "anachronism." The Sandburgs had an outside privy, and there was no bathtub with running water.

Following my college graduation I decided to hitchhike the great American West. Having learned something of *Smoke and Steel* from my job on the railroad, it was time for my own tour of the "Slabs of the Sunburnt West." After reaching San Francisco I made my way back to Galesburg. Sandburg said that Galesburg burned in his memory. I understood that. Like Sandburg said, Galesburg developed through the arrival of always the young strangers. Like Sandburg, I am a Swede on my father's side, but I am Scotch-Irish on my mother's side.

On my return to Galesburg, I decided to pursue graduate study in philosophy. Sandburg's father wondered whether there was any money in poetry. So did I. But I knew it was possible to become a teacher. I received my doctorate from Washington University in St. Louis in 1964 and taught successively, at NIU, Penn State, and finally at Emory University, arriving in 1982 to serve as Chair of the Department of Philosophy.

Taking up residence in Atlanta, I realized I was only a few hours' drive from Flat Rock, North Carolina where the Sandburgs had moved to Connemara thirty years earlier. I have visited Connemara twice, and I learned that the Park Rangers were giving regular readings of Sandburg's poetry to visitors. A very nice practice.

On October 1, 1967, Sandburg's ashes were buried beneath Remembrance Rock at his birthplace. My sister, Louise Verene, now a retired teacher from the Galesburg school system, sang at the memorial service. I donated the stone marker in front of the house on Berrien Street where in 1904 Sandburg wrote and published *In Reckless Ecstasy*. I also donated a stone bench that sits before the statue of Sandburg in the Galesburg Square.

Our son, the photographer Chris Verene, has devoted his work to documenting the people of Galesburg. His photographs are exhibited worldwide and appear in two prominent books published by Twin Palms Press. He recently received a Guggenheim Fellowship grant to continue his work.

Sandburg has been a spirit behind my many philosophical books and *The People*, Yes is the subject of a chapter in my book, *The Philosophy of Literature: Four Studies* (Cascade Books, 2018).

With me always is Sandburg's answer, when asked what he wanted out of life. Sandburg said, "What I need mainly is three things in life, possibly four: To be out of jail, to eat regular, to get what I write printed, and then a little love at home and a little outside."

## THE SANDBURG'S CONNEMARA HOME

By Gayle Keiser

### Part II

After Lilian managed major renovations to the three-story, twenty-two room house, the three-generational Sandburg family moved into their new home at Connemara. The family included Carl and Lilian, their three daughters Margaret, Janet, and Helga with her two children Paula and John Carl.



Gayle Keiser

The top story was a crow's nest with windows facing in four directions. Carl considered using this room for his writing but decided the view would be too distracting. Instead he chose two small loft-like rooms on the second floor—his workroom and bedroom—facing west to the setting sun.

Here Carl worked undisturbed through the night, often retiring to his bed just as the farmers in the family were rising below, putting coffee on the stove, and calling the dogs to accompany them to the early milking. He must have enjoyed this waking of farm life as he was turning in to sleep. Sometimes he called or waved from his high windows as they struck out before dawn. "You look like you know where you're going," Paula remembered him calling out. "If you get lost I bet you'll follow the stars."

Carl did most of his writing in the upstairs workroom amid a clutter of filing crates, book cases, and boxes of books. The manual typewriter he pecked with index fingers sat atop an orange crate turned on end. He pinned notes and paper clippings to the walls and shelves. Scattered around the workroom and throughout the house were the 12,000 books brought from Michigan by railroad boxcar.

Perhaps the most interesting rooms in the house were the downstairs studies dedicated to Lilian's and Carl's careers. Records for Lilian's Chikaming herd were maintained in her study. Paula wrote that she often saw her grandmother with "her head bent over the records of dams, sires, and daughters, studying pedigrees, proposed matings, and the percentage of inbreeding. At a time when I knew nothing of genetics, I greatly admired Gramma's familiarity with each goat in the herd."

Lilian's Connemara herd expanded to include three breeds: two Swiss breeds with pricked ears—the white Saanans, and the Toggenburgs with their markings of white trim in brown coats; and the Nubians with pendulous ears that delicately turn at the ends and coats varied in mottled, splashed, or solid colors. The Saanans and Toggenburgs give a greater volume of milk than Nubian goats, but Nubian milk with more butterfat is known for its exceptional flavor.

Connemara became widely-known as a dairy farm and Lilian as a top goat breeder, her stock always in demand: kids, bred does, and the stud service of the bucks. The Chikaming herd produced just enough milk to meet a steady demand for babies and ill or elderly people unable to digest cow's milk. After more years of breeding the family made goat's milk cheese, buttermilk, butter, and yogurt.

"I frequently heard Gramma explaining to dubious visitors that goat's milk is naturally homogenized and alkaline in reaction, unlike that of a cow, and this is the reason that it takes only twenty minutes to digest, whereas cow's milk takes two hours," Paula wrote. "Many times I was to hear a visiting goat enthusiast remark, 'You mean her husband is the Carl Sandburg?'"

Carl's downstairs study is where he worked on correspondences and prepared completed manuscripts for publication with the assistance of a secretary or his daughters Margaret and Helga. The room was piled high with papers, filing boxes, and more books scattered on shelves and loosely organized by subjects and projects.

In this study Carl read many letters arriving daily, including mail from his publisher, fellow poets, school children reading and studying his poetry, U.S. Senators, Supreme Court Justices, and an occasional letter from various Presidents of the United States that he befriended over the years.

A prominent feature of Carl's study was the table constructed from timbers that supported the roof of the White House during Lincoln's presidency. The wood was salvaged from a White House renovation and used to construct the table that was later given to Sandburg in honor of his Pulitzer prize-winning biography of Abraham Lincoln.

On February 12, 1959, the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Sandburg delivered the Lincoln Day address to a joint session of Congress. He was the first private citizen to address such a session in the twentieth century. "Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is hard as rock and soft as drifting fog," Sandburg said in his reflections on Lincoln.

At the White House in 1964 President Lyndon Johnson gave Sandburg the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor for a meritorious contribution to national interests, cultural, or other public endeavors.

At Connemara the following year Sandburg received a lifetime membership from the NAACP for his writings about the 1919 Chicago race riots and his "life-long struggle to extend the frontiers of social justice." This was the first time the NAACP had bestowed an award on a white man, calling him "a major prophet of Civil Rights." His Pulitzer prize-winning *Complete Poems* included many works on civil rights and labor rights.

A few months after Sandburg's death on June 22, 1967 almost six thousand people gathered at the Lincoln

Memorial to honor his memory. The crowd included Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Earl Warren and Carl's friend—the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall. Also in attendance were members of Congress, fellow poets, and President Lyndon Johnson. In the President's remarks he referred to Sandburg as a "vital, exuberant, wise, and generous man."

Lilian wanted her husband's legacy to endure and Connemara to be preserved as a national treasure. The next year she sold Connemara to the U.S. National Park Service, and she donated the contents of their home that the property would remain as it was while the family lived there. Connemara opened to the public as a National Park in 1974.

A Writer-in-Residence program was established in keeping with Lilian's final wish that Connemara be a place of inspiration for future generations of writers. The program was implemented in 2010, thirty-three years after Lilian's death in 1977. The three-week residency is located at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site and provides housing for a writer in the cottage a stone's throw from the Sandburg residence.

Paula reflected, "Even when everyone was in town and Connemara was peopleless she never seemed empty—but like a strong gentle creature in the sun and perfectly content."

## **CARL SANDBURG'S MEMORIAL DAY: WAR & PEACE IN POETRY & PROSE**

By John Quinley

Young Carl Sandburg was fascinated with the world's great wars he read about in a book his mother spent a day's salary to buy. He was also intrigued by the tales of Civil War battles shared by Uncle Joe, a veteran who rented a room in the Sandburg's home. In his autobiography *Always the Young Strangers* Carl recalls wanting to "tell the family war is a wonder and soldiers are a wonder.... I wish we had a war now and I could be a soldier."

Sandburg's thoughts about war evolved from this boyhood infatuation. As an adult, Carl lived through three wars and fought in one. He saw no direct action as a soldier in the Spanish-American War, but he suffered in the heat in woolen uniforms recycled from the Civil War, fought off malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and ate beef and beans from tin cans. He said, "It was a dirty and lousy affair while it lasted."

In the periods before and after wars Carl supported efforts for lasting peace. But whenever America was at war, he responded with patriotic fervor, never losing faith that the peoples of the American democracy would prevail.

*Time and time again, I saw the faces of her men  
and women torn and shaken in turmoil, chaos and storm.  
In each major crisis, I have seen despair on the faces of  
some of the foremost strugglers, but their ideas always  
won. Their visions always came through.*



This article explores war and peace as expressed in Carl's poetry and prose: how war affects ordinary people on the home front as well as the personal and unique experiences of war by the common soldier. In his work of historical fiction *Remembrance Rock* Carl writes that the common soldier,

*...knows the real story of the war; he feels it sharply. This war has a thousand faces...and a fantastic variety of means for testing a boy's brain, for stretching his nerves, for exposing his heart or burying his heart.... The war must be lived to be understood. We can tell you only some events, of what men do. We can see and tell you that this war is brutalizing some among your sons, and yet ennobling others. War happens inside a man. It happens to him alone. It can never be communicated. That is the tragedy—and perhaps the blessing.*

Carl's thoughts on war and peace are examined within the pacifist, just-war, and crusader/fascist traditions. These ideologies provide standards for why nations go to war, give limitations for armed conflict, and outline elements of a just peace.

### **Pacifist Tradition**

Most Christians in their first four centuries refused to participate in war. The later Protestant Reformation peace churches, such as the Quakers, continued the pacifist tradition. The nonviolent movements of Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. were influential during Sandburg's life.

How Sandburg fits into the pacifist tradition can be illustrated by looking at points early and late in his life—the lead-up to World War I and the Cold War of post-World War II. Carl focused on three pacifist related themes: the disparity of wealth and power along socio-economic and political lines; the horror and futility of war, especially in the modern era; and the universal humanity shared by both sides of an armed conflict. The issue of universal humanity is covered at the end of this article. Issues concerned with the burdens of war, especially on the working class, and the horror and futility of war are discussed below.

### **The People**

Carl organized for the Social Democratic Party in Wisconsin after college, promoting the causes of the labor class in an era of big business monopolies and pro-business Congress and courts. In the lead-in to World War I the labor movement called for workers across the world to unite across national borders in opposition to the pro-war ruling capitalists and often royalist elites, who were the real enemies.

Sandburg opposed war from a position of working-class solidarity not from a formal religious perspective. In "And They Obey," Carl echoes the commands of the elite to soldiers and working peoples:

*SMASH down the cities.  
Knock the walls to pieces.*

*Break the factories and cathedrals, warehouses and homes  
Into loose piles of stone and lumber and black burnt wood:  
You are the soldiers and we command you.*

*Build up the cities.  
Set up the walls again.  
Put together once more the factories and cathedrals,  
warehouses and homes  
Into buildings for life and labor:  
.....You are workmen and citizens all: We command you.*

In "A Million Young Workmen, 1915," Carl describes the decadence of pro-war royalty.

*The kings are grinning, the kaiser and the czar—they are alive riding in leather-seated motor cars, and they have their women and roses for ease, and they eat fresh poached eggs for breakfast, new butter on toast, sitting in tall water-tight houses reading the news of war.*

*I dreamed a million ghosts of the young workmen rose in their shirts all soaked in crimson . . . and yelled:*

*God damn the grinning kings, God damn the kaiser and the czar.*

### **Horror and Futility of War**

Much of Sandburg's World War I era poetry speaks of the desolation of war on the battlefield and on the home front, sometimes in brutal, graphic language. In "Smoke":

*Millions of men go to war, acres of them are buried,  
guns and ships broken, cities burned, villages sent up in smoke, and children where cows are killed off amid hoarse barbecues vanish like finger-rings of smoke in a north wind.*

In "Killers," sixteen million soldiers sleep along the picket lines.

*Some of them long sleepers for always,  
Some of them tumbling to sleep tomorrow for always  
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak,  
Eating and drinking, toiling . . . on a long job of killing.*

In "Iron," Sandburg yokes the shovel to the gun as brothers. And, in "Grass" he laments the agonies of war, which are too often soon forgotten. The grass covers the soldiers buried in the battlefields, and in two years, ten years, people ask, "What place is this? Where are we now?"

### **Just-War and Crusader/Fascist Traditions**

Stemming from the time of St. Augustine in 400 CE, the just-war tradition lays down strict controls over any resort to war: war must be a last resort of diplomacy; it must seek justice in response to a serious evil without self-enrichment or total devastation; it must respect the lives of noncombatants and refrain from atrocities; and the harm done by war must not exceed the good.

The crusader/fascist ideology stands in stark contrast to the just-war framework. Created from the fusion of

political and religious authority in the Middle Ages, it led to a series of crusades pitting Christians against Muslims. Warfare became a holy cause and a path to sainthood. Crusader beliefs—and later ideologies like fascism—held few moral principles other than the desired ends justifies any means. The use of poison gas, fire raids, concentration camps, nuclear weapons, and napalm became normative behavior for all sides within this tradition.

The just-war and crusader/fascist traditions can best be understood in tandem—the push and pull factors of war. Belligerents claim a just-war rationale for their war efforts while ascribing a crusader/fascist motivation to their enemies. Sandburg's poetry and prose that speak to issues of war and peace can be framed using the ideas that underpin these traditions.

### World War I Era

Carl believed that World War I was “a war to end all wars,” and America's involvement kept “alive the names of those who left red prints of bleeding feet at Valley Forge in Christmas snow.” He depicted allied soldiers as clean-scrubbed, clear-eyed patriots—ready to do their duty, but not eager for battle nor interested in the spoils of war. His best-known poem from this era, “The Four Brothers,” was read at Liberty Bond rallies across the country. Sandburg declares that the brother-soldiers of France, Russia, Britain, and America were common folk ready to defend their respective nations, “Cowpunchers, cornhuskers, shopmen, ready in khaki; Ballplayers, lumberjacks, ironworkers, ready in khaki.”

Sandburg disparaged the German Kaiser as the leader of a repressive state, which ought to be wiped off the face of the earth. The Kaiser, always presented as part crackpot, part bloodthirsty madman, was depicted by Sandburg as ‘the one-armed mastoid Kaiser,’ the ‘half-cracked one-armed child of the German kings,’ ‘the child born with his head wrong-shaped,’ ‘the blood of rotted kings in his veins,’ ‘the last of quivering Hohenzollerns,’ and ‘a piece of trash.’

### World War II Era

In “What would Lincoln do Now?” Carl compared the policies of Lincoln and Roosevelt as they prepared a nation for war. In “Is There Any Easy Road to Freedom” Sandburg says, “that in order to keep our freedoms we must never take them for granted; we must always keep threats to freedom in check.”

*There are freedom shouters  
There are freedom whisperers.  
Both may serve.  
Have I, have you, been too silent?  
Is there an easy crime of silence?  
Is there any easy road to freedom?*

At a national unity rally at the Chicago Stadium in 1941, 24,000 people came to hear Judy Garland sing “God Bless America” and to listen to the words of Carl Sandburg among other speakers. Carl recalled that there were widespread boos when the song was sung at an

America First rally a couple of weeks earlier. Firsters couldn't stomach an anthem written by a Jew. Carl warns,

*When the long arm of Nazi propaganda reaches  
from Berlin to Chicago and Philadelphia telling us  
what songs we can or can't sing, we are merely  
getting a little preview and foretaste of what that  
propaganda will hand us when its prestige and power  
have been fortified and buttressed to the extent we  
will surely see if and when the British Isles become a  
Nazi outpost, we will surely, regret the lack of what  
we might have determined to send.*

Sandburg covered the war in a weekly column, and he gave public speeches at rallies and on radio broadcasts. These were compiled into the book, *The Homefront Memo*. It included “Wings Over Norway,” about the Crown Princesses and the Norwegian Air Force depicted in the recent PBS series; and “The Man with Broken Fingers,” about torture at the hands of the Gestapo. Carl asks

*Did he think about violins or accordions he would  
never touch again?  
Did he think of baby or woman hair he would never  
again play with?  
Or of hammers or pencils no good to him anymore?  
Or of gloves and mittens that would always be  
misfits?*

And in “Meditation at Arlington,” Sandburg asserts that the sacrifices of the Unknown Soldier and of common people on the home front belong to each other.

*A great war has its hundreds of heroes whose names  
stand out, blazed high on the public records. But they  
are only a handful and often what they did would not  
have been possible except for the hundreds of  
thousands, even the millions, who hammered out  
weapons, raised and transported food, passed along  
ammunition, wrote letters sending messages of faith,  
love, and hope—those anonymous ones too vast for  
the record, these and the loyal soldier who does his  
plain, humdrum duty—they and the Unknown Soldier  
belong to each other.*

### A Just Peace for All

Sandburg decried the futility of repeated war and peace cycles witnessed throughout world history. In “War,” he accepts that there will always be the quarreling of the kings and followers but hopes that the people will prevail, “In the wars to come kings kicked under the dust and millions of men following great causes not yet dreamed out in the heads of men.”

In the World War I poem, “The Liars,” Carl writes that the liars of the nations met behind closed doors and lied to their citizens. He feared a return to the old ways at war's end, with the liars telling each other, “Let us run the world again...Wait and we'll cash in again.”

As more and more deadly weapons were developed during the world wars with no end in sight, Sandburg believed the greatest threat to humanity was something he called, “The Unknown War.”

*The bombs of the next war, if they control, hold the Unknown blasts--the bacterial spreads of the next war, if they control, reek with the Unknown--the round-the-curve-of-the-earth guided missiles of the next war, should they control, will have the slide and hiss of the Unknown--the cosmic rays or light beams carrying a moonshine kiss of death, if and when they control, will have the mercy of the sudden Unknown.*

Sandburg's belief in the universal oneness of humankind and faith in humanity was made evident in *The Family of Man*—a photographic book that Sandburg and his brother-in-law, Edward Steichen, published in 1954 during the Cold War. Photographs in the publication depicted birth, love, joy, war, privation, illness, and death – everything humanity had in common. The brothers-in-law traveled the world to present the collection that was seen by six million people in sixty-nine overseas exhibits.

In the Prologue, Carl wrote:

*Here are...the loved and the unloved, the lonely and abandoned, the brutal and the compassionate—one big Family hugging close to the ball of Earth for its life and Being...A camera testament, a drama of the grand canyon of humanity, an epic woven of fun, mystery and Holiness—here is the Family of Man!*

## Conclusion

Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven wrote that, “no other American poet has been so immediately responsive to the convolutions of American life.” These shaped him, and as a national figure, he helped shape the times, including how America viewed issues of war and peace. While Sandburg's ideas evolved, his core beliefs remained fast: the promise of working peoples within the American democracy system and the ultimate hope for a peaceful and just future for all of humanity.

In Sandburg's book-long poem, *The People Yes*, Carl shares “the something” the little girl knows:

*The little girl saw her first troop parade and asked,  
“What are those?”  
“Soldiers.”  
“What are soldiers?”  
“They are for war. They fight and each tries to kill  
as many of the other side as he can.”  
The girl held still and studied.  
“Do you know . . . I know something?”  
“Yes, what is it you know?”  
“Sometimes they'll give a war and nobody will come.”*

## 2022 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

We are accepting membership renewals for 2022!  
Please find a form with membership categories & online options for paying dues on page 8 of this newsletter.  
Thanks to all for your continuing support!

## CARL & LILIAN

By Barbara Schock

On December 29, 1907 Carl Sandburg reported for a new job in Milwaukee. He was to be an organizer for the Wisconsin Social Democratic Party. By chance, he met Lilian Steichen, a party member, who was at the headquarters to say goodbye to her friends. She had been home for the Christmas holiday to visit her parents and was about to return to her teaching job in Princeton, Illinois.

Sandburg walked with Lilian to her trolley, and she gave him her address. He promised to send some samples of his writing to her. During the next six months 135 letters were exchanged. (In 1987, Margaret Sandburg, daughter of Carl and Lilian, edited the letters for a book *The Poet and the Dream Girl*. She described the letters as being poetic and passionate.)

The previous year Sandburg had given his first paid speaking engagement in Racine. At that time he was thinking of becoming a platform speaker on one of the circuits which provided entertainment to the many opera houses and theaters across the Midwest. His performance came to the attention of Winfield R. Gaylord, leader of the Wisconsin Social Democratic Party. It was Gaylord who described the socialist movement in a way that was practical and constructive. After convincing Sandburg to come to Wisconsin Gaylord assigned him to work in the Lake Shore and Fox Valley District on the shores of Lake Winnebago. He lived in Oshkosh on the western side of the lake. Carl's salary was whatever his listeners could afford to give him. He was his own publicist and arranged his own speaking schedule.

Lilian Steichen was born in Michigan after her parents emigrated from Luxembourg. She had an older brother Edward. Her father's health was broken from working in the copper mines. Mrs. Steichen became the breadwinner of the family by making ladies hats. Later, the family moved to Wisconsin. Mrs. Steichen worked very hard to give her children the best education possible. She sent them to church-affiliated schools in Wisconsin and Canada.

Lilian first enrolled in the University of Illinois and then transferred to the University of Chicago. She graduated with a Phi Beta Kappa key. Even though he had attended Lombard College for three years, Carl suspected that she was smarter.

The first letter was sent on January 17, 1908. The two writers discovered similarities in their backgrounds, being the children of immigrants. He called her Paula, based on the affectionate name her family called her. She called him Carl, his original given name. He was using Charles as his first name at the time. She gave him advice on his writing, and he called her a “literary stylist.”

Carl and Lilian were married June 13, 1908 in Milwaukee. He was thirty and she was twenty-five years old. Only his two sisters traveled to Milwaukee for the wedding.

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The **Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association** promotes awareness of the historical and cultural significance of Carl Sandburg and the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site in Galesburg, Illinois. We support a variety of educational programs and the collection, preservation, and display of materials which demonstrate the life, times, and achievements of Carl Sandburg.

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