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THE SECONDARY SCHOOL OF TODAY.

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A STUDY OF CARL SANDBURG: A MAJOR WRITER FOR
THE SECONDARY SCHOOL OF TODAY

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
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By

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Minor Field: Teacher Education

Studies in Teacher Education. Professors L.O. Andrews and Charles Galloway

Minor Field: Guidance and Counseling

Studies in Guidance and Counseling. Professors Herman J. Peters and Anthony C. Riccio
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CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY OF

CARL SANDBURG

Introduction

It was cold and brisk for Washington, D. C. that February day in 1959 as I hurried up the steps of the Capitol Building to claim my seat in the press gallery. Inside the massive building, I rid myself of my heavy coat and showed my ticket of admission to a uniformed attendant, who directed me to the section reserved for working press representatives. We were gathered to cover an extraordinary event in American history--for the first time in the nation's history, a private citizen had been invited to address a joint session of the United States Congress. This private citizen was Carl Sandburg of Connamara Farm, Flat Rock, North Carolina. The occasion was the commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's one hundred fiftieth birthday, February 12, 1959.

The Honorable Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives, called the session to order. The first order of business was to introduce the speaker for the day, and the late Mister Sam said to the Congress, justices of the Supreme Court, the members of
President Eisenhower's Cabinet, and the Diplomatic Corps:

It now becomes my very great pleasure and high privilege to be able to present to you the man who in all probability knows more about the life, the times, the hopes and the aspirations of Abraham Lincoln than any other human being. He has studied and has put on paper his conceptions of the towering figure of this great and good man. I take pleasure and honor to be able to present to you this great writer, this great historian, Carl Sandburg. ¹

A standing ovation was accorded to Sandburg, now making his way slowly down the wide aisle toward the podium. Instead of the jovial man with the guitar, Sandburg looked solemn and scholarly as he put on his large eyeglasses in preparation for his speech. As the speech would be a matter of public record, I decided to watch him deliver the speech instead of taking laborious notes as he spoke.

As I listened to the slow cadences of Carl Sandburg's speech that day, I realized that Carl Sandburg would still have been a poet had he never written a line of poetry. Note the poetic quality of these lines that Sandburg spoke shortly after 11 A.M., Thursday, February 12, 1959, in his opening remarks:

Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect. ²


² Ibid.
I could see these words arranged as poetry on the printed page as follows:

Not often . . .
In the story of mankind
Does a man arrive on earth
Who is both steel and velvet,
Who is as hard as rock
And soft as drifting fog . . .

On the printed page of the Congressional Record that day, the words are recorded as prose, but to those who heard the speech, the words were poetry. For here was the personal testament of a sincere man who still held that mankind's best hope is America.

He spoke for just twenty minutes that day and closed his short Lincoln tribute with more of the same kind of poetic utterance:

Today we may say, perhaps, that the well-assured and most enduring memorial to Abraham Lincoln is invisibly in the hearts of men who love liberty today, tomorrow, and for a long time, yes, a long time yet to come. It is there in the hearts of lovers of liberty, men and women--this country has always had them in crisis--men and women who understand that wherever there is freedom there have been those who fought, toiled and sacrificed for it. 3

Since that time, I had the privilege of getting to know Carl Sandburg on a personal basis, and my respect and admiration for him grew with the years until his death in 1967. I have written a number of articles on him for various newspapers and magazines and was also a guest in the Sandburg home on three occasions. This study will

3 Ibid., p. 6.
make full use of my personal knowledge of Carl Sandburg. It will also survey the literature of criticism in an attempt to evaluate Sandburg's contributions to American literature.

The main part of the study will attempt to discuss Sandburg's work, especially the large volume of his work that is particularly adaptable for use in the secondary school classroom.

Scope of the Study

The objects of the present study are as follows: (1) to survey and discuss a number of the works of Sandburg that the secondary school teacher can most effectively use in classroom teaching; (2) to suggest and analyze various methods of teaching the selected pieces; (3) to offer insight and understanding of Carl Sandburg and his work.

Limitations of the Study

This study gives only passing glance at much of the work of Sandburg, concentrating primarily on his work that is most easily adaptable to the curriculum of the secondary school. Biographical material is used only where it has direct relationship to Sandburg's writing. The concern of this study is with the works of the writer which have direct relevance to high school students.

Materials and Methods of the Study

The standard literary and biographical primary and secondary sources will be used in the study. Also used will be transcripts
of interviews with Sandburg by the author (Appendix A), and assorted audio-visual sources for the teaching of Sandburg (Appendix B).

**Sandburg's Place in American Literature**

Carl Sandburg made a unique contribution to American literature. Whether he sat in a high-backed schoolchair before a symphony orchestra in a major city reading his poetry or twanged away on a guitar in the middle of a goat herd on his North Carolina farm, Carl Sandburg's major contribution was in preserving the art and culture of the American people.

No other serious writer of our time has enjoyed so much popularity with the great bulk of the American people as Sandburg. Keeping a shaggy and seemingly unkempt appearance, Carl Sandburg succeeded in building an image of himself as a common person, and, more than any other writer, became the spokesman for the people. As representative for these mystical "people," he successfully created a definite literary personality of his own which included a skillful rhapsodic patterning of words and a simple, direct message.

Sandburg's position as the spokesman for the common man was not a forced development, however. Sandburg had long contact in a variety of jobs with the laboring classes; in fact, until his emergence as a poet in early middle age, Sandburg was a working member of this group. His long association with the working class of people
is responsible for his point of view, which, developed in his youth, he never drastically altered. If such a position appears static, in another way it is not. For Sandburg managed to keep his few issues alive through fifty years of drastic change in American life, thus remaining prominent on the contemporary scene of literature. While it is true that some scholars dismiss his work as trivial, naive, and unintellectual, Sandburg must still loom quite large, if only for his importance as an important link between the free-verse of Whitman and the modernistic poetry of the post-Thirties.  

Critical Reputation of Carl Sandburg

Literary critics have been quite split over the reputation of Carl Sandburg. For some he is dull, tiresome and of little worth. John Crowe Ransom, for example, made no mention of Sandburg in his assessment of American poets between 1900 and 1950. Listed as minor poets were Vachel Lindsay, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, E. E. Cummings, and Hart Crane. Definitely major in stature were Wallace Stevens, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, and T. S. Eliot.

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6 Ibid., p. 446.
Edmund Wilson attacked Sandburg quite early in his career.

In 1920, Wilson wrote of Sandburg:

But Carl Sandburg, born in Chicago, is a very different matter. There is nothing in Chicago to encourage a sensitive lover of life. There is no suggestion of harmony in anything about him. . . . There is no ecstasy of beauty here, no calm and high reflection: his emotions simply cannot find expression in the forms of Milton and Shelley. 7

Kenneth Rexroth, in a 1958 review of The Sandburg Range, declared that Sandburg had not written any worthwhile poetry since 1925 and that Sandburg's prose was not literate. Rexroth wrote:

What ever happened to the author of the best of the Chicago poems? It is a terrible pity, but after about 1925 there is nothing of value. Since most of the prose comes after that, Sandburg the historian, novelist, autobiographer, writer of children's stories simply does not exist for literature. 8

Nicholas Joost of Commonweal admits that Sandburg is a skillful technician of the writing trade, but is not a true literary artist: "Sandburg attains technical success. But it is an extremely limited success as an imitator of Whitman and as one of the Imagists." 9

Walter Blair writes of Sandburg's total literary contribution:

The poetry, the ballad collecting, the biography, and a rather chaotic historical novel [Remembrance Rock], are all of a piece . . . . As Sandburg has conceived of his task, it has been to voice the thoughts and feelings of the common folk; and he believes that he expresses them in his poems, in his folk songs, and in the biography of the American people's greatest hero. [Lincoln] 10

Blair says that Sandburg's poetry is expressive of the times in which he lived and that he was a product of his historical period:

His poetry is expressive of his times in both its form and its subject matter. It is free verse of the sort becoming fashionable when he started to write. His diction is the American language, the richness of which was being discovered in Sandburg's young manhood. He, like others, was bewildered by the shift of America from the agrarian way of living to the industrial way. He, like others, was resentful of the injustices and the hypocrisies of a transitional period. Finally he, like others, found a hope and a belief which he could affirm. For him, these grew, naturally enough, from what he had seen and learned of the people. 11

Michael Yatron supports Blair's claim that Sandburg's poetry was representative of the historical period in which it was written. 12 Yatron states that the political Populism of Sandburg's youth during the 1890's had great influence on all of his poetry. This same Populist influence is also seen in the poetry of two other Illinois

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11 Ibid.
poets of Sandburg's time, Vachel Lindsay and Edgar Lee Masters, says Yatron. 13

Daniel Hoffman also holds to the thesis that Sandburg's poetry is a result of his affinity for political Populism. 14 Hoffman claims that Sandburg developed what he has termed "literary populism" in his poetry. Sandburg, writes Hoffman, used the collective term, "The people" to describe too many individuals in society:

In presenting collective emotions divorced from the individual consciousness to a culture as pre-eminently noncollective as ours, Carl Sandburg may have set himself an impossible task. He has lost many otherwise concerned readers in the process. 15

Bernard Duffey, in his 1954 story of Sherwood Anderson, Vachel Lindsay, and Carl Sandburg, develops the thesis that, as Sandburg departs from fact in writing his poetry, "his ideas are lost in romantic vaporizings." 16

William Carlos Williams, in a review of Sandburg's Complete Poems in 1951, was critical of what he termed "formlessness"

13Ibid., p. 165.


15Ibid., p. 278.

and "a drifting quality" of most of Sandburg's verse. \(^{17}\) "There is a total lack of controlling form," he concluded.

H. N. Fairchild, in a 1962 study on religious trends in modern poetry, sees Sandburg as something of an elder statesman of modern poetry who never reached his potential:

> We should always be grateful to Sandburg as a pioneer liberator of American poetry from the genteel tradition. And yet it must be said that Sandburg is never a great and seldom even a very good poet. He abounds in potentially poetic feeling, but he is not sufficiently interested in writing poems. Too often he is the victim, too seldom the master, of tender emotions which liquefy his desire to seem hard and tough. He loves real people and real things but does not look at them intently enough to make his images of them come alive. \(^{18}\)

Fairchild sees a paradox in Sandburg in that he seems to yearn to be the sage of the literary community through his unconventionality:

> Beneath the regional and documentary surface of his work, beneath its relative modernity of matter, form, and diction, one discovers the wish to be a quite old-fashioned poet-prophet. \(^{19}\)

And Hyatt Waggoner, in a very recent study of American poetry, says that with few exceptions, much of Sandburg's poetry

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\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 500.
is "subliterary." "Much of it reads like the worst of Whitman," he writes. 20

But for others, Sandburg is in the company of the great.

Willard Thorp declares that The People, Yes is an American classic:

Not even Whitman, with whom he is habitually compared, knew America as he knew it . . .
The People, Yes is one of the great American books . . .
Whatever may be the name you put to it, a foreigner will find more of America in The People, Yes than in any other book we can give him. 21

Thorp calls The People, Yes "a strange and powerful book which defies classification." 22

Thorp maintains that Sandburg's name became synonymous with the term "New Poetry" during the 1920's:

For thousands of Americans the "new" poetry soon meant Sandburg. Even school children in the twenties possessed "Village in Late Summer," "Cool Tombs," "The Hangman at Home," "The Lawyers Know Too Much." In such brief and remarkable poems the form adequately carries the vision; and the anger, tenderness, and irony. 23


22Ibid., p. 1183.

23Ibid., pp. 1182-83.
While William Carlos Williams attacks his lack of form and structure, Gay Wilson Allen praises Sandburg's sense of structure:

"Sandburg has a considerable sense of structure and a consistent control of form in his poetry." 24

Seymour Krim writes of his poetry and prose:

Carl Sandburg is the voice of America. His poetry is in the language of the people and he writes a lean, hard prose that is so whittled to the point that it drives home everything it intends, and yet remains quite boyishly fresh and engaging in spite of its obvious mastery. 25

Richard Crowder, a Sandburg biographer, writes of Sandburg:

His style is made of equal parts of Whitman, the Imagists, and original Sandburg, with a passing debt to the Lincoln of the "Gettysburg Address." Rhymeless and unmetered, his poems nevertheless employ strong cadences derived from common Middle Western speech, and the diction ranges from a strong, sometimes hackneyed rhetoric to casual slang. 26

Yet, says Crowder, behind the uncouthness, the muscular, and the primitive of Sandburg, there is a large fund of pity and kindness which is the primary motive for all his poetry.


25 Seymour Krim, "Voice of America," Commonweal, LXII (June 17, 1955), 283-84.

On Sandburg being in disfavor with many of today's critics, Crowder writes:

Sandburg is not in fashion today with the academic poets and critics who have, perhaps temporarily, captured the positions of power in the American literary world; but his work remains popular with a large and loyal audience. There is no doubt that his poems offer a representation of his time and place which is at once widely characteristic and poetically significant.  

As Crowder pointed out, Sandburg derives from Whitman stylistically as well as in content. However, for Whitman's vibrant optimism, Sandburg substitutes a more cautious and somewhat cynical skepticism of the twentieth century. While he gloried in America's youthful strength and exuberance, he also bitterly attacked war and materialism. Essentially, though, Sandburg was a romantic who viewed people and events as larger, greater, and more important than they were in reality. But it should also be pointed out that it was in this realm that Sandburg owed much of his power as a writer of poetry and prose, for his best writing is in short, blunt words, in the diction of all strata of American daily life. And this, in itself, is no small accomplishment.

Review of the Literature

Periodicals

Sandburg's value as a poet for secondary school students was quite well recognized during the decade of the 1930's. A number of

27 Ibid., p. 993.
articles dealing with his poetry appeared during the period of the Depression years and World War II times.

L. A. Deupree and B. A. Quinn, in a 1932 article, discuss Sandburg's poetry for use with both elementary and high school students. Their article recounts the valuable learning experience the students had when Carl Sandburg agreed to talk with their classes.

H. A. Voaden and J. M. Paton suggested that teachers include more of Sandburg's poetry in teaching the adolescents of the 1930's. The teacher of English, they urged, should do more to get the student interested in the medium of poetry for creative expression:

Many of the poems of the Chicago poet, Carl Sandburg, could be used by the teacher to develop interest of young people in the writing of poetry. Mr. Sandburg seems to write his poems about common subjects in the free verse style. They maintain that students will be more easily encouraged to attempt their own poetic expression after they have become familiar with the free verse poetry of such writers as Carl Sandburg.


30 Ibid., p. 331.
S. A. Royster, in a 1934 article that advocated greater amounts of modern poetry selections for the student of the period, supports the view that Sandburg would stimulate higher interest among high school students in poetry than many of the more traditional poets. An important consideration in the teacher's selection of works of poetry for classroom study, she maintains, is the matter of student interest in the poetry:

If poetry study is to be meaningful in the total education of the great majority of today's students, then the teacher should consider the types of poetry that would be of the most interest to the students. Works of contemporary poets, such as Carl Sandburg and other less traditional writers, would provide poetry of interest to the young.  

A 1935 article by L. A. Morris mentions Sandburg as a prime example of how poetry could be used in the social studies curriculum of the school. "Many of the poems in Chicago Poems and Cornhuskers deal with the world of work and the accompanying social issues in an industrial society," the article states. S. T. Beckoff presents a similar statement in his 1942 article on songs and poetry of various occupations. He urges teachers to make more use of  

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Sandburg's American Songbag folksong collection in their teaching of poetry and literature because of its bearing on such problems.

A 1937 article by Babette Deutsch deals with Sandburg's desire to communicate with the average man and suggests that Sandburg, "though not so distinguished as other modern poets," has much to say about the nature of contemporary American life:

Carl Sandburg is important because he is of the vulgar, in the flattering sense of the word, making no compromise with conventionality, frankly expressing, in their own language, the deeper emotions of the common people. . . .

Sandburg may be disturbing, as, some eighty years ago, Walt Whitman was disturbing, though to a lesser degree; but he will not puzzle anybody except those who continue to measure poetry by the foot and who have never learned the value for poetry of the "anti-poetic." He is not as distinguished a writer as certain of his more esoteric contemporaries. Too often he says too much. . . . But he is not writing for other poets, or for critics, or for pedagogues; he is writing for the average wayfaring man.

Deutsch also points out the fact that Sandburg was a living poet whose lines were being used by the President of the United States. This fact, she says, is evidence of Sandburg's widespread popularity:

It is not without interest that a phrase from Sandburg's poem on Chicago should have been quoted in a recent presidential address. The event brought home the fact that not since an earlier Roosevelt cited the verse of Edwin Arlington Robinson has a contemporary poet been thus distinguished. This neglect of the unacknowledged

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35 Ibid., p. 274.
legislators of the world does not lie wholly with our chief executives, nor yet with their audiences and the teachers of those audiences. The President speaks to the people; the poet, for the most part, does not.\textsuperscript{36}

Two articles dealing with the teaching of Sandburg's poetry and prose appeared in 1940. The first was a book review of the final sections of the Lincoln biography, \textit{The War Years}, which strongly suggested the suitability of the biography for reading by youth.\textsuperscript{37} Joseph Auslander was particularly impressed with the patriotic flavor of the biography:

\begin{quote}
Carl Sandburg, poet and storyteller, author of \textit{Chicago Poems} and \textit{Slabs of the Sunburnt West}, of \textit{Good Morning, America}, and \textit{The People, Yes}, editor of \textit{The American Song-Bag}, has written a biography whose greatness will perhaps never be estimated. We cannot say that nothing better will ever be written about Lincoln, but we can say that there has been nothing as definitive and noble to date. Every American carries in his heart an unwritten biography of Lincoln. Sandburg has written that biography. We rediscover in the life of Lincoln the meaning of America. In him we renew ourselves as Americans. And as long as biographies are written about the Great Emancipator, as long as he moves vitally in the American mind and gratefully in the American heart, we can continue to enjoy and to expect the blessings of that democracy for which he lived and died.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

The other 1940 article can be called something of a miniature prelude to Steichen's \textit{The Family of Man}, as it centers on excerpts from \textit{The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 265.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Joseph Auslander, "A Poet Writes Biography," \textit{The English Journal}, 29 (May, 1940), pp. 349-355.
\item \textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 349.
\end{itemize}
People, Yes, including the lines:

Who else speaks for the Family of Man?
They are in tune and step with constellations
of universal law. 39

And crowded around the lines of poetry as a sort of border are photographs taken of people of all races at work and play. There are pictures of Indian children, farm workers, Negro children seated at a rustic plank table, Yiddish, Chinese, men at prayer, and city dwellers.

Sandburg's poetry attacking racial discrimination was barely noticed during the period of World War II. Although little was done at the time, much has since been done to include more material on the problem in recent years.

An early call for the establishment of a curriculum in English that would be better geared to motivate racial pride among Negroes was the 1941 proposal by Arthur Farrell. 40 Farrell urged teachers to include Sandburg's little-known poem-essay, "Bronze Wood," in a unit on racial pride for Negro youth. He also mentioned the sections dealing with prejudice in The People, Yes. (Sections 37, 38, and 63) 41


41 Ibid., p. 22.
C. A. Niemeyer, in a 1942 article, suggests that poetry of contemporary American writers be used in the required college courses in English in order to stimulate the reading interest of the students who will not be continuing their literary studies:

These recent poets are, even in their most difficult poems, less difficult than Shakespeare whom we blithely teach to high-school juniors. I do not suggest banishing Shakespeare from the curriculum. I am only suggesting that any teacher who can understand Elizabethan English and impart his own understanding to a class is certainly competent to understand and impart modern poetry.

During the postwar period after World War II, educational magazines published few articles on the teaching of Sandburg's works in secondary school English. This might be explained as due to the fact that Sandburg had not published any new books of poetry since 1936, when The People, Yes appeared. He had written a number of poems which were published in magazines of the period, but these were not published in book form until the publication of his Complete Poems in 1950, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. During the immediate postwar period, it should be noted, Sandburg was at work on his novel, Remembrance Rock, and his output of poetry greatly dwindled during this time. It could also be said that another possible reason for the lack of material on Sandburg and his work

\[42\text{C. A. Niemeyer, "Recent Poetry in Terminal Courses," College English, 3 (January, 1942), pp. 403-06.}\]

\[43\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 403.}\]
during this period was that he had fallen out of favor with some of the influential critics and was no longer considered a major contemporary writer.

After Sandburg was awarded the 1950 Pulitzer Prize for poetry on the publication of his *Complete Poems*, however, a number of articles again appeared on the teaching of his poetry and prose.

Oscar Cargill, in a 1950 study of Sandburg's poetry and prose, explains that Sandburg sacrificed his critical reputation as a literary artist by remaining the consistent poet and friend of the workingman. Cargill maintains, however, that Sandburg purposely chose out of conscience to remain a popular poet of the masses rather than attempting to be the critical artist he might have been:

One suspects that some inclination to maintain his role as mobocrat stifled the artist. Inventiveness and sensibility have been sacrificed for the polemical. But, though he has shifted political allegiance in his maturity, Sandburg has remained the consistent friend of the workingman if not the abstraction, the proletariat. To represent workmen always correctly in verse is an achievement of merit. As certainly as if he had chosen to be a labor lawyer, Sandburg has sacrificed to this aim in his time reputation that he might have achieved, and it has cost him a portion of his immortality. But given his conscience he could not do otherwise.

Cargill holds that Sandburg, in such works as *The People, Yes*, was a deep-feeling, effective artist, but not a profound thinker. He also


says that a possible reason for his great effectiveness as a poet "is because of the sheer force of his personality." Cargill writes of Sandburg's personal power:

> With a guitar to strum and a sympathetic audience, Carl Sandburg could make Harry S. Truman's budget message sound, if not like "Lycidas," at least like Allen Tate's "Ode to the Confederate Dead." 46

Literary tastes and changing standards can best be seen in a 1951 article by Charles B. Willard 47 which takes the view that older poets such as Sandburg, Frost, Amy Lowell, and Vachel Lindsay should be replaced in high school courses in literature by more controversial poets such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Archibald MacLeish. Willard maintains that the work of more intellectual poets than Sandburg would be a great step toward upgrading the content of the high school literature program. 48

(It should be noted that less than a generation before, it was Sandburg, the nonconformist, who was considered to be the controversial poet of the period. But by 1951, Sandburg had become a traditional American poet, at least in the view of Willard.)

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46 Ibid., p. 177.


48 Ibid., p. 508.
Seymour Krim, in a 1955 review of Sandburg's *Prairie-Town Boy*, a condensation of the first twelve chapters of the Lincoln biography, strongly recommends the book for high school readers, on the basis of its direct style of prose that is easy for readers to follow and understand. \textsuperscript{49} Krim calls Sandburg "the voice of America" in the review of the biography of Lincoln's youth for young people. A major part of the value of the biography for the young reader, says Krim, is the freshness of the prose style. \textsuperscript{50}

An article on the teaching of Sandburg's poetry to high school students appearing in 1959 was written by Michael Yatron. \textsuperscript{51} Sandburg, writes Yatron, "wrote simple poetry for simple people" and "is a good poet for the high school English teacher, faced with indifferent students, to begin his poetic chore with." \textsuperscript{52} Yatron holds that Sandburg's popular appeal can be extended to the classroom, because Sandburg's diction and content are not likely to arouse the antagonism of anti-poetic students. Sandburg's poetry offers the thrill of recognition to the student, particularly since the America Sandburg writes about, is an America that still exists and conforms

\textsuperscript{49}Krim, "Voice of America," p. 283.

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 284.


\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 524.
to the students' own experience, says Yatron.

Yatron writes:

He can attract to poetry many of our youth who would normally be repulsed by other poets who seem to say nothing in antiquated and dull language. And once Sandburg has been the initial magnet, and he has given the student the thrill of recognition and of understanding, the next step is to teach the mechanics of traditional poetry and lead the student to the rich veins of English, and ultimately, world poetry. 53

A 1962 study by Sister Mary Peter 54 includes a number of references to Sandburg's prose and poetry as examples of suggested materials for a fused approach to the teaching of American Literature and United States History. Also recommended to teachers for inclusion in a fused literature-history program are Sandburg's folk song collection and the Lincoln biography. 55

William Wrigg pointed out in 1962 that poetry might better be taught with the use of phonograph records of poets such as those of Sandburg and Frost reading from their own work. 56 Wrigg writes: "After a poetry record has been played, it is not unusual for students to volunteer comments or to say how much better they

53 Ibid., p. 539.


55 Ibid., p. 46.

understood and enjoyed the poem. He also maintains that the use of records in the teaching of Sandburg's poetry will have a carryover to history and social problems.

Nathan Lilienthal urges teachers to personally read poems aloud to classes:

To develop a deep and lasting interest in literature, one must personally read the material loud and clear, for it is through this procedure that interpretation and appreciation of the written word grow. Our present methods of teaching reading must take into consideration that much of the enjoyment of reading certain selections comes from assuming a leisurely attitude toward them. Oral reading requires a leisurely attitude. . . . The primary value of oral reading lies in the fact that it is the best method for teaching the appreciation of poetry. Historically, poetry has been meant to be read aloud. Alliteration, assonance, balance, symmetry, and tone shades are most fully realized when the beauty of the sound strikes the mental ear.

John S. Simmons, in a 1965 article on the direction of current literature teaching, sides with Wrigg in saying that the audio-visual approach to the teaching of literature is superior to the

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57 Ibid., p. 555.
58 Ibid., p. 557.
60 Ibid., p. 13.
61 John S. Simmons, "Directions in Current Literature Teaching," Audiovisual Instruction, 10 (April, 1965), pp. 283-93.
traditional read-aloud method:

The search for reinforcement of understanding of that which is found on the printed page is being accomplished more and more effectively through the use of films, filmstrips, phonograph records, and tapes. Students today have a far better opportunity to comprehend and truly sense ideas found in imaginative writing by seeing and hearing these selections vividly read. Whereas reading selections would be the slowest, the most arduous, and the most distasteful manner of transmitting ideas to the student, viewing dramatizations and listening to recordings can provide access to themes, concepts, and propositions of human experience he might never have received by any other means. 62

A 1968 article in The Instructor was devoted exclusively to the teaching of the works of Carl Sandburg. 63 Written by this writer, the article includes a listing of teaching aids and audio-visual materials which could be used by the classroom teacher in presenting the poetry, prose, and folksongs of Carl Sandburg to students from elementary to junior college. 64 The full content of this article will be discussed in Chapter III of this study.

Textbooks on the Teaching of English

Sandburg's value to the secondary school English program has long been recognized by many of the authors of textbooks on the

62 Ibid., p. 283.

63 Michael Quigley, "Carl Sandburg: Get to Know Him During His Birthday Month," The Instructor, LXXVII (January, 1968), pp. 66-69.

64 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
teaching of English. Stratton, in his 1922 textbook, for example, suggests a unit on free verse beginning with Sandburg's "Chicago." Stratton also raises the question of whether "Chicago" is really as unstructured as some critics claimed. The repeat of parts of the first line at the end of the poem ("Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation."), Stratton maintains, shows the poet's careful attention to structure. 66

A 1927 textbook on high school English teaching by Charles Swain Thomas, includes Sandburg's _Cornhuskers_ as a representative book of modern poetry for high school students. 67 Thomas also lists Sandburg as a writer of poetry that can be used by the teacher to assign oral themes in class. But Thomas cautions the teacher of poetry to keep an open but critical attitude toward the new forms and themes that are prevalent in Sandburg's poetry:

> During the past years, many of the younger group of poets, discarding rhyme and the conventional regularity of line, meter, and stanza, have adopted and defended what the French call _vers libre_. These poets have, moreover,

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66 Ibid.

ventured to employ new themes--themes that the older poets would stigmatize as prosaic. The form, it must be asserted, is not new; it was used years ago very liberally by Walt Whitman, and in a more limited way by Matthew Arnold and others. Taken up by Amy Lowell and groups of gifted poets in England and America, it has now won a considerable popularity. It has likewise met violent opposition--especially from the older school of critics. 68

Thomas looks at both sides of the controversy, then concludes that the free verse movement has positive possibilities in literature study:

Those who have spoken adversely of the forms and themes employed have at times forgotten that art allows a large degree of liberality and grows restive under any imposed restraint. Those who have defended the innovation have frequently lost the distinction between what is essentially poetic and what is essentially prosaic. The result has been a temporary loss of standards. We may rest assured, however, that even though the tumult of opposition continues long, the sense of poetic values will never be entirely lost. A feeling of rhythm abides; it is felt in the cadenced lines of the free versifiers as well as in the rhymed lines of the conventional poets. The net result of the conflict should in the end prove salutary. Free verse is helping to enlarge our concept of the field of poetic art. 69

Among suggested topics for composition in high school English, Thomas lists "Free verse" and "Defending the Literary Revolt," both areas which would involve the poetry of Sandburg. 70

68 Ibid., p. 214.
69 Ibid., p. 215.
70 Ibid., p. 245.
In his 1931 text on the teaching of poetry, Howard Francis Seely discusses the changing outlook on the selection of poetry for high school readers and suggests that some of the older poetry might be advantageously replaced or supplemented by the more modern poetry of Sandburg, Robert Frost, and Louis Untermeyer:

The poetry we include in the course of study must be chosen for reasons other than its historical value and conventional reputation and use. If some of Wordsworth and Keats needs to be replaced by some of Sandburg, Frost, and Untermeyer; or if some of Shelley might be advantageously replaced or supplemented with Teasdale, Millay, or Robinson; or if Scott and Campbell respond to the fellowship of Kipling, Noyes, and Bret Harte, then it should be plain enough what our course of action ought to be in our selection of poetry. 71

Seely dismisses the charge that updating the poetry selections in high school courses will lower the literary tastes of students as untrue:

Cries of "This will lower tastes!" are puerile in this connection. The reverse is the truth. The attitude toward selection that has just been described will give tastes a chance to develop and function. The other attitude merely sprays on the pupil a very thin coating of shellac, which, by the way, generally cracks and peels off long before it has a chance to fuse with the surface to which it has been applied. 72

Two Sandburg poems are discussed by Seely. One is the familiar "Fog," about which Seely writes:

There is one movement here: stealth, the stealth of the lines, the stealth of the cat, the stealth of the fog. The

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72 Ibid., p. 57.
word "comes" and the ever-so-slight pause after it, caused by the broken line, achieve the poet's intent perfectly.\textsuperscript{73}

The other poem is "Grass," which Seely compares to Alfred Lord Tennyson's "After Blenheim," probably because of similarities in theme and treatment of the futility of warfare after viewing a deserted battleground.\textsuperscript{74}

Lucia B. Mirrielees treats Sandburg as a major writer for high school study in her 1943 text on the teaching of literature and composition. She cites the modernity of Sandburg's poetry, the values of including such modern poetry in the English class, as well as its high popularity with high school readers:

A poem popular with high school pupils, and one rich in pictures, is Alfred Noyes's "The Highwayman." Perhaps with older pupils a close second and third are Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo" and Carl Sandburg's "Chicago." All three are rich in picturization, but "The Congo" and "Chicago" show unmistakable modernity. In them is the juxtaposition of fact and imaginative interpretation, ugliness and beauty, lusty strength and vigor of feeling, that makes strong appeal to modern youth. Our pupils live in the twentieth century. Give them much of the idealism and beauty of the past, but keep them aware by means of modern poetry that poets still live, portray, and interpret the life about them.\textsuperscript{75}

Mirrielees shows the differences in the amounts of figurative language that two poets might choose to use by contrasting the great amount of

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., pp. 25-26.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., p. 102.

\textsuperscript{75}Lucia B. Mirrielees, Teaching Composition and Literature, rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943), p. 396.
figurative language in Matthew Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum" with the smaller amount in Sandburg's "Fog." She writes:

With your aid, a class soon discovers that many pictures, many comparisons, in poetry are merely implied, demanding of the reader that he sense the resemblance, that he, too, like the poet, create from the poet's suggestion a picture or a comparison of his own. 76

She quotes a representative passage from Arnold's poem to illustrate how little effort is required of the reader to fill in his own conception of details, then points out that Sandburg and other poets are often less explicit. In "Fog," for example, says Mirrielees, "Carl Sandburg leaves the reader to sense the quietness of both cat and fog."

Recommended in the Mirrielees' text for high school reading and discussion are a number of Sandburg's poems, including "Chicago," "Grass," "Cool Tombs," "Jazz Fantasia," and "Loser." Suggested for a unit on democracy and the problems of society are The People, Yes, and for extracurricular activities such as folksong festivals and sings, Sandburg's The American Songbag. 77

E. A. Cross and Elizabeth Carney maintain that poetry is best taught to students in high school by considering the types of experiences the young people have had. They urge teachers to ask

76Ibid., 397.

77Ibid., p. 398.
students to recall their own images and to compare them to those of poets such as Sandburg:

Pupils must be taught to read poetry in light of their own experiences—to re-create for themselves the experience in the poem. The poet is often very indirect in his statements, and pupils must read between the lines and finish painting the picture in their own imagination. In Carl Sandburg’s fog poem this is very true. 78

More recent textbooks on the teaching of English likewise discuss the use of Sandburg’s poetry. In their 1964 textbook on the teaching of language and literature, Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire also accord Carl Sandburg major status as an important poet for high school study. Sandburg’s use of repetition to show irony in "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind" is used as an example of how the poet can effectively establish a basic rhythm from which he is free to depart and to return:

On a more complicated level, students discover the ironic importance Sandburg grants to the three lines he repeats so often in "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind." 79

We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
Nothing like us ever was.

This text suggests teachers add Sandburg’s "Primer Lesson" to a file of typed copies of poems for oral reading as a poem that the


students would personally enjoy:

Keep on your desk a file of typed copies of poems--not to be used as part of a unit or as a lesson illustrating an aspect of poetry, but merely some you enjoy reading and think students may like. Ready at hand, these suggest occasions for poetry that might otherwise be overlooked. . . . The star of one teacher's file is an illustrated copy of James Weldon Johnson's "Creation," prepared by a senior class as their favorite. A close second is Sandburg's "Primer Lesson," given by a boy in apology for a pert remark. 80

Sandburg's "Fog" can be used to make a comparison of how two writers give different moods to the same element--fog. The teacher might select the eerie description of fog in a Poe story and contrast it with Sandburg's delicate account. 81

The Loban, Ryan, and Squire study refers to "Fog" and "Wind is a Cat" as examples of Sandburg's use of imagery, metaphors, and symbols, and suggests that the teacher use these short poems as models to teach the class how the poet can synthesize his experience into a few lines. 82 Recommended as an effective Sandburg poem for small group reading and discussion is "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind," and "Jazz Fantasia" is suggested for groups of various sizes. 83

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80 Ibid., p. 360-61.
81 Ibid., p. 680.
82 Ibid., p. 37.
83 Ibid., p. 367.
Edwin A. Sauer, however, disputes Sandburg's right to an important place in the high school English curriculum. In his 1961 book on the state of the secondary school English curriculum, he says that he has serious doubts about Sandburg's supposed value for secondary school usage:

I have seen students tense with excitement as they discussed the Antigone of Sophocles, a play which ought to be part of every high school curriculum, and I have seen the same students bored by Carl Sandburg, about the high school use of whose work--his poetry, at least--I have very serious doubts. 84

Sauer says he considers Sandburg a "safe" poet, rather than as a controversial writer of verse as he had formerly been considered:

At best, however, the teaching of poetry is difficult in the American secondary school. In some places only the most courageous teachers are willing to attempt it. And, where the teacher can count at least on tolerance, he is likely to stay with "safe" poets and the good old reliable poems. In modern poetry this usually means nothing more than a rather haphazard excursion through Edwin Arlington Robinson, Carl Sandburg, and Robert Frost. 85

Sandburg, writes Sauer, is entirely too heavily used in the secondary school, for his poetry is just not worthy of serious study and discussion in the high school English class:

... if there is any youngster in any American high school who has not heard at least three times before his junior year that "the fog comes in on little cat feet," he must be in a


85 ibid., p. 181.
remote area indeed. . . . It would be unfortunate for American students to miss Robinson and Frost . . . As far as Sandburg is concerned, I've never understood just what the students are supposed to take from a discussion of his work; I have never been able to discover any advantage in Sandburg's setting up observations in poetic form. They would go just as well in prose paragraphs. 86

And crowning his attack on the use of Sandburg's poetry for high school, he concludes:

I can appreciate only too well the Sandburgesque effort of a student of mine several years ago after he had just been through a unit on these [Sandburg] poems:

Carl Sandburg

The people,
yes.
The poetry,
no. 87

Lou LaBrant, in We Teach English, uses two quotations from Sandburg's The People, Yes, to introduce chapters of her book. 88

One of the chapters which begins with a Sandburg poetry quotation is on the importance of language in the individual's life; the other is on the difficulties teachers have in marking the student's paper. The lines from The People, Yes seem to set the mood and theme of

86 Ibid., p. 182.

87 Ibid.

88 Lou LaBrant, We Teach English, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), pp. 21, 171.
LaBrant's entire chapter:

And you take hold of a handle
by one hand or the other
by the better or worse hand
and you never know
maybe till long afterward
Which was the better hand. 89

But LaBrant does have some reservations about the use of Sandburg's poetry with youth who do not have the background to understand or recognize the poet's allusions:

In choosing poetry which will at once introduce the young reader to the enjoyment of poetry and some knowledge of how it is read, it would seem beyond question that the selections presented should use metaphors to which the reader will have an immediate reaction. Recently the writer attempted to teach Sandburg's "The Prairie" to a group of New York students. They listed some forty phrases which were relatively unfamiliar to them. No descriptive explanation by the teacher, no amount of dictionary research, could give them the same enjoyment felt by the native from the prairie. To these students the poem was uninteresting, unmoving; to the one familiar with the sights and odors named, it was a delight. 90

J. N. Hook sees great value in Sandburg's poetry in the schools of urban America in his work on the teaching of high school English:

In our increasingly urbanized life, writers frequently emphasize the problems inherent in dwelling within congested areas. Sandburg sees both the glory and the gloom of city life; he hears Chicago laugh "the stormy, husky, brawling

89Ibid., p. 171.

90Ibid., pp. 297-98.
laughter of youth, " but he knows, too, that in Chicago is Mamie, from a little Indiana town, underpaid Mamie who has always dreamed and still dreams of romance and big things off somewhere. 91

Hook quotes from Sandburg's short poem, "Clean Curtains," in discussing how writers seem to stress the undesirable aspects of city life:

In the city also are the new neighbors who put up clean curtains, but

Dust and the thundering trucks won—the barrages of the street wheels and the lawless wind took their way—was it five weeks or six the little mother, the new neighbor, battled and then took down the white prayers in the windows?

Writers, it seems, tend to stress the undeniable squalor of the cities and to ignore the equally undeniable advantages of urban life. A good class discussion will consider both sides—what is good and what should and can be bettered. 92

Francis W. Newsom suggests an interesting assignment using, among other poetry, two works by Sandburg, "Grass" and "Fog," to get students to do some descriptive writing:

After reading Amy Lowell's "Lilacs" or "Patterns," Carl Sandburg's "Grass" or "Fog," Stephen Crane's "I Saw a Man," Edgar Lee Masters' "Ann Rutledge," call up from your memory an exact picture suggested by the subject you have chosen. State this experience in brief rhythmical phrases and sentences, showing the image in your mind, the significance, thoughts, and feelings attached to it, the


92 Ibid.
concrete details, the figurative comparisons you might now make in trying to explain it vividly. 93

Newsom points out that, in free verse, the student may offer their "bits of wisdom unhampered by considerations of form." Such exercises in creative writing, he maintains, will result in student poetry with vision, insight, and drama. 94

Edward J. Gordon and Edward S. Noyes, editors of a collection of essays on the Yale Conference on the Teaching of English in 1959, also include a listing of a number of Carl Sandburg's poetry and folksong recordings which are suitable for high school teaching of poetry. 95 Available recordings of Sandburg reading from The People, Yes and singing from The American Songbag are suggested for the use of the English teacher as teaching and instructional aides.

Some detailed strategies on the teaching of several Sandburg poems are found in Royal J. Morsey's Improving English Instruction. Morsey supports the view that Sandburg's poetry can convey much meaning to students, because of the poet's ability to present a few


94 Ibid., p. 126.

details in such a manner that the reader can realize a deeper meaning.

Such a poem by Sandburg, says Morsey, is "Buttons":

Although semanticists say that only a few details can normally be abstracted from a total situation, a few details presented by an able poet can sometimes convey more meaning to readers than their actual experiences. During World War I, thousands of hurrying citizens saw a laughing young man move buttons one inch west or east on the war map in front of a newspaper office. 96

Morsey points out the fact that Sandburg uses these buttons on the war map in his poem to vividly portray the horror of war:

. . . Carl Sandburg portrayed vividly in "Buttons" the cost in American, French, British, and German lives which preceded the moving of buttons one inch east or west. Sandburg saw beyond the territorial gains or losses on the Western Front, and was able to abstract from what he saw a word picture which caused many of his readers to understand for the first time that newspaper headlines announcing victories and defeats are written in the blood of soldiers. 97

Also treated by Morsey is Sandburg's poetic attack upon Billy Sunday in "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," which he recommends for secondary school class reading:

Perhaps the most violent poetic denunciation of an individual is Carl Sandburg's "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter." Before you read it to students, ask them whether (1) invective is ever more effective than logic and (2) an author can ever appeal strictly to a reader's reason. 98


97 Ibid.

98 Ibid., p. 144.
After the class has read the poem, Morsey then suggests that the teacher ask the students to explain why they accept or reject the following assumptions:

a. The poem is all feeling, no thought.
b. Sandburg's tactics are as intemperate as the bunkshooter's.
c. He is justified in hating the bunkshooter.
d. His purpose was to annihilate the bunkshooter with words.
e. Invective is a weapon that should never be used.
f. All evangelists should read the poem. 99

Geneva R. Hanna and Mariana K. McAckster recommend Sandburg's Lincoln biography as an important book for young people on the cultural heritage of America:

The cultural heritage of Americans is composed, among other things, of men and women who have dared to speak out against wrongs and who have courageously fought for the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice against complacency, greed, or tyranny of the crowd or a popular movement . . . As the reader meets and comes to know Abraham Lincoln intimately in Sandburg's books about Lincoln--The Prairie Years, The War Years--he feels the gropings, the uncertainties of the man. But the lasting impression is one of struggle for mastery over self to do whatever is necessary and right "as God gives us to see the right," no matter how difficult. 100

Also mentioned as an example of books for high school readers about various parts of the United States is Chicago Poems. 101

99 Ibid., pp. 144-145.


101 Ibid., p. 88.
Mary Elizabeth Fowler writes that Sandburg's poems are suitable for high school reading because they are of interest to the student and many pupils can identify with the people portrayed:

Poems which say something about the world in which we live are also of interest to the young reader: Sandburg's "Clean Curtains," in which a mother struggles with city dirt; "Buttons," in which men are merely pins to be moved on a war map; or "Child of the Romans," in which the Italian railroad laborer looks through the train window at men and women eating steaks and strawberries. . . . 102

Sandburg's strong point with high school students, says Fowler, is his ability to recreate certain sounds through his poetry. She cites an example of this ability to recreate sounds in "Jazz Fantasia," which is meant to sound like a Mississippi steamboat of a bygone age. 103

An in-depth case study on the teaching of some of Sandburg's poetry is found in Abraham Bernstein's Teaching English in High School. 104 Bernstein describes how a student teacher came to teach a unit on Sandburg by the use of six of his poems, "Chicago," "Fog," "Grass," "Lost," "Cool Tombs," and "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind." By the careful prodding and questioning of her methods professor, the student teacher was able to skillfully connect these


103Ibid., p. 271.

five somewhat different poems into a single theme about "common"
people:

"These go off in several directions," Professor Methods
said. "Why do you want to teach them? And don't tell me
it's because Mrs. Regular assigned them."

"To show something about rough and tough people," Miss
Hepburn replied.

"What's the something you want to show?" Professor
Methods pursued, seeking the specific.

Miss Hepburn thought and then said, "That they're in trouble
if they're not sensitive."

"Sensitive to what?" Professor Methods demanded.

"To as much as sensitive people are. Sandburg talks about
death, cities, and music as if he had as much right to the
subjects as Edna St. Vincent Millay."

"But he doesn't sound like Millay. What's particularly
Sandburgish about his roughness and toughness when he writes
about death, cities, and music?"

"He's tender at the same time."¹⁰⁵

Bernstein relates how he then had the student point out the tenderness
of Sandburg in poems such as "Chicago" and "Grass." According to
Bernstein, the key to developing understanding in these poems is to
have the students find the lines which show Sandburg's dual traits of
toughness and tenderness.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 246-247.
¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 249.
The test for this thesis, Bernstein recalls, came when the student teacher taught the six Sandburg poems to an unimaginative, hard to move, and disorderly class of students. Miss Hepburn had prepared three separate sets of two of the six mimeographed poems and distributed them to three groups in the class. She asked the groups to read their poems silently and, when finished, write in their notebooks a brief description of what kind of man they thought the poet was. Bernstein reports that the response was quite good as each of the three groups had somewhat different opinions of Sandburg and as a result, one of the students asked to see the poems of the other two groups:

The boy with the sideburns and levis asked, "Could we have the other poems too?"

"Of course. I've got enough to go around," Miss Hepburn said, and distributed to all three groups the two sets that had been withheld from them. Nobody had to tell Miss Hepburn that she had them moving well. They had pointed out to her that they wanted additional information, and that they were interested in seeing the poems that the other groups had been given. 107 Bernstein cites this experience as an example of how poetry can be effectively taught by the selection of poetry such as Sandburg's that will be of interest to youth:

Time did not permit much more, but the class, so indifferent and aloof at other times, was completely involved. Mrs. Regular later told Miss Hepburn that the class had gone far beyond anything it had accomplished before.

107 Ibid, p. 249.
The next day Miss Hepburn met with Professor Methods to analyze results. Miss Hepburn was pleased. "I forced them to defend a point of view against the others. They were fighting each other. Also my playing hard to get made them curious about what I was holding back."

"But isn't it wrong for a teacher not to put all her cards on the table? Isn't it trickery?"

"Maybe, but they were more interested. And it wasn't trickery either. I presented them with the contradiction in Sandburg that wasn't a contradiction after all. I wasn't cheating."

"I agree. It was generalship, not cheating, and tactics, not trickery."108

Bernstein warns the English teacher not to invade the field of history in teaching much of Sandburg's Lincoln biography in the English course. He suggests that Sandburg's Lincoln work be used only to teach biographical material and that the large amount of pure history not be used in the literature program:

But not Carl Sandburg as historian or any of the other buffs--leave these for your colleague. Civil War biography is suitable, but Civil War history is not. When your colleague asks artfully if you aren't setting up arbitrary and artificial boundaries, ask only if he will take over the teaching of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."109

An interesting similarity in a poem by Ezra Pound to Sandburg's "Fog" is also cited by Bernstein. The poem, which

109 Ibid., p. 398.
Bernstein labels as a "first cousin" to Sandburg's poem, has the lines:

Dawn enters with little feet
like a gilded Pavlova. 110

John S. Lewis and Jean C. Sisk have high regard for Sandburg's folksongs as a valuable method of presenting verse. They recommend usage of phonograph recordings of Sandburg singing from his own collection of American folksongs, The American Songbag, as an innovative method of showing students the emotional impact in poetry:

Carl Sandburg's recordings are virile enough for anyone. After your students have become accustomed to such recordings, experiment with brief musical selections as introductions and conclusions for reading. . . . Music touches the emotion as almost nothing else can; and emotional impact is the aim of all your works in poetry. Without overdoing it, use music just as much as time and your resources permit. 111

The teaching of several Sandburg poems is also given much attention in Morris Sweetkind's Teaching Poetry in the High School. Sweetkind suggests that a good method of beginning the study of poetry in high school would be an oral reading to the class by the teacher of

110 Ibid., p. 394.

Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia":

JAZZ FANTASIA

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos, sob on the long cool winding saxophones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with the slippery sandpaper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops, moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans--make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

Can the rough stuff. . . . Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills. . . . Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sweetkind suggests that the students be presented the various definitions of poetry, such as Arnold's "a criticism of life," Wordsworth's "overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility," Poe's "rhythmical creation of beauty," and for contrast, Sandburg's "the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits."1

    Sweetkind suggests that the teacher contrast Sandburg's free verse technique in "Jazz Fantasia" and "To the Ghost of John Milton"

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113 Ibid., p. 2.
with other poets such as Theodore Roethke. In teaching imagery and the use of figurative language, Sweetkind includes Sandburg's "Fog" and "Lost." He points out how music can be introduced into the poetry lesson by the playing of a Dixieland jazz recording after reading "Jazz Fantasia" and how some of Sandburg's recorded folk songs from his collection, The American Songbag, could be used in a treatment of the ballad as an art form.

Flora J. Arnstein believes that Sandburg's poetry is of great use in developing creativity in the writing of children. In her recent book, Children Write Poetry, she states that one of the best means to get children to recount personal experience is to read Sandburg's "Fog" and to use it as a model for their own attempts in writing short poems of imagery. She finds that the young student who wants to learn to write poetry gets an understanding of how a poem can be written without prime consideration of rhyme and meter. Children also gain some social understanding of some of the issues of contemporary life, such as life in the city and the problems of a democracy, says Arnstein.

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114Ibid., p. 11.
115Ibid., p. 188.
117Ibid., p. 61.
Don M. Wolfe sees value in Sandburg's poetry for the prose development of students. He suggests that prospective teachers go through Sandburg's *Complete Poems* and select several poems not covered within his text and write a paragraph or two showing what particular things in the poem would appeal to various grade levels of high school English.\(^{118}\) Such poems could serve the teacher as the poem they can use when assigning students to write their personal reactions to a line of poetry:

> But the most important image or line to each reader is the one which reminds him of an intense moment in his own life. The moment the passage calls to mind need not be a moment of parallel meaning: The validity of the memory is more important than any similarity of idea. . . . When students feel free to describe such moments, poetry suddenly possesses for them an intimate meaning. What poems will be real to our students? What poems will call up the parts of themselves that no friend has fully understood? These are questions every dedicated teacher of poetry knows he must answer. Consider, for example, such a poem as this one by Carl Sandburg:

**PRIMER LESSON**

Look out how you use proud words.  
When you let proud words go, it is not easy to call them back.  
They wear long boots; they walk off proud;  
they can't hear you calling--  
Look out how you use proud words.\(^{119}\)

Wolfe suggests that the following questions be asked the students


\(^{119}\)Ibid., pp. 255-56.
after the teacher has read "Primer Lesson" aloud to them:

How does Carl Sandburg personify proud words? What is the most original line or metaphor? 120

Then, says Wolfe, the teacher can prepare for the writing assignment as follows:

Almost everyone here has had an experience of using proud words. What moment can you call up from the past in which you were sorry you had used proud words? 121

It is Wolfe's suggestion to the teacher that a student theme be read to the class on the subject of "proud words," quoting one or more lines from Sandburg's poem. The class is then assigned to write a similar theme from their own experience, using color and sound and touch words to build up the story of how they happened to use "proud words."

Wolfe also recommends Always the Young Strangers, Sandburg's own account of his youth, as an example for students to use so that they might learn how to depict in writing real-life experiences of their own. 122

An interesting suggestion to teach the contrasts between the poetry of Carl Sandburg and that of a poet such as Robert Frost is made in Geraldine Murphy's recent book on literature study in the secondary

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120 Ibid., p. 256.
121 Ibid., p. 257.
122 Ibid., p. 269.
Murphy points out that the students will gain a greater understanding of both poets by such a comparative analysis of their style, imagery, language, themes, and subjects. This type of literature study, says Murphy, will lead to a greater and continued interest in the total study of poetry as a literary form.

Of special value in the poetry of Sandburg to the high school student is his effective use of imagery in many of his poems, Murphy finds. 124


124 Ibid., p. 124.
CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF THE MOST ADAPTABLE WORKS OF SANDBURG FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

Introduction

The primary concern in this chapter is the selection for high school study of Sandburg's works, including both poetry and prose, and an in-depth study and analysis of each, particularly as the work can be related to educational concerns in the secondary school. It should be pointed out that these works all have high student interest factors that are often overlooked by many secondary teachers.

Perhaps the fault here, if there is any to be placed, lies with the academic preparation of high school English teachers. Few English Departments today give more than passing mention to Sandburg's writing, probably because of the shifting criticism he has received in recent years. The prospective teacher of English in the secondary school is thus deprived of a substantial body of literary material of great value in the high school teaching situation. Later in this study more will be said on this aspect of the question.

The works selected include a representative sampling of the Sandburg canon. This sampling is drawn from Sandburg's early
Chicago Poems, which first brought him public and critical recognition in American letters, his book-length poem The People, Yes, two little-known essays, entitled "Bronze Wood" and The Chicago Race Riots, July 1919; selections from his Lincoln biography, his only novel, Remembrance Rock, his autobiography of his first twenty years, Always the Young Strangers, and his three cooperative ventures, The American Songbag, A Lincoln Portrait, and The Family of Man.

Chicago Poems

It took a great deal of persuasion and perhaps a little trickery for young Alfred Harcourt, then an editor with Henry Holt Publishers of New York City, to get the conservative Mr. Holt to approve publication of Sandburg's first noteworthy book of poetry, Chicago Poems, published in the spring of 1916. Harry Golden, a crony of Sandburg in his twilight years, recounts with charm and color (and probably with the license of the journalist) how Harcourt persuaded the dignified Holt to publish a poet who was considered to be a radical poetic innovator of poor taste and very questionable background. ¹ Golden says that Harcourt purposely removed one of the poems which he considered would be just too objectionable for the conservative

¹Harry Golden, Carl Sandburg (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1961), 163-64.
tastes of Mr. Holt when he submitted the manuscript to the publisher for approval to publish.\(^2\)

The poem in question was originally entitled "Billy Sunday," and had been published in the socialist magazine *The Masses*, edited by Max Eastman, in 1913.\(^3\) The poem is an angry attack on the one-time major league baseball pitcher who had become a sensational evangelist, William H. (Billy) Sunday. Sandburg, the idealistic Socialist, claims in the poem that the barnstorming evangelist had perverted the Socialist ethic of the Christian religion into an approval of Capitalistic exploitation of the poor by the rich:

You tell people living in shanties Jesus is going to fix it all right with them by giving them mansions in the skies after they're dead and the worms have eaten 'em . . .

You tell poor people they don't need any more money on payday and even if it's fierce to be out of a job, Jesus'll fix that up all right, all right—all they gotta do is take Jesus the way you say.\(^4\)

In all probability, Mr. Holt, a supporter of the Evangelistic movement in America, would never have approved of such a frontal attack on Sunday, but Alfred Harcourt inserted the poem in the *Chicago Poems* after he had received the publisher's permission to

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 163.

\(^3\)Carl Sandburg, "Billy Sunday," *The Masses*, III (December, 1913), 7-10.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 9.
publish the volume. However, he did take the precaution of changing the name of the polemic from the specific "Billy Sunday" original title to the more general title of "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter." In an interview with Sandburg, this writer questioned the poet about this alleged incident as recounted by Golden and was told essentially the same account, with the exception of the title change. Sandburg contends that Henry Holt himself ordered the title changed when he learned that the poem against Sunday had been included in the first proofs of the poetry collection. An examination of the proofs, which are among the Sandburg papers at the University of Illinois, confirms that Harcourt, at least in the initial stages of typesetting the manuscript of the poem, did not change the title. Of course, Harcourt may well have made the title change in the proofs, where the new title is pencilled in.

Harcourt's own account of the publication of Chicago Poems does not directly mention the insertion of the additional poem in the


\[6\] Carl Sandburg, private interview with author, Flat Rock, North Carolina, April 12, 1965.

\[7\] University of Illinois, Carl Sandburg Collection, 145, 13b.
approved collection but he does state there was a problem with Holt:

When I saw the manuscript of *Chicago Poems* in the fall of 1915, I saw at once that it was of first importance and quality. There was something of a skirmish to get it past the inhibitions and traditions of the Holt office, for its middle western atmosphere, its subject matter and strength, seemed to them rather raw for their imprint, but Henry Holt himself agreed to let me try it. 8

In his anecdotal biography of Sandburg, Golden recounts the story that Billy Sunday did not see the Sandburg poem until sixteen years after the original publication. 9 Research into this point quickly corrects this Golden claim, as Sunday is known to have preached at least one sermon in answer to the poet's attack in 1916 and made several references to "Commie poets with red streaks down their backs" in his Prohibition and anti-Devil campaign of 1919-20. 10

Furthermore, the poem "Billy Sunday" had already achieved quite a notoriety at least two years before it was published in the *Chicago* collection. For after it was first published in Eastman's *The Masses*, it was soon reprinted in the well-known socialist newspaper of the time, the *New York Call*. 11 This newspaper had a

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8 Harcourt, "40 Years of Friendship," p. 396.


11 *New York Call* (December 25, 1913), 4.
national circulation and Sandburg said the issue carrying the poem was forbidden to be distributed and sold in a number of eastern cities, including New Haven, Boston, and Philadelphia, by order of the local police of these cities. This, Sandburg claims, constituted the only instance in his long literary career where he was subjected to direct ban or censorship. 12

The Boston Transcript had editorial comment on Sandburg's diatribe on the acrobatic evangelist: "Now we are not about to endorse Mr. Sunday or other religious leaders, but we are convinced that a man's sincere religion should be beyond the realm of a gutter poet or even a laureate. It is simply a matter of good taste. "13

Crowder writes of the poem: "The poem was daring; the language was heady; the tone was a barrier-breaker; this righteous diatribe was throwing back at the notorious evangelist a little of his own sawdust. "14

Sandburg remembers receiving several critical letters from ministers who felt the poem bordered on blasphemy and that it was too political. One suggested to him one time, he recalled, that he read Arnold and Browning to gain understanding of how religious themes

12 Golden, Carl Sandburg, p. 164.

13 Editorial, Boston Transcript, December 28, 1913.

can be handled. "Browning was great, my favorite poet for years, but Browning only had Elizabeth and not a Bible-beating bastard to contend with!" was Sandburg's comment. 15

"To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," as it appears in Chicago Poems, then, can be said to be the most controversial of the poems in this volume of poetry that is said to usher in a new form of American poetry. The title poem, "Chicago," is usually afforded this distinction, but does not have nearly the unconventionality of form and language of "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter."

The effect of the earlier "Chicago," is already well-known, as it started a major controversy among the critics immediately on its publication in March of 1914 in Harriet Monroe's controversial new monthly magazine, Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. In her autobiographical A Poet's Life, Miss Monroe recounts how she was shocked by the opening lines of "Chicago," but decided to publish the unconventional poem along with eight others that Sandburg had submitted to Poetry while doing reporting and feature writing for the Day Book, a Chicago tabloid daily owned by E. W. Scripps:

Alice [her assistant] had handed over to me a group of strange poems in very individual free verse, beginning with "Chicago" as the "hogbutcher of the world." The line was a shock at first, but I took a long breath and swallowed it, and was laughed at scornfully by critics and

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15 Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Flat Rock, North Carolina, April 12, 1965.
columnists when we gave it the lead in March, 1914. Carl
was a typical Swedish peasant of proletarian sympathies in
those days, with a massive frame and a face cut out of
stone. . . . 16

Publication of these nine poems touched off a loud protest
among the literary magazines of the time. The Dial, considered to
be something of a literary arbiter of the times, did not hesitate to say
that the Sandburg pieces were not poetry at all, but rather jargon
thrown together to pass for some form of poetry. 17 In fact, the Dial
reviewer used the Sandburg poems as a vehicle to attack the magazine
itself:

The typographical arrangement for this jargon creates a
suspicion that it (Sandburg's poems) is intended to be taken
as some form of poetry, and the suspicion is confirmed by
the fact that it stands in the forefront of the latest issue of
a futile little periodical described as 'a magazine of verse'.
. . . We think that such an effusion as the one now under
consideration is nothing less than an impudent affront to the
poetry-loving public. 18

When Chicago Poems was published in 1916, The Dial again
struck at Sandburg as it had two years earlier; this time, the reviewer,
William A. Bradley, lashed out at the slangy colloquialisms of "To a
Contemporary Bunkshooter." 19 The literary critic referred to

16 Harriet Monroe, A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a

17 "New Lamps for Old," The Dial, LVI (March 16, 1914),
231-32.

18 Ibid., p. 232.

19 William A. Bradley, "Four American Poets," The Dial,
LXI (December 14, 1916), 528-30.
Sandburg as a "mystical mobocrat," who was "gross, simple-minded, sentimental, and sensual."\(^\text{20}\)

But Monroe's *Poetry*, called a "futile little periodical" by The Dial, was to reply later to The Dial in its review of *Chicago Poems* by saying that the reader could not deny the basic quality of honesty in the work, "whether you call it poetry or not."\(^\text{21}\) Harriet Monroe, the editor and founder of the publication, wrote the review of the Sandburg poetry collection herself, saying: "There is tenderness and visual strength in *Chicago Poems*. I associate his manner and voice tone with what Carl Sandburg writes. His poetry is like his own slow speech and massive gait."\(^\text{22}\)

Another critic, however, William Stanley Braithwaite, in the unfriendly *Boston Transcript*, labelled *Chicago Poems* as "a book of ill-regulated speech that has neither verse nor prose rhythms."\(^\text{23}\) Braithwaite did admit that the tenderness and visual strength that Miss Monroe had seen in Sandburg's work and conceded that he did seem to have the imagination of a poet. But, said the reviewer, Sandburg had little skill in communicating his vision to the reader.

\(^{20}\text{Ibid., p. 530.}\)


\(^{22}\text{Ibid., p. 26.}\)

Wood, in his 1925 critical study of current poets of America, took the stand that Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* was an exceptionally strong collection of poetry, but that his succeeding volumes of poetry greatly deteriorated until he could be called a poet who writes "hymns from Hogwallow."^24^ Wood's allegation would include *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920), *Slabs of the Sunburnt West* (1922).

Jones, taking a position contrary to that of other critics, held Sandburg to be a formalist in his poetry and claimed that Sandburg consciously used 'quantitative syllable rhythm' in his poetry, particularly in his *Chicago Poems*.^25^ Stroud made much the same point in his 1956 study.^26^

Rosenfeld, in an appraisal of Sandburg's poetry, found it unfortunate that in Sandburg's work during the period from the publication of *Chicago Poems* in 1916 to 1921, there was no progression or development of thought. Rather, said Rosenfeld, Sandburg never lets


life have its full way with him as he (Sandburg) "puts blinders on his mind." 27

Chicago Poems contains 146 individual poems, which make up the seven separate sections of the volume. The first section, entitled "Chicago Poems," is the largest and contains both "Chicago" and "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," among its fifty-five poems. All of these poems are word pictures and images of the city of Chicago as Sandburg knew it in the years before the First World War.

The second section of the volume is entitled "Handfuls," and contains eleven very short, fleeting impressions of Haiku-like structure. The most famous of these fleeting images, of course, is the opening poem, "Fog," one of the most frequently anthologized poems in all American literature. 28 This poem definitely shows the Japanese influence on Sandburg's work of this period, especially in his imagery poetry. Sandburg steadfastly denies any influence whatsoever upon his work by the Imagist school of poetry of such poets as Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound, rather attributing his "Fog" and other such works to his fondness for the Japanese school, which

27 Paul Rosenfeld, "Carl Sandburg," The Bookman, LIII (July, 1921), 396.
was popular among readers and writers of the period before 1917.  

Another example of the Japanese influence in the "Handfuls" section is the four-lined "Flux":

Sand of the sea runs red  
Where the sunset reaches and quivers.
Sand of the sea runs yellow  
Where the moon slants and wavers.  

The third section is "War Poems (1914-1915)." Also made up of eleven poems, this section's poems hammer out three themes, all of anti-war sentiment: (1) That the masses of people suffer for the wars started by the powerful few--

Smash down the cities.  
Knock the walls to pieces. . . .  
You are the soldiers and we command you.

Build up the cities.  
Set up the walls again. . . .  
You are workmen and citizens all: We command you.  

(And They Obey) CP 40

(2) That war is senseless and futile--

I have been watching the war map slammed up for advertising in front of the newspaper office.  
Buttons--red and yellow buttons--blue and black buttons--are shoved back and forth across the map.

29 Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Flat Rock, North Carolina, April 12, 1965.

30 Carl Sandburg, Complete Poems (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), p. 34. Hereafter in the text I shall use the abbreviation CP and the page number for material quoted from this source.
A laughing young man, sunny with freckles,
Climbs a ladder, yells a joke to somebody in the crowd,
And then fixes a yellow button one inch west . . .

Who would guess what it cost to move two buttons one inch
on the war map here in front of the newspaper office
where the freckle-faced young man is laughing to us?

(Button) CP 40

(3) That war is ugly and cruel and makes dead heroes--

And a red juice runs on the green grass;
And a red juice soaks the dark soil,
And the sixteen million are killing . . . and killing and killing.

(Killer) CP 36

(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies in a red soak
along a river edge,
(Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling death
in their throats.)

(Button) CP 40

The fourth section of Chicago Poems is "The Road and the
End." Most of the eleven poems here present a philosophical approach
to life. In "The Answer," Sandburg holds that the answer to man's
searching is silence and acceptance of what he sees in life. And he
answers the question of his poem, "Who Am I?" by saying: "My name
is Truth and I am the most elusive captive in the universe." (CP, 45)

Much of this section, according to Sandburg, derives from his read-
ing of Emily Dickinson and Stephen Crane. It should also be pointed
out that Sandburg obviously was just as greatly influenced by Crane in
his war poetry of the previous section. In regard to this influence,
Sandburg says: "I read Stephen Crane in Puerto Rico in a leaky poncho tent by a penny candle when the lantern wouldn't light. I saw him down there, too—he was about the best writer there was. I read two of his books of poetry—Black Riders and War Is Kind. He sure knew a lot about war for a young fellow who'd never been close to one except with a notebook in his hand."31

And about Emily Dickinson, Sandburg says: "I guess my philosophy about things in that section[^The Road and the End[^] is right from Emily Dickinson. Green[^Phillip Green Wright of Lombard College[^] got me reading her when I want to Lombard after the war. Now she was a poet! Probably the best."32

The next section is "Fogs and Fires," which also reveals much about Miss Dickinson's influence upon the poet. As Emily Dickinson did, so Sandburg in this group of twenty-eight short poems looks away from the hustle and confusion of city life toward a solemn consideration of nature and life.

One of the more interesting poems in this section is "Joy," set in a single stanza of fifteen two- and three-beat lines. The opening line of the poem, "Let a joy keep you," generates excitement as

31 Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Flat Rock, North Carolina, April 12, 1965.

32 Ibid.
the poet rapidly takes the reader to an opposite view of this same joy at the end—"Let joy kill you!" The last line of the poem, "Keep away from the little deaths," has a coda effect, or a returning to the opening line of the wonderful power of a spirit of joy. (CP, 51)

The sixth section is entitled, "Shadows," and the theme of fallen women is taken up in six of the seven poems. Much of the original "painted women" image from "Chicago," is in such individual poems as "Used Up," (CP, 62) "Trafficker," (CP, 62) "Soiled Dove," (CP, 63) and "Gone." (CP, 64) In "Gone," Sandburg says that all of us love the wild woman of the streets:

So we all love a wild girl keeping a hold
On a dream she wants. (CP, 64)

The seventh section of Chicago Poems is made up of twenty-three poems headed "Other Days, 1900-1910." There are several very important poems in this section which must be considered in any study of Sandburg's total writing. Two of these poems, "I Am the People, the Mob," (CP, 71) and "Government," (CP, 71) are precurors to much of Sandburg's message in later poetry. In "I Am the People, the Mob," Sandburg is writing the preface for his monumental work of twenty years later, The People, Yes. The lines "Sometimes I growl, shake myself and spatter a few red drops for history to remember. Then--I forget" are the genesis for Sandburg's credo in
People, Yes:

The people will live on.
The learning, blundering people will live on.
They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it . . . (CP, 615)

The third of the most important poems in the section is
"Letters to Dead Imagists," which is an acknowledgment of Sandburg's
debt to Emily Dickinson and Stephen Crane. (CP, 73) That this poem
is one of Sandburg's very first is not known, but Sandburg remembers
it as one of his first written after Professor Phillip Green Wright in-
troduced him to the poetry of Emily Dickinson shortly after 1900. 33

His letters to Emily Dickinson and "Stevie" Crane are both
three lines. To Emily he writes:

You gave us the bumblebee who has a soul,
The everlasting traveler among the hollyhocks,
And how God plays around a back yard garden. (CP, 73)

And to the tragic young Crane, the poet says:

. . . we never knew the kindness of war till you came;
Nor the black riders and clashes of spear and shield out of the sea,
Nor the mumblings and shots that rise from dreams on call.
(CP, 73)

One point, on which most critics of Sandburg can agree, is
the diversity of these 146 poems. The loud, shattering blasts of the
opening title poem, "Chicago," are a striking contrast to the

33Ibid.
melancholy "Sketch," immediately following it. Compare the opening of "Chicago" ("Hog Butcher of the World") (CP, 3) to the serenity of the opening lines of "Sketch":

The shadows of the ships  
Rock on the crest  
In the low blue lustre  
Of the tardy and the soft inrolling tide. (CP, 4)

The shouting and snarling of the exposers of the religious fakir in "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter" is in a seemingly different poetic voice from that expressing the simple faith of "Our Prayer of Thanks." In the poem attacking Billy Sunday, Sandburg angrily writes:

Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to.  
Smash a whole wagon load of furniture at every performance.  
Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. . . .  
I like to watch a good four-flusher work, but not when he starts people puking and calling for the doctors.  
(CP, 29)

Notice the vast difference in the mood of the poet who would write in "Our Prayer of Thanks":

For the laughter of children who tumble barefooted and bare-headed in the summer grass,  
Our prayer of thanks. (CP, 48)

And compare the serenity of Sandburg's "Happiness," with the Hardy-like dread of "Mag." In "Happiness," the poet tells us that he asked learned professors "who teach the meaning of life" to tell him just what happiness was. Then he went to rich men, who, with all
their money, also could not tell him. Finally, he found the answer to his question and writes:

And then one Sunday afternoon I wandered out along the Desplaines river
And I saw a crowd of Hungarians under the trees with their women and children and a keg of beer and an accordion. (CP, 10)

But there is a contrasting, quiet despair of the poet in "Mag." The speaker addresses his wife, Mag, by saying first: "I wish to God I never saw you, Mag." He recounts their courtship and marriage, then wishes he were a bum a thousand miles away. He closes:

I wish the kids had never come
And rent and coal and clothes to pay for
And a grocery man calling for cash,
Every day cash for beans and prunes.
I wish to God I never saw you, Mag.
I wish to God the kids had never come. (CP, 13)

The People, Yes

Is The People, Yes a poem? Or is it a travelogue in verse? Or is it a political and cultural tapestry of the American people? Or could it be, in a larger sense, a panoramic view of mankind? Reviewers, literary critics, and historians have called it all of these since its publication in late 1936.
The reviewer for The Nation, Ben Belitt, referred to the collection as "a heroic poem without a hero." 34

*Time* said of The People, Yes: "The book narrowly misses a place with the best of U. S. poetry." 35

Stephen Vincent Benet, in reviewing the poem for the New York Herald Tribune, said in a long, two-page article:

Now, in The People, Yes, he brings us the longest and most sustained piece of work he has yet done in verse. It is a book that will irritate some; and some will find it meaningless. . . . This voice does not come from Moscow or Union Square. It comes out of America . . . it is the voice of somebody who knows the faces, the folkwords and the tall tales of the people. It is as honest as it is questioning and it speaks its deep convictions in a tongue we know . . . And every line of it says "The People, Yes." 36

William Rose Benet, in a cover article in the Saturday Review of Literature, referred to the publication as "memoranda on Americans." In criticism of the book-length poem, Benet wrote:

I should say the main criticism of Sandburg's long effort, interesting as parts of it are, is that it has not enough cohesion. It has not enough structure. And, certainly it does not think through, as does the modern radical economist, the situation in which modern civilization finds itself. 37


35 "Poets and People," *Time*, XXVIII (August 31, 1936), 47.


Benet said that Sandburg was too interested "in the half-tones of humanity" and in the highlights of humor and eccentricity of people. Rather, said the critic, Sandburg was interested in atmosphere, and, in this respect, had in him "the wisdom of an ancient race." Benet pointed out that Sandburg saw the American people as "Wanters" and "Hopers."

Mildred Boie, writing in The North American Review, said that Sandburg wrote with a variety of styles in The People, Yes, and favorably compared him to Whitman:

> Sometimes he writes with the swift staccato realism, the jumbled inselectiveness of a newspaper or a radio; sometimes he writes with the solemn chanting beauty of the Bible. Concrete and pure at times as the best imagist verse, his poetry is at other times vaguely diffusely rhapsodic and formless as Whitman's. 38

Morton Zabel, then editor of Harriet Monroe's Poetry magazine, wrote a critical and very penetrating review of The People, Yes, which contains the charge that only a small portion of the book could be considered poetry:

> It will be suggested immediately that he has simplified his subject primarily by stopping short of his responsibilities as a poet. To this one must agree at once that hardly a fifth of this volume is classifiable by any definition of poetry, although any definition of poetry must include the purpose and imagination that runs through its pages, even when they

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contain nothing but inventories of popular speech or long lists of trades and slogans.  

But in calling The People, Yes "a manual of words and phrases, episodes and characters," Zabel also says that it represents the poetic and literary testament of Carl Sandburg.  

Sandburg's critical biographer, Crowder, says that most of The People, Yes does not qualify as poetry, and that the work is really of more potential interest to the sociologist and historian or newcomer to America than to a student of imaginative literature.

Crowder writes:

Occasional change of pace, of mood, and of diction does not alter the fact that only a small portion of the book can qualify as poetry. The rest is a catalogue of information, no doubt very useful for the reading and writing of literature, but not actually literature itself.

For it is Crowder's contention that the most distinguishing mark of true poetry is that the poet attains some degree of intensity. This, according to Crowder, Sandburg has done in The People, Yes only occasionally.

This study will not attempt to categorically dispute Crowder's contention as it hinges entirely on the definition of poetry being used.

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40 Ibid., p. 33.

41 Crowder, Carl Sandburg, p. 118.
Crowder's conception of poetry, however, does appear to be extremely limited in scope and would seem to rely on the personal tastes and opinion of the reader, particularly in determining this all-important "intensity" he speaks of. The same is true of his claim that much of The People, Yes is not literature—much would depend upon the definition of literature being used by the critic.

A very convincing argument can be made for the use of The People, Yes in the high school literature class. This argument is based upon the vast scope of Sandburg's treatment of "the people" in the poem. Sandburg again and again strikes the age-old truth that people the world over have certain basic similarities and that there truly is "a family of man." The importance of instilling this message into the minds of youth can scarcely be challenged in the precarious world in which we live. There can be no middle ground on this point.

The People, Yes is a full-length development of Sandburg's long-held belief in the universality of people. Sandburg believes that the people of the world do the chores and work of the world, sometimes rise in revolt against both right and wrong, but soon quiet down, forgetting their grievances and letting themselves be cheated once more. Sandburg says that the salvation of the people will come only when they learn to use the misery of the past as an incentive to action for a better future.
In the opening sections of the poem, Sandburg asserts that the common people of the world still ask the same questions: Who am I? What should I do next? What is my ultimate purpose in the world? Sandburg opens *The People, Yes* with a vision of man's continual struggle to control his environment:

> From the four corners of the earth,  
> from corners lashed in wind  
> and bitten with rain and fire,  
> from places where the winds begin  
> and fogs are born with mist children,  
> tall men from tall rocky slopes came  
> and sleepy men from sleepy valleys,  
> their women tall, their women sleepy,  
> with bundles and belongings,  
> with little ones babbling, "Where to now?  
> what next?"  
> (CP, 439)

And, it is interesting to note that Sandburg runs these opening questions of mankind full circle in *The People, Yes*, as he closes the 107 sections of the poem with the same questions:

> In the darkness with a great bundle of grief  
> the people march.  
> In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:  
> "Where to? What next?"  
> (CP, 617)

These questions form a coherent line of reasoning and theme throughout *The People, Yes*. But Sandburg says that people are conditioned to a large extent by the land they spring from. It could be Texas, California, Kentucky, Cleveland or Ashtabula County, Ohio, Russia, Greece, or New Salem, Illinois, but regardless of their language,
customs, and individual life styles, the same questions remain constants.

The questions raised and left unanswered serve as a type of linking device for the various sections of the book. They form the "argument" of the poem, which is that while the people may be ignorant, gullible, and foolhardy, they also have many admirable qualities such as a sense of humor, shrewdness, toughness, and dignity, and that these qualities will at last help them win out over all adversaries.

Though some critics took Sandburg to task because of this prophecy without program for improvement, Sandburg's vagueness can be taken as a strength, for he was no political scientist or politician and had no means by which he could directly effect change. The People, Yes was not meant to be a propagandistic tract advocating specific programs for economic and political change; rather, it was the testament of one poet, who happened to be living in the midst of the Great Depression of the Thirties. Sandburg says of this:

"Some of those critics wanted me to pull an Upton Sinclair and run for Governor or something like that. In fact, Franklin Delano Roosevelt did try to get me to run for Congress back then, but I'm no politician and wouldn't want to be."  

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42 Carl Sandburg, personal interview. Dayton, Ohio; February 9, 1963.
It can be said that in *The People, Yes*, Sandburg is the first poet of modern times to use the language of the people as his almost total means of expression. While Wordsworth approached the problem, says Crowder, he never really put the common idiom of the people he observed down on paper. Sandburg, however, was at home with the language of the people and had not looked at it as a strange curiosity as had his contemporary, Henry L. Mencken. Following is an example of Sandburg's usage of the language of people:

Listen to me,
   brother.
They'll hand yuh anything.
Look for the dirty work.
   Listen.
Never see nothin'.
Never know nothin'.
Never tell nothin'.
Then yuh'll get along.

(CP, 54)

*The People, Yes* contains much visionary material as to the nature of man, his history, aspirations, culture, and eventual fate. Sandburg says that "Time is a great teacher" and that the mass of people can see through the trickery, lies, and nonsense of the world's heroes and demagogues. Sandburg says that if man can do that task, then he should be ready to face himself and foresee his own destiny. In one eloquent passage Sandburg says that man will always

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43 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, p. 125.
be striving, but that he will never completely attain his goal:

The sea moves always, the wind moves always.
They want and want and there is no end to their wanting.
What they sing is the song of the people.
Man will never arrive, man will be always on the way.
It is written he shall rest but never for long.
The sea and the wind tell him he shall be lonely, meet love,
be shaken with struggle, and go on wanting.

(CP, 479)

Sandburg's view of history is contradictory at certain points in The People, Yes. For example, he cries that history is a waste of time in one place ("the past is a bucket of ashes") (CP, 608) and in others, that only when the people learn to profit from the past will they find their salvation. (CP, 71)

Sandburg's anti-war views emerge in The People, Yes in a number of eloquent passages that will have much relevance to youth of today facing Vietnam and, perhaps, an all-out war. Sandburg could readily see the gathering of the war clouds in 1936, and he could also see yet a third world war. And the people are the losers in all of these wars, he believes, saying:

The first world war came and its cost was laid on the people.
The second world war--the third--what will be the cost?
And will it repay the people for what they pay?

(CP, 454)

Sandburg points out that the leaders get their soldiers from the people and that the real support for the wars comes unknowingly from these people who will be dying for some abstract cause they never fully
understand. Hatred, says Sandburg, is the problem:

Hate is a vapor fixed and mixed.
Hate is a vapor blown and thrown.
And the war lasts till the hate dies down
And the crazy Four Horsemen have handed the people
Hunger and filth and a stink too heavy to stand.
Then the earth sends forth bright new grass
And the land begins to breathe easy again
Though the hate of the people dies slow and hard. (CP, 455)

The title of the poem, "The people, yes," serves as a structural device throughout the long poem. At key points, Sandburg concludes or opens a new section with the line, for the purpose of unifying what he has written into a broad, skeleton structure of a central theme. For example, in his attacks on war, he brings his message back to his central theme of the people, showing that all individuals he has spoken of are a part of his mystical "people." He says that the people, regardless of their language and flag, gather and wait to hear about the next war:

They will be told when the next war is ready,
The long wars and the short wars will come on the air,
How many got killed and how the war ended
And who got what and the price paid
And how there were tombs for the Unknown Soldier,
The boy nobody knows the name of,
The boy whose great fame is that of the masses,
The millions of names too many to write on a tomb,
The heroes, the cannonfodder, the living targets,
The mutilated and sacred dead,
The people, yes. (CP, 454)

And among these same people, Sandburg has a little girl watching her first troop parade in awe and asking some questions and then telling
her elders something quite profound in a simple way:

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?"
"Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come."

(Sandburg, 464)

Sandburg's use of the line, "The people, yes," in opening a
section of the poem, can best be seen in Section 28, which is closed
with an attack on the poet's people: ("Your people, sir, is a great
beast.") (Sandburg, 470) The next section immediately starts with:

The people, yes--
Born with bones and heart fused in deep and violent secrets
Mixed from a bowl of sky blue dreams and sea slime facts--
A seething of saints and sinners, toilers, loafers, oxen, apes
In a womb of superstition, faith, genius, crime, sacrifice--

(Sandburg, 470)

And Sandburg follows with his repetitive refrain that from out of this
motley collection of the people come the armies, navies, work gangs,
the very living blood of nations, which make up the very Family of Man
on this little planet. Again and again, Sandburg hammers out this
message--that we are all a part of the same world, the same species,
and have the same problems and concerns. And his repetitive use of
the line, "The people, yes," is Sandburg's device for weaving the
varied story line of his poem into one unit.
For students in secondary school, most of whom have little inclination toward poetry in the first place, *The People, Yes*, because of its wide diversity, varied themes, folk tales, political propaganda, aphorisms, and easy-to-read style, offers major material for use in the literature class.

A survey of high school literature textbooks shows that *The People, Yes*, as a whole, is generally neglected by anthologists, however. A number of standard texts do use the concluding section of the long poem, beginning with "The people will live on." (CP, 615), but not one uses any of the more controversial sections. Teachers miss a great opportunity to make their teaching of literature more relevant to today by not selecting some of the sections from *The People, Yes*, that will be of greater interest to their students.

**Selected Poems from Complete Poems**

It is difficult to select a few poems from a poet's work that stretches to more than eight hundred pages of poetry as does Sandburg's, particularly when so many of his poems have such great adaptability for secondary school usage. However, a selection was made, and fourteen separate poems, covering a wide range of subjects, have been selected as being especially suitable and valuable

for students in secondary school literature classes. These poems cover all the years of Sandburg's long writing career, and show the consistency of Sandburg's style, vision, and message.

The poem, "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind," is a chilling warning to modern nations such as our own, which hints that destruction, decay, and disintegration can come as easily to the haughty and mighty nation as it can to the weak and powerless. Sandburg uses a picture of a dead city of antiquity in his poem about the death of a civilization, both past and present. It could be Athens, Rome, Pompeii, Troy, or Washington, D.C. that Sandburg refers to when he writes:

> It has happened before.  
> Strong men put up a city and got  
> a nation together,  
> And paid singers to sing and women  
> to warble: We are the greatest city,  
> the greatest nation,  
> nothing like us ever was. (CP, 184)

Then Sandburg writes that while the singers sang and the rest of the city listened, the society disintegrated and fell victim to the rats and lizards, who represent the forces of decay in history. He writes from his vantage point in the future that "the only listeners left now . . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards." (CP, 184)

Secondary students are easily able to understand the imagery and symbolism of this poem, and can quickly identify elements in
their own society that are reminiscent of Sandburg's paid golden
girls and warblers who constantly extoll the supposed virtues of the
once-vibrant society in which they lived. The poem can be used as a
springboard for student writing, which might be interrelated with
other courses being taken by the high school student such as history,
government, science, and business. A more meaningful and relevant
learning experience for the student will take place when such cor-
relative learning is accomplished. A poem such as Sandburg's "Four
Preludes on Playthings of the Wind" is an excellent type of poetry to
use for this purpose.

A number of the other selected poems are also quite effective
for stimulation of student interest in other areas of their curriculum.
These poems deal with the subjects of war, national destiny, freedom,
democracy, and historical figures who loomed large in the past.

In "Storms Begin Far Back," Sandburg points out that wars
do not just happen upon unsuspecting mankind, but have to grow and
develop as a young storm or tidal wave. His storm is the Second
World War, which had just begun when this poem was written in 1940.
And the present world situation in which we find ourselves could just
as easily be substituted for the United States of 1940 that Sandburg was
addressing when he wrote:

You can't have a storm offhand
like somebody took a notion and
decided a storm would be right
handy to come off now and here.

This storm now didn't come out of nowhere
--it had a starting place, a home and womb
--far back it began, brother, sister,
--far back, sweetheart.       (CP, 621)

After reading "Storms Begin Far Back," many secondary
school students will relate the phrase "This storm" to Korea, to
Vietnam, and to the possible future confrontation with China.

"Books Men Die For" is another poem that will offer much
material for class discussion. The issue in this poem is whether it
is worth the inevitable price of death at the hands of a conqueror to
keep certain ideas alive. Books are ideas in the poem, and Sandburg
obviously is referring to the mass bookburnings, witchhunts, execu-
tions, concentration camp assignments, and deportations which took
place in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia of the 1930's and 1940's.
Sandburg sees these ideas in the books that must be destroyed by the
despot:

    Lights or no lights,
so they stand waiting
. . . books men die for.

    For this a man was hanged,
For this a man was burned.
For this two million candles
    snuffed their finish,
For this a man was shot.

    Open the covers, they speak,
they cry, they come out as from
open doors with voices, heartbeats.       (CP, 622)
But Sandburg does not directly say that these "books" are worth the price, as he closes the poem with a question--

You books in the dark now with the lights off.
You books now with the lights on,
    What is the drip, drip, from your covers?
    What is the lip murmur, the lost winds wandering
    from your covers?

Books men die for--
    I say with you; what of it?

(CP, 622)

Four of the poems selected deal with freedom and the long, weary road of struggle that must be traversed by those who cherish it. In the poems, "Is There Any Easy Road to Freedom?" and "Freedom is a Habit," Sandburg defines the struggles of those who choose to fight for freedom. In "Is There Any Easy Road to Freedom?" he compares the struggles of the Free French in the dark days of the Nazi occupation with those of the Russian soldiers who fought Hitler's onslaught, saying they are both "relentless" and that they both loved their country, and were willing to sacrifice for it. Sandburg compares the Russian and Frenchman to Abraham Lincoln in his hour of travail:

A Kentucky-born Illinoisan found himself
By journey through shadows and prayer
The Chief Magistrate of the American people
Pleading in words close to low whispers:
"Fellow citizens . . . we cannot escape history.
The fiery trial through which we pass
Will light us down in honor or dishonor
To the latest generation . . .
We shall nobly save or meanly lose
the last best hope of earth."  (CP, 625)
Sandburg ends the poem with three questions, all centered around the idea that all men who love freedom must be willing to sacrifice in order to preserve and protect it. He asks his reader:

Have It, have you, been too silent?
Is there an easy crime of silence?
Is there any easy road to freedom?  (CP, 625)

In "Freedom is a Habit," Sandburg describes freedom as a garment, worn by believers in it just as distinguishing garb is worn by clergymen and women. This garment requires care and must be nurtured and fought for; otherwise, it may be lost:

Freedom is a habit
and a coat worn
some born to wear it
some never to know it.
Freedom is cheap
Or again as a garment
is so costly
men pay their lives
rather than not have it.  (CP, 627-28)

The longer two of the four poems dealing with freedom are both about incidents in early World War II. The first of the two, entitled "Open Letter to the Poet Archibald MacLeish Who Has Forsaken His Massachusetts Farm to Make Propaganda for Freedom," was written in 1942 and praises the poet and literary expert MacLeish, who took the World War II position of Director of War Information under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. (It should be noted that MacLeish's decision to take the job was first greeted with dismay and
disgust by many left-wing supporters of Communist Russia (U. S. S. R.) as, at this time, Russia was an ally of Hitler's Germany and had assisted, the year before, in the partitioning of Poland. Sandburg, the socialist and anti-war man, was the first important literary person to support MacLeish in his decision.\textsuperscript{45} 

Sandburg compared MacLeish to earlier patriots such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, who decided that they would have to throw in their lot in a fight for freedom. Sandburg calls such men— 

lovers of peace, decency, good order, 
who throw in with all they've got 
for the abstractions "freedom," "independence." 

\textsuperscript{(CP, 623)}

Certainly there can be a connection drawn between such people as MacLeish and the dedicated young liberals of this generation who joined in such altruistic enterprises as the Peace Corps, Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA), and the various governmental agencies' programs aimed at alleviating poverty and social problems in this country and abroad. Many of these people faced much the same kind of problem in reaching their decision in the early days of the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations. Such a comparison would offer much material for discussion and analysis in a classroom teaching situation.

\textsuperscript{45}Golden, \textit{Carl Sandburg}, p. 94.
In the poem "The Man with the Broken Fingers" Sandburg tells the tragic story of the young Norwegian ski champion who was inhumanely tortured by the Nazi Gestapo in order to force from him the names of other resistance fighters. The young man refused to divulge any names and the Gestapo broke his bones one by one, causing his eventual death. Sandburg's poetic tribute to the Norwegian patriot, whom he called "the man with the broken fingers," was first published in 1942 in the United States, and was subsequently translated into more than a dozen languages and distributed to the underground forces of the captive nations of Europe.

Though not great poetry, the poem does tell the story of the young hero quite effectively and makes good reading material for the secondary student. Note the description of the brutality in the poem:

So they broke the little finger of the left hand.  
Three fingers came next and the left thumb bent till it broke.  
Still no names and there was a day and night for rest and thinking it over.  
Then again the demand for names and he gave them the same silence.  
And the little finger of the right hand felt itself twisted,  
Back and back twisted till it hung loose from a bleeding socket.  
Then three more fingers crashed and splintered one by one  
And the right thumb back and back into shattered bone.  

(CP, 626)

And there is the quiet resolve of the poem:

And there are those like you and me and many many others  
Who can never forget the Man with the Broken Fingers.  

(CP, 627)
The secondary English teacher might also deal with John Steinbeck's novel of the Norwegian resistance, *The Moon Is Down*, in connection with this poem of Sandburg. Both deal with the indomitable will of free men, who were willing to give their lives for what they believed.

Four of the fourteen poems here surveyed are written in memory of famous men, including two American presidents. "Number Man" and "To the Ghost of John Milton" are written in honor of Johann Sebastian Bach and Milton, respectively. For Abraham Lincoln, there is the 1944 Phi Beta Kappa poem, "The Long Shadow of Lincoln: A Litany" and for Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 1945 tribute, "When Death Came April Twelve 1945."

Of Bach, Sandburg writes that he was born to wonder about numbers and discusses the master's use of numbers in his writing of his classic music:

> He balanced fives against tens and made them sleep together and love each other . . .

> He managed eights and nines, gave them prophet beards, marched them into mists and mountains. (CP, 675)

The secondary school teacher could here blend music and poetry to illustrate Bach's use of numbers as depicted in Sandburg's poem.

And to Milton, Sandburg says in his "To the Ghost of John
Milton, "he looks with envy for Milton's courage to stand when others sit down and to persevere in the face of personal tragedy and misfortune:

If I should pamphleteer twenty years against royalists,
With rewards offered for my capture dead or alive,
And jails and scaffolds always near,

And then my wife should die and three ignorant daughters
Should talk about their father as a joke, and steal the
Earnings of books, and the poorhouse always reaching for me,

If I then lost my eyes and the world was all dark and I
Sat with only memories and talk--

I would write "Paradise Lost," I would marry a second wife . . .
I would write "Paradise Regained," I would write
Wild, foggy, smoky, wordy books--

"The Long Shadow of Lincoln: A Litany" is something of a symphony of words, a symphony without musical score. Written in the midst of the Second World War, with American Armies fighting on two continents and all the oceans of the world, the poem is in the spirit of Vachel Lindsay's famous "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," in that Sandburg has Abraham Lincoln's words thunder down in advice to a wartorn nation and world nearly a century later. But unlike Lindsay's Lincoln, Sandburg's Lincoln is more of a shadow of influence, rather than an actual ghostly figure parading down a Springfield, Illinois street:

There is dust alive.
Out of a granite tomb,
Out of a bronze sarcophagus,  
Loose from the stone and copper  
Steps a whitesmoke ghost  
Lifting an authoritative hand  
In the name of dreams worth dying for,  
In the name of men whose dust breathes  
of those dreams so worth dying for,  
what they did being past words,  
beyond all smooth and easy telling.  (CP, 636-37)

Lincoln's advice that suggested that we think and act anew and that  
"We must disenthrall ourselves," is what Sandburg sees to be the  
long shadow of Lincoln upon our history.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945,  
Sandburg wrote what was probably the most moving and eloquent  
elegy since Walt Whitman's elegy of Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last In  
the Dooryard Bloom'd." This is, of course, Sandburg's "When Death  
Came April Twelve 1945." In the brief elegy, Sandburg pictures the  
dead Roosevelt as his nation's commander and as a hero of the people  
who feel a deep personal loss at his passing. Where Whitman used  
a grey-brown bird, Sandburg uses a bell, which rings in the hearts  
of everyone, telling the world that death had come that April after-noon:

Can a bell ring in the heart  
telling the time, telling a moment,  
telling of: a stillness come,  
in the afternoon a stillness come  
and now never come morning?  

(CP, 637)

Sandburg's poetry here is definitely Whitmanesque as he explores the
original theme of a bell signalling the death of a loved one much as

Whitman used the bird symbol and the returning of spring in his elegy
of Lincoln. Sandburg also uses the spring reference:

Now never again come morning,
say the tolling bells repeating it,
now on the earth in blossom days,
in earthy days and potato planting. . . . (CP, 637)

Sandburg also uses a device similar to Whitman's vision of the coffin of Lincoln being taken across the country that he served and showered with flowers as it travelled to interment in the earth.

While Whitman had Lincoln travelling from Washington, D. C. to Springfield, Illinois, Sandburg has Roosevelt being heralded by mourners from the corners of the earth:

And there will be roses and spring blooms
flung on the moving oblong box, emblems endless
flung from nearby, from faraway earth corners,
from frontline tanks nearing Berlin
unseen flowers of regard to The Commander,
from battle stations over the South Pacific
silent tokens saluting The Commander. (CP, 638)

The last stanza of "When Death Came April Twelve 1945"

opens with the recurrent bell image appearing in what is to be the ending rhetorical question:

Can a bell ring in the heart
in time with the tall headlines,
the high fidelity transmitters,
the somber consoles rolling sorrow,
the choirs in ancient laments--chanting:
"Dreamer, sleep deep,
Toiler, sleep long,  
Fighter, be rested now,  
Commander, sweet good night."

(CP, 638)

What Sandburg is saying in this closing is that the death of Franklin Roosevelt was a deep personal loss for the individuals who loved him as their friend, as well as those who looked on him as dreamer, toiler, fighter, and Commander.

The esteem in which Sandburg held Franklin Roosevelt is revealed in this poem and also in conversations with Sandburg recorded by this writer. Of Roosevelt, Sandburg said: "Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the greatest social reformer of our time and will stand with Lincoln in time. What is so amazing to me, however, is the fact that this man, who knew not the slightest odor of poverty, became the great social reformer and friend of the common man that he was."46

Asked to elaborate more fully on his personal feeling toward President Roosevelt, particularly in regard to "When Death Came April Twelve 1945," Sandburg said: "The man had Lincolnesque qualities. Some of his speeches will be recorded by historians as great oratory that moved men and events. He had humor, wit, and compassion, and a personal warmth about him that made people love

46Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Dayton, Ohio; February 9, 1963.
him as a human being, not as a faraway, distant Chief Executive of the American government. This personal feeling of loss that I, Carl Sandburg, felt that afternoon in April is what I was trying to convey in the poem. "47

Sandburg denied that he used Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" as a model or that he tried to imitate Whitman in his elegy of Roosevelt: "Hah! I no more copied off Whitman than Walt Whitman copied off Milton or Tennyson. I've long ago forgotten what I intended in a lot of my poems--that's the hell of old age--but that poem I remember exactly. I wrote it late in the evening of the Sunday he died, in my own home on Lake Michigan. Later in the week I was asked by a magazine to write a poem about Roosevelt, so I revised that one and sent it in. But it was originally a very personal thing. "48

Sandburg's views on religion and theological questions can be found in a short poem, "They Ask: Is God, Too, Lonely?" In this three-stanza poem, Sandburg reveals that he had a questioning mind about the nature and reason of religion, particularly of the organized kind that it has become in history. The poet asks whether God made

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
man because he was lonely and wanted company. Then he asks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did God say to Himself he must have company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And therefore He would make man to walk the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And set apart churches for speech and song with God?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sandburg ends his poem by saying that these are questions that are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>. . . scrawled in old caves and painted in tall cathedrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By people who are so lonely that they believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God, too, is lonely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(CP, 393)

Sandburg's poem, "Crossing Ohio When Poppies Bloom in Ashtabula," is a representative example of Sandburg as a poet of imagery. The poem, composed of two sections, is a fleeting glimpse of the northern Ohio countryside in the month of May, when the countryside is green and the wildflowers are blooming. This image of the area was gained by Sandburg as he was riding in a railroad car on his way to New York to visit his publisher to arrange publication of Good Morning, America. As with many of his earlier poems, Sandburg could not recall the reasons for some of the references, but he did remember that it was his fascination with the Indian word, Ashtabula, that made him start writing. "Ash-ta-bu-la, that's just a beautiful word, isn't it?" he said. "I remember saying it over and over and looking out the window, looking at the red and yellow flowers, but I can't tell you when or where or how it was written down."  

49 Ibid.
The poem is a good work to use to show students how a memory of a certain scene might be used at a later time to write about. It need not be a precise recollection, but rather a shadowy one such as Sandburg's memory of looking out of the window of the train he was riding on as it rolled across Ohio:

Leave the high winds of May
blowing over the fields of grape vines
near the northwest corner of Pennsylvania.
Leave the doorstep peonies
pushing high bosoms at passers-by
in northern Ohio towns in May.

(CP, 365)

Sandburg seems to be looking back into his own past, searching for a less complicated, pastoral existence than his own as a celebrated poet when he wrote:

Pick me poppies in Ohio,
mother.
Pick me poppies in a back yard
in Ashtabula.

(CP, 365)

The last selection of individual works from Sandburg's poetry is the extremely unusual list of definitions of what poetry is, which Sandburg used as a separate poem in itself, titled "Tentative (First Model) Definitions of Poetry." For its sheer diversity, the work has great value for study in secondary school literature.

"Tentative Definitions of Poetry" is composed of thirty-eight single sentence definitions of poetry, all beginning with the words, "Poetry is--" Few students, and teachers, have ever thought of
poetry as Sandburg defines it in these statements:

Poetry is an art practised with the terribly plastic material
of human language.

Poetry is a sequence of dots and dashes, spelling depths,
crypts, crosslights, and moon wisps.

Poetry is a puppet-show, where riders of skyrockets and
divers of sea fathoms gossip about the sixth sense
and the fourth dimension.

Poetry is a mock of a cry at finding a million dollars
and a mock of a laugh at losing it.

Poetry is an enumeration of birds, bees, babies, butterflies,
bugs, bambinos, babayagas, and bipeds, beating
their way up bewildering bastions. (CP, 317-19)

The value here is to show students that poetry can be many
things to many people and that poets are as diverse as people. What
one poet writes, therefore, another may not call poetry at all. It all
depends on the definition of poetry being used by the poet and the
reader. There is great value for students in being made aware of
this diversity, and Sandburg's compilation of definitions of poetry is
an excellent means to use for this purpose.

"Bronze Wood" and The Chicago Race Riots of July, 1919

These two little-known listings in the Sandburg bibliography
offer tremendous potentialities to the creative English teacher who
wishes to enrich a literature course content by including some
socially significant material. Both of these works by Sandburg are
relatively unknown to most teachers of literature in the high school,
but represent the early awareness and realization that the race issue would someday become the dominant issue in American domestic life. It can also be stated and supported that these works are two of the very few examples of the treatment of race relations by a leading American writer. The English teacher in secondary schools of today will find both of these essays to be extremely suitable for use in the classroom. Written by an acknowledged figure in American literature, "Bronze Wood" and The Chicago Race Riots would also be much easier for the teacher to propose using than some of the current material on race, written, in many instances, by writers of lesser renown. More simply, what is being said here is that few school board members would like to go on record as to expurgate Carl Sandburg from the secondary curriculum.

For example, the central message of "Bronze Wood" is quite simply "Black is beautiful." Written in the form of a short essay, "Bronze Wood" takes a poetic look at a statue of a Negro, whose ancestors were members of an ancient African civilization. Sandburg, the poet, becomes Sandburg, the cultural anthropologist, when he sees racial pride, dignity, and a vision of a great and historic past. The optimism of The People Yes comes out again in "Bronze Wood" with Sandburg writing:

The Face seemed to say it had forgotten things that ought to be forgotten and it is a gift worth having to so forget.
In the same look the face seemed to be saying important things have been forgotten that shall yet be remembered and used and loved.  

Sandburg speaks prophetically of the Negro's untold history and yearning for a free life in "Bronze Wood."

"Bronze Wood" is a combination of a poem and essay. It was written by Sandburg in early 1941, and was privately printed by a San Francisco firm for Sandburg, who gave out fifty personally signed copies of the seven page folio to friends and associates. At least two of Sandburg's contemporary "Chicago" writers, Richard Wright and Nelson Algren, are known to have received copies from Sandburg. A larger reprint of "Bronze Wood" was made shortly after the initial printing and made available for general distribution. Many copies of this reprint can be found in the libraries and faculty offices of Negro colleges and universities. The work was a standard for courses in oral interpretation at a number of predominantly Negro institutions of the nineteen forties and fifties. Professor Hazel McDaniel Teabeau, then of Lincoln University in Missouri, writes:

"I first heard it read by Sandburg himself in 1942 at the University of 

50 Bronze Wood, (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1941).  

51 Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Flat Rock, North Carolina, April 12, 1965.  

52 Ibid. Sandburg recalled that more than 10,000 copies of "Bronze Wood" were printed and distributed free to colleges and universities.
Chicago where I was doing graduate study. I immediately recognized its possibilities for Negro self-image and used it repeatedly since."53

Asked why "Bronze Wood" is not so well known as other Sandburg works, Professor Teabeau related:

First of all, it's quite well known by Negro or Black Sandburg students. It's only white authorities who don't know about it. Ask Gwendolyn Brooks, James Baldwin, or Langston Hughes and they'll tell you they heard it in college.54

In addition to the development of a staccato style in his prose writing, another important result came from the many years of newspaper writing and reporting of Carl Sandburg. This result was the publication in the fall of 1919 of Sandburg's important journalistic report, The Chicago Race Riots of July, 1919.

Sandburg was a special reporter for the Chicago Daily News at the time the infamous riots broke out and at that very time was writing a continuing series of articles about the city's crowded and growing Black Belt. In need of labor for war industry, Chicago was jammed with Negroes from the South after World War One and Sandburg was assigned to report of their lives and attitudes.

53 Letter from Hazel McDaniel Teabeau, Professor of English and Speech, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio, December 15, 1965.

54 Hazel McDaniel Teabeau, private interview, Wilberforce, Ohio, January, 1966.
The series on the Negro problem of Chicago had been running in the newspaper for exactly two weeks when the riots broke out. Sandburg reported that the riot started with the stoning to death of a Negro boy who had accidentally ventured into a white-only section of the public beach. Whites, said Sandburg, decided to make "an example of him" and pounced upon the youth, savagely pummeling him with stones and bottles. 55

Much of what Sandburg wrote in the series, which makes up a large part of the short book, seems as timely today as it was when it was written half a century ago. Reporter Sandburg described how Negroes, in attempting to leave the overcrowded ghettos for better living areas, were met by frightened white people who resisted integration by all means, including violence. The volatile situation was aggravated, wrote Sandburg, by postwar unemployment, the return of disenchanted Negro veterans from the war, and increased migration of Negroes from the South and low-class whites from what is now called Appalachia.

Sandburg quoted a Harvard-educated Negro bridge engineer on the crisis:

White citizens must be educated out of all hysteria over actual or prospective arrival of colored neighbors. All colored

55Carl Sandburg, The Chicago Race Riots of July, 1919, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1919), p. 5. Hereafter this source will be cited as CRR.
citizens do not make bad neighbors, although in some cases they will not make good ones. It is of the greatest importance, however, both to white and colored people, that the real estate dealers should cease to make a business out of commercializing racial antagonisms.

(CRR, 42)

Sandburg further prophesied that Negroes would not long stand for segregated facilities and double-standards and that there would eventually be violence if they were further frustrated in their drive for equality. The Chicago race riots, said Sandburg, were not provoked by large masses of illiterate and semiliterate people moving from the South, but rather by the fact that many Negroes had become more literate, skilled, and were able to see how much they were being shortchanged.

The Chicago Race Riots included an interview with Julius Rosenwald, then the president of Sears, Roebuck Company, who was already planning to set up a foundation to establish schools for Negroes in southern states. Sandburg's interview of Rosenwald included the often-quoted prediction of the department store executive who said, "The most expensive thing we can do is not to educate the Negro." (CRR, 61) Few who quote the Rosenwald statement know the original source of the comment was in a 1919 book by Carl Sandburg.

In 1919, Sandburg realized that the racial question could not be handled on a local basis and needed national action. The last chapter of The Chicago Race Riots of July, 1919 was entitled "For
Federal Action," and concluded: "The race question is national and federal. No city or state can solve it alone. There must be cooperation between states. And there must be a federal handling of it."

(CRR, 72)

Another important point in favor of using Sandburg's book on race relations in the secondary school is the short, prophetic introduction to the work, which was written by a young liberal journalist of the time, Walter Lippmann. The young Lippmann, later to become one of the country's leading political analysts, wrote in the introduction to Sandburg's essays:

We shall have to work out with the Negro a relationship which gives him complete access to all the machinery of our common civilization, and yet allows him to live so that no Negro need dream of a white heaven and of bleached angels. Pride of race will come to the Negro when a dark skin is no longer associated with poverty, ignorance, misery, terror, and insult. When this pride arises every white man in America will be the happier for it. He will be able then, as he is not now, to enjoy the finest quality of civilized living—-the fellowship of different men.

(CRR, iii)

The Lincoln Biography

Sandburg's monumental biography of Abraham Lincoln, totalling 2,500 pages in six volumes, actually began as a biography of Lincoln for young people. Alfred Harcourt, of Harcourt, Brace Publishers, recalls that he encouraged Sandburg to do a book about Lincoln for young readers largely because of the tremendous reception
which was accorded to Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*, published by Harcourt in 1922. Sandburg was receptive to the idea simply because he had long been interested in Lincolniana and the project would give him the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of the Civil War president.

But what started to be a four-hundred-page project for children soon went far beyond the reading interests of just children. After three solid years of painstaking and exhaustive research, Sandburg handed Alfred Harcourt a bulky typescript of Lincoln's years on the Illinois prairie, his background and family history, and the forging of the Lincoln character and personality. This typescript would make up the nine hundred page biographical study of Lincoln, which was published in February, 1926, in celebration of its subject's one-hundred-twenty-fifth birthday. The work was published in two volumes under the title, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*.

Critical reception of the biography of Lincoln, which covered the Lincoln family from 1776 until Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois for his inauguration in Washington, was excellent. Critics stated that

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56 Harcourt, "40 Years of Friendship," p. 397.

Sandburg had succeeded in what all previous biographies of Lincoln had failed to do—create a portrait of the man and to re-create the panorama of a growing and maturing young nation in the process.

The final four volumes of the Lincoln biography, Abraham Lincoln: The War Years, took Sandburg nearly a dozen more years to complete. Many times Sandburg had doubts whether it could be finished within his lifetime and recalled his fear of that likelihood by saying: "I'd say to myself, 'My God, what if I don't live to finish it?'" But Sandburg finally completed the study in August of 1938. He recalled the sense of melancholy sadness he seemed to feel as he wrote, revised, rewrote, and again revised the final chapter of the study which deals with Lincoln's death, funeral, and interment in Springfield, Illinois: "I felt as if I was giving up a dear and sympathetic friend in Lincoln. He had been my constant companion for years and I will admit that I actually shed tears as I typed the final lines closing the biography."59

These final lines are something of a summary of Sandburg's whole six-volume study. They are very short, simple lines written in a muted staccato style. They offer the reader a moving burst of sheer lyricism of Sandburg, the poet, as well as Sandburg, the Lincoln

58Golden, Carl Sandburg, p. 240.
59Ibid., p. 241.
The Lincoln biography of Carl Sandburg has an abundance of material very suitable for secondary students. Two years after the volumes were published the first twenty-six chapters of *The Prairie Years* were reissued for the young reader audience, under the title of Chapter 12 of the biography, *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*, and the book has long been a favorite with many youth. These chapters tell the story of Lincoln's early years in Kentucky and Indiana, the background of his father, Thomas Lincoln, and of his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. As are most of the events in Sandburg's treatment of

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60 Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years, The War Years*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), 6 volumes, IV, 413. Hereafter in the text I shall use the abbreviation AL, the volume, and page number for material quoted from this source.
In Lincolns life, the actual birth of Abraham Lincoln is vividly re-created by the biographer by including the accounts of a number of people who were said to have been there. Then Sandburg writes:

Whatever the exact particulars, the definite event on that 12th of February, 1809, was the birth of a boy they named Abraham after his grandfather who had been killed by Indians—born in silence and pain from a wilderness mother on a bed of perhaps cornhusks and perhaps hen feathers—with perhaps a laughing child prophecy later that he would "never come to much."

(AL, 34)

The death of Lincolns mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, is one of the most moving and memorable sections of the entire biography for both youthful and adult readers. Sandburg is at his best in both poetry and prose when he writes:

She knew she was dying, called for her children, and spoke to them her last dim choking words. . . . Death came October 5, 1818, the banners of autumn flaming their crimsons over tall oaks and quiet maples. On a bed of poles cleated to the corner of the cabin, the body of Nancy Hanks Lincoln lay in peace and silence, the eyelids closed down in unbroken rest.

(AL, I, 39)

Sandburgs treatment of the Lincoln children at the time of their mothers young death is equally vivid and unforgettable to the reader, especially the young reader:

To the children who tiptoed in, stood still, cried their tears of want and longing, whispered, and heard only their own whispers answering, she looked as though new secrets had come to her in place of the old secrets given up with the breath of life.

(AL, I, 40)
The description of young Abe Lincoln assisting his father in the building of his mother's coffin is equally memorable:

Tom Lincoln took a log left over from the building of the cabin, and he and Dennis Hanks whipsawed it into planks, planed the planks smooth, and made them of a measure for a box to bury the dead wife and mother in. Little Abe, with a jackknife, whittled pine-wood pegs. And while Dennis and Abe held the planks, Tom bored holes and stuck the whittled pegs through the holes. (AL, I, 40)

Sandburg is Whitmanesque with shades of "O Pioneers," when he describes Nancy Hanks Lincoln as a "pioneer sacrifice, with memories of monotonous, endless everyday chores, of mystic Bible verses read over and over for their promises, of blue wistful hills and a summer when the crabapple blossoms flamed white and she carried a boy child into the world." (AL, I, 40)

Although esteemed critic Edmund Wilson has referred to these early imaginative chapters as "corn," and "nonsense," they nevertheless present the best available picture for youth of today of Abraham Lincoln's boyhood. The recreated conversation of Nancy Hanks on her deathbed with her children particularly outrages Wilson as he contends that Sandburg could not have known exactly what happened. But it is this Sandburg literary trait, looked upon as a

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62 Ibid.
serious weakness and deficiency by critics such as Wilson, that
brought Sandburg the praise of most others.

It should be noted, too, that later historians have found some
obvious factual errors in Sandburg's biography. For example,
Sandburg used the early traditional view that the Lincoln family had
moved from Kentucky into Indiana without cows or horses, but scholars
have since proved that they had horses and must have had cows, too,
in order to contract the milk sickness that Sandburg says they had at
that time. Sandburg also greatly understated the cost of the Mexican
War, he mistakenly placed Crawfordsville, Indiana on the Wabash
River, said that Shelley had drowned in an Italian Lake rather than in
the Gulf of Spezzia; and credited Montesquieu with a quotation from
de Tocqueville. However, it can be said that these errors are
quite minor and petty when the length and breadth of the Sandburg
biography is considered. Moreover, it can be pointed out that
Sandburg meticulously corrected all of the cited factual mistakes in
later condensations and excerpted editions.

The chapters of the huge Lincoln biography are all very short
and Sandburg's brevity in this respect has an element of value in the
Teaching of secondary students. Shorter chapters seem to have the

63 Allan Nevins, "Sandburg as Historian," Illinois Historical

64 Ibid., p. 363.

65 Ibid., p. 364.
important psychological effect in younger readers of inviting the reader to go further in his reading than longer, more complex divisions might have. Each chapter of the biography seems to end in a way as to entice the reader to start the next one. And the chapters all begin with an interesting opening line. For example, a chapter ends with these lines:

The war drums rolled and the telegraph clicked off mortality lists, now a thousand, now ten thousand a day. Yet there were moments when the processes of men seemed to be only an evil dream and justice lay in deeper transitions than those wrought by men dedicated to kill or be killed.

Beyond the black smoke lay what salvations and jubilees? Death was in the air. So was birth. What was dying no man was knowing. What was being born no man could say.

(AL, IV, 207)

The next chapter begins:

In the months between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, events swirled round the peculiar pivot where Lincoln moved, and put him into further personal isolation. So often daylight seemed to break---and it was a false dawn---and it was as yet night. When hope came singing a soft song, it was more than once shattered by the brass laughter of cannon and sudden bayonets preceding the rebel yell.

(AL, IV, 208)

In many places, the narrative of the biography seems to have the effect of the novel rather than that of objective history. The writing of a historical biography is constantly interrupted by the poetic rhapsody of Sandburg, the poet. This is particularly true in the early chapters of The Prairie Years, where Sandburg, obviously short on
nonexistent or unretrievable solid historical data about Lincoln's formative years, wrote a one-paragraph summation of ten years of maturation of young Abraham Lincoln by comparing him to the tree that just grew and developed:

Ten years pass and the roots of a tree spread out finding water to carry up to branches and leaves that are in the sun; the tree thickens, the forked limbs shine wider in the sun; they pray with their leaves in the rain and the whining wind; the tree arrives, the mystery of its coming, spreading, growing, a secret not even known to the tree itself; it stands with its arms stretched to the corners the four winds come from, with its murmured testimony, "We are here, we arrived, roots are in the earth of these years," and beyond that short declaration, it speaks nothing of the decrees, fates, accidents, destinies, that made it an apparition of its particular moment. (AL, I, 72)

Such sections of the book also can be used by the secondary teacher to show that Sandburg's biography of Lincoln can also classify as imaginative literature, which would tend to illustrate to the students that a true work of the serious artist can come in many forms.

Another outstanding example of Sandburg's ability to transform historical biography into imaginative literature is at the end of the chapter covering the Gettysburg speech by Lincoln. After covering every minute detail of the delivery of the speech, he summarizes Lincoln's achievement that November day by saying that Lincoln "had stood that day, the world's foremost spokesman of popular government, saying that democracy was yet worth fighting for." (AL, V, 401)

Then he discusses and interprets Lincoln's unique role in the American experiment at self-government.
Finally, the actual events of the day and their historical importance being well covered, Sandburg bursts forth as the writer of an epic novel in his treatment of how the bloody battle of the past few days would affect the individual home and family:

In many a country cottage over the land, a tall old clock in a quiet corner told time in a tick-tock deliberation. Whether the orchard branches hung with pink-spray blossoms or icicles of sleet, whether the outside news was seedtime or harvest, rain or drought, births or deaths, the swing of the pendulum was right and left and right and left in a tick-tock deliberation.

(AL, IV, 476)

Then Sandburg tenderly discusses the fallen boy in blue or grey who had stood and watched the clock in previous peacetime years:

The face and dial of the clock had known the eyes of a boy who listened to its tick-tock and learned to read its minute and hour hands. And the boy had seen years measured off by the swinging pendulum, had grown to man size, had gone away. And the people in the cottage knew that the clock would stand there and the boy would never again come into the room and look at the clock with the query, "What is the time?"

In a row of graves of the Unidentified the boy would sleep long in the dedicated final resting place at Gettysburg. Why he had gone away and why he would never come back had roots in some mystery of flags and drums, of national fate in which individuals sink as in a deep sea, of men swallowed and vanished in a man-made storm of smoke and steel.

(AL, IV, 476)

For a further treatment of this mystery of war, Sandburg reverts to Lincoln and the speech he gave that day. Then Sandburg goes back again to the omnipresent clock in the cottage of the home of the dead
private soldier:

To the backward and forward pendulum swing of a tall old clock in a quiet corner they might read those cadenced words while outside the windows the first flurry of snow blew across the orchard and down over the meadow, the beginnings of winter in a gun-metal gloaming to be later arched with a star-flung sky.

(AL, IV, 477)

The most distinctive and important qualities of the Lincoln biography are three: first, its pictorial vividness, which is a product of Sandburg's graphic, primitive style, love of concrete details, and his poetic ability to recreate scenes in a few sentences; second, its human quality--its feeling for great and small human beings, with all their frailties and heroisms; and third, the total cumulative force of its building up, step by step, the impression of the crowded discordant times of Abraham Lincoln, with problems rising in an endless welter--and, by the same means, developing an impression of Lincoln learning to endure the storm, patiently and shrewdly developing his powers, and finally mastering all the adverse forces arrayed against him. Out of Sandburg's long biography rises the picture of a whole people and a single leader caught in a terrible, complex dilemma.

Asked about his view of the Lincoln biography a generation after it was written, Sandburg said only: "The only thing I can tell you about it now is that it was probably the only book ever written by a
man whose father couldn't write his name, about a man whose mother couldn't write hers."

**Remembrance Rock**

The reviewer for *The Bookman*, in a 1926 review of Sandburg's first two volumes of the Lincoln biography, *The Prairie Years*, likened the scholarly Lincoln study to a novel and first suggested that poet-historian Sandburg turn his efforts toward the writing of the great American novel. John Farrar wrote:

I am convinced that Carl Sandburg could be the supreme American novelist of his period. He has the depth of a Dreiser, combined with a stronger grasp of broad aspects of human character and a limpid, graphic style. He has everything necessary to make a great novelist.

Sandburg first planned to write the novel after this review and started working on it in 1928. But he shelved it with his work on *The People, Yes* and, because of his absorption into the mass of research for *The War Years* volumes of his Lincoln study, did not resume it until near the end of World War II. The *New York Times* of June 11, 1944, first carried the announcement that Sandburg was again at work on "a biographical novel of American life, manners, and morals." The novel, reported the *Times*, would be called *An__*  

66Carl Sandburg, personal interview, Dayton, Ohio, February 9, 1963.

American Cavalcade. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had signed a contract with Sandburg for motion picture rights to the novel in its partially completed stages, the newspaper said.

By the time Sandburg had completed his novel in 1948, however, the title had been changed twice from the original An American Cavalcade. First change was to The Angel of the Backward Look, a phrase Sandburg found repeatedly used in the journals of William Bradford of the Pilgrim Colony of Plymouth when he was doing research for his novel. Sandburg said that he and his publishers decided against this title because of its close resemblance to Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward, Angel. The title of the published work, Remembrance Rock, was finally decided upon by the publishers, said Sandburg. 68

The structure of Remembrance Rock is simple, even though the 1,067 pages of the massive novel make up a complicated and involved story. There are a prologue, three parts, and an epilogue. The prologue of the novel takes place in Washington, D.C. at the very end of World War II. Orville Brand Windom, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, and descendant of a distinguished American family, addresses a nationwide radio audience on the coming of peace and the just-concluded war. The Justice died soon after the broadcast on the

meaning of America, and the plot of the novel then unfolds when his
grandson, Captain Raymond Windom, who returns home from the
bloody battle for Okinawa, finds, in a locked box, a novel which was
written by the judge and left as a literary and historical legacy to his
family. The judge's novel is made up of three stories--Parts One,
Two, and Three of Sandburg's novel--of characters, situations, and
events that are parallel in every way, with the exception of a three-
hundred year time span. All three of the stories come to the same
conclusion--that the crises they detail and unfold have left America
a finer and stronger nation.

Much correlation with American history can be achieved by
students and teachers in the use of Remembrance Rock in the English
classroom. It can be said that Sandburg's long novel would make an
excellent combination history-literature text as it covers in detail the
mainstreams of American history in the genre of fictional prose.
Although the main characters of Remembrance Rock are fictional,
most of the people mentioned and events described are solidly based
on historical fact.

Sandburg attempts to tie together his historical novel by the
recurrent use of a small bronze plaque, cast in 1608 in Scrooby,
England by Oliver Ball Windom, a man of great philosophical learning.
On the plaque, he inscribed Roger Bacon's Four Stumbling Blocks
to Truth:

1. The influence of fragile or unworthy authority
2. Custom
3. The imperfection of undisciplined senses
4. Concealment of ignorance by ostentation of seeming wisdom

This plaque is first given to Windom's sweetheart who later marries a member of the English Separatist cult in Holland, which was to make up the Mayflower passenger roster of 1620. The plaque was carried on the ship to the Plymouth colony where it was again handed down to a surviving member of a Pilgrim family. This plaque is among the personal possessions of Justice Windom. As it was handed down through the years to him, so it is to be passed on to his descendants and their children.

Three major periods of American history are covered in Remembrance Rock's three parts: The Founding and Settlement of the Plymouth Colony and New England; The Revolutionary War Era; and The Civil War Period.

As Captain Raymond Windom and his wife Maria read the three stories of earlier American history left them by Justice Windom, Sandburg has them, in the novel's epilogue, recognize that their own period of history, that of the Second World War, has also been a time of crisis for the United States just as the three stories of the novel

69 Carl Sandburg, Remembrance Rock (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), 43. Hereafter in the text I shall use the abbreviation RR and page number for material quoted from this source.
have been. They decide to commemorate this period of American history by following Justice Windom's ancestors' practice of burying beneath the huge rock in the front yard of the Windoms' 200-year-old colonial home, some memento of the critical period in which they lived. This rock, of course, is known as Remembrance Rock throughout the novel. From the period of the Second World War, they choose to bury beneath Remembrance Rock some gravel from Anzio Beach in Italy, a little sand from Utah Beach in Normandy, and a small block of volcanic ash from Okinawa.

Most reviewers, however, did not feel Sandburg's affinity for patriotism and rocks was worth the 1,067 pages. Diana Trilling, for example, actually said that the novel was simply a waste of time and effort and was not worth reviewing. Sandburg, although he publicly said many times that he was not the least bit concerned about what critics said about his writing, never got over his rage and anger. Fifteen years after the 1949 Trilling review, Sandburg told Harry Golden: "Hell, I never paid the slightest attention to critics, not even to that fool Diana Trilling--she wrote in 1949 that Remembrance Rock wasn't worth reviewing--not worth reviewing, she said!"  

70 Diana Trilling, "Fiction in Review," The Nation, CLXVII (October 30, 1948), 500-01.

The New York Times Book Review, among many others, was also not very kind to Sandburg as a novelist. Perry Miller, in his review of Remembrance Rock, probably aware of Sandburg's contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for the rights to the novel, sarcastically referred to the book as "a script for a Hollywood spectacular." Miller wrote that he could actually visualize how four astronomically salaried superstars could be cast in the three principal roles in the three periods of the novel and the prologue-epilogue. Only costumes, scenery, and century would have to change, he said, for all the ingredients necessary for a mass-appeal movie spectacular were there: gory battles, sexual encounters, and sham that would pass for tender feelings.

Vlademar Vetlugin, the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer executive and Redbook editor who purchased the rights to Remembrance Rock, had mixed feelings about whether or not the book was a novel: "Maybe it is a novel, maybe it is a long dramatic poem, or maybe it is a new form. If Pilgrim's Progress is a novel, then this is a novel." While there were many adverse reviews of Remembrance Rock, there were respected critics who judged it to be an excellent novel.


73 Golden, Carl Sandburg, p. 229.
The Chicago Tribune book editor, Fanny Butcher, wrote:

"To supremacy as poet, historian, biographer, teller of tales to young America, Carl Sandburg at 70 adds supremacy as a novelist with Remembrance Rock. It is the sum of everything that Carl Sandburg has written, learned, done."\(^{74}\)

Of particular interest to this study is the review in the Chicago Sun-Times, written by Herbert Graffis, who could see the novel as being especially good reading material for the young:

Some day when my grandson gets old enough and quiets down so he'll sit and listen, there are parts of Remembrance Rock that I want to read to him. I know of no other book that comes close to Sandburg's in its telling of the American story. He'll get the big idea, too, that Sandburg has made ghosts live to give him the close-up on how American liberty was conceived, fought for, and won. The kid will understand it clearly, the way Carl reports this story.\(^{75}\)

Irita Van Doren said that while Sandburg called the book a novel, it actually transcended all definition:

This American story with all its rich variation, is told in folk song and proverb, in strong, slow-moving narrative, in emotionally enthralling climaxes, and always with Carl Sandburg's unparalleled ear for the latent music of his country. An accomplishment worthy to stand beside his great biography of Lincoln, Remembrance Rock is Carl Sandburg's fullest, ripest tribute to the American people whom he loves.\(^{76}\)

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Sandburg explains *Remembrance Rock* by stating:

The questions rise and weave and never end. They keep going. How did this America, this United States, come to be where and what it is today? When and where did it begin? How did it go on? What is this elusive intangible, this mysterious variable that at times seems to be a constant? What is this ever shifting and hazardous ghost of a thing we often call the American Dream? These are the questions I am dealing with in *Remembrance Rock*.

(RR, iii)

Whether or not Carl Sandburg has achieved all he attempted in *Remembrance Rock* would depend upon the question of whether the novel is truly "a great American novel." And this question is certainly beyond the scope of this study. But one major point can be concluded from the discussion of *Remembrance Rock*, and that is the novel does have significant historical and literary value for secondary students. In fact, it could be a major work for reading and study in both the English and history class in the high school of today. Few books can claim this dual use as a point of distinction as can Sandburg's *Remembrance Rock*.

**Always the Young Strangers**

On his seventy-fifth birthday, January 6, 1953, Harcourt, Brace and Company published Carl Sandburg's moving autobiographical account of the first twenty years of his life. The title of the work, *Always the Young Strangers*, derived from lines of an old poem
of the poet, called "Broken-Face Gargoyles":

... the young strangers, coming, coming, always coming.

It is early.
I shall yet be footloose. (CP, 175)

In his account of his first twenty years, the son of Swedish immigrants, whose father signed all documents with a big "X," recalled his youth as that of a young stranger, meeting crisis and surmounting the difficulties of a new land. Lewis Nichols of the New York Times Book Review, interviewed Sandburg shortly before Always the Young Strangers was released. Sandburg told him that he did not think of his new book as an autobiography. Rather, Sandburg explained, it was to be "an account of the life of a town and a community (Galesburg, Illinois), something of the life of the nation. If it should be called anything, it is the biography of a town filtered through the life of a boy."77

Sandburg's assessment of Always the Young Strangers is an accurate appraisal of the work. The account is a very quiet one, with the incidents recounted being quite usual ones which could happen in the life of any small-town Midwestern boy. But there is far more to the book than just a view of boyhood in a small Illinois village. The book reveals to the close reader a definite growth in curiosity,

judgment, and understanding on the part of the young Sandburg. The book deals with the education of Carl Sandburg as he moves toward adulthood. Though not on the level of the initiation into learning of such notable figures as John Stuart Mill, Sandburg's account of his education does tell the reader how the young Midwestern boy of the 1890's gained and retained knowledge, perception, and judgment. In the plain language that was later to characterize his narrative style, Sandburg recalls the people of his youth and shows his early awareness of the real world about him:

There was Stella Garrity. Her name was in the papers several times when her house was raided and the men in the patrol wagon tried to hide their faces. She kept a house next west of the Narrow Gauge Railway on Berrien Street. She was a massively constructed woman, with the curves of a burlesque star. . . . She was a show-off, no other woman of the town quite so flagrant about being seen publicly in dashing fine clothes. . . .

After her place was raided and she was fined several times and men were afraid of being caught in raids on her house, Stella left town. . . .

During his youth, Sandburg came to know most of the people in Galesburg, from the respected to the immoral and the lazy. 

Always the Young Strangers recounts how he learned to make distinctions and to formulate value judgments about relative good and

78 Carl Sandburg, Always the Young Strangers (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), 338-39. Hereafter in the text I shall use the abbreviation ATYS and page number for material quoted from this source.
evil. Though the writing is of a man well over seventy, Sandburg was quite successful in his book in conveying the emotions of a boy. Lines such as this illustrate Sandburg's ability to write it as a child would have thought or said it: "... He didn't holler it nor make a face at me. He said it kind of soft. ..." (ATYS, 38)

The great value in Always the Young Strangers is the balance Sandburg keeps in describing his early years as a Swedish immigrant's son in a small Midwestern town, from his vantage point as a distinguished American writer at the time of actual writing. The reader of this book does not need to know that the man writing about his youth is a famous person. There is no premonition of fame to come in Always the Young Strangers, but rather the charm and fascination of an old man with youth.

The American Songbag

Sandburg's fascination with the common man, coupled with his lifelong interest in and hobby of music, was responsible for the poet's 1927 collection of American folksongs, The American Songbag. The long and varied collection of 280 spirituals, work songs, ballads, blues, jazz, and pure folk numbers has long been recognized as a classic work in the area of American folk music and musicology. 79

The interest of secondary students in this music is quite high and there are a number of recordings of Sandburg singing many of the numbers, which adds a great deal to the classroom study of this collection. Sandburg describes the collection as "ancient as the medieval European ballads brought to the Appalachian Mountains" of the United States and "as modern as skyscrapers, and the latest oil well gusher." Perhaps it is the timeless diversity that accounts for the high interest present in students, but there can be no doubt that the interest is high and quite genuine.

Sandburg assembled the book of songs from his own childhood in Galesburg, Illinois; his seven months as a private in the United States Army during the Spanish-American War of 1898; his years as a wandering hobo riding the railroads of the country; and from his many journeys as a traveling lecturer and poet. On the lecture platform in the decade after the First World War, Sandburg used a thirty-minute folksong rendition to his presentation as a closing. Many times, he recalled, his audience would refer him to persons who knew similar ballads and songs. (AS, ix) By talking with such fellow collectors, Sandburg soon became one of the leading authorities on American folk music.

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80 Carl Sandburg, An American Songbag (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), viii. Hereafter in the text I shall use the abbreviation AS and page number for material quoted from this source.
One of the best known works in *The American Songbag* is the
sad song of the demise of the American buffalo, "The Buffalo Skin-
ners." (AS, 270) Sandburg credits the discovery of the song to
John Lomax, of Texas. The song deals with the starvation of the
Indians, the gore of rotting buffalo on the prairie, the Indians made
violent by the slaughter of the animal that was the lifeblood of their
way of life. Lloyd Lewis, the Lincoln collector and scholar, recalls
hearing Sandburg sing the song at a dinner given for Sinclair Lewis
upon his return to America on August 17, 1929, writing that the
strange, haunting words and melody sung by Sandburg that evening
actually moved Lewis to tears:

> It was like a funeral song to the pioneer America that is
gone. And when Carl was done Sinclair Lewis spoke up,
his face streaked with tears. "That's the America I came
home to. That's it."81

Another ballad in *The American Songbag* is one of Sandburg's
personal favorites, and is, appropriately entitled "Amerikay." It
was a standby for an earlier poet-folksinger, Vachel Lindsay. Before
he sang the ballad in one personal appearance in 1964, Sandburg pre-
faced his song with an explanation of what American folk music is all
about:

> There is a human stir throughout our American folksongs
that equals the heights and depths of Shakespeare. The
rich and the poor, the robbers, murderers, and hangmen--

81Golden, *Carl Sandburg*, p. 81.
fathers and sons, mothers with soft words for their babies, workmen on railroads, steamboats, ships, wanderers, and lovers--they tell what life has done for them here in America. (AS, viii)

The ballad goes:

Torn from a world of tyrants
Beneath this Western sky
We formed this new dominion
A land of liberty.
The world shall know we're freemen here
And such shall ever be
Huzzah, huzzah, huzzah
For free, free Amerikay.

Lift up your hands you heroes
And swear with proud disdain
The wretch that would ensnare you
Shall lay his snares in vain.
Should Europe send invading force
We'll meet her in array
And fight and shout and fight
For brave, brave Amerikay. (AS, 13)

The Family of Man

Although this best-selling book of photographs is actually the work of Edward Steichen, Carl Sandburg's brother-in-law, Sandburg could rightly be referred to as a co-author. For the title is a much-used line of Lincoln from Sandburg's book-length poem, "The People, Yes," and Steichen chose Sandburg to write the Prologue to his photographic collection as well as the individual captions.

The Family of Man is Edward Steichen's attempt to illustrate Carl Sandburg's premise that the needs of men the world over
are basically the same, and that all men are members of the same general species of life. In the Prologue, Sandburg writes that men should and will finally realize that they are a part of their environment and must not consider themselves alien to it: "As you read the book over the years, you can catch yourself saying: 'I am not a stranger here, I am not a stranger.'"

Steichen's book contains five hundred and three photographs taken in sixty-eight countries around the world. The book simply and eloquently affirms and re-affirms the basic unity of mankind, even though there are apparent outward differences. There are pictures of peoples of the modern world kissing and caressing in public places, men and women at work in fields with the aid of oxen in the under-developed nations, men praying to a variety of deities, men at war, at work, at play.

The Family of Man, because of its diversity, its telling a story through many pictures and few words, can be an extremely significant and worthwhile work for the students of secondary school. The teacher of English can find an infinite number and variety of uses for it in the classroom, either as an artistic entity or in correlation with the poetry of Sandburg and other socially-oriented modern writers.

The innovative and aware English teacher can also use The Family of Man as an example of the definite relationship that exists
among all the creative arts of man. By studying Sandburg's influence on the photographic exhibit, students will readily realize this fusion and relationship of pictures and ideas, with the written and spoken word.

A Lincoln Portrait

The same type of dual authorship as is present in The Family of Man is also found in Aaron Copland's famous tone poem, "A Lincoln Portrait." Copland actually wrote the musical score of the composition for a collection of Sandburg lines about Lincoln and by Lincoln, two years after the last four volumes of Sandburg's Lincoln biography were published in 1940.

"A Lincoln Portrait," therefore, is the composer's interpretation of poetry, in this case, the poetic lines of Lincoln biographer, Carl Sandburg. Composer Aaron Copland admits this to have been true, and even points out that the composition was written with the idea that Carl Sandburg would be the narrator for the premiere of the number with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on May 14, 1942. 82

Copland had been commissioned a few months before by Andre Kostelanetz, the orchestra conductor, to write an orchestral work descriptive of great Americans which could be used to mirror the spirit of America. "I had just completed reading Sandburg's The

War Years and the choice of Lincoln as my subject seem inevitable," Copland explains. 83

The composition is roughly divided into three main sections-- an opening section, a middle section, and a conclusion. The text, read by a narrator, is drawn from the letters and speeches of Abraham Lincoln as quoted by Carl Sandburg in his six-volume biography. The quotes selected included lines from "The Gettysburg Address," and Lincoln's speeches as president. An example of Sandburg's part in the selection of the text is as follows:

This is what he said--
This is what Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of these United States, said:
"We must disenthrall ourselves--
Then we shall save our country!"

This is what he said--
This is what Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of these United States said:
"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy." 84

The opening section of the work suggests something of the mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln's personality as depicted by Sandburg. Near the end of the section, something of the

83Ibid.

gentleness and simplicity of spirit of the Lincoln in *The Prairie Years* emerges. The middle section briefly sketches in the tumultuous background of Lincoln's period in history. Copland includes in this section two songs of the period to give historical flavor: Stephen Foster's "De Camptown Races" and "Springfield Mountain," a ballad taken from Sandburg's *American Songbag*. 85

As with *The Family of Man*, "A Lincoln Portrait" also offers the teacher of English the opportunity of using a work that is a fused creation of two of the arts. The Copland-Sandburg piece combines orchestration with poetry in a natural blending of the two into a single work of beauty. There is much in this poetry for exercise in oral interpretation, too. A number of recordings of the music alone are available, which students might use as the background to practice reading the narrator's part. 86 Another possibility for secondary school usage of "A Lincoln Portrait" would be for the music department to present the number in concert, with members of the English classes of the school doing the narration.

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86 Aaron Copland, "Orchestration of A Lincoln Portrait," Columbia Record, 1943UA; also recorded on Caedemon, and Library of Congress, Disc 1942ALP.
CHAPTER III

METHODS OF TEACHING SELECTED SANDBURG WORKS

Introduction

In the teaching of the works of Carl Sandburg to high school students, the teacher should relate Sandburg to the larger literary heritage of the United States. Sandburg is quite easy to relate to this heritage as he has attained literary standing in all three major areas of literature--narrative prose, fiction, and poetry. Few writers can claim this distinction. For this reason, it can be said that Sandburg as a writer defies standard classification, for he is a writer of many talents.

Sandburg's major works can be taught in a myriad of ways and methods. The following will be covered in this chapter of the study:

Conventional Reading and Discussion

Use of Audio-Visual Materials

Interviews with Carl Sandburg

His Relationship to Other Writers of Literature
Student Writing

Dramatic Presentation

This chapter offers specific suggestions on the teaching of individual Sandburg selections discussed in Chapter II of the study. These suggestions include:

(1) How the Sandburg work might be introduced to the class.

(2) How the work could be read to enable students to better understand and appreciate it.

(3) What discussion topics would be appropriate for general class sessions, panels, small group activities, or oral reports.

(4) What specific topics could be suggested for written composition.

(5) What skills of writing might be learned from an analysis of Sandburg's writing.

Conventional Reading and Discussion

Probably no teaching practice has been under as heavy attack in recent times as the traditional reading and discussion of pieces of literature. Critics charge, and rightly so, that in most cases, the discussion becomes a teacher-centered exercise in drudgery for the students. Thomas C. Pollock, of the National Council of Teachers of English, urges teachers to assist the individual student in gaining an
understanding of American literary heritage:

... Our experiences in the classroom have made us aware that the stereotyped patterns of traditional education ... are in many ways inadequate to meet the needs of the living children we have to teach.

... Facing these realities, the teacher of English discovers two great responsibilities. The first responsibility is to help the individual student ... develop his own special linguistic abilities—to express himself through speaking and writing the English language ... The second responsibility is to transmit to the student his literary heritage: an appreciation and an understanding of the values of American culture, which is part of the culture of the Western world, as those values have been expressed through literature.¹

Most of the Sandburg works covered in this study are quite adaptable to traditional class reading and discussion, and, by being concerned with the individual in the teaching of Sandburg's work, the teacher can assist the students in gaining both an appreciation and understanding of Sandburg's unique role in our modern literature as poet, historian, social critic, and novelist.

Such results may best be accomplished by having students read and discuss different individual Sandburg works dealing with the same general topic. Several students might read a different section of The People, Yes while several others may be reading a chapter of Remembrance Rock; and yet others in the same class might wish to read a chapter of the Lincoln biography. Each student, in this method

of reading and discussion, will have an individual contribution to make.

Introduction and Questions for Discussion of Individual Sandburg Works

Chicago Poems

In introducing poems from Sandburg's first important book of poems, the teacher should first explain the literary and historical setting of the poems. The literary taste of the United States of 1914 was vastly different from today's and unless this fact is understood by the student, it is somewhat difficult for today's reader to realize the distaste and controversy over poems such as "Chicago," "Masses," and "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter."

The teacher might then relate the highlights of the controversy, such as the angry attacks made upon Sandburg by some critics as recounted in Chapter II. Students will enjoy hearing the story about how Henry Holt, the staid publisher, was persuaded to publish Chicago Poems in a collection, and particularly, how Alfred Harcourt, then a young editor with Holt, slipped an extremely controversial poem—("To a Contemporary Bunkshooter") into the collection.

The text and suggested questions for classroom discussion of four of the Chicago Poems follow:

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders.

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,  
Shoveling,  
Wrecking,  
Planning,  
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,  
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,  
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,  
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,  
Laughing!  
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

(CP, 3-4)
Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the examples of unconventional rhythms, diction, and imagery in "Chicago" that caused so much debate and controversy?

2. In what ways does "Chicago" have structure?

3. How would you interpret the fifth line of the poem, "City of the Big Shoulders"?

4. Point out the grim aspects of the city Sandburg depicts and contrast them with the city's strengths.

5. From this poem, would you say Sandburg is optimistic or pessimistic? Explain your choice.

MASSES

Among the mountains I wandered and saw blue haze and red crag and was amazed;
On the beach where the long push under the endless tide maneuvers, I stood silent;
Under the stars on the prairie watching the Dipper slant over the horizon's grass, I was full of thoughts.
Great men, pageants of war and labor, soldiers and workers, mothers lifting their children--these all I touched, and felt the solemn thrill of them.
And then one day I got a true look at the Poor, millions of the Poor, patient and toiling; more patient than crags, tides, and stars; innumerable, patient as the darkness of night--and all broken, humble ruins of nations.

(CP, 4-5)

Questions for Discussion

1. What images in the first four lines of the poem does Sandburg use to show awe and wonder?
2. What sharp contrast do you find in the last part of the poem? How does Sandburg relate this part of the poem to the first four statements?

3. What do you think Sandburg means by "broken, humble ruins of nations"? Do you think that such "broken ruins" are inevitable in the life of a nation?

4. From reading this poem, do you conclude that Sandburg is an optimist or pessimist? Give your reasons.

HAPPINESS

I asked professors who teach the meaning of life to tell me what is happiness.

And I went to famous executives who boss the work of thousands of men.

They all shook their heads and gave me a smile as though I was trying to fool with them.

And then one Sunday afternoon I wandered out along the Desplaines river.

And I saw a crowd of Hungarians under the trees with their women and children and a keg of beer and an accordion.

(CP, 10)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the central idea of the poem?

2. What is another way of saying what Sandburg says in this poem?

3. Can you think of a contemporary expression of the same sentiment? Begin your statement with the phrase, "Happiness is--"
4. What is the meaning of the last line of the poem?

TO A CONTEMPORARY BUNKSHOOTER

You come along . . . tearing your shirt . . . yelling about Jesus.
Where do you get that stuff
What do you know about Jesus?
Jesus had a way of talking soft and outside of a few bankers and
higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked
to have this Jesus around because he never made any fake
passes and everything he said went and he helped the sick
and gave the people hope.

You come along squirting words at us, shaking your fist and
calling us all dam fools so fierce the froth slobberers
over your lips . . . always blabbing we're all going
to hell straight off and you know all about it.

I've read Jesus' words. I know what he said. You don't
throw any scare into me. I've got your number. I
know how much you know about Jesus.

He never came near clean people or dirty people but they
felt cleaner because he came along. It was your crowd
of bankers and business men and lawyers hired the sluggers
and murderers who put Jesus out of the running.

I say the same bunch backing you nailed the nails into the
hands of this Jesus of Nazareth. He had lined up against
him the same crooks and strong-arm men now lined up with
you paying your way.

This Jesus was good to look at, smelled good, listened good.
He threw out something fresh and beautiful from the skin
of his body and the touch of his hands wherever he passed
along.

You slimy bunkshooter, you put a smut on every human blossom
in reach of your rotten breath belching about hell-fire
and hiccupping about this Man who lived a clean life in
Galilee.
When are you going to quit making the carpenters build emergency hospitals for women and girls driven crazy with wrecked nerves from your gibberish about Jesus-- I put it to you again: Where do you get that stuff; what do you know about Jesus?

Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to. Smash a whole load of furniture at every performance. Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. If it wasn't for the way you scare the women and kids I'd feel sorry for you and pass the hat.

I like to watch a good four-flusher work, but not when he starts people puking and calling for the doctors.

I like a man that's got nerve and can pull off a great original performance, but you--you're only a bug-house peddler of second-hand gospel--you're only shoving out a phoney imitation of the goods this Jesus wanted free as air and sunlight.

You tell people living in shanties Jesus is going to fix it up all right with them by giving them mansions in the skies after they're dead and the worms have eaten 'em.

You tell $6 a week department store girls all they need is Jesus; you take a steel trust wop, dead without having lived, gray and shrunken at forty years of age, and you tell him to look at Jesus on the cross and he'll be all right.

You tell poor people they don't need any more money on payday and even if it's fierce to be out of a job, Jesus'll fix that up all right, all right--all they gotta do is take Jesus the way you say.

I'm telling you Jesus wouldn't stand for the stuff you're handing out. Jesus played it different. The bankers and lawyers of Jerusalem got their sluggers and murderers to go after Jesus just because Jesus wouldn't play their game. He didn't sit in with the big thieves.

I don't want a lot of gab from a bunkshooter in my religion.
I won't take my religion from any man who never works except with his mouth and never cherishes any memory except the face of the woman on the American silver dollar.

I ask you to come through and show me where you're pouring out the blood of your life.

I've been to this suburb of Jerusalem they call Golgotha, where they nailed Him, and I know if the story is straight it was real blood ran from His hands and the nail-holes, and it was real blood spurted in red drops where the spear of the Roman soldier rammed in between the ribs of this Jesus of Nazareth. (CP, 29-31)

Questions for Discussion

1. At the time this poem was written, it was called "anti-religious." Do you think that the poem is anti-religious? Why or why not?

2. What is the basic claim Sandburg is making in this poem?

3. Does the poem have any structure? If so, identify Sandburg's method of structure.

4. This poem has been said to contain much socialistic propaganda. Cite any examples of Sandburg's socialistic leanings you can find in it.

5. Does the poet reveal any of his own religious beliefs in this poem? Give examples.

6. Sandburg's writing is said to be filled with folk language and expressions. Cite some of them in this poem.

7. What are some examples of Sandburg's use of figurative language in the poem?
The People, Yes

A sampling of the representative criticism, both positive and negative, can effectively be used to introduce a secondary class to Sandburg's book-length poem, The People, Yes. The students should know that this work has received both extremes of reaction from critics. There are few works in literature which have received such divergent reviews, roundly condemned as subliterature by some, termed great poetry by others.

The usual method of English teachers with The People, Yes is to use just excerpts of the total poem, such as the familiar concluding section of the work, which begins "The people will live on." (CP, 615-17) An alternative method of presentation would be for the students to read the complete work rather than the excerpts. This could be done by the use of a unit approach to the English curriculum, with one of the units being on the American people as a literary subject. The People, Yes could effectively be used as the main source for the study of this unit. Additional and supplementary readings, such as Stephen Vincent Benet, Samuel Clemens, Walt Whitman, John Steinbeck, Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Wolfe, and other writers, could be brought in as they relate during the reading of Sandburg's long poem.

Of value, too, would be for the English teacher to work out a correlation of materials and themes covered with the social studies teachers of the school. History and literature could truly become a
single study if such an arrangement could be developed by teachers in secondary schools.

The People, Yes as a class reading project would enable secondary students to realize that there is a basic content in Sandburg's work which can be summed up in the word man. By reading Sandburg's view of man and comparing it with other poets' views, students can find enrichment and intellectual nourishment in the best tradition of Western civilization.

Throughout the reading of The People, Yes, the teacher should raise timely questions and points for class discussion. These questions will enable students to recognize that certain themes are prevalent in Sandburg's writing. These themes include:

(1) Collective man is indomitable, although he experiences many frustrations and disappointments as an individual being.

(2) There is a universality in all people, even though there are wide surface differences.

(3) The story of America is of one fabric, made up of many different threads.

(4) The language, folktales, and common-sense of the people can make poetry.

Questions for discussion of The People, Yes should be developed by the teacher to induce the thinking of the students toward a clear
recognition of the basic themes present in Sandburg's poetry and prose.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does Carl Sandburg seem to be saying about people?

2. What are Sandburg's views on the future?

3. From your reading of The People, Yes, do you see constant view of mankind? Explain.

4. What does Sandburg say about the diversity of American culture and society?

5. In the context of the entire poem, The People, Yes, interpret these lines:

   Man is a long time coming
   Man will yet win
   Brother may yet line up with brother.

6. What does Sandburg mean in the line: "The past is a bucket of ashes"?

7. From The People, Yes, select Sandburg's individual heroes and villains or show why, in your opinion, Sandburg does not see heroes and villains as individuals.

8. Is The People, Yes poetry? If not, what is it?

9. Why do you think there is so much debate and controversy about The People, Yes?

10. What does Sandburg say about hope in this poem?

11. What lines in this poem hold the central meaning of the
entire work? In your own words, what is this meaning?

12. What are some examples of striking imagery in this poem?

Selections from Complete Poems

Sandburg wrote poems about a variety of subjects that are of interest to young people. There is the delicate word picture, "Fog," which creates an image that is never forgotten for most readers. Youth of today generally associate it with the Haiku-type of poetry, probably because of its terse and direct method of describing a common thing.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

(CP, 33)

This poem, generally used in elementary school, is also suitable for high school use to show the vast contrast in individual Sandburg poems. "Fog" is as simple of a poem as can be found for students to use as a model for writing short image poems.

Two timely Sandburg poems for today are "Buttons" and "Jaws." Written more than fifty years ago, these short war poems of another generation still have the same kind of interest for youth as
Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, written in 1894. Students in secondary school classes are genuinely interested in reading and discussing both of these Sandburg poems and always seem to use the poems to show that protest against war is nothing new for today's young people.

**BUTTONS**

I have been watching the war map slammed up for advertising in front of the newspaper office. Buttons—red and yellow buttons—blue and black buttons—are shoved back and forth across the map.

A laughing young man, sunny with freckles, Climbs a ladder, yells a joke to somebody in the crowd, And then fixes a yellow button one inch west And follows the yellow button with a black button one inch west.

(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies in a red soak along a river edge, Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling death in their throats.)

Who would guess what it cost to move two buttons one inch on the war map here in front of the newspaper office where the freckle-faced young man is laughing to us?

(CP, 40)

Questions for Discussion

1. From your study of history, what war would you say Sandburg is writing about? How would you know that it is not a war of the present time?

2. How does Sandburg use irony in this poem?
3. What do the buttons in the poem signify?

4. Why are the two lines enclosed in parentheses?

5. Is this poem a true picture of war? Could wars of today be described the same way? Explain.

6. How would you characterize Sandburg's view on war from reading this poem?

**JAWS**

Seven nations stood with their hands on the jaws of death.

It was the first week in August, Nineteen Hundred Fourteen.

I was listening, you were listening, the whole world was listening.

And all of us heard a Voice murmuring:

"I am the way and the light,
He that believeth on me
Shall not perish
But shall have everlasting life."

Seven nations listening heard the Voice and answered:

"O Hell!"

The jaws of death began clicking and they go on clicking:

"O Hell!"  
(CP, 41)

An excellent correlation with history can be made in this poem, by introducing the class to Barbara Tuchman's popular history of the outbreak of World War I, *The Guns of August*. A student could do a report on Tuchman's book to explain the allusions in the poem such as "seven nations," "first week of August," and "jaws of death."

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A socially and politically significant poem for class reading and discussion is "I Am the People, The Mob." Written during the period just before World War I, this poem still has great appeal to the youth of today, particularly those who sympathize with the protesters against the Establishment. A main tenet in the philosophy of this anti-Establishment group is the conviction that a great majority of the people of the United States are not being represented under our form of representative democracy. They are not saying that these people have lost their representation; rather, they are contending, as Sandburg did nearly sixty years ago, that they never had it.

"I Am the People, The Mob," though loaded with emotional propaganda, is still fraught with meaning for the thinking youth of today. A stimulating class discussion on contemporary social problems could be held, using this poem as the basis for discussion. The social studies teacher, particularly the government teacher, might also wish to participate in developing some correlative lessons in the vital issues raised by Sandburg's poem.

I AM THE PEOPLE, THE MOB

I am the people--the mob--the crowd--the mass.
Do you know that all the great work of the world is done through me?
I am the workingman, the inventor, the maker of the world's food and clothes.
I am the audience that witnesses history. The Napoleons come from me and the Lincolns. They die. And then I send forth more Napoleons and Lincolns.
I am the seed ground, I am a prairie that will stand for
much plowing. Terrible storms pass over me. I forget.
The best of me is sucked out and wasted. I forget.
Everything but Death comes to me and makes me work
and give up what I have. And I forget.
Sometimes I growl, shake myself and spatter a few red drops
for history to remember. Then--I forget.
When I, the People, learn to remember, when I, the People,
use the lessons of yesterday and no longer forget who
robbed me last year, who played me for a fool--then there
will be no speaker in all the world say the name: "The
People," with any fleck of a sneer in his voice or any far-
off smile of derision.
The mob--the crowd--the mass--will arrive then. (CP, 71)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is Sandburg's message in this poem? What are
the issues here?

2. How could this poem be relevant to today?

3. Why does Sandburg repeat the phrase, "I forget" four
times?

4. It is said that this poem espouses Marxist doctrine.
Is the charge accurate? Why or why not?

5. What do the references to Napoleon and Lincoln repre-
sent?

The sombre and foreboding lines of "Four Preludes on Play-
things of the Wind" provide students with a thought-provoking, if
frightening view of a post-1984 American civilization. High school
students of today are quick to point out the contemporary inferences
that can be drawn from this poem when the piece is read aloud in an
effective, dramatic manner. Much of the possible impact of the poem can be lost by a hurried scanning of the lines or a recitation without the needed flair of drama. This is a poem that should definitely be rehearsed before it is read to a class in order that the full message and power be properly conveyed by the reader to the students.

Section 1 should be read in an unconcerned matter-of-factly voice. The reader should try to have the students think of a woman, calmly combing her hair and primping while the world around her is in ruins.

Section 2 should be read quite slowly and in a deliberate tone of voice. The chant of the "golden girls," however, should be done in a sing-song variation.

Section 3 is best given in a slow, mournful cadence. The sing-song tone should be again used for the repeat of the chant of the women: "We are the greatest city, the greatest nation, nothing like us ever was."

The concluding section can be read most effectively in the same deliberate tones of Section 2. The last stanza of the section, beginning with "And the wind shifts," should be slowed even more than the first. The reader should read the last line of the poem—"and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was"—in a loud whisper.
FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The past is a bucket of ashes."

1

The woman named Tomorrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

2

The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
   We are the greatest city,
   the greatest nation;
   nothing like us ever was.
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
where the golden girls ran and the panels read:
   We are the greatest city,
   the greatest nation,
   nothing like us ever was.

3

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well
and felt good about it all,
    there were rats and lizards who listened
    . . . and the only listeners left now
    . . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.
And there are black crows
crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
    We are the greatest city,
    the greatest nation:
    nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and
the lizards.

4

The feet of the rats
scribble on the doorsills;
the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood
and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the dust on a doorsill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tells us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.

(CP, 183-85)
Questions for Discussion

1. The line, "It has happened before" refers to what?
2. What does Sandburg seem to be warning of in this poem?
3. What does Sandburg mean when he refers to "paid singers" and "women to warble"?
4. What do the rats, lizards, and crows represent?
5. Why does Sandburg repeat the chant of the women so often? What does it mean?
6. Is there relevance for today in Sandburg's message? If so, what is it?

A lofty expression of idealism is found in Sandburg's poem, "Books Men Die For." Throughout human history, there have been attempts to suppress the free expression of thought and poets have traditionally decried such censorship of thinking and writing as wrong and immoral. Written during the Nazi epoch of book-burning, Sandburg lashes out at those who would try to control men's minds by censorship. The teacher using this poem of Sandburg's could have a student do an individual report for class presentation on a book which discusses the theme of "Books Men Die For" at greater length. This book is by Robert B. Downs and is entitled Books That Changed the World. After hearing about these books, students will better realize

the type of books that men have actually died for in history.

BOOKS MEN DIE FOR

Lights or no lights,
so they stand waiting
. . . books men die for.

For this a man was hanged.
For this a man was burned.
For this two million candles
snuffed their finish.
For this a man was shot.

Open the covers, they speak,
they cry, they come out as from
open doors with voices, heartbeats.

Fools: I say hats off.
Fools: I say, who did better?
Fools: I say with you:

What of it?

You books in the dark now with the lights off,
You books now with the lights on,
What is the drip, drip, from your covers?
What is the lip murmur, the lost winds wandering
from your covers?

Books men die for--

I say with you: what of it?

(CP, 622)

Questions for Discussion

1. What does Sandburg mean when he refers to books as
"lights" in the opening line of this poem?

2. What type of books would men die for? Give examples.

3. Why would some consider books to be dangerous? Can
a book be dangerous? Give the reasons for your opinion.
The Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919 and "Bronze Wood" can effectively be used in the secondary English classroom in a unit dealing with race relations in the United States. Both of these Sandburg works have been overlooked by most teachers in their search for more materials on civil rights and minority groups. They should be introduced to the class as journalistic works of a prominent American man of letters who spent a good part of his life in studying the American Civil War and the issue of racial strife, both before and after the Emancipation Proclamation, which, supposedly should have settled the problem. The key point that should be made by the teacher is that the civil rights issue did not begin with the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation. To quote Sandburg:

STORMS BEGIN FAR BACK

Storms begin far back.

You can't have a storm offhand
like somebody took a notion and
decided a storm would be right
handy to come off now and here.


This storm now didn't come out of nowhere
--it had a starting place, a home and womb
--far back it began, brother, sister,
--far back, sweetheart.

(CP, 621)

There is much to support the view that civil rights questions were becoming prevalent long before the Civil War in Sandburg's
Lincoln biography. The teacher might assign small groups within the class to do research out of this six-volume biography for historical data on the early beginnings of the civil rights issue in American society. As in other Sandburg study materials, this activity might also involve the history or government teacher, too.

Remembrance Rock

An enterprising student, with an interest in history, might well be the choice of the teacher to read and report on Sandburg's long novel, Remembrance Rock. Because of the immensity of historical material and an extremely long time span of three hundred years in its plot, a superior academic student would be better equipped for this assignment. Perhaps it would be advisable to make as a term project for a willing student the reading and reporting to the class on Remembrance Rock. For it is far too long and involved for the regular book report, as are many of the longer classic novels.

An important teaching strategy for the teaching of Remembrance Rock to the entire class would be for the teacher to develop significant correlations with history from the various historical periods covered in the long novel. The novel is built around a chronological sequence of American history, and the possibilities for drawing such historical correlations are numerous. The Prologue to the three sections of Remembrance Rock is written from a vantage
point in time three centuries after the opening section of the novel. The students should be made aware of the historical time span covered in the work before reading is begun in order that they might keep track of the involved plot line that runs throughout the entire book. The plot runs parallel to American history. An effective method of conveying the chronology and movement of the plot is the use of the following drawing:

```
1946
(End)
Epilogue
pp. 989-1067

(Beginning)
Prologue

1620 (The Mayflower and Plymouth Colony)
pp. 3-30

PART I ("The First Comers")
Colonial Period of American History pp. 31-332

PART III ("The Arch Holds")
America Becomes a World Power pp. 635-988

1865 (Appomatox)

PART II ("The Arch Begins")
The Young Republic and Civil War pp. 333-634

1783 (Independence)
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The students, in order to gain a full appreciation of what Sandburg has attempted in Remembrance Rock, must see this type of outline of the chronology of the novel. The drawing might be described to students as a blueprint of Remembrance Rock. From such a capsule view of the whole of the novel, it is only logical that they will better understand the individual parts in their reading. If the prospective reader realizes Sandburg's intended purpose of a panoramic view of the history of the American people through the individual trials and tribulations of the members of an American family, then Remembrance Rock could well become a meaningful reading experience that will contribute immensely to the total education of the high school student.

A case can be made to support the view that Remembrance Rock could effectively serve as a required reading type of supplementary text in high school courses in American history. And using selections from representative American writers of each of the periods covered in the novel, a very adequate survey of American literature could also be made concurrently. Perhaps the study of literature could be made to better relate to the historical and cultural setting in which it was originally written in this approach to the teaching of high school literature and history.

A worthwhile unit can be developed for the study of Remembrance Rock. The unit is designed for students of a wide range of
abilities, rather than for homogeneous classes of high ability, as Sandburg's long novel can be simultaneously taught and read on several levels. The vocabulary is not too difficult for the great majority of high school students and Sandburg generally avoids involved sentence structure. The story line, though somewhat complicated, is also easy to follow. What makes the novel a challenge to the abler student, however, is a deeper understanding of Sandburg's panoramic view of American history as experienced by a succession of generations of the Windom family.

Four major areas of skill development can be listed as aims to be accomplished in teaching Remembrance Rock to a high school literature class:

1. Reading
2. Listening
3. Speaking
4. Writing.

The first aim, that of reading, will help students re-create the drama of their own American heritage and, at the same time, enhance their appreciation of the novel as means chosen by the writer to convey his message. Remembrance Rock, as has been indicated by the drawing, is a record of America and the people who were parts of her growth and development. The novel is structurally divided according to the three major periods of American history--colonial
days, the nation as a young republic, and the emergence of a powerful world power after the Civil War. The student of limited reading ability can gain this concept from even a casual reading of the novel and the student with serious reading handicaps can gain much from a combination of reading and listening to the discussion of the novel.

The deeper understanding level that can be gained from a reading of the novel is Sandburg's "round-robin" or circular pattern of plot development. The opening section of the novel, the prologue, is set by Sandburg at the conclusion of the Second World War. Orville Brand Windom, former Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, addresses the nation via nationwide radio. Shortly after the address, the judge dies, leaving behind as a testament the three books which make up the three sections of Remembrance Rock. The three sections are entitled "The First Comers," which deals with the settlement and colonization of New England and the inevitable breaking of the colonial binds; "The Arch Begins," covering the development and growth of the young republic, finally culminating in a bloody civil war; and "The Arch Holds," the account of America's rise to a world power. Then Sandburg follows with a prologue, which brings the reader again to Justice Windom's address at the end of World War II.

A third, yet deeper level of understanding that can be gained from a reading of Remembrance Rock, is the novelist Sandburg's own
views, which permeate the dialogue of all the major characters of the book. The advanced student, for example, might notice and point out that it is Carl Sandburg, poet of the people, the national poet of America, the believer in a special brand of patriotism, who speaks through Justice Windom as he addresses the nation:

"When we say a patriot is one who loves his country," ran the voice of Justice Windom, "what kind of love do we mean? A love we can throw on a scale and see how much it weighs? A love we can take apart to see how it ticks? A love where with a yardstick we record how long, high, wide, it is? Or is a patriot's love of country a thing invisible, a quality, a human shade and breath, beyond all reckoning and measurement? These are questions. They are old as the time of man. And the answers to them we know in part. For we know when a nation goes down and never comes back, when a society or a civilization perishes, one condition may always be found. They forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what brought them along. The hard beginnings were forgotten and the struggles farther along. They became satisfied with themselves. Unity and common understanding there had been, enough to overcome rot and dissolution, enough to break through their obstacles. But the mockers came. And the deniers were heard. And vision and hope faded. And the custom of greeting became "What's the use?" And men whose forefathers would go anywhere, holding nothing impossible in the genius of man, joined the mockers and deniers. They forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what had brought them along."

(RR, 18-19)

The gifted students, as well as many of the so-called average students, will be quick to identify the theme or message of Justice Windom with the theme expounded by Carl Sandburg, poet, in The People, Yes. Some of the more perceptive readers will even cite sources within The People, Yes and such individual poems as "Four Preludes on
Playthings of the Wind" for the content of Justice Windom's statement:

"When we say a patriot is one who loves his country, what kind of love is it we mean? Those are tremendous questions. I could write a book trying to answer those questions. You have heard that the shroud has no pockets and the dead to whatever place they go carry nothing with them—you have heard that and you know its meaning is plain. Whatever cash or collateral a man may have, whatever bonds, securities, deeds and titles to land, real estate, buildings, leases and patents, whatever of jewels, medals, decorations, keepsakes or costly apparel, he leaves them all behind and goes out of the world naked and bare as he came. You have also heard the dead hold in their clenched hands only that which they have given away. In this we begin to approach the meaning of a patriot though we do not unlock the secret that hides in the bosom of a patriot. The dead hold in their clenched hands only that which they have given away. When men forget what is at the heart of that sentiment—and it is terribly sentimental—they are in danger of power being taken over by swine, or beasts of prey or men hollow with echoes and vanities. It has happened and the records and annals cry and moan with specific instances."

(RR, 19)

In fact, a sound teaching strategy would be for the teacher to select such passages from Remembrance Rock and pair them with some of Sandburg's earlier poetry. For example, the two excerpts from Justice Windom's radio speech could be used in correlation with Sandburg's "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind." The opening lines of this poem describe the same attitude toward the past as those who, according to Justice Windom, have forgotten "where they came from."

The important skills of listening and speaking can also be
developed by the use of such a technique in the teaching of Remembrance Rock. The skill of learning to listen could be improved by the teacher's oral reading of excerpts such as those quoted aloud to the class and then reading a Sandburg poem such as "Grass" or an excerpt from The People, Yes. A combination of methods and materials is also possible here; the teacher may have students read the selections from Remembrance Rock and use phonograph records of Sandburg reading his own poetry. As in reading, there is also much understanding to be gained by the student in learning to listen.

Along the same line is the enhancement of spoken language in the classroom. By guiding discussion of Sandburg's possible message in Remembrance Rock from the simple to the more complex, the teacher can help to create a better learning experience for all the students in the classroom.

Remembrance Rock might also be taught on a philosophical basis to a group within a class especially interested in the question of morals and ethics. Such an approach could be used by pointing out to the students Sandburg's use of Roger Bacon's "The Four Causes of Error" in the development of the plot and theme of his novel. Sandburg calls these causes "The Four Stumbling Blocks to Truth," and lists them as:

1. The influence of fragile or unworthy authority.
2. Custom.
3. The imperfection of undisciplined senses.
4. Concealment of ignorance by ostentation of seeming wisdom.

(RR, 43)

These statements of the ills of mankind are first introduced early in Part One of the novel as the engraving on a plaque of the Windom family ancestors. They reappear at critical times throughout the remainder of the work, serving as a model and inspiration for descendants of the family.

A number of suitable topics for composition to improve writing skills could be effectively used in this part of the unit of study. Possible topics would include: The Philosophy of Roger Bacon in *Remembrance Rock*, Sandburg's Reasons for calling Bacon's listing "The Four Stumbling Blocks to Truth," Sandburg's Philosophy of Truth in History, or Was Sandburg's Plaque Device Successful in *Remembrance Rock*? The creative students might be asked to form into a smaller group and attempt a dramatization of various sections of *Remembrance Rock*, perhaps setting up a cast of characters with dialogue taken directly from the novel.

A detailed outline of a unit of study on *Remembrance Rock* follows:

*Remembrance Rock*
*By Carl Sandburg*

Purpose: To develop an appreciation and understanding of Carl Sandburg's panoramic novel of America; to
develop awareness of the predominant humanitarian theme in all of Sandburg's work; to
acquaint students to the techniques of the novelist; to point out the relationships of history to literature; to increase student performance in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

Time: Approximately six weeks

Launching the Unit:

1. Introduction to the novel by the teacher. The following should be covered: background material on Sandburg and how he happened to decide to write a novel; and a brief outline of the plot, with a drawing to show the time span of the plot.

2. Silent reading of Chapters 1 and 2 of the novel, followed by a discussion to insure that the students understand the setting and can visualize the initial situation as the novel opens.

3. Reading of Chapter 3, "Listening Millions," aloud by the teacher, including an explanation of Judge Windom's use of radio rather than television. Sufficient time should be spent on
this chapter to assist students in understanding the significance of the message given by the Justice.

4. Writing in class immediately after the chapter has been read aloud on one of these topics:
   Do you agree with Justice Windom's opinion about the downfall of a society or civilization?
   What are your reasons?
   What is patriotism?
   Justice Windom's Message.
   Sandburg's Method of Writing.

5. Silent reading of the remainder of the Prologue, followed by a discussion and reminder by the teacher that the novelist will now use the device of flashback to begin the main story line in the novel. Of particular importance here are Sandburg's ending lines of the Prologue, which are also the opening lines of the first chapter of Book One:

   Mimah took the top sequence, its cover marked Book One, turned to the first page and read: "Time eats all things. The brown gold of autumn says so. The falling leaves in the last rainwind before the first spit of snow--they have their way of saying, Listen, be quiet, winter comes: Time eats all things." (RR, 29, 30)
6. Read from Book One, (pp. 33-332), silently on an individual basis for approximately one-half the class period daily. Divide the class into several small groups and have the small groups meet daily for discussion of individual chapters during the last half of the class sessions. The teacher should suggest questions or topics for discussion of specific passages of the first part of the novel such as poetic quality of the opening lines of Chapter 1—"Time eats all things. . . ." or Sandburg's treatment of the Tower of Babel fable.

7. Select writing topics from the opening section. A number of possible library research topics would be suitable here, including research into the Salem witchcraft trials, the Puritans, and the literature of the colonial period in our history.

8. A historical correlation should definitely be made, either by the teacher or in class discussion. Individual students might be assigned to do reports on this topic. Perhaps the
assistance and cooperation of the American history teacher, whose course is usually taken concurrently with American literature, might be secured. A joint research project might be undertaken by students in both courses.

9. The entire Book One should be discussed by the class as a whole. Each of the small groups might be called upon for reports on groups of chapters.

10. Audio-visual materials should be employed, dealing with the colonial period of American history.

Book Two: "The Arch Begins."

1. Introduction to Book Two, including class comment and discussion of Sandburg's choice of a title for the second section of his novel. What is this "arch" that Sandburg mentions? How is it symbolic?

2. Continued silent reading and subsequent small group discussions of individual chapters of Book Two.

3. Other novels dealing with the period covered in
Book Two can be brought into class discussion. Of special value here would be Irving Stone's *The President's Lady*, which deals with the critical Jacksonian Era. Point out to the students the view of Jackson as one of the first "men of the people," in Sandburg's treatment of the American people in these days of rapid growth of the United States.

The ante-bellum days of the pre-Civil War period should be discussed.

4. The literature of the Abolitionists would make a worthwhile sub-unit in the teaching of Book Two of *Remembrance Rock*. A week of study and review of the major works dealing with slavery--works of James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry David Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass--and their relationships to the period Sandburg covers would make excellent supplementary reading for this unit. Writing assignments can be made, with individual works by other writers of the pre-Civil War period used as subjects for compositions.
5. A class discussion of the plot development in Book Two.

Book Three: "The Arch Holds," and Epilogue:

1. Introduction by the teacher, again outlining the chronology of the section of the novel.

2. Written and oral reports on the role of Lincoln, the preservation of the Union, the abolition of Negro slavery, and the resulting problem of civil rights.

3. Silent reading of the remainder of Book Three, small discussion groups, and analysis of Sandburg's fictional writing style as compared with that of his poetry and historical prose.

4. Reading aloud by the teacher of the last chapter of the Epilogue, followed by a class discussion of how Sandburg has brought the novel to a conclusion.

5. An overview of the entire novel, featuring a review of the chronology of events depicted in the novel, Sandburg's method of writing the novel, main themes, major historical figures, and use of symbolism in such elements as the novel's title, the plaque, the title of the three books
making up the novel, and selection of names for his characters.

6. Depending upon the interest and ability of the individual student, a final paper should be done on Remembrance Rock. The paper should deal with either the work as a whole or a single aspect of the novel treated in more detail. Some of the "Questions for Discussion" would serve as very adequate subjects for such final papers by the able students. More general topics would be more suitable for other students.

Remembrance Rock is a unique literary work for high school reading and study in that there is no other single fictional selection that so adequately and comprehensively treats the nature and story of the American heritage. With proper introduction and a guided reading, Remembrance Rock can be an important addition to both the English and history curriculum.

Questions for General Discussion

1. Just what is the "remembrance rock" of the novel? What does it signify? How does Sandburg use it as the connecting thread in his plot development?
2. Develop a "family tree" of the Windom family of *Remembrance Rock*.

3. Select a single chapter of *Remembrance Rock* and list the allusions to historical events. Using library materials in your research, write a short paper on one of the events and, if possible, Sandburg's treatment of it.

4. In what ways is *Remembrance Rock* similar to Sandburg's poetry? To his Lincoln biography?

5. Identify the central theme of *Remembrance Rock* and discuss Sandburg's treatment of it in the novel.

6. Discuss Sandburg's view of American history and culture.
   In Sandburg's view, what are our national strengths and weaknesses?

7. Draw specific comparisons between incidents and lines in *Remembrance Rock* and *The People, Yes*.

8. Does Sandburg seem to have faith in the doctrine of heroes in history? Give specific examples from *Remembrance Rock* to support your answer.

   In what ways does it not?

10. Does *Remembrance Rock* have unity of plot? Support your opinion by citing specific incidents and sections.

11. Is there conflict in this novel? Cite examples.
12. What do you think Sandburg was trying to accomplish in this very long novel? Was he successful? Explain.

13. What does Sandburg say about "the people" in his novel? Cite specific references.

14. Discuss Sandburg's style of writing in Remembrance Rock. How would you describe it in relation to that of other novelists you have read?

Always the Young Strangers

**Always the Young Strangers** will be a delight to read for many secondary students, especially male students of a sensitive nature. Students readily see the humor and pathos of a maturing self-conscious boy of immigrant parents in a small midwestern town during the last part of the nineteenth century. The book's depiction of common, everyday life in an age of the not-too-distant past will also be of interest to the perceptive youthful reader. Sandburg's recollections of his Spanish-American War military service, complete with a leaky poncho tent, are equally of interest to many high school readers.

A vital key to the success of teaching **Always the Young Strangers** to the high school class is that the teacher properly introduce the autobiography. Inherent in the introduction might best be an explanation of Sandburg's own view of how **Always the Young Strangers**
is an account of a young boy growing up in the heartlands of America. The teacher should emphasize that far more important than the actual names and places referred to in the book is the record of a young man's personal and educational growth as he moves toward adulthood. The historical setting of Sandburg during his maturing years should not be a major area for study and exploration; rather, the universality of youth in the maturation process should be the important consideration.

The teacher, by way of introduction, might also explain the symbolism involved in Sandburg's selection of a title of the autobiography of his first twenty years of life. That the title is excerpted from one of his own early poems, "Broken-Face Gargoyles," written in retrospection of his younger years, would enhance the understanding of the book for youthful readers. Perhaps the teacher might read the entire poem and explain to the class that Sandburg looked upon his youth as a time of growing, learning, and preparation. It should be pointed out, too, that Sandburg wrote Always the Young Strangers in what could be called the "twilight" period of his writing career, with Collected Poems, the Rootabaga stories, The American Songbag, the Lincoln biography, and Remembrance Rock all behind him. That a writer of such reputation and popular acclaim could write such a quietly unassuming personal account of his own developing years without the slightest hint of the monumental accomplishments that were to
come in later years, makes *Always the Young Strangers* even more interesting to the high school reader. The teacher can definitely aid the student in understanding and appreciating Sandburg’s autobiography by using these techniques and materials in presenting *Always the Young Strangers* to a class.

*Always the Young Strangers* can be used by the teacher of literature in the high school as one of the selections for study in a unit dealing with autobiography. Other autobiographies such as Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography*, *Autobiography of J. S. Mill*, and Jesse Stuart's *The Thread That Runs So True* or *Beyond Dark Hills* are examples of suitable works of autobiography which would best serve with *Always the Young Strangers* as a unit of study.

The most effective method of teaching such a unit of study would be for the teacher to divide the English class into four groups. Each group would be assigned one of the four autobiographies. It would be their task to prepare a panel discussion for the entire class on the work. As guidelines for discussion, the teacher should have the students look for the following influences upon the development of the person's life: home, school, society, family, and religion. In reading these autobiographies the pupils should constantly be searching for material to answer the question of how these five areas influenced the person.
To synthesize the unit, perhaps a chart might be set up by the teacher and filled in by the students in an all-class discussion of the unit after each of the four small groups has reported on the autobiography assigned. Included in the chart would be spaces for listing of the ways home, school, society, family, and religion have had important influence on the person writing the autobiography. The part of the chart covering *Always the Young Strangers* might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author and Title</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Always the Young Strangers</em></td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Carl Sandburg</td>
<td>I, III, IV, V, VII, VIII</td>
<td>I and IV</td>
<td>I, II, and III</td>
<td>III, IV, and VI</td>
<td>VII, VIII, and XI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another method of filling in the chart would be for students to select excerpts from the autobiography to be read aloud to the class. An example would be Sandburg's treatment and discussion of the influence of religion during his developing years. A memorable excerpt from *Always the Young Strangers* on this subject appears in Chapter VII, "Along Berrien Street," in which Sandburg fondly recalls the old Swedish shoemaker, John Swedenborg, who was a religious zealot:

He was a long man with stooped shoulders, with a good face when quiet, and burning eyes and trembling lips when he spoke. Always John spoke to us the same lesson, keeping silence only when his mouth was filled with wooden pegs.
I learned later the word for John. He was a Zealot. His zeal ran in every drop of his blood.

So many times we heard him say, "I have Jesus in my heart. Jesus is with me all the time. I pray to my Jesus in the daytime and in the nighttime. You boys will never go wrong if you can get Jesus in your heart. He is my Saviour and He can be your Saviour. He is the Light of the World. When I have Him I am not afraid. I cannot be afraid, for He has told me to lean on Him when it is dark and things go wrong. You should learn to pray to Him, boys. You should learn to kneel at his blessed feet and ask forgiveness and ask Him to take you in His arms."

He had his own style of speaking straight from the heart, once saying, "Om Jesus says it anta possible den it anta" (If Jesus says it ain't possible then it ain't).

... I can see now the blaze in John's eyes, his mouth shaping his words, as he tried to teach us and lead us. I have no trouble imagining him at the Gate of Heaven and St. Peter saying, "Welcome, John Swedenborg. On earth you made bad shoes better. You wronged no man and cheated no one and the earth would be a better place to live in if there were more like you."

(ATYS, pp. 160-61)

This excerpt could be listed as "John Swedenborg recollection" on the chart.

An example of how his family was to influence his later life is found in Chapter IV, "Father and Mother," and deals with how Carl Sandburg was to become quite interested in the administration of justice. The crucial incident involved his father, a Swedish immigrant who had become an American citizen and served on a county jury. The case that was the most critical during his father's tenure on the jury was one in which a Negro was charged with grand larceny.
Sandburg relates the mental anguish and deep concern of his father, which obviously was to make an indelible impression upon the maturing youth:

He couldn't see how on the face of the evidence he could vote to send the Negro to the Joliet penitentiary for several years. He had heard others of the jury saying it looked bad for the Negro. He had heard others who were doubtful like himself. There might be a stormy time in the jury room when they came to voting. And there was a stormy time. There were jury members who kept saying, "We ought to make an example of this nigger." The wrangling, as I recall, went on all of Tuesday, and it was late in the night when the jury brought in a verdict of acquittal. At home we were pleased when the two weeks were over and Papa could go back to the Q. blacksmith shop and sometimes show a smile. It was plain that he appreciated the county government summoning him to hear matters of justice threshed out beyond a reasonable doubt—but he didn't want any more Sundays of walking back and forth and asking, "Wat iss right? Wat iss fair?"

(ATYS, 100-01)

The influence of home upon young Carl Sandburg is illustrated in an incident he recalls from his childhood when his family almost lost their home as a result of some shady legal maneuvers of an attorney. Tangible property such as real estate represented one of the great and noble things in life to the immigrant parents of Sandburg. To acquire ownership of a home and a small amount of ground they could forever call their own was a lifelong desire of such newcomers to the United States during the last century and it was this opportunity of home and property ownership that had been the prime factor in their decision to settle on what was then the frontier of the young nation. Sandburg describes as follows the sense of pride of his
father after managing to completely pay for a piece of property:

Five years and three months went by and in that time the father felt serene in a quiet pride that he was the owner of a property he had earned while working as a blacksmith "helper" for the Q. railroad at fourteen cents an hour, with a paycheck of about thirty-five dollars a month, watching the nickels and dimes from day to day. We heard him speak of it as "a nice piece uh propety."

(ATYS, 102)

The sense of confusion, fear, and bewilderment in the young son of a man who had paid for his property out of savings from a thirty-five-dollar-per-month job and was about to lose it is seen in Sandburg's description of the coming of the letter which contained news that there was a long-standing previous mortgage on the home that must be paid by the father:

He came home from the shop one evening in February 1889, and Mama handed him an envelope she had opened. She wasn't sure what to make of it. He took it, ran his eyes over it, and he wasn't sure what to make of it. He laid it by, washed the shop grime and soot off his hands and face, and ate his supper, looking a little worried and saying to mother after supper they would read again the paper that had come in the mail and they would see what they could make of it reading it together. They went over it themselves, the two of them together, their faces sober and very alive. We children could see it was none of our business and we didn't try to listen.

(ATYS, 102-03)

It should be pointed out to the students that some of the later antagonism of Sandburg in his poetry toward the judicial process is probably rooted in his childhood memory of how his immigrant father was forced to borrow money to pay off the mortgage on his home for the second time. Sandburg somewhat bitterly writes about this
incident:

Probably there was quoted Caveat emptor, Latin for "Let the buyer beware," along with "Ignorance of the law excuses no one." A Swedish emigrant blacksmith "helper" earning a dollar and forty cents a day should beware when buying real estate, and if he is ignorant of the law that doesn't excuse him. Can any degree of guilt attach to those who by their pleas and actions laid all blame, penalties, and extractions on a workingham trying by hard work and thrift to own a house and lot in free America?

(ATYS, 105)

That the most meaningful education for Carl Sandburg did not come from the formal schooling he received is revealed in the chapter devoted exclusively to his school days in Galesburg, Illinois. The following excerpt seems to support the view that Sandburg had broad views on the nature of the educational process:

Of course we got education out of the Cronin murder [a local murder of a physician] and the first and second trials. We learned that in time of peace, and no war on, men can kill a man not for money but because the man stands for something they hate and they want him out of the way. We learned that juries can be fixed, that if a convicted man waits a few years and gets a second trial there may be important witnesses who have died or moved away or somehow can't be found. We learned that crime and politics are tangled with each other, that law and justice sometimes can be a monkey business with a bad smell. We learned things we didn't hear about in the Seventh Ward school and we never read about them in the detective stories of those days. We learned that if you see a white horse he may be hauling a good doctor to his death and the last one you would blame would be the white horse.

(ATYS, 132)

Sandburg's initial introduction to history is also an interesting excerpt that could be used in discussing the influence of school upon his later life. In discussing the first book on American history
that he was to read in his high school career, he points out that the writing was "stuffy and hifalutin in style" and that the only points that interested him were buried in the footnotes of the text. (ATYS, 138)

But Sandburg has high words of praise for his teacher, who pointed out that the textbook wasn't always fair and impartial:

Miss Hague knew her history in a big way and often gave color and good sense to stupid pages. The book sized up the American Indian, the Red Man: "He rarely spoke to his wife or children. He would sit on the ground for days, leaning his elbows on his knees in stupid silence. He was crafty and cruel. His word was no protection. False and cunning, he never hesitated to violate a treaty when his passions prompted him to hatred. . . . Unless he can be induced to give up his roving habits, and to cultivate the soil, he is doomed to destruction. It is to be earnestly hoped that the red man may yet be Christianized and taught the arts of industry and peace." To such a passage Miss Hague might add that it wasn't quite fair to the Indians and there were cases where the White Man had done great wrong to the Red Man.

(ATYS, 138)

The subject of this excerpt, that of an early teacher of Sandburg, and her influence on the youth who was to later write the six-volume Lincoln biography, would provide an interesting subject for student composition. The teacher might point out to the student who wishes to write on this subject that one of the unusual characteristics of Sandburg's Lincoln biography is the total lack of footnotes. Perhaps Sandburg's early discovery that the most interesting part of his American history text was in the footnotes is responsible for this omission.

An excerpt to show how the views of society influenced young
Carl Sandburg is his discussion of the infamous Haymarket Riot of 1887, in which seven policemen were killed while trying to disperse a labor organization meeting in Chicago. Sandburg remembers the trial of the accused rioters and how the mass public opinion had been swayed so as to pre-judge the men guilty before the trial began:

Then came the murder trial of eight men and we saw in the Chicago papers black-and-white drawings of their faces and they looked exactly like what we expected, hard, mean, slimy faces. We saw pictures of the twelve men on the jury and they looked like what we expected, nice, honest, decent faces. We learned the word for the men on trial, anarchists, and they hated the rich and called policemen "bloodhounds." They were not regular people and they didn't belong to the human race, for they seemed more like slimy animals who prowl, sneak, and kill in the dark. This I believed along with millions of other people reading and talking about the trial. I didn't meet or hear of anyone in our town who didn't so believe then, at that time.

(ATYS, 132-33)

It can be said that the use of such excerpts from *Always the Young Strangers* would also have the additional value of making the autobiography relevant to today, as there is still this "court of public opinion" in American life. A timely composition topic could emerge from a discussion of Sandburg's recollection of the Haymarket incident. Students might be asked to point out the possible connection with contemporary events of a similar nature in a composition. Newspaper sensationalizing of many bizarre contemporary incidents and events would be another suitable topic for composition in this connection. Using Sandburg's treatment of the outcome of the Haymarket
affair as a model, the student would have the material for a worthwhile composition.

Sandburg's method of using sarcasm and irony in his prose writing is also revealed in the following excerpt about the execution of the convicted men involved in the Haymarket incident:

The trial dragged on and the case went to higher courts and the governor of Illinois, and two of the eight men were sentenced for life, one for fifteen years, and five to be hanged on November 11, 1887. I was nine years old, nearly ten, when we were let out of the Seventh Ward School at three-thirty on the afternoon of November 11, 1887. Kids had been asking and were still asking what would happen. In a world where there could be anarchists doing the things that anarchists do, who could tell what would happen next? We had heard about the crowds and mobs who swarmed around the courtroom when the trial was on. We knew that the jury-men leaving the courtroom were guarded by policemen with hands on their revolvers and sharp eyes for any bomb thrower. And the wild news had come to us on the day before that one of the anarchists, a bomb maker, had somehow got, probably by a woman fascinated by him who visited his cell, what he told her he wanted. It was a "fulminating cap" that exploded dynamite. He had put it in his mouth, bit his teeth into it, and blown part of his head off. There was one, we said, that wouldn't have to be hanged. He was out of this world and that was something. We talked like that.

(ATYS, 133)

Sandburg then recalls the sigh of relief of most people when the other four were executed and the strange, but natural instinct of the children to join in the widespread celebration:

We walked from school that afternoon of November 11 a block and a half south on Seminary Street. On the other side of the street we saw walking fast toward us a railroad man we knew. We heard him call out, as he went on walking fast, to another railroad man about ten feet ahead of us. I can never forget the four words that came from that man across the street.
He had the big news of the day and was glad to spread it. The four words were "Well, they hanged 'em!" That was all. The man was more than satisfied, went on walking fast, more than happy. You could tell that by his voice, by the way he sang it out with a glad howl. No need to say more. Everybody knew what had gone before. The end of the story was "Well, they hanged 'em!"

Something tight in me came loose and it was the same with the other kids. We looked into each other's faces and said, "I'm glad it's over, ain't you?" and, "They had it comin' to them and I'm glad they're dead," and "A lot of people will be glad today, won't they?"

(ATYS, 133-34)

The beginning of the intellectual growth of Carl Sandburg from the young prairie-town boy of Galesburg, Illinois to his later position of eminence in the field of letters and as a writer of humanitarian views is evidenced in this excerpt from his autobiography, which recalls his feelings about Haymarket five years later:

Five years later I sat in a gallery and heard John Peter Altgeld in a campaign speech in the Opera House. Not a word came from him about the Haymarket bomb and the anarchists. But a few months after he was elected governor he pardoned the three "anarchists" at Joliet and gave out a sixteen-thousand-word message on why he did it. . . .

I knew as I moved through that sixteen-thousand-word message, crammed with what I now took to be sober facts and truth, that I wasn't the same boy as five years before when I was glad about four men hanged. The feeling grew on me that I had been a little crazy, "off my nut," along with millions of people like myself gone somewhat crazy. I could understand, when I met it later, what was said by Lyman Trumbull, a Chicago lawyer who had been a United States Senator and the floor leader in the Senate in 1865 for important measures Lincoln wanted passed. Trumbull said, "The time will come when mankind will look back upon the execution of the anarchists as we of this day look back upon the execution of the witches in New England." They hanged the witches instead of burning
them, yet Trumbull's meaning cannot be mistaken. In Salem and Chicago it was broken necks for the accused with later regrets over what couldn't be undone.

(ATYS, 134-35)

Sandburg's account of his own growth and development should be compared and contrasted with that of other writers, particularly those of American literature. A number of good composition topics exist here, such as a comparison of Sandburg's education with that of Lincoln Steffens or Jesse Stuart. The student should be directed to explore the views of such writers as to what, in their expressed opinions, constitutes the most important learning experiences. The views of learning experiences of such American writers could then be compared and contrasted with those of writers in English and world literature.

An outline of a unit of study on *Always the Young Strangers* follows:

**Always the Young Strangers**
*By Carl Sandburg*

**Purpose:** As a part of a unit of study on autobiography, this work serves as an example of how religion, family, home, school, and society can play important roles in the development of the youth into adulthood. The purpose of teaching this autobiography is to have the students read an author's own account of his personal and intellectual development in a small
midwestern town during a period not too far removed from the present.

Time: Two weeks

Launching the Unit:

1. The small group assigned to read *Always the Young Strangers* would be directed to prepare a panel discussion for class presentation on what influences affected Sandburg during his childhood and the part they played in his later writing. This assignment would require separate consultations with the teacher for each student in the group. The teacher would assist the student in the assignment by directing him to a Sandburg work in which the influence of his childhood is evident. For example, the influence of society upon Sandburg's childhood is seen in his treatment of the Chicago race riots in his book, *The Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919*. The prejudices and preconceived notions of the Galesburg citizenry toward the Haymarket rioters probably had great influence on Sandburg's own journalistic coverage of a riot in his adulthood. Other works by Sandburg to
which the teacher might direct students would include *The People, Yes* and *Chicago Poems*. Students should be encouraged to locate specific poems where such influences are evident.

2. Each student assigned a specific influence—religion, family, home, school, and society—might pair an excerpt from *Always the Young Strangers* with a poem or passage of similar theme from other Sandburg works. Both might be presented to the class during the panel discussion session and then discussed.

3. During the panel discussion, members of the class who are studying other autobiographies should be encouraged to comment on how comparisons and contrasts could be made between Sandburg and the person whose autobiography they are then studying.

4. A class writing assignment should be made on each of the panel discussions. A suitable topic would be a comparison of the autobiography each student is reading with the one being discussed by the panels.

5. From the panel and class discussions, the class
is then ready for a discussion of the autobiography as a literary form. Styles of
writing, content, and purposes of writing the autobiography, should be covered in this dis-
cussion. General questions on material from all the autobiographies should be asked by the
teacher to insure a basic understanding of the book treated.

6. A suitable type of final paper for this unit would be the writing of personal autobi-
ographies by each student. The students should be instructed to use the autobiography
they read and the ones they heard discussed by other students as models for their own.

Topics for Discussion and Composition

1. Discuss Sandburg's possible meaning in the selection of the title of his autobiography.

2. What type of technique does Sandburg use in the writing of Always the Young Strangers? Is this the usual way autobiographies are written? Find both similar and dissimilar types of autobiographies.

3. Do you find any suggestion in this book that the author was destined for major accomplishments? If so, where?
4. Using as a model, the numerous boyhood incidents in Sandburg's account of his youth, write a theme on a similar incident in your life.

5. It can be said that *Always the Young Strangers* is not just the recollections of the boyhood of Carl Sandburg but rather the details of an account of the personal growth and development of Sandburg, the poet, the biographer, the historian, and the novelist. Support this contention from your reading and interpretation of this autobiography.

6. Cite some specific instances which Sandburg uses to show the influence of home, school, religion, family, and society upon his maturation.

7. Using such instances of Sandburg's youth as a model, write your own autobiography, emphasizing the role of each of these influences in your own life.

**The American Songbag**

The *American Songbag* can be used in a number of very effective ways by the teacher of English. As a collection of folksongs of America, it is still unsurpassed in terms of quality and authenticity. Because of the recent interest in, or craze for, folk music, it is quite easy to get students to listen when one is talking about the origins of this type of art form. Students, however, are sometimes disappointed
when they do not hear the same type of "folksongs" as many of the
numbers currently in vogue. An interesting and worthwhile activity
for individual students is to use Sandburg's American Songbag as a
source book for tracing the origin of some of the recent popular folk-
songs. Students will be quick to notice similarities between the old
and the new.

A unit on Folksongs of America could be taught, with
Sandburg's The American Songbag as a sourcebook. In introducing the
unit, the teacher should use the introduction and preface to the col-
lection of Carl Sandburg. In them, Sandburg discusses not only the
individual songs in his collection, but also the folksong itself as an
authentic form of literary expression. Interesting and worthwhile,
too, is Sandburg's discussion of the song as a dramatic role to be per-
formed by the artist:

Often a song is a role. The singer acts a part. He or she is
a story-teller of a piece of action. Characters or atmosphere
are to be delivered. . . . No two artists deliver a role in the
same way. Yet all good artists study a song and live with it
before performing it. . . . There is something authentic about
any person's way of giving a song which has been known, lived
with and loved, for many years, by the singer.

(AS, ix)

A phonograph recording of Sandburg singing the ballad is also
very effective in teaching The American Songbag. It can be said that
part of Sandburg's great appeal in this area is his strong performing
ability. To get students interested and to maintain their interest in
Sandburg's folksongs, the teacher should make full use of such instructional materials.

Perhaps a student in the class can play the guitar and might be asked to bring his guitar and accompany a student singer in a rendition of a number from The American Songbag. Another possibility here would be a class sing of a number of such folksongs. Such activities can have academic value if the teacher can introduce the songs with comments on the background and social significance of the individual number. Folksongs can be studied as a poetic form used by people with no interest in collecting or writing traditional poetry. If the teacher refers to folksongs as a poetic and musical form, it will be easier to teach this type of material as a part of the English curriculum.

A representative number from The American Songbag that can be used very effectively in the secondary classroom is Sandburg's arrangement of a mournful ballad of the great American prairie, "The Buffalo Skinners." As an introduction to the number, the teacher might read Sandburg's own discussion of the song:

This is one of the magnificent finds of John Lomax for American folk song lore. It is the framework of a big, sweeping novel of real life, condensed into a few telling stanzas. It is of the years when outfits of men went onto the Great Plains and killed buffalo for the hides. The carcasses were skinned by thousands and left on the open prairies for the crows and buzzards to pick to the bone. We may hunt for a harder sardonic than that of Crego telling the men they had been "extravagant" and were in debt to him. They killed
him; it is told as casually and as frankly as the doing of the bloody deed and their immediate forgetfulness about it except as one of many passing difficulties of that summer. Lomax speaks of this piece as having in its language a "Homeric quality." Its words are blunt, direct, odorous, plain and made-to-hand, having the sound to some American ears that the Greek language of Homer had for the Greeks of that time.

(SA, 270)

Sandburg's introduction to the folksong will then prepare the class for a reading of the entire song:

1
'Twas in the town of Jacksboro in the spring of seventy-three,
A man by the name of Crego came stepping up to me,
Saying, "How do you do, young fellow, and how would you like to go
And spend one summer pleasantly on the range of the buffalo?"

2
"It's me being out of employment," this to Crego I did say,
"This going out on the buffalo range depends upon the pay.
But if you will pay good wages and transportation too,
I think, sir, I will go with you to the range of the buffalo."

3
"Yes, I will pay good wages, give transportation too,
Provided you will go with me and stay the summer through;
But if you should grow homesick, come back to Jacksboro,
I won't pay transportation from the range of the buffalo."

(SA, 271)

Questions for Discussion

1. From your study of history, discuss the slaughter of the buffaloes during the last century. Do you agree with Sandburg that this subject would make an ideal subject for a big, sweeping novel of real life?

2. In your own words, rewrite the story line of "The Buffalo
Skinners" as a poem.

3. Are there books dealing with the subject of the song?
   List some of them.

4. What is the central message of "The Buffalo Skinners"
as a song of social criticism?

Another folksong from The American Songbag which will be
of more interest to slower students would be "Jesse James," which
deals with the life, exploits, and death of the legendary Robin Hood of
the American West. In introducing the ballad about Jesse James,
Sandburg writes:

There is only one American bandit who is classical, who is to
this country what Robin Hood or Dick Turpin is to England,
whose exploits are so close to the mythical and apocryphal that
to get a true picture of him we must read a stern inquiry such
as Robertus Love's book, "The Rise and Fall of Jesse James."
(AS, 420)

The teacher could secure a copy of Love's book on the bandit and have
a student volunteer to read and report on it to the class as an intro-
duction to a study and discussion of the ballad, "Jesse James." The
words of the ballad provide a capsule history of Jesse James, men-
tioning his family, his daring robbery of trains and a Missouri bank,
and his robbery of a railroad agent. The purpose of using this type of
work in the classroom rather than some of the more traditional types
of ballads is to stimulate student interest. The teacher will find it
much easier using Sandburg's "Jesse James" in the teaching of the
ballad as a literary form because of the general familiarity of students with the subject. Using this ballad as a starting point, the teacher could then launch a unit of study dealing with the more traditional ballads of English and American literature.

"Jesse James" consists of seven four-line verses, each followed by a refrain. The text of the ballad is as follows:

1

It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright,
They robbed the Glendale train.
And the people they did say, for many miles away,
'Twas the outlaws Frank and Jesse James.

Refrain—Jesse had a wife to mourn all her life,
The children they are brave.
'Twas a dirty little coward shot Mister Howard,
And laid Jesse James in his grave.

2

It was Robert Ford, the dirty little coward,
I wonder how he does feel,
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed,
Then he laid Jesse James in his grave. —Refrain

3

It was his brother Frank that robbed the Gallatin bank,
And carried the money from the town.
It was in this very place that they had a little race,
For they shot Captain Sheets to the ground. —Refrain

4

They went to the crossing not very far from there,
And there they did the same;
And the agent on his knees he delivered up the keys
To the outlaws Frank and Jesse James. —Refrain
It was on a Saturday night, Jesse was at home
Talking to his family brave,
When the thief and the coward, little Robert Ford,
Laid Jesse James in his grave. --Refrain

How people held their breath when they heard of Jesse's death,
And wondered how he ever came to die.
'Twas one of the gang, dirty Robert Ford,
That shot Jesse James on the sly. --Refrain

Jesse went to his rest with his hand on his breast.
The devil will be upon his knee.
He was born one day in the county of Clay,
And came from a solitary race. --Refrain

The teacher, in teaching such a work as "Jesse James" to a
class, should emphasize the general storyline which the ballad usually
tells. Students should be asked to discuss the story of this ballad and
to use it as the basis of a written composition on the subject of Jesse
James or another person from the folklore of the American West of
the last century. Another possible topic would be for the student to
search for other ballads of the "Old West" or to draw a comparison of
the historical Jesse James with the romanticized hero of the ballad.

Thus, such a work as "Jesse James" can be taught on several
levels within the same classroom. The slower student would prefer to
simply follow the storyline and perhaps be interested in a comparison
of the real Jesse James with the legendary version. The abler student
will tend to study such a ballad on a deeper level, seeing it as a representative form of the folk ballad as a definite literary form of American literature. Most students would prefer to study it using a combination of both of these views.

Questions for Discussion

1. Secure a biography of Jesse James from the library and report to the class on the true story of his life. How did he get to be a legend? Discuss the nature of the legendary hero in literature and history.

2. In your own words, tell the story of Jesse James and his inglorious end.

3. Write a story, using Jesse James as one of your characters. For the subject of your story, use one of the verses of the song.

4. Are there songs and ballads about people of today such as this one? What are some examples? Compare one of them to "Jesse James."

The folksong, "Roll the Chariot," is a combination hymn, spiritual, and marching song which could very effectively be used by the teacher in a unit of study of the spiritual as a part of American literature. In his introductory notes to the song, Sandburg explains that "Roll the Chariot," originally a spiritual, became a favorite revival and marching song of the religious organization, The Salvation
What would the big brutal city be without that international, interdenominational organization, The Salvation Army? It is ready to take any popular song or spiritual, any ragtime ditty or jazz tune, and tie it up to religion. . . . An old Saturday night spiritual favorite is "The Chariot Song," trumpeted with jubilee voices as the bass drum invites contributions.

(SAS, 196)

Sandburg records the text of this number as follows:

ROLL THE CHARIOT or THE CHARIOT SONG

1
We'll roll, we'll roll the chariot along,
We'll roll, we'll roll the chariot along,
We'll roll, we'll roll the chariot along,
And we won't drag on behind.

2
If the Devil's in the way we will roll it over him,
If the Devil's in the way we will roll it over him,
If the Devil's in the way we will roll it over him,
And we won't drag on behind.

3
The collection will help us to roll it along,
The collection will help us to roll it along,
The collection will help us to roll it along,
And we won't drag on behind.

(SAS, 196-97)

This folksong offers the teacher a good opportunity to teach a well-known poem by Vachel Lindsay on the same theme, "General William Booth Enters Heaven." Sandburg also discusses General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, in his introduction to "Roll the Chariot," writing of him:

Reading Booth's memoirs, we notice that forty years ago, and more, the Army street meetings were broken up;
singers of gospel hymns were pelted with bad eggs and worse tomatoes. Time has passed. The Army is respectable now, is established, with million dollar real estate holdings. When the big bass drum is laid flat and the public invited to throw dimes or dollars onto the drum, there is no outside interference. They challenge the Devil and worship God in peace.

(AS, 196)

Questions and Points for Discussion and Composition

1. From the introductory notes by Sandburg, what do you think his attitude is about the message of "Roll the Chariot"?

2. Compare Lindsay's poem, "General William Booth Enters Heaven," with Sandburg's introduction and his version of this song of Booth's organization.

3. What is the purpose of the repetition of the first line of each of the verses of "Roll the Chariot"? Is such repetition usual in such songs? Give some examples.

4. Do some research into the spiritual and gospel hymn. Find out their origins, words, and themes. In a composition, discuss these points.

5. Discuss the historical and social context of such songs. Were many of these numbers written during the same period? If so, how do you account for this fact?

A controversial folksong for high school usage, which was personally collected by Sandburg from his years in Chicago, is
"Cocaine Lil." Although it does deal with the subject of narcotic addiction, a subject still not readily discussed in many high schools, the number does have merit for use in the urban high school classroom as it depicts a way of life that is familiar to a number of students who complain that they cannot identify with the contemporary English curriculum. Such students may be interested in a song about a cocaine addict and her friends. Sandburg writes of "Cocaine Lil" in his introduction:

We do not know whether Willy the Weeper (the subject of another song in The American Songbag about an addict) and Cocaine Lil were ever introduced to each other. But they travelled the same route. Illusions, headaches, mornings after, soft fool fantasies, "and the rest is silence." Lil was one of those who say "I'll try any thing once."

(AS, 206)

Sandburg compares "Cocaine Lil" to DeQuincey's The Confessions of an English Opium Eater and refers to the song as a "document of realism":

As an utterance the song of Lil has as much validity and more brevity than "The Confessions of an Opium Eater," by Thomas DeQuincey. It is a document of realism that rises from the night life places of Chicago and Detroit. Besides a document it is a song-sketch. . . .

(AS, 206)

The text of the verses of "Cocaine Lil" follows:

Did you ever hear about Cocaine Lil?
She lived in Cocaine town on Cocaine hill,
She had a cocaine dog and a cocaine cat,
They fought all night with the cocaine rat.
She had cocaine hair on her cocaine head,  
She wore a snowbird hat and sleigh-riding clothes.  
She had a cocaine dress that was poppy red.  
On her coat she wore a crimson, cocaine rose.

Big gold chariots on the Milky Way,  
Snakes and elephants silver and gray,  
O the cocaine blues they make me sad,  
O the cocaine blues make me feel bad.

Lil went to a "snow" party one cold night,  
And the way she "sniffed" was sure a fright.  
There was Hophead Mag with Dopey Slim,  
Kankakee Liz with Yen Shee Jim.

There was Hasheesh Nell and the Poppy Face Kid,  
Climbed up snow ladders and down they slid;  
There was Stepladder Kit, stood six feet,  
And the Sleighriding Sisters that are hard to beat.

Along in the morning about half-past three  
They were all lit up like a Christmas tree;  
Lil got home and started to go to bed,  
Took another "sniff" and it knocked her dead.

They laid her out in her cocaine clothes.  
She wore a snowbird hat and a crimson rose;  
On her headstone you'll find this refrain;  "She died as she lived, sniffing cocaine."

\(\text{(AS, 206)}\)
Questions and Points for Discussion and Composition

1. List and identify some of the slang expressions and jargon of this folksong. Example--"snow." What are some of the more contemporary of such terms?

2. In what ways could "Cocaine Lil" be called a ballad?

3. Does Sandburg suggest a moral to his story of Lil?

   Explain.

4. In your own words, write the story of Lil.

5. Are there any similar songs today? What are some that you have heard?

   Sandburg also includes in The American Songbag a number of Negro spirituals and odes, which might be classed as "blues." These laments of a life of struggle and despair are very popular with many of today's folksingers. One such number is "Times Gettin' Hard, Boys." In this folksong, usually sung by a solo voice, the singer laments how he will be forced to look for another place to live unless conditions improve. Where he might seek this better place to live is not made clear in the song, which might tend to imply that his vow to leave is only an empty promise to himself. The four-line text reads:

   Times gettin' hard, boys, money gettin' scare;
   If times don't be no better hyar, boun' to leave dis place.
   Take my true love by de han' lead her roun' de town;
   When she see dat yellow boy she almos' faint away.

   (AS, 242)

   The line mentioning the "yellow boy" is a reference to the
Negro male of partial Caucasian background. Among many Negroes of former times, such a mixture was either a mark of prestige or dishonor. The teacher using this song should explain this line and its possible meanings to the class. It might also be pointed out to the students that recent recordings of "Times Gettin' Hard, Boys" do not include this controversial last line as it is replaced by a line without the racial allusion. This act of editing to omit controversial passages might serve as a worthwhile subject for individual study and class discussion, particularly in classes of academically talented students.

Another spiritual that is popular with youth is "You Fight On." The theme of this number is the necessity for perseverance and forgiveness of those who have done another wrong. The number takes somewhat of a Golden Rule approach to injustice, then abruptly implies that negotiation with those who have done wrong should be carried on by the oppressed with a sword in hand:

If yo' brother done you wrong
Take him to you'self alone;
Tell him brother you done treated me wrong.
You fight on, you fight on,
With yo' swo'd in yo' han',
You fight on, yes, you fight on.
Lawdy you fight on
With yo' swo'd in yo' han',
You fight on.

(AS, 248-49)

A tragedy at sea which was to cause poems to be written and
the theme of dozens of songs, was also to be the subject of the Negro spiritual, "De Titanic." Sandburg says of this number:

The central facts of an immense sea tragedy are here. The main narrative lines of each stanza cadence a proud ship sailing at high speed, ending with a slow drawn drag, the silence of the empty sea that follows the "sinkin' down." As a poem, in accuracy of statement, in stresses of details, and in implicative quality, some would rate this above Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus." The dialect is imperfectly rendered. Negro troops sang the song crossing the submarine zone and in the trenches overseas. The verses move smoothly, in even pulsations, like the stride of a great ocean liner with its turbines in good working order. The chorus words "ocean" and "Titanic" sway like a swiftly moving thing abruptly slowed down, struck, staggering and bewildered, while the words "sinkin' down" have the grave, quiet suspension of a requiem.

(AS, 254)

This song might be used by the teacher as an example of how an event in the history of a country can become a part of the legends and folklore of its people. This process is carried on, among other ways, by the folksongs of the common people, who hand down oft-repeated tales and stories in songs. "De Titanic" is such a work. Negroes, probably working in the homes of the wealthy at the time of the Titanic disaster in 1912, perhaps heard their employers discussing the details of the collision with the iceberg and the following story-song resulted:

1

De rich folks 'cided to take a trip
On de finest ship dat was ever built.
De cap'n presuaded dese peoples to think
Dis Titanic too safe to sink.
Chorus:
Out on dat ocean,
De great wide ocean,
De Titanic, out on de ocean,
Sinkin' down!

2
De ship, lef' de harbor at a rapid speed,
'Twuz carryin' everythin' dat de peeples need.
She sailed six-hundred miles away,
Met an icebug in her way.

3
De ship lef' de harbor, 'twuz runnin' fas'.
'Twuz her fus' trip an' her las'.
Way out on dat ocean wide
An icebug ripped her in de side.

4
Up come Bill from de bottom flo'
Said de water wuz runnin' in de boiler do'.
Go back, Bill, an' shut yo' mouth,
Got forty-eight pumps to keep de water out!

5
Jus' about den de cap'n looked aroun',
He seed de Titanic wuz a-sinkin' down.
He give orders to de mens aroun':
"Get yo' life-boats an' let 'em down!"

6
De mens standin' roun' like heroes brave,
Nothin' but de wimin an' de chillun to save;
De wimin an' de chillun a-wipin' dere eyes,
Kissin' dere husbands an' friends good-bye.
On de fifteenth day of May nineteen-twelve,
De ship wrecked by an icebug out in de ocean dwell.
De people wuz thinkin' o' Jesus o' Nazaree,
While de band played "Nearer My God to Thee!"

Questions and Topics for Discussion and Composition

1. Discuss the themes in the Negro folksongs or spirituals in Sandburg's collection.

2. Using Sandburg's own introductions and additional research for material, list and discuss some of the origins of a number of these songs.

3. Do you agree with Sandburg's appraisal of some of the Negro ballads and spirituals being great American poetry? Why or why not?

4. Who are some other collectors and authors of such folksongs? What are the titles of some of the works they have gathered into anthologies and collections?

5. Define the following terms: spiritual, blues, ode, ballad.
   Give examples of each from Sandburg's The American Songbag.

6. Using selections from Sandburg's collection as models, try writing the words of your own idea of a folksong or ballad.
Unit of Study on *The American Songbag*
Collected by Carl Sandburg

**Purpose:** To develop an appreciation of the folk music of the American people; to assist students in recognizing the folksong as an authentic literary expression.

**Time:** Six weeks

**Launching the Unit:**

1. The introduction to the unit should utilize Sandburg's remarks in the preface of the collection on the nature of folk music in American culture. The teacher may introduce students to the study of folksongs of *The American Songbag* by telling them that such works are authentic parts of literature.

2. The class might be divided into small groups and each group assigned to lead a discussion of one of the sections of numbers in the collection. A number of representative sections could be included in the study of folksongs such as "Dramas and Portraits," "Pioneer Memories," "Tarnished Love Tales," "The Big, Brutal City," "Prison and Jail Songs," and "Blues, Mellows, Ballads."
3. Each group should select representative numbers from their section, do research on its content, and present the number to the class, either singing it themselves or using a recording. A suggestion here would be a sing-along technique, where an individual student would sing a verse and have the entire class join in for the chorus.

4. Folksongs present many topics for composition. For example, the class might be asked to write short papers or a paragraph on each of the folksongs presented by individuals and small groups. This writing assignment should include the title of the song, its compiler, the subject or theme of the number, and, perhaps a few lines of special importance in the song.

5. Some time should be spent, too, on the recent revival of interest in the folksong. Each group should be asked to look for similarities in such songs and any of the current popular versions of American folksongs. They will find that some are still used in their original versions; others have been altered or totally
Reworded. Students might suggest reasons for these changes in a class discussion of the subject.

6. A vote should be taken by the entire class to determine several of the most popular numbers in the collection. These songs should be used by the teacher for sources of questions that could be asked the students to evaluate their understanding of the material covered in the unit of study.

7. Creative writing should be encouraged in this unit, especially for students who have particular interest in folk music. All of the students should be urged to write some type of a poem or song such as those in The American Songbag. Students with musical ability might wish to set them to music. A presentation of such numbers would make an interesting and very worthwhile final activity.

Use of Audio-Visual Materials

The teaching of Sandburg's works can be accomplished by extensive use of the various instructional equipment and materials.
There is a great amount of various Carl Sandburg materials. During his long lifetime, Sandburg made more recordings of his poetry than any other poet of his time. He also made extensive recordings of his folk songs, guitar playing, and excerpts from his Lincoln biography. Many of the recordings Sandburg made were done for the Library of Congress, with the express purpose of making them forever available at no charge for classroom usage. Library of Congress recordings of Sandburg may be copied by teachers for classroom use and require only that proper acknowledgment and credit be made.

Sandburg also was the subject of several documentary television programs of recent years. Perhaps the best of these for secondary classroom use is the Edward R. Murrow "Person-to-Person" show interview with Sandburg, made in 1956. This thirty-minute interview, now available as an educational film, covers much of the Sandburg range--from his poetry, to his Lincoln scholarship; from his views on contemporary America, to his priceless advice to would-be writers who want to know his secret--"You know, it's very simple. All you have to do is to write a word down, then another one,

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4Letter from C. A. Eselius, Director of Recording Section, United States Library of Congress, May 1, 1969.

5Ibid.

and another one, and then another. Just take one word at a time."\(^7\)

Also included in the interview film is a sample of Carl Sandburg's guitar-playing and folksinging.

Another interesting and useful film for the classroom is the Library of Congress film of Sandburg addressing the Joint Session of Congress on February 12, 1959.\(^8\)

Also, unlike many other famous writers, Sandburg has made himself available to a large number of photographers, both amateur and highly professional, which is responsible, at least partially, for the fact that there are more existing photographs of Carl Sandburg than of any other writer in the world.\(^9\) A supplementary reason, however, might be the fact that Sandburg's brother-in-law was Edward Steichen, probably the most famous photographer since Matthew Brady of Lincoln's day, who has been taking pictures of his sister's husband since the Sandburgs' marriage in 1907. Some of Steichen's photographs of Sandburg have become famous and have been used hundreds of times throughout the world over the past forty years.

As with his recordings, Sandburg also made all of his

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\(^7\)Ibid.


photographs available to the Library of Congress, which currently maintains an elaborate file of every known photograph of Carl Sandburg in existence. Like the tapes and records, these are also available for non-commercial use. Copies can be made at a nominal charge for material and labor.

The secondary teacher of English can make effective use of photographs of Sandburg. Because he has been photographed so much, and his photographs are readily available, the teacher might set up a display of various photographs of Sandburg at the time the class will be studying his work.

A complete listing of available audio-visual materials on Carl Sandburg and his literary work is found in Appendix B.

**Interviews With Carl Sandburg**

A different approach to the teaching of Sandburg would be for the teacher to make use of a number of personal interviews by journalists and critics with Sandburg. In these interviews, Sandburg directly discusses many of his own works as well as other literature and current history.

There are many such interviews published, as Sandburg was an avid talker who genuinely enjoyed being interviewed by members of

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the working press, probably because of his own early career as a journalist. These interviews cover a wide range of topics and can also make interesting and worthwhile report topics for students.

One of these recent interviews was the Ebony magazine interview of September, 1963.\textsuperscript{11} The topic of this long interview, conducted by this writer in two locations at different times, was the discussion by the foremost Lincoln scholar of our time of what Abraham Lincoln would do in the present touchy racial situation of the mid-twentieth century. In the course of the several sessions which made up the interview, Sandburg runs the gamut of his entire canon in discussing the hypothetical question of Lincoln's possible handling of the problems of today. And while most adults, including Sandburg, are quick to point out the fallacy of saying "If" in history, secondary students, for the most part, still enjoy playing this game of historical projection. This practice can have very good results in the secondary classroom if taught in the context of both history and literature.

Of value to classroom teachers is the 1968 Instructor article on how to make use of Sandburg in classroom teaching.\textsuperscript{12} This article,

\textsuperscript{11}Mike Quigley, "Carl Sandburg--An Exclusive Interview," Ebony, XVIII, (September, 1963), 158-59.

\textsuperscript{12}Michael Quigley, "Carl Sandburg. Get to Know Him During His Birthday Month," pp. 66-69.
written by this writer a few months before Sandburg died in 1967, was meant to be published as a commemorative article during the month of Sandburg's eighty-ninth birthday, which would have been January 6, 1968. After Sandburg's death, it was decided by the editors of The Instructor that the article would still be used, and was entitled, "Carl Sandburg, Get to Know Him During His Birthday Month."

The article includes a partial listing of Sandburg's works, as well as a complete list of available phonograph records, tapes, and films on the writer. The list of audio-visual materials is included in Appendix B of this study.

The article was written with the hope that young people now and in the future should be helped to know Sandburg, the prairie-town boy, the ballad singer, the Lincoln scholar, the poet who sang of everyday, familiar experiences with the fresh delight of the ever-young. Following are some suggested classroom activities to honor Sandburg:

Using small groups within the classroom,

--Choose poems and parts of stories and practice reading them aloud. Then make a recording and exchange with another group of students.

--See and hear Carl Sandburg talk, read his own poems, or

13 Ibid., p. 66.
sing folk songs by using films, tapes, and recordings.

--Suggest students sketch their mental pictures from
selected passages of Sandburg's work.

--Hold a folksinging in honor of Sandburg. Try to include as
many songs as possible from his folksong collections. 14

Other informative interviews with Carl Sandburg include a
1953 discussion with book critic Lewis Nichols of the New York
Times, 15 a 1942 interview by Robert Van Gelder; 16 and parts of
Harry Golden's biography of Sandburg, which were done as journal-
istic interviews. 17

Also useful here would be a sampling of the criticism of
Sandburg, with a balance between the negative and positive. A
number of such critical reviews are included in the bibliography.
Students should be asked to weigh and evaluate the criticism and to
reach their own conclusion after careful study of all sides and their
own reading of Sandburg.

14 Ibid., p. 69.


16 Robert Van Gelder, "An Interview with Mr. Carl

17 Golden, Carl Sandburg, pp. 30-36, 74-75, 91-95, 183-88,
239-41.
An effective method of teaching literature in the secondary classroom is the use of the thematic unit. Burton says that the thematic unit of organization stresses the theme or topic rather than the individual writer. One concept of the thematic unit, for example, he says, goes beyond the study of literature and makes the theme the center for the integration of all phases of the language arts—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. 18

The works of Sandburg would certainly fit well into a number of such thematic units. The Lincoln biography, for example, would have selections suitable for a thematic unit on growing up, on men in stress, on adventure and courage, and many others. Sandburg's poetry would certainly find an easy place in a unit on "People We Know." In fact, such a unit might best be called, "The People, Yes." Other writers who see and write about the same kind of people as Sandburg could effectively be used in such a unit in the secondary classroom literature program. The parallels between Whitman's, Sandburg's and Steinbeck's treatment of the people they write about could be brought out, as well as the conflicting views of Frost, Robinson, Eliot, and Faulkner. Perhaps a unit could be done on these conflicting views of man and titled "The People, No."

Sandburg's connection with earlier writers and poets is well worth study and exploration in the effort to achieve a better understanding of his work. The works of Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, could be explored here, as well as the poetry of Stephen Crane. Crane's use of color, as compared to Sandburg's, would be a topic for advanced students of literature, which would require some reading of French literature of the late nineteenth century. Another topic would be the types of heroes and characters in Sandburg's works as contrasted with those of his contemporaries, such as Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, and many others. A larger and more important topic, but one far more difficult to answer, would be Sandburg's comparative ranking or stature as a literary figure among his contemporaries of two distinct periods of American literature, that of the Pre-Depression period and the Post-World War II age. Much understanding of the nature of not only literature but of our culture is to be gained by a study of the critical reputation of such a writer as Carl Sandburg. An entire unit of study might deal with this topic, and the changing critical reputation of other American writers might be correlated with that of Sandburg's.

Crowder holds that the critics have been incorrect when they have considered Sandburg to be too much of a provincialist, charging that he has not dealt with a world of universals. Crowder compares
Sandburg in this respect to the youthful Ishmael of Melville's *Moby Dick* and to Thoreau:

In *Moby Dick* Captain Peleg asks the youthful Ishmael: 'Can't ye see the world where you stand?' Thoreau in jail or in a cabin at Walden Pond was no provincial. One can travel far in Concord, or in Galesburg, or even in Chicago.  

**Student Writing**

Much of the Sandburg work included in this study is particularly suitable as subjects for student writing in the high school English class. One of the most difficult things required of English teachers is this all-important selection of topics for student writing. It is not an easy thing for the teacher to find varied topics in a single piece of literature. The Sandburg works surveyed in Chapter II offer the variety necessary for the selection of interesting topics for high school students. By using the prose of Sandburg as a model, some meaningful instruction in composition development can be accomplished.

Following are individual Sandburg prose works with suggested topics for longer student compositions:

**The Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919**

The Causes of Race Riots: Are They the Same Today?

Key Points in the Chicago Race Riots of 1919

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19 Crowder, *Carl Sandburg*, p. 158.
Is Race War Inevitable?

Walter Lippman's Prophetic Preface to Sandburg's Book on the Chicago Race Riots of 1919

Should the Federal Government Have Acted?

Lessons That Might Have Been Learned

Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and War Years

Sandburg's Affection for Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln's Accomplishments

Lincoln's Greatest Speech

What Made Abraham Lincoln Great?

Lincoln's Enemies

Lincoln's Religion

Lincoln's Writing Style

The United States During Lincoln's Life

Famous Writers of Lincoln's Period

Differences in Lincoln's Time and the Present

How the Death of a President Affected Me

The Death of a Loved One

Always the Young Strangers

The Differences Between Growing Up Then and Now

Influences of My Childhood

Early Memories of My Neighborhood

Boyhood Adventures
Jobs and Activities I Have Had
Unpleasant Encounters of Youth
My Autobiography

The Family of Man
What is this Family of Man?

A Word Description of a Steichen Photograph
My Favorite Photograph in the Collection

Remembrance Rock
Sandburg's Use of Symbolism in Remembrance Rock
Sandburg's View of America in Remembrance Rock
Remembrance Rock as a Novel
Sandburg's Use of Historical References in Remembrance Rock

And using the poetry of Sandburg, students might best be encouraged to try their own hands at writing poetry in the free-verse style.

One of the most creative ways in using Sandburg's work as a topic for student writing is the use of Sandburg recordings of selections from his own work. After listening to Sandburg read a poem such as "Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind" or the picturesque description of the battlefield at Gettysburg after the excitement of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, students will be able to list any number of topics for their own compositions or critical essays. An educationally
worthwhile, but controversial suggestion that the teacher might make to the class would be that the class relate their composition topics to the present day. Certainly the English classroom can thus become much more relevant to society and its young members. For Sandburg's work is not static history, but rather a dynamic, ever-changing view of how history is recorded in the pages of great literature. If a major goal of the school composition program is to develop clear, rational thinking and reasoning, then the teacher would be justified in suggesting to students that they draw parallels with today from Sandburg's work.

**Dramatic Presentation**

The free-verse poetry, the vivid prose, and the warm folk-songs of Carl Sandburg are already packaged into an attractive and very successful dramatic production for the amateur and professional stage. This presentation, *The World of Carl Sandburg*, was adapted for the stage by Norman Corwin in 1961. This play, with only a small royalty charge as compared with plays of equal stature and popularity, is a suitable presentation for most high school drama groups.

There are some quite controversial sections in the play, such as the recital of Sandburg's poem about a Negro whore, "Elizabeth

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Umpsteadt. " The poem uses the term "nigger," which might draw fire from certain groups, as does Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn for the same reason. But just as Nigger Jim is, in many ways, an admirable character in Huck Finn, so is the Elizabeth Umpsteadt in The World of Carl Sandburg. There is no racial downgrading in Sandburg's poem in the play, but instead a sense of warm admiration and respect for the servant girl who started with nothing and ended up with "thousands of dollars in the bank, eight houses owned as property in the same way my mother was owned as property by white men in Tennessee. . . ."\(^\text{21}\)

To date, only a few high schools have performed The World of Carl Sandburg.\(^\text{22}\) A survey of schools which have used the play, however, reveals that it was a very successful production. The Chairman of the English Department at Chaminade High School in Dayton, Ohio, in fact, maintains that their production of The World of Carl Sandburg received unanimous support and praise from all races and elements within the school's student body. Brother Dumbauld writes:

We had absolutely no problem in using the play, which is one of the finest combinations of poetry, prose, and sheer drama,

\(^{21}\text{Ibid., p. 19.}\)

\(^{22}\text{Letter from Samuel French, Inc., theatrical agency, which arranges production rights for the play, August 1, 1969.}\)
that is available. We received nothing but high praise and
critical applause for our selection. Of course, we did care-
fully lay groundwork for the selection by discussing possible
objections with all concerned.\textsuperscript{23}

About the lack of issue taken with the racial mention in his
play, Sandburg, in a discussion with Harry Golden, is quoted as
saying: "Hell, it played in twenty-eight cities without an objection,
including Little Rock!"\textsuperscript{24}

Much meaningful learning and teaching can take place in a
secondary school English and drama department production of \textit{The
World of Carl Sandburg}. This dramatic presentation combines parts
of all of Sandburg's writing talents into a single genre. For students
who have already studied and discussed some of the Sandburg mate-
rial in the play, \textit{The World of Carl Sandburg} will be even more ex-
citing and relevant to their experiences. The play could also be
used in conjunction with the classroom teaching of the poetry, songs,
and prose of Carl Sandburg.

\textsuperscript{23}Letter from Brother Charles Dumbauld, August 9, 1969.

\textsuperscript{24}Letter from Harry Golden, of Ashville, North Carolina,
June 6, 1968.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

This study has tried to point out the value of a number of Carl Sandburg's individual works in the teaching of English in the high school of today. These works include a representative sampling of his poetry, both early and more recent; his prose, including major excerpts from his six-volume Lincoln biography, journalism, and his long novel, Remembrance Rock; his collection of folksongs; and also his collaboration with other creative artists in photography and music.

The study has emphasized the collective strength of Sandburg's many contributions to American literature and his high rate of adaptability for the high school teaching of literature and composition skills. Criticism of Carl Sandburg as a poet and writer has also been included. A survey of representative Sandburg works shows that his poetry and prose has clarity, color, intensity, and imagination, all elements of effective writing.

Carl Sandburg was an enigma in American literature, in that he is not classifiable by a single period or as either a poet or prose writer. To read Sandburg's works, either poetry or prose, is to share the hopes, dreams, fears, aspirations, joys, and tragedies of
a profoundly sincere American writer, who, at his best, ranks with
the major writers of American literature.

The study finds that Sandburg's poetry and prose works have
the power to communicate with students in such important areas of
concern as beauty, justice, scorn, racial prejudice, personal stress
in life, war, patriotism, and empathy. And overriding all of these
areas of concern is Sandburg's abiding sense of warm optimism that
challenges the young who say with Carl Sandburg in their own quest
and search for identity: "Where to? What next?"

Emphasis has also been placed on Sandburg's humanitarian-
ism, which also has great appeal to the youth of today's schools.
This is probably the most social of all centuries, and in the critical
era in which we are living, students yearn for a form of quasi-
romanticism, out of which come answers to the perpetual questions
of the aware, groping man. Carl Sandburg's work offers the young of
today the realistic optimism that is so needed in a turbulent, chaotic
world that is getting to be characterized by the despair and sense of
hopelessness of youth facing an uncertain future. Secondary teachers
would do well to teach more of Sandburg's works.

A review of the literature has revealed the fact that Sandburg
has long been a controversial writer in American letters. His critical
reputation has always been quite divided, between highest praise and
contempt. While some critics have rated certain of his works as
among the very finest in all American literature, others have characterized him as unworthy of serious consideration. As do most writers, Sandburg has had periods of popularity and disfavor with the critics. Sandburg's reputation was at a zenith in the 1930's, reaching a pinnacle at the time of the publication of the final volumes of the Lincoln biography in 1940, when he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for history. By this period in his writing career, he was able to earn a substantial living by his poetry output, which is quite rare for modern poets.

Although Sandburg was to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1950, it can be said that he was on the decline as a poet by this time, as he had not produced a full volume of poetry since _The People, Yes_ of 1936.

Although critical response to his later poetry was largely negative and reviews of his rambling novel, _Remembrance Rock_, were disappointing, Sandburg's popularity with the general public greatly increased as he was becoming something of an American institution in his twilight years of life. Some critics claimed that he had sold out, that he had become too commercial in his quest for personal popularity, and that he had written nothing of literary merit or worth in forty years. Others simply ignored him, relegating him to the rocking chair as an elder statesman of American letters.

This study finds many of such harsh judgments of Sandburg's
work to be unfair in light of his many literary accomplishments. The
study asserts that too narrow of a definition of literature has been
applied by critics to Sandburg's poetry and prose.

While some critics claim that Sandburg's poetry is dated,
this study finds much of his poetry to be fresh and quite relevant to
today. For Sandburg still has much to offer youth in his free-
wheeling, direct style of poetry. Some of Sandburg's short poems can
also serve very effectively as models for students wanting to write
their own short poems. Longer Sandburg poems can serve as spring-
boards of discussion and student composition.

Sandburg's prose, especially in the Lincoln biography and
Always the Young Strangers, offers numerous composition topics for
today's secondary school student. This study finds Sandburg's prose
extremely readable and worthwhile for high school use.

Sandburg has written material quite suitable for teaching
racial pride and problems of civil rights, in "Bronze Wood," The
Chicago Race Riots, July, 1919, and a number of personal interviews.
These Sandburg works would make valuable additions to the high school
English curriculum, particularly in relating English to other areas of
the curriculum, such as social studies and history.

The study has found that Sandburg is a writer of many talents,
in that he has branched into other areas of creative endeavor to help
produce two major works in photography and music, by writing the
text for Edward Steichen's photographic exhibit, *The Family of Man* and Aaron Copland's orchestration, *A Lincoln Portrait*. He also assisted Norman Corwin in the writing of *The World of Carl Sandburg*, a dramatic presentation.

Also covered has been Sandburg's relationship with other writers. It has been explained that Sandburg derived some of his style, content, and structure from earlier writers as Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Stephen Crane. Also suggested was his influence on younger authors such as Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, and Thomas Wolfe.

Thus, it can be said that Carl Sandburg is truly a major writer for the secondary school of today. His poetry and prose are worth far more study than they have been receiving in the high school curriculum in recent years.

Carl Sandburg presents a fine example of what a writer can be for the youth who suspects that there must be more to life than material gain. Sandburg rode freight trains, washed dishes, labored on a construction gang, farmed, painted houses, enlisted in the Army and served in a foreign war, was a college student, a hobo, a wandering folksinger, a newspaperman, a militant revolutionary socialist, a poet, a historian, and a novelist.

As a model of nonconformity and humanitarianism, Sandburg can be of tremendous value for use in the teaching of English to the
youth of today. Another area where students can profit from studying Sandburg's poetry and prose is his high regard for honest work.

It can be said that our middleclass society is currently making many forms of work undesirable and unworthy. This society is sending most of its youth to college and has put such a premium on a college education, that soon there may be nothing but white collar applicants for a wide variety of jobs.

Sandburg lauds honest toil in all of his work. Like Carlyle, he thinks of work as a privilege, and champions the homely virtues and skills of common people throughout his poetry and prose.

Suggestions for Further Study and Experimentation

Three major questions can be posed out of this study:

(1) Would a fused curriculum, with literature and social studies combined, provide a better course framework for many Sandburg works?

(2) Why is there not a "middle-ground" position on Sandburg's ranking as a poet and as a writer of imaginative literature?

(3) Should American literature courses on the college level, particularly for students planning on a high school teaching career, include more of Sandburg?
These questions form the basis for additional research and experimentation into the work of Carl Sandburg, the secondary school curriculum, and the content of college courses for high school teachers in American literature.
Mr. Sandburg, how does it feel to have been the first private citizen ever invited to address a joint session of Congress?

I don't know 'cause I'm not the first--I'm really the second. You boys didn't do your homework! The first was George Bancroft, the famousstuffshirt historian. He was invited to deliver a flamboyant eulogy of Lincoln in 1865. But he had been Secretary of the Navy one time, so I guess you might not call him "a private citizen." Of course, Harry Truman calls himself that and he was president. So I'm the second, not first. What else do you want to know?

What would Abraham Lincoln do in today's touchy racial situation?

Young man, I'd get a thousand dollars to write a magazine article on that very subject. How much are you getting? On condition we split, I'll let you in on the reason I haven't written on that myself--it can't be answered. The reason is that there is simply no issue in today's America with the historic proportions, the economic issues, the sheer force of numbers, as the slavery issue had in Lincoln's time. Any answer I would give to that would be totally covered by a thick tissue of conjecture.

Of course, I do have my ideas about that question, and I guess I should give them to you. First, I think we can find the answer to the question of what Lincoln would do today in his own words. He gave good and sound advice for today as he did in 1858 in his House Divided Speech: 'If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.' Remember that--first, where we are and how we're doing, then say to ourselves: 'Where to? What next?'

You know, there's only one other recent writer who remembers this and he's dead, died before you were born--that's Tom Wolfe,
who lived about twenty-one miles from here. He only wrote three or four books and a lot of letters but he caught what Lincoln meant in his advice. Right at the end of one of his books--I can't tell you which one right off--he says that we're lost in America, but he slams right back by predicting that we're going to find ourselves. This is what's important right now. The paths of destiny in America have always led us into a dark unknown and our young will always ask: What is worth living for? What is worth fighting for? What might, just perhaps, be worth dying for? I said in my speech before Congress on Lincoln that there are always those who will help America in crisis, and those ready to pay the cost.
Q: What would Abraham Lincoln do in today's touchy racial situation?

A: Lincoln was a living figure of republican government, and the young President who was slaughtered in Dallas was a like symbol. They were both victims of the same kind of terrible hate that devours nations. I hope the lesson is clear and indelible. But as Wilson warned his fellow Americans—we cannot turn back because the stage is set, the destiny disclosed to those of us who will but look.

Q: Then how can you be so optimistic?

A: Someone asked me what I thought of Johnson now. Well, he's certainly not a McKinley! 'Who can live without hope? Who can live without hope?' Read with me from The People, Yes:

This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.  
There are men who still can't be bought.  
The fireborn are at home in fire . . . 
Time is a great teacher.  
Who can live without hope?  Who?

A few years ago they named a shiny new school after me up in Minnesota and because it was so near where Sinclair Lewis was from, I went up and spoke at the dedication. I was the voice for that congregation of stone and steel and I told them the same thing. I get as many as thirty or fifty letters a week from students in schools like this. Most of them come because some lame-brained teacher assigns them to write me for information about Lincoln, but I get some that make me ponder and weigh words for an answer. This Vietnam thing, for example, puzzles me. I tell the young who write me that we should have music, we should have music instead of murder. And I believe we can. John Steinbeck, now there's a great writer--he says we can, too.
Q: Some critics say you are a propagandist--

A: Hah! You can tell them to go to hell.

Q: I read in Harry Golden's biography that you like to laugh at the critics. Is this accurate?

A: No, I don't laugh at them, I laugh with them at myself for reading what they have to say. Sometimes, though, I learn from them, like the time the one bird wrote this long, supposedly scholarly study and me and Jesus Christ--I'll be damned if I knew I had meant all that! Of course, they've got the degrees and I just write. Trouble is, though, they could make a body nervous, like he'd be looking over his shoulder to see if what they say is there is really there!

Q: The critics, usually referred to as The New Critics, have been unusually harsh on you and your work--

A: Hah! You're talking about Crowe Ransom and his boys. They say that there should be no life in poems. They would make Harriet Monroe turn in her grave because they've lost sight of the most important thing about poetry itself--the depiction of life. Take it out and you've got death. Old Edmund Wilson must have been born in cellophane--he's not known the touch of human hands--maybe that's why he has all the woman troubles.

Q: What then do you feel poetry is?

A: Whatever you want it to be. No two persons can ever register exactly the same to a work of art. Ruskin held Turner's painting "The Slave Ship" to be a perfect and immortal work of art, but another painter called it "stupid claptrap." Lincoln thought that the Declaration of Independence was a historic document of all mankind, while Rufus Choate held it to be a gang of "glittering generalities." I'll never forget Mark Twain's recounting of two men who saw the Grand Canyon of Arizona for the first time. One yelled: "I'll be damned!" but the other started praying on his knees. Nobody knows the absolute line between what is instinct and personal opinion.

In Good Morning, America, I listed some of the things I think poetry is and I'm adding to them almost forty years hence. A few of these definitions that I can pull off the top of my head
are:

Poetry is an art practiced with the plastic material of human language.

Poetry is the kinetic arrangement of static syllables.

Poetry is the capture of a picture, a song, or a flair, in a planned prism of words.

Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through guessing what we have seen during a moment.

Poetry is a packsack of invisible keepsakes.

Poetry is what the poet sees, not the reader.

These are a few of the things I think poetry is to me.

Q: What are your personal preferences in twentieth century novels?

A: Those of Steinbeck and Ernest Hemingway are clearly the greatest. They will endure, they will endure for generations and centuries to come. The critics don't like them either, you know.

Q: Since you are known chiefly as a poet and Lincoln scholar, who were your chief idols or teachers?

A: Well, overall, it would be my college teacher Phillip Wright, at Lombard College. Also it would be Stephen Crane--you know I saw him in the war in Puerto Rico--he was the best writer of his time and his poetry is the most underrated and unknown of any major American writer. It was genuine and was cut of the fabric of emotional alienation with the world around him. Anyone who read Steve Crane was influenced by his stuff. There's another one the critics don't like, too.

Q: What is your reaction to critical reception then?

A: Nothing, nothing at all. I don't write for them--never did. If I did, I'd have to teach, not write, and all I have is a fistful of honorary degrees--none earned.
I've gotten my share of criticism and some of praise from them. I would hope by this time in my life that I could quit worrying and fretting about it. There's more important things to me.
APPENDIX B
ASSORTED AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS FOR THE  
TEACHING OF CARL SANDBURG

Phonograph Records


Tapes


Films

"Carl Sandburg Discusses His Work." Adapted from "Person-to-\Person" C.B.S. telecast, October 14, 1956. Narrated by Edward R. Murrow.


Color Transparencies


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