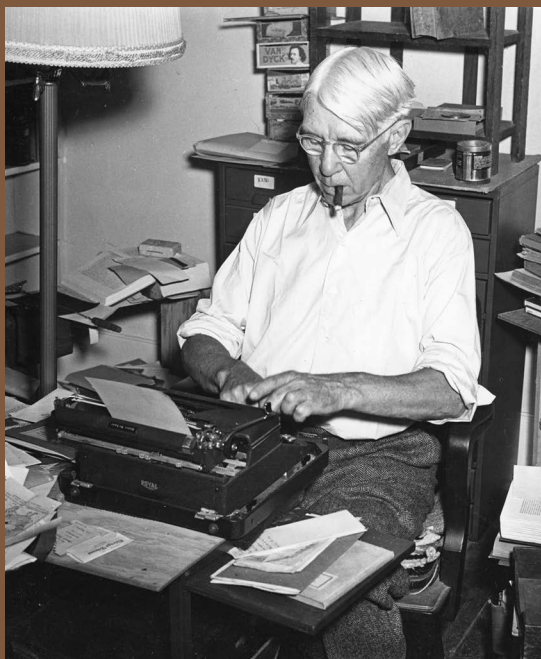




# “The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet:”

A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968-2008







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A History of the Carl Sandburg Home  
National Historic Site, 1968-2008

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September, 2016



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A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968-2008

<http://www.nps.gov/>


About the cover:

Carl Sandburg in his Study at Connemara, Mrs. Sandburg and her goats in the Kid Room, and a view of Connemara. Photographs by June Glenn, 1946.

# Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Historic Resource Study

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements . . . . .	viii
----------------------------	------

Executive Summary . . . . .	ix
-----------------------------	----

## Establishing the Park, 1967-1974

### CHAPTER 1 “The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet,” 1967-1968

Carl Sandburg . . . . .	3
Proposing a National Park . . . . .	8
Expanding the Park Service . . . . .	14
Advancing the Park Proposal . . . . .	16
Getting through Congress . . . . .	21

### CHAPTER 2 Getting Started, 1968-1974

The “Changeover” . . . . .	27
Securing Funding for the New Park . . . . .	29
Planning for the Park . . . . .	30
The First Park Superintendent Takes Charge . . . . .	35
Still No Development Funding . . . . .	43
Work at the Park Goes On . . . . .	45
A New Park Superintendent . . . . .	53
Congressman Taylor Finds an Opportunity . . . . .	59
Preparing for the opening . . . . .	64
Opening Day . . . . .	73

## The Thoman and Davis Superintendencies, 1974- 1986

### CHAPTER 3 “The Foundation Laid,” 1974–1986

Park Management and Staff . . . . .	75
Planning for the Park . . . . .	78
Infrastructure and Utilities . . . . .	84
Development of Administrative and Maintenance Facilities . . . . .	86
Visitor Contact Station and Parking Area . . . . .	90
Expanding the Park Boundaries . . . . .	92

### CHAPTER 4 “We had a Preservation Program,” 1974-1986

Establishing a Preservation Ethos . . . . .	98
Preserving the Historic Buildings . . . . .	101
The Cultural Landscape . . . . .	112
Archeological Resources . . . . .	120
Carl Sandburg Home NHS . . . . .	123

### CHAPTER 5 Managing the Sandburg Collection, 1974-1986

Museum Collections in the National Park Service . . . . .	125
Cataloging the Sandburg Collection . . . . .	129

The Disposition of the Sandburg Library. . . . .	134
The National Endowment for the Humanities Grant Project. . . . .	138
The Carl Sandburg Oral History Project. . . . .	139
Preserving the Collection . . . . .	140
Cataloging the Collection. . . . .	144
Developing a Computerized Collections Program . . . . .	148
Creating a Furnishings Plan . . . . .	149

## **CHAPTER 6 Interpreting the Sandburg Story, 1974-1986**

The Interpretive Prospectus . . . . .	158
Implementing the Interpretive Plan . . . . .	159
Refining the Visitor Services Focus. . . . .	161
Developing Interpretive Programs. . . . .	162
The Living History Farm . . . . .	171
Visitor Contact Station . . . . .	176
Eastern National Parks and Monument Association Agency . . . . .	178
Park Visitation . . . . .	179

## **The Hulick Superintendency, 1986-1993**

### **CHAPTER 7 “A Better Managed and Preserved Park,” 1986-1993**

“Intensive Preservation Inside—Extensive Cooperation Outside” . . . . .	184
A New Administrative Style . . . . .	185
Planning and Development . . . . .	189
Resource Management: Historic Structures . . . . .	190
Resource Management: The Museum Collections. . . . .	196
Resource Management: Natural Resources. . . . .	211
Park Visitation . . . . .	213
Interpretive Programs. . . . .	214
Maintenance and Park Protection . . . . .	223

### **CHAPTER 8 “Trying to Put the Park on the Map,” 1986-1993**

The Friends of Connemara . . . . .	225
Expanding the Volunteer Program . . . . .	228
Expanding Programs with Volunteers. . . . .	230
Developing Partnerships in the Community and Region . . . . .	232
Collaborating with State and National Partners. . . . .	238
National Park Service and Eastern National . . . . .	239

## **The Backlund Superintendency, 1994-2008**

### **CHAPTER 9 Leading with Change in Mind, 1994-2008**

A New Park Superintendent and New Challenges . . . . .	243
Park Planning and Management . . . . .	245
Completing the Park Infrastructure . . . . .	246
General Management Plan and Boundary Expansion . . . . .	249
Investing in the Park Staff . . . . .	256
Confronting Fiscal Concerns. . . . .	258

A Member of the Community . . . . .	259
Expanding the Friends and Volunteer Programs . . . . .	260
Engaging Community and Regional Partners . . . . .	266
Expanding Partnerships within the National Park Service . . . . .	269
<b>Chapter 10 Cultural and Natural Resources Management, 1994-2008</b>	
Maintaining the Historic Structures . . . . .	274
Managing the Cultural Landscape . . . . .	282
Focusing on the Natural Resources . . . . .	286
Developing a Natural Resources Program . . . . .	288
Inventorying, Monitoring, and Managing the Natural Resources . . . . .	291
<b>CHAPTER 11 “Management of a Large Museum Program,” 1994-2008</b>	
Managing the Museum Collections . . . . .	300
Growing the Museum Collection . . . . .	302
Cataloging the Collection . . . . .	303
Improving Collections Storage . . . . .	304
Preserving the Museum Collections . . . . .	307
Preserving the Collections in the Main House . . . . .	310
Implementing and Updating the Historic Furnishings Report . . . . .	317
Processing the Park Archive . . . . .	319
Using the Collection . . . . .	322
<b>CHAPTER 12 Redefining Interpretive and Educational Programming, 1994-2008</b>	
Refocusing the Interpretive Programs . . . . .	327
Refocusing the House Tours . . . . .	330
Expanding Non-Personal Interpretive Services . . . . .	332
Developing a Curriculum-Based Education Program . . . . .	333
Developing and Sustaining Strong Interpretive Programs . . . . .	338
Cultivating the Arts . . . . .	343
Developing the Long Range Interpretive Plan . . . . .	345
Engaging the Community through Celebrations . . . . .	345
Visitation . . . . .	349
Eastern National: Cooperating Association and Partner . . . . .	
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Authorizing Legislation . . . . .	353
Appendix B: Timeline Of Notable Events . . . . .	354
Appendix C: Carl Sandburg Home NHS Staff History . . . . .	359
Appendix D: Carl Sandburg Home NHS Visitation 1974-2011 . . . . .	361
<b>Bibliography . . . . .</b>	<b>362</b>

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## Executive Summary

In the late 1960s, as Americans celebrated the arts and the National Park Service (NPS) began one of its greatest periods of expansion under Director George Hartzog (1964-1972) and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall (1960-1968), the idea to create a park dedicated to Carl Sandburg quickly took hold. Known as “America’s Poet,” Sandburg enjoyed recognition for his verse, but also as a biographer of President Abraham Lincoln and a collector and performer of folk music. For the last 22 years of his life, Carl Sandburg and his family made their home at Connemara, in Flat Rock, North Carolina. When Sandburg passed away in July 1967, Udall advocated strongly for bringing Connemara into the National Park Service. Mrs. Sandburg’s offer to convey the furnishings of the farm enhanced the historical significance of the property. With strong support from local western North Carolina U.S. Congressman Roy Taylor, who chaired the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, and the backing of both Udall and Hartzog, the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site quickly passed through the required approvals in the National Park Service and in the U.S. Congress in the summer of 1968. President Johnson signed Public Law 90-592 to authorize the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) on October 17, 1968.

It would take almost four years for the new park to open to the public. With the rapid expansion of the park system during the late 1960s, Carl Sandburg Home NHS was one of many national parks established without the funds needed to open. The park waited for the developmental funds needed to preserve the historic buildings and to complete the visitor services facilities proposed in the Master Plan. Operating under the auspices of the Blue Ridge Parkway, a small but dedicated park staff began to clean the grounds, stabilize the historic buildings and cultural resources, process the collection in the Main House, conduct research for the interpretive programs, and acquire several goats to establish the living farm. It would take the

strong arm of Congressman Taylor to advocate for funds for the park to open. In November 1973, the staff, assisted by the Blue Ridge Parkway and specialists from around the National Park Service, prepared the facilities for the public, developed the first house tour, and created a Visitor Center in the basement of the Main House for the May 11, 1974 opening.

Once open, the park faced several significant challenges. Under the able direction first of Superintendent Ronald Thoman (1973-5), but primarily from Benjamin Davis (1975-1986), the talented and devoted park maintenance staff stabilized and preserved most of the historic structures by 1986 without the promised developmental funding, assisted by contractors as needed. The park also completed essential planning documents, including a Development Concept Plan, and began construction of a new Visitor Contact Station and parking lot. Curator Warren Weber, who arrived in April 1974, focused on developing the visitor services and interpretive programs, including the Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association bookstore, while also continuing to catalog the park’s massive collection. Questions arose about the disposition of the Sandburg Library remaining in the Main House, but the NPS resolved that issue through an agreement with the University of Illinois Library in 1981. The NPS undertook a Historic Furnishings Report that guided both museum activities and interpretation of the Main House. Park staff introduced several popular, long-lasting interpretive programs, including summer plays relating to Sandburg performed at the park amphitheater by Flat Rock Playhouse apprentice actors, ranger programs and special events focusing on poetry and folk music, and the Carl Sandburg Festival for school children. The park developed a living history program, but reduced the operation to a smaller herd of only goats after 1978. This allowed the park to continue its interpretation of Mrs. Sandburg’s dairy goat operation, while

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staying focused on the park's primary mission of interpreting the life and work of Carl Sandburg.

When Davis retired in 1986, Kenneth Hulick came to the park in his first superintendent position, bringing a philosophy of "Intensive Preservation Inside—Extensive Preservation Outside." Inside the park, now that many of the buildings had been preserved, the focus shifted to maintenance of the historic structures and the development of a broader cultural resource management program, advanced by the *Cultural Landscape Report* (1993). Hulick brought a natural resource background and advocated for preservation of the natural resources as part of the cultural landscape. Cataloging the collection gained priority, especially with the backlog cataloging funding now available through the NPS. Judy Hellmich-Bryan and a dedicated group of staff and volunteers completed processing the majority of the collection during these years. The park's museum staff assumed a leadership role in the new NPS automated cataloging program, serving as a test site and helping to shape the new computer program. During these lean budget years, the park began to utilize more volunteers for the Main House tours and implemented a charge for the tours in 1987. Park staff introduced the Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival in 1987, continued the successful existing programs and performances, and expanded programming into the community. Hulick's philosophy to engage the community with the park led to the creation of the Friends of Connemara in 1988, the expansion of the Volunteer in the Parks program (VIP), and the development of more partnerships within the community, region, state, and the NPS.

Connie Hudson Backlund entered duty at the park in 1994 and prepared the park to meet new challenges and opportunities. Backlund continued to strengthen the relationship between the park and the community, building lasting relationships and partnerships that would advance its mission. Undertaking a *General Management Plan* (completed in 2003) and securing Congressional approval for expansion of the park boundaries in 2008 were significant accomplishments that also helped to build relationships within the region. The VIP and Friends groups gained momentum, with the Friends group raising needed funds for park programs. As the park managed its cultural resources, the documentation and preservation of the natural resources gained momentum, especially with the NPS Natural Resource Challenge. The museum collection management program began to shift its focus from cataloging, though some of this was still done, to emphasize preservation, conservation, and storage. The completion of the Museum Preservation Center in 1994 provided a home for the park's important curatorial programs. The park introduced new and innovative educational programs, established its first education position, and developed a Long Range Interpretive Plan (2008) to enhance visitor experiences at the park and to expand outreach within the community. In 2008, the park celebrated its 40th anniversary and the many significant accomplishments made during its relatively short history.

In 1968, the Carl Sandburg's home, Connemara, became the first national historic site dedicated to a poet. Today, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS illustrates the poet's life by celebrating the arts, fostering the values of a simple and sustainable lifestyle, and including all voices in the American experience.

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# CHAPTER 1

## “The First National Historic Site Dedicated to a Poet,” 1967-1968

The 1960s witnessed a rebirth of the arts and the national parks in America. It was during this decade that the idea for a park devoted to Carl Sandburg, a famous American poet, Lincoln biographer, folk song collector, and “bearer of American traditions” was born.<sup>1</sup> The proposal to create a national park at Sandburg’s North Carolina mountain home accelerated quickly after the poet’s death in July 1967, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the authorizing legislation only fifteen months later. The context of the time—including Director George Hartzog’s expansion of the Park Service to represent a more complete vision of America’s history, strong advocacy by Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall and North Carolina U.S. Congressman Roy A. Taylor, and support from the Sandburg family—helped expedite the inclusion of Sandburg’s Flat Rock farm into the National Park Service system.

President John F. Kennedy’s vision for a “New Frontier” included renewed interest in the arts in America. Kennedy wrote in a 1962 *Look* magazine article, “To further the appreciation of culture among all the people, to increase respect for the creative individual, to widen participation by all the processes and fulfillments of art, this is one of the fascinating challenges of these days.”<sup>2</sup> Kennedy nominated Stewart Udall, a kindred spirit, as secretary of the interior. Elected as a congressman from Arizona in 1954, Udall joined the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, through which he gained knowledge about the National Park Service. Udall “was instrumental in persuading Arizona Democrats to support

Kennedy during the 1960 Democratic Nomination Convention,” which no doubt encouraged the new president to reward him with the secretarial post, the first of Kennedy’s appointments.<sup>3</sup> Udall was a strong advocate for environmental causes and the arts, and he partnered with Kennedy to promote the value of the arts in the spiritual life of America and, as the president argued, the “full recognition of the place of the artist.” Ambitious and hardworking, even Udall could not have anticipated the tremendous changes that would occur during his nine-year tenure from 1960 to 1969. The administrations of Presidents



**Figure 1.1** Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who served both in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, was a strong supporter of the arts. He especially loved poetry and forged strong relationships with both Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg. Here, Udall sits in the Sandburg home at Connemara, with some of Sandburg’s library in the background. October 27, 1967 (CARL Museum Collection). Used with permission of Paula Steichen Polega.

Kennedy and Johnson, with Udall at the head of the Department of the Interior, ushered in “an appreciation for American poets” and “a dawning

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1 Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site: A Proposal, National Park Service, 1968, 10, CARL Park Archive.

2 “The Arts in America,” *Look Magazine*, December 8, 1962, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations.aspx> (accessed August 18, 2011).

3 “Stewart L. Udall: Biographical Note,” University of Arizona Libraries, August 1977. <http://www.library.arizona.edu/exhibits/sludall/biography.htm> (accessed September 15, 2011).

of the national government's promotion of American arts and humanities."<sup>4</sup>

Udall and his wife Lee appreciated a variety of arts, particularly those of the Native American communities of the Southwest where they were raised. When they moved to Washington DC in 1955, they decorated their home with Native American art and invited many leading literary figures to dinner events. Udall had a passion for poetry, and he became friends with a number of poets, including Archibald MacLeish and Robert Lowell, but he established close relationships with poets Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg. Udall forged what would become a lifelong relationship with Frost, who began serving as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress in 1958, and the Secretary of the Interior listened intently to Frost's ruminations on the role of the poet in modern life. Udall also recognized the tremendous talent of Carl Sandburg. In February of 1959, Udall was "spellbound" at hearing Sandburg's address at the joint congressional session to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, later describing the speech as "surely one of the noble moments of this or any other Congress."<sup>5</sup>

At Udall's suggestion, President Kennedy invited Robert Frost to recite a poem at his inauguration. Soon afterwards, Udall approached First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy about sponsoring an arts event featuring Frost at the White House. "An Evening with Robert Frost," held on May 1, 1961, proved very successful, and Udall decided to expand the series to feature other artists. As Udall's former staff member, Boyd Finch, writes, Carl Sandburg was a "logical, predictable next move." Udall announced that he wanted to "break down this picture of the poet as something far removed from ordinary life."<sup>6</sup> This event would become the first of the president's Cabinet Artist Series to be held in the State Department's new west auditorium.<sup>7</sup>

A few weeks after Frost's performance, Udall invited Carl Sandburg to headline the next event. Udall's office scheduled "An Evening with Carl Sandburg" for October 1961, when Sandburg would be in Washington to speak at the opening of the Civil War Centennial exhibit at the Library of Congress. In a "dressing room" stage setting with an overflow audience, Sandburg shared "trifles and offerings," and then sang ballads accompanied



**Figure 1.2** Carl Sandburg poses with Stewart Udall, Helga Sandburg, and President John F. Kennedy while he was in Washington for "An Evening with Carl Sandburg." This event was the second of the Artist Series that Udall planned. Standing, from left to right: Carl Sandburg, Stewart Udall, Helga Sandburg, and President John F. Kennedy. October 26, 1961 (CARL Museum Collection).



**Figure 1.3** As Carl Sandburg arrives at the White House for "An Evening with Carl Sandburg," he is greeted by Stewart Udall and his family, including, from left to right, Maxine Lowry, Udall's receptionist and social secretary; Tommy Udall; and Lee and Stewart Udall. October 26, 1961 (CARL Museum Collection).

4 L. Boyd Finch, *Legacies of Camelot: Stewart and Lee Udall, American Culture, and the Arts* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 5; President John F. Kennedy, Remarks at Amherst College, October 26, 1963, National Endowment for the Arts, <http://www.arts.gov/about/Kennedy.html> (accessed August 27, 2011).

5 Finch, 17.

6 Finch, 34.

7 Finch, 29.





**Figure 1.4** Carl Sandburg visits with President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall in the White House the day following his "Evening with Carl Sandburg" presentation. October 27, 1961 (CARL Museum Collection).

by his guitar. The next day, he met President Kennedy and Secretary Udall at the White House, surrounded by photographers. Afterwards, Sandburg held what his biographer Penelope Niven described as "a raucous press conference." Sandburg defended Kennedy's controversial Peace Corps and expressed his frustration over Eisenhower's lack of support for the program. Not afraid of public response or controversy, Sandburg complained, "With [Eisenhower] the words 'socialist' and 'socialism' are dirty words." In response, mail poured into the mailbox at Connemara, his North Carolina mountain home, but biographer Penelope Niven wrote, "He was not too disturbed by the brouhaha after his 'crazy press conference.'"<sup>8</sup>

## Carl Sandburg

By 1961, the year of his White House performance, Sandburg had become a well-established American writer, famous as a biographer of Lincoln; a collector and performer of folk songs; an activist for social issues; and, most significantly, as a poet. Sandburg was born to Swedish immigrant parents in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878. He was now 83 years old and approaching the twilight of his career. His literary and performing work drew upon his rich life experiences in a variety of working class jobs and his travels as a hobo across the country, all of which provided insight into the plight and conditions of ordinary Americans. After serving

briefly in the Spanish American War, Sandburg attended Lombard College, where he became actively engaged in studying and writing poetry. He met Lilian Steichen through his work as an activist in the Social Democratic Party, and they married in 1908 and settled in Chicago. Sandburg worked as a journalist to support his family, but he continued to write and publish other works. The success of his two-volume biography on President Abraham Lincoln in 1926 provided the financial resources for the Sandburgs to move to a farm on the Harbert, Michigan, dunes. Here Lilian, whom Carl called Paula, began to establish a herd of champion dairy goats as Carl focused on his writing career, earning his first Pulitzer Prize for *Corn Huskers* in 1919.

By the early 1940s, the Sandburgs began to consider a move to a more temperate climate that would offer milder winters and more space for Mrs. Sandburg's prizewinning goat herd and "solitude and privacy" for Sandburg.<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Sandburg and her daughter Helga found Connemara, a 240-acre farm in Flat Rock, North Carolina, and considered the property ideal for Mrs. Sandburg's growing farm operations. She



**Figure 1.5** The Sandburg family enjoys spending some time with the goats in the barnyard area and enjoying the outdoors soon after they moved to Connemara. From left, John Carl Steichen, Carl Sandburg, Helga Sandburg, Lilian Sandburg. Late 1940s (CARL Museum Collection). Used with permission of Paula Steichen Polega.

and Carl purchased Connemara in the fall of 1945. One year later, the Sandburgs packed their belongings and the goat herd on a railroad boxcar to move to their new home. The historic Greek Revival summer home was built around 1838-9 by Christopher Memminger, a Charleston resident who served as the secretary of the treasury for

8 Finch, 34-5, 90; Penelope Niven, *Carl Sandburg: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1991), 689.

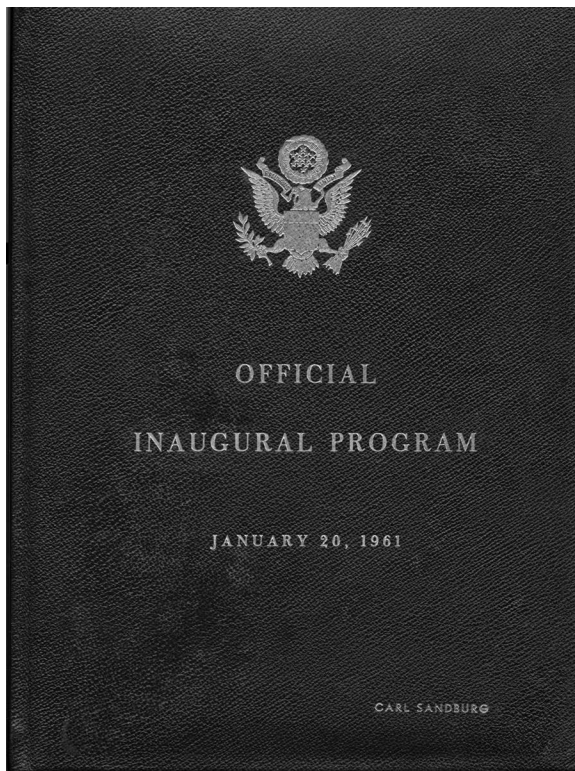
9 Niven, 569.

the Confederacy.<sup>10</sup> No doubt aware of the irony of the "people's poet" and Lincoln biographer owning this stylish estate built by a Confederate official, Sandburg joked, "How can the author of *The People*, Yes be a colonel or a poobah?" As he looked out at the sweeping views from the front porch, friends recall him exclaiming, "What a hell of a baronial estate for an old Socialist like me!"<sup>11</sup> Still, Sandburg settled in, establishing an office for writing on the second floor of the home. Here, he accomplished some of his most significant work, editing his six-volume Lincoln biography to one volume and completing *Remembrance Rock*; *The Sandburg Range*; *Honey and Salt*; his autobiographical account *Always the Young Strangers*; and *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*, for which he received his second Pulitzer Prize in 1951.

Sandburg endorsed Kennedy's political stance and supported him for president in 1960. Kennedy similarly respected the poet who was the man

10 Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report, September 2005, 1, Historical Architecture, Cultural Resources Division, National Park Service Southeast Regional Office.

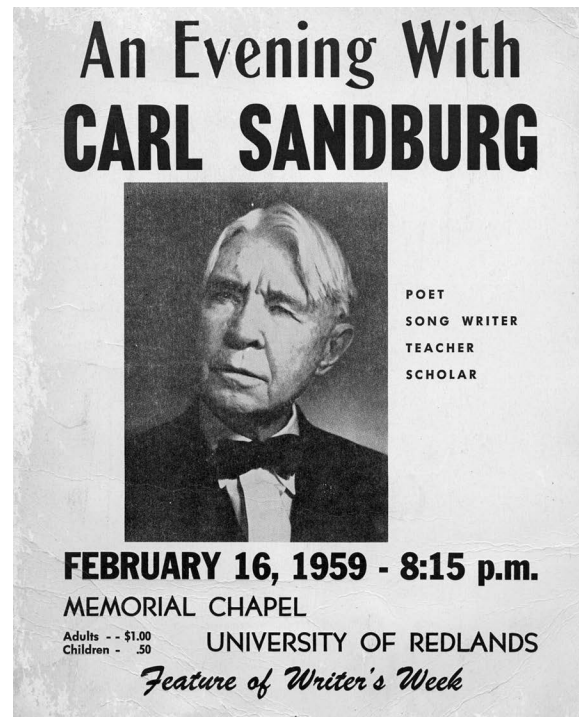
11 Niven, 572.



**Figure 1.6** President John F. Kennedy invited Carl Sandburg to his inauguration with this formal invitation. Kennedy supported the arts and appreciated Sandburg's work. (CARL Museum Collection).

"of the people." He invited Sandburg to the inauguration, but Sandburg did not attend, perhaps disappointed that his friendly rival, Robert Frost, had been selected to present a poem at the event. However, Sandburg agreed to write the forward for a volume of Kennedy speeches entitled *To Turn the Tide*.<sup>12</sup>

At the time of his invitation to the White House in 1961, Sandburg had already become a popular literary and cultural figure in America. His inspiring address about Lincoln to a joint session



**Figure 1.7** Carl Sandburg had become not only an award-winning writer but also a popular speaker by the 1950s. This flyer advertises "An Evening with Carl Sandburg" from February 16, 1959 (CARL Museum Collection).

of Congress two years earlier catapulted him to great fame. As biographer Penelope Niven observed, "During the last decade of his life, he was a full-time celebrity, and only a part-time writer." Sandburg was traveling across the United States frequently, appearing in "television shows, advertisements, causes, prefaces to books, public occasions, and motion pictures." He was writing his tenth book of poetry, which would be published in 1963.<sup>13</sup> Sandburg kept in touch with his many Washington D.C. friends, including Udall and other politicians. Boyd Finch writes that "Udall's personal contacts continued with the

12 Niven, 687. Kennedy's book was published in 1962.

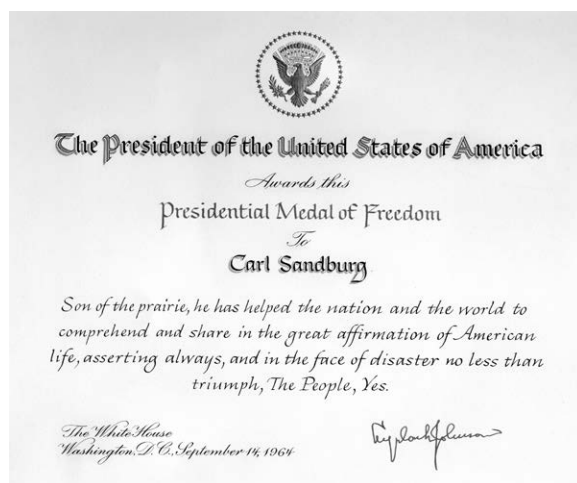
13 Niven, 677.



Sandburg family" during these years. Sandburg's daughter Helga, who lived in Washington at this time, also became close acquaintances with both Stewart and Lee Udall. Helga appreciated Udall's support of her father, saying, "I look at you as the benefactor of the poets and my father's natural shield-bearer."<sup>14</sup>

Udall retained his position as Secretary of Interior when President Lyndon B. Johnson took office after Kennedy's assassination in 1963. He continued to advocate for the arts and humanities under Johnson's Great Society agenda, some of which began under Kennedy's administration. This ambitious program promised to revitalize America and included the War on Poverty, new health care programs such as Medicare and an expansion of Social Security, and major legislation in civil rights, education, transportation, consumer protection, and environmental issues and protection. In 1965, when the 89<sup>th</sup> Congress passed a flood of landmark legislation now considered the core of the Great Society program, President Johnson signed bills to establish the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, federal agencies to support cultural projects across the country. Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to preserve significant historical buildings, objects, and sites through a variety of programs within the National Park Service. This Act established partnerships between the federal, state, and local governments and the private sector to support historic preservation; authorized the Historic Preservation Fund grants to states to establish state historic preservation offices and programs; established the National Register of Historic Places to recognize significant historical resources; and created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.<sup>15</sup>

During these years, Johnson also acknowledged the work of famous American artists. In September 1964, he awarded Sandburg the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award for service, in a White House ceremony which included writer John Steinbeck, composer Aaron Copeland, filmmaker Walt Disney, art critic Lewis Mumford, and journalist Edward R. Murrow. Sandburg and his wife Lilian traveled to Washington D.C. to



**Figure 1.8** Carl Sandburg received this Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Lyndon Johnson in September 1964 (CARL Museum Collection).



**Figure 1.9** Stewart Udall watches as Carl Sandburg autographs a book in the Lincoln Bedroom of the White House. Sandburg is in Washington to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His brother-in-law, Edward Steichen, visits with Lady Bird Johnson to the left. September 1964 (CARL Museum Collection)



**Figure 1.10** Carl and Lilian Sandburg, Edward Steichen and his wife, Joanna and Stewart and Lee Udall visit in the Lincoln Bedroom, a fitting place for the Lincoln biographer. Sandburg is in Washington DC to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. September 1964 (CARL Museum Collection).

<sup>14</sup> Finch, 35.

<sup>15</sup> 40th Anniversary, National Historic Preservation Act, <http://www.nps.gov/history/40th/> (Accessed January 2, 2013).



**Figure 1.11** Lady Bird Johnson stands outside the White House with Carl and Lilian Sandburg. September 1964 (CARL Museum Collection).



**Figure 1.12** Lady Bird Johnson chats with Carl Sandburg and Edward Steichen as they walk outside the White House. Her husband, President Johnson, had great respect for the honored American poet. September 1964 (CARL Museum Collection).

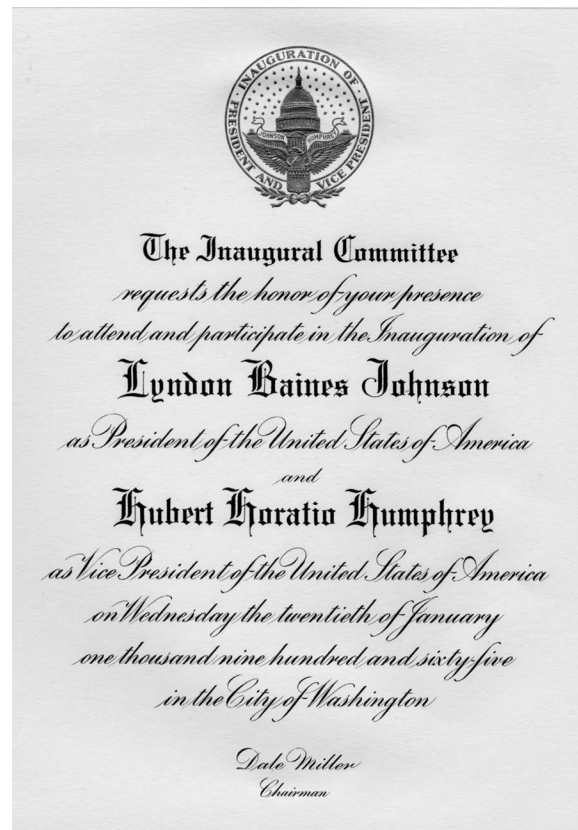
accept the award. While in the nation's capital, the Sandburgs, along with her brother, renown photographer Edward Steichen and his wife Joanna, visited with the Udalls and Lady Bird Johnson in the Lincoln bedroom, a fitting location for the Lincoln biographer.<sup>16</sup>

Penelope Niven writes that this would be "the last time Sandburg would venture far from the

sanctuary of his home."<sup>17</sup> His health had begun to decline around 1963, and he retreated to Connemara to spend his remaining years there. As Mrs. Sandburg wrote to Udall on February 26, 1965, "We are not planning any trips to Washington. Helga and Dr. Crile both think, as do I, that Carl is happier at our farm home here in the mountains with his books and records and quiet family life."<sup>18</sup> President Johnson kept in touch with Sandburg, sending him a telegram on January 6, 1966, to celebrate his 88th birthday: "You once wrote that 'The people will live on.' Thanks to you the people live on with a deeper insight into their nation, their fellow citizens and their own inherent dignity; you spoke to them in verse; you sang to them of their traditions; you wrote to them of

<sup>17</sup> Niven, 696.

<sup>18</sup> Lilian Sandburg to Stewart Udall, February 26, 1965, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.



**Figure 1.13** This invitation to President Johnson's inauguration in January 1965 reflects the strong relationship that had developed between Sandburg and the President. Johnson would sign the authorizing legislation to add Connemara to the National Park Service. (CARL Museum Collection).

<sup>16</sup> Finch, 100.



Lincoln's greatness and of the greatness of the land that produced him."<sup>19</sup>

The extent to which Carl and Lilian Sandburg communicated with Udall during Carl's last few years is unclear from available archival sources. A letter from Mrs. Sandburg to Udall in November 1968 references a meeting with Mrs. Udall "two years ago at the White House," which would have been 1966, but there is no mention of her husband's presence at that occasion. Perhaps Lilian was referencing their visit in 1964 to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.<sup>20</sup> Carl Sandburg passed away at Connemara on July 22, 1967, at the age of 89. Hearing of his death, President Johnson stated, "It is our special pride and fortune as Americans that we will always hear Carl Sandburg's voice within ourselves."<sup>21</sup>

The family held his memorial two days later, on July 24, at St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church in Flat Rock. His death and the service received attention not only in the local newspapers, where the *Times News* called him "the embodiment of an American ideal," but also in national news outlets such as the *New York Times*. The private seventeen-minute memorial addressed 58 mourners, including Mrs. Sandburg and her family, her brother Edward Steichen and his wife, Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Sandburg's friend and fellow writer Harry Golden, and several neighbors. Following the ceremony, Sandburg's body was cremated and the ashes buried in his hometown of Galesburg, Illinois. An article in the *New York Times* noted that the family was planning "a public memorial service [that] will be arranged in the fall, probably in Chicago."<sup>22</sup>

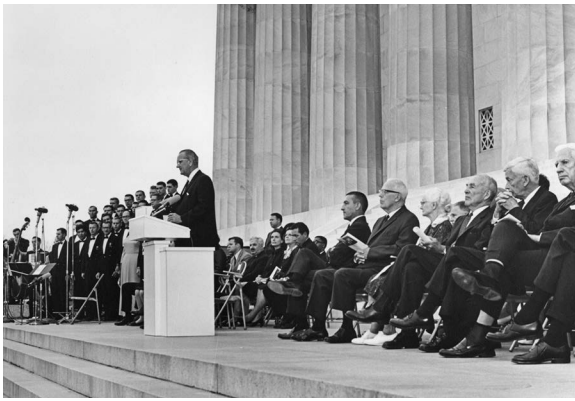
On the day of Carl's memorial service, Secretary Udall and his wife Lee wrote to Mrs. Sandburg

expressing their condolences at Sandburg's death. "What a gorgeous, lovely poet of a man Carl was—and how great it was that you and the country had him as a national treasure so many rich years."<sup>23</sup> Former Udall staff member Boyd Finch wrote that Udall, saddened by the loss of the second of his "cherished American poets," initiated the idea of a memorial service in Washington DC. Udall was "determined" to have the service at the Lincoln Memorial, Finch recalls, stating, "I could do that. I had the Park Service."<sup>24</sup> Udall wrote to Mrs. Sandburg to suggest the idea, proposing the creation of a committee to issue special invitations and sharing some of the thoughts he had discussed with Helga.<sup>25</sup> Lilian Sandburg agreed, responding to Udall on August 13: "Your plans are well-considered in every way. Nothing could be more appropriate than an outdoor service on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial." She added, "I am very happy to hear that you are presently going ahead with preparations."<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Sandburg sent a list of guests to whom she hoped Udall would extend invitations.<sup>27</sup> In the press release announcing the event, Udall stated that it would be a simple ceremony, what Sandburg would have wanted, declaring, "Nations are judged by the homage they pay their finest poets."<sup>28</sup>

The memorial service occurred on Sunday, September 17, 1967, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Udall had recommended Mark Van Doren and Archibald MacLeish to deliver the eulogies, to which Mrs. Sandburg agreed, and both participated. Guitarist Charlie Byrd played two folksongs, again a suggestion that Mrs. Sandburg liked, claiming it was "so fitting for Carl," and Jessye Norman, later joined by a choir, sang four songs, two of which were recommended by Mrs.

- 19 President Lyndon Johnson to Carl Sandburg, telegram, January 6, 1966, CARL Museum Collection.
- 20 Mrs. Carl Sandburg to Stewart Udall, November 2, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.
- 21 "National Memorial Set for Carl Sandburg September 17, Washington," press release, September 3, 1967, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
- 22 "A Sandburg Poem Inspires Service," *New York Times*, July 25, 1967; "Sandburg Hailed by His Neighbors," *New York Times*, July 24, 1967, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site File, HFC Archive.

- 23 Stewart and Lee Udall to Mrs. Carl Sandburg, July 24, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.
- 24 Finch, 82.
- 25 Stewart Udall to Lilian "Paula" Sandburg, August 10, 1967, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
- 26 Lilian Sandburg to Stewart Udall, August 13, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.
- 27 Lilian Sandburg to Stewart Udall, August 23, 1967, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
- 28 "National Memorial Set for Carl Sandburg September 17, Washington," press release, September 3, 1967.



**Figure 1.14** President Lyndon Johnson speaks at the Carl Sandburg Memorial Service at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. Stewart Udall and Mrs. Sandburg are sitting in the front row. (CARL Museum Collection). Photograph by the National Park Service.



**Figure 1.15** President Lyndon Johnson and Mrs. Carl Sandburg greet guests at the memorial service held in Washington DC. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, a park supporter, stands to the left. (CARL Museum Collection). Photograph by the National Park Service.

Sandburg.<sup>29</sup> Though unannounced due to the intensity of the Vietnam War protests at the time, President Johnson appeared at the service to offer his eulogies, concluding, "I will miss him; we will all miss him. There will not be one like him again." Afterwards, Johnson wrote a formal note of appreciation to Udall for organizing the service, and Udall later recalled, "It was the nicest thing Johnson ever did for me."<sup>30</sup>

## Proposing a National Park

When and how the proposal to acquire the Sandburg farm for a national park emerged is not known for certain, but all of the sources attribute the idea to both Udall and local North Carolina

Congressman Roy A. Taylor. The 1971 Master Plan for the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site notes that "shortly after" Sandburg's death, Taylor and Udall "initiated action that would lead to authorization of the Carl Sandburg Farm."<sup>31</sup> Oral tradition at the park suggests that Udall had hoped to incorporate the home of an American poet into the National Park Service (NPS) system and that he had attempted, unsuccessfully, to add the home of his close friend Robert Frost. "There was some feeling of loss because the Robert Frost Home had not become a part of the service," recalled Warren Weber, who served as the second curator of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS).<sup>32</sup> When Sandburg passed away, Udall saw an opportunity to bring the home of another favorite poet into the National Park Service.

Whether Udall had discussed the idea of creating a national park at Connemara with the Sandburg family prior to Sandburg's death cannot be substantiated through the available written sources, as no documents survive that record any such conversations. The only support for this perspective comes from oral histories. Biographer Penelope Niven recalls hearing from close family associates during her oral history project that the Sandburgs had discussed the option of creating a park and had made the decision to pursue this idea before Sandburg died. She reflected that given the "national figure that he was" at that time, "it was a logical extension to make his home a national park."<sup>33</sup>

Paula Steichen Polega, Carl Sandburg's granddaughter, recalled a similar account. Her mother, Helga, had an apartment in Washington DC during the 1960s and she had "gotten to know many of the personalities in Washington," including Stewart and Lee Udall. Polega remembers hearing that Udall was disappointed that Robert Frost's home "had slipped by the Department of the Interior because of procrastination on the department's part and a certain stubbornness on the part of one of the daughters." As a result, Udall was "very eager" to

29 Sandburg to Udall, August 13, 1967; "Carl Sandburg: A Service at the Lincoln Memorial," September 17, 1967, CARL Park Archive.

30 Finch, 82-83.

31 Master Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, July 31, 1971, 3, CARL Park Archive.

32 Warren Weber, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, March 29, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

33 Penny Niven, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, October 20, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

bring Connemara into the National Park system. "So he was the one who really put it through," Polega recalled. "He had almost cemented it with Helga before my grandfather had died, that when he died, the department would come and look at it."<sup>34</sup>

Ronald Thoman, the second park superintendent at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, believes that the idea for the park was a "done deal" before Sandburg died. He had heard that Sandburg and Udall had met and negotiated about the park, though Thoman was not sure which party initiated the conversation. He recalls that Sandburg was trying to "make sure his family was taken care of when he died."<sup>35</sup> In contrast, Warren Weber heard the initial contact was made after Sandburg died. Granville Liles, superintendent at the Blue Ridge Parkway told Weber that Congressman Roy Taylor "contacted Mrs. Sandburg almost immediately after Sandburg died, either before the funeral or right after the funeral, and she was very open to it. She was very willing to have this become a memorial to her husband."<sup>36</sup>

While written documentation cannot provide definite proof for any of these accounts, surviving correspondence confirms that Mrs. Sandburg invited Udall to visit Connemara when she talked with him at the national memorial service in Washington D.C.<sup>37</sup> Although the purpose of the visit was not officially stated in the letter, both must have understood that Udall was coming to see if the property would be appropriate for inclusion in the National Park Service. An October 4, 1967, letter Mrs. Sandburg wrote to Udall reveals that the two had discussed a proposed park by that point. The letter acknowledges that she had heard from Helga that the Udalls would be coming later that month. "I am so glad that the government

is interested in preserving Connemara for the country," she wrote, since "Carl loved Connemara more than any of the places where we have lived." Mrs. Sandburg invited the Udalls to stay at her home and hoped that they would be prepared for some hiking during their visit.<sup>38</sup>

Udall had also discussed the idea of the park with Congressman Taylor at the Washington memorial



**Figure 1.16** Congressman Roy Taylor stands with President John F. Kennedy on August 10, 1961, as he signs Taylor's bill authorizing a study of a proposed extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway from Beech Gap to a point near Atlanta. Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 28804.

service. Born in Vader, Washington, in 1910, Taylor moved to Candler, North Carolina, as a young child. After attending Asheville-Biltmore College and Maryville College in Tennessee, he completed his studies at Asheville University Law School in 1936 and began practicing law in Asheville. Taylor served as a member of the North Carolina General Assembly from 1947 to 1949 and again from 1951 to 1953 before being elected as a Democrat to the 86th Congress in 1959 to fill the position vacated by David Hall, who had died. Taylor was reelected to a full term in 1960. He became a member of the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, and in January 1967, he assumed the post as chairman of that committee.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the fact that the Blue Ridge Parkway was located in Taylor's district sparked his interest in serving on this committee.

34 Paula Steichen Polega, interviewer unknown, January 23, 1973, transcription, September 2006, CARL Park Archive. Ronald Thoman, superintendent from 1973-5, also heard this story; see Ronald Thoman, interview with Jay Stevens, July 29, 2003, transcript, CARL Park Archive, and Ronald Thoman, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, August 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

35 Ronald Thoman, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, August 1, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

36 Weber, interview, 2011. He reports hearing this story from a presentation that Granville Liles made at the park.

37 Sandburg to Udall, November 2, 1967.

38 Mrs. Carl Sandburg to Stewart Udall, October 4, 1967, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

39 Collection Description, May 28, 2001, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville. [http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/taylor/default\\_taylor.html](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/taylor/default_taylor.html) (Accessed August 2, 2011).



Superintendent Thoman describes Taylor as "real dynamic and real supportive of the Park Service, and he was smart enough to know that as the chair of that subcommittee, that's how he was going to make his name." He was "very active working with Hartzog in creating new parks."<sup>40</sup> NPS Director George Hartzog praised Taylor on his appointment as chairman, noting, "I have worked closely with him since becoming Director of the National Park Service in January 1964. He has contributed generously of his time and talents to all facets of our program."<sup>41</sup>

Taylor formally initiated the proposal to create a park by writing to the National Park Service soon after Sandburg died and suggesting a study of Connemara. Thoman believed that "it was a feather in his cap and with his constituency to get a national park located in his district."<sup>42</sup> The idea created a buzz in the Flat Rock community. E. B. Quinn, the postmaster in Flat Rock and the former chamber of commerce director, wrote to Taylor on August 3, "A great deal of local interest is being expressed in the possibility that the Federal Government might acquire the Carl Sandburg property for use as a National Park, museum or shrine." Quinn suggested that the historical association with Christopher Memminger be added to the property's significance. He urged Taylor to "look into the possibility of bringing [the park] about," and offered to help arrange a visit of local people to Washington to support the cause.<sup>43</sup> On August 11, Taylor sent a copy of this letter to Hartzog, requesting "any suggestions that you have as to steps that should be taken."<sup>44</sup> Deputy NPS Director Harthorn L. Bill responded on August 23, 1967, that the Park Service would pursue this request. The first step would require a study to determine the national significance of the property, to be reviewed by the secretary of the interior's Advisory Board. If the Advisory Board approved the proposal, the Park Service could pursue additional studies to determine "suitability

and feasibility for inclusion in the National Park System." Bill agreed to initiate a "study of sites related to Carl Sandburg" as soon as possible.<sup>45</sup>

The creation of a new park requires the support of a congressman and senator to introduce a bill into their respective houses of Congress. Taylor was eager to introduce the legislation.<sup>46</sup> Luckily, he was not only the hometown booster but he was also the chairman of the subcommittee that needed to pass the legislation to go the House floor. Pleased to have such an enthusiastic ally, Udall assisted Taylor by sending "a draft of a bill which would authorize the establishment" of the park. The secretary warned that the bill "has been drafted as a service to you," but it had not been cleared by the Bureau of the Budget.<sup>47</sup> Taylor used this example to produce H.R. 13099, which he introduced to the 90th Congress on September 25, 1967. The bill proposed to authorize the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site, "where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life, comprising approximately two hundred and sixty-eight acres."<sup>48</sup>

"Shortly after" Congressman Taylor introduced the legislation, Secretary Udall, NPS Director George Hartzog, and Mrs. Sandburg "became involved in the proposal."<sup>49</sup> Taylor wrote to Udall on September 28 that he had had "a delightful conversation" with Mrs. Sandburg about the plan and that she "would be pleased to see it become a historic site," though she said that she would prefer to live there for a few more years. He included a copy of a letter Mrs. Sandburg had sent him on September 27, which, he notes, "points out reasons

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40 Thoman, interview, 2011.

41 "Statement of George B. Hartzog, Jr, Director, National Park Service, Before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee," January 30, 1967, 1, Hartzog papers, HFC Archive.

42 Thoman, interview, 2011.

43 E. B. Quinn to Roy A. Taylor, August 3, 1967, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site File, WASO Files.

44 Roy Taylor to George Hartzog, August 11, 1968, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site File, WASO Files.

45 Harthorn L. Bill to Roy Taylor, August 23, 1967, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site File, WASO Files.

46 William Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 138.

47 Stewart Udall to Roy Taylor, September 2, 1968, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site File, WASO Files. The second number of the date is missing. It must be after the memorial on September 17, because the letter is written in response to their conversation. The bill was attached to this letter. A letter from Udall dated September 21 notes that this draft bill has been sent.

48 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, Washington, DC, April 16-18, 1968, 78 (hereafter cited as Minutes, Advisory Board), HFC Archives; 90th Congress, H.R. 13099, September 25, 1967, HFC Archive.

49 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board, 79.



**Figure 1.17** The Sandburgs' dining room in 1967. This photograph was taken by the National Park Service to use in the proposal for the new park. Sandburg's books were all over the house, including this room. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

why the Flat Rock property is the most suitable place for a Carl Sandburg Historic Site."<sup>50</sup> All participants clearly understood that a case would have to be made for the Flat Rock home over Carl Sandburg's previous residences. At the end of her letter outlining the strong connection between Carl Sandburg and Connemara, Mrs. Sandburg commented that people came to visit the farm and often asked if it were open to the public.<sup>51</sup>

Local residents heard about Udall's interest. The speedy development of the park proposal caught the attention of at least one regional constituent. On October 21, J. M. Gaines from Brevard, North Carolina, wrote to Secretary Udall, whom Mr. Taylor told him had "shown a great amount of interest in the matter," to ask, "Is it usual to be so hasty in adding a National Historic Site (Sandburg died only last July 22)?" Acting Park Service Director Howard Baker responded that, indeed, Udall "is very interested in commemorating the life and literary contributions of such recent poets as Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost." He noted that the NPS was studying sites associated with both of these poets, but that the Park Service remained very interested in Connemara. Baker explained that the National Survey of Historic Sites, conducted by the NPS, had already recognized the homes of many writers for inclusion as National Historic Landmarks, including Walt Whitman, Edgar Allen

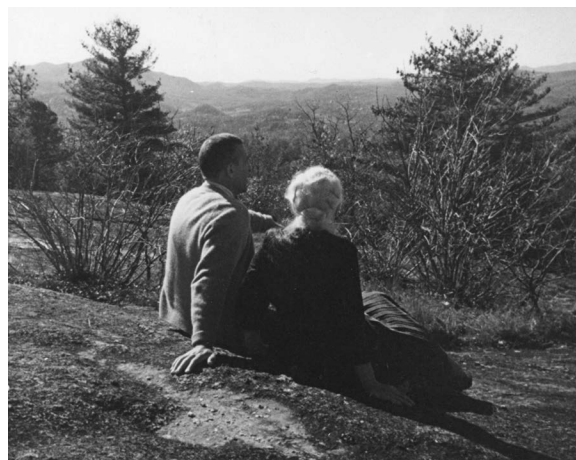
Poe, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Joel Chandler Harris, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau. Although historical perspective was usually assessed over time, Baker argued that the "significant productivity" of both Sandburg and Frost had occurred over a long period of time, and they had already achieved stature as "great figures in American literary history."<sup>52</sup>

Stewart and Lee Udall's visit to Connemara on October 27, 1967, clearly convinced the secretary of the significance of the property. The Udalls enjoyed a weekend with Mrs. Sandburg and her

- 52 J. M. Gaines to Stewart Udall, October 31, 1967, and Howard Baker to J. M. Gaines, November 17, 1967, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.



**Figure 1.18** Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall visits with Mrs. Sandburg in the Living Room at Connemara during his October visit to the farm. Udall was so impressed by the property that he worked diligently to ensure Connemara became a national park. October 26, 1967 (CARL Museum Collection). Used with permission of Paula Steichen Polega.



**Figure 1.19** Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall visits Mrs. Sandburg at Connemara on October 27, 1967, and they hike to the top of Little Glassy Mountain. "What a glorious view to greet us as we walk to the top of Glassy Mountain," wrote Stewart Udall on this photograph. October 27, 1967 (CARL Museum Collection).

- 50 Roy A. Taylor to Stewart L. Udall, September 28, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.
- 51 Mrs. Carl Sandburg to Roy A. Taylor, September 27, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.

daughters and hiked to the top of Little Glassy Mountain, one of Carl's favorite places. On October 30, after his return to Washington, Udall talked with both Taylor and Hartzog about his trip and communicated his strong conviction that the park should be created and the urgency for taking action. With their support, he then wrote to Mrs. Sandburg the following day, "Naturally I came back convinced that the estate would make a magnificent historical site." He added that he had spoken with Roy Taylor "to advise him of my personal enthusiasm for his bill and my hope that action can be expedited so that the legislation might become law before Congress adjourns next year." Udall also told Mrs. Sandburg that Hartzog was "planning to send a three- or four-man team on November 7 to prepare an official report and study which would be used by my Department and the Congress in forming a final judgment on the legislation"<sup>53</sup> In an official memo of support to Hartzog on November 1, Udall expressed that the "house itself readily qualifies as a National Historic Landmark," based on its rich history with Memminger and its preserved landscape. "Most important of all," he added, were "the furnishings and mementos of a 'Great American,'" Carl Sandburg.<sup>54</sup>

Udall warned Hartzog that the Park Service would need to act quickly. Mrs. Sandburg was agreeable to turning over her home to the Park Service "in substantially its present condition," including "the accumulated books and papers and memorabilia of a long colorful lifetime." However, Udall worried that she was 84, which "naturally imposes an element of haste." Udall was confident that Taylor, as chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee of the House, could help pass the authorizing legislature in 1968 "if we are able to get a report prepared and cleared through Budget by, say, late January." If the planning team recommended National Historic Site status, Udall believed that

the 90th Congress could approve the authorizing legislation.<sup>55</sup>

The project continued on a fast track. In their October 30 meeting, Hartzog told Udall that he



**Figure 1.20** NPS Director George Hartzog strongly supported developing Connemara into a national park commemorating Carl Sandburg. (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection, HFC Archive).

thought that the presence of Sandburg's home in Roy Taylor's district would help advance the proposal. Recognizing that "the Secretary is anxious that our team" go to Connemara as soon as possible, Hartzog sent Assistant Directors Theodor Swem and William Everhart to visit the site. Udall requested that the team include Roy Basler, poet and literary specialist of the Library of Congress. Udall asked to receive a report no later than December 15, "with the idea that we will have legislation ready to send to the Hill in January."<sup>56</sup> Swem, Everhart, and Basler visited the Sandburg home from November 6 through 9, during the week of the 57th Advisory Board meeting, to gather information for the report.<sup>57</sup> NPS photographer Cecil Stroughton came to Flat Rock to take photographs for the proposal.

Theodor Swem expedited the report preparation, writing to the Office of Resource Planning (ORP) at the Washington Service Center to obtain the

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53 Stewart Udall to Paula Sandburg, October 31, 1967, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

54 Stewart Udall to Assistant Secretary Cain and Director Hartzog, memorandum, November 1, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.

55 Stewart Udall to Assistant Secretary Glass and Director Hartzog, memorandum, November 1, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers (AZ 372). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.

56 George B. Hartzog to Swem, Everhart, and Stewart, follow-up slip, October 30, 1967, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.

57 Sandburg to Udall, November 2, 1967. Mrs. Sandburg added that she was looking forward to the visitors on Tuesday or Wednesday.





**Figure 1.21** NPS photographer Cecil Stroughton took photos of Connemara in late 1967 for use in the park proposal. Featured here is the Day Room. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

data needed for congressional hearings. Swem requested staffing plans and justifications, supporting costs, a development schedule, program summary, landownership and cost estimates, boundary map and description, general development plan, vicinity map, photographs, budget data, attendance estimates, and a fact sheet on the Flat Rock Playhouse. The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation had already been asked to prepare a statement of historical significance. Swem suggested that it include "the historical significance of Carl Sandburg, the man" and "Sandburg's relationship to this site—dates of occupancy, literature written here, associations with prominent people of this site, etc." In addition, he recommended including any other historical values, including Memminger's occupancy.<sup>58</sup>

In December 1967, the Office of Resource Planning completed the first draft of A Master Plan for Proposed Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic

Site, meeting Udall's deadline.<sup>59</sup> The goal of this initial proposal was to provide information for the National Historic Site review by the National Parks Advisory Board, scheduled for April, and for the upcoming congressional hearings, which Udall hoped would occur in the summer of 1968.<sup>60</sup> Designed to establish "policy guides for the National Park Service's uses of the site for operating, interpreting, and maintaining the farm estate," the plan suggested that the farm focus on



**Figure 1.22** Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall participated in the swearing in ceremony for new NPS Director George B. Hartzog Jr. on January 8, 1964. (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection, HFC Archive).

the "Sandburg ownership and family occupancy." In establishing significance, the authors quoted President Johnson's statement that Sandburg "was more than the Voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America." The proposal established the "priority of needs" as "(1) acquisition of property, (2) preparation of historic structure report, Interpretive Prospectus, and Furnishing Plan, (3) Building and Grounds Development Plans, and (4) Management plans fiscal and priority programs for development and maintenance of buildings and grounds." The Park Service estimated annual visitation at 65,000, land acquisition costs of \$400,000, and all visitor developments at \$990,000.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities (Theodor Swem) to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC, memorandum, December 4, 1967, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.

<sup>59</sup> Office of Resource Planning, Washington Service Center, A Master Plan for the Proposed Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site, National Park Service, December 1967, RG 79, Box 989, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II.

<sup>60</sup> Master Plan, 1971, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Office of Resource Planning, Master Plan, December 1967.

## Expanding the Park Service

Udall's request to create a park at Carl Sandburg's home fell on sympathetic ears with Park Service Director George B. Hartzog Jr. Appointed by President Johnson at the request of Secretary Udall in January 1964, Hartzog embarked on one of the most ambitious expansion programs in National Park Service history. As Assistant Director Everhart later recalled, "I think that with the coming together of President Johnson, Stewart Udall, and Hartzog for the Great Society, there was really sort of a revolution . . . During that time, all things



**Figure 1.23** George Hartzog and Stewart Udall worked together to shepherd the park proposal for the Carl Sandburg Home in Flat Rock through the Advisory Committee and then the Congress in less than a year. 1966 (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection, HFC Archive).

were possible and the Park Service started looking where it had never looked before for parks and for activities.”<sup>62</sup>

As the National Park Service “Mission 66” initiative, a ten-year program to improve infrastructure and “upgrade” the system, came to a close, Hartzog proclaimed a new agenda for the Park Service “that could achieve goals of basic importance to a Great Society.”<sup>63</sup> In a July 10, 1964, address, Hartzog outlined these new goals for the Park Service, which included expanding the system and communicating “the significance of the American heritage through the National Park System.” Lively, passionate, and politically savvy, Hartzog proposed a plan to add 76 new

parks and create a “completed National Park System.” Hartzog’s new management policy, signed by Secretary Udall, argued that the Park Service needed new historic, natural, and recreational sites to create a more accurate representation of America’s treasures. Udall’s successor in 1969, Walter Hickel, also supported Hartzog’s vision, arguing, “There are serious gaps and inadequacies which must be remedied while opportunities still exist if the System is to fulfill the people’s need.”<sup>64</sup> Hartzog’s hard work and vision brought immediate growth: ten new parks authorized in 1964, fourteen in 1965, ten in 1966, and two in 1967. Another ten would be approved in 1968, when Hartzog and Udall hoped the Carl Sandburg proposal would be heard in Congress. During the Hartzog directorship, which lasted until 1972, the Park Service added 69 new parks, the majority of which, 35, were historical in character.<sup>65</sup>

Just as the criteria for the new National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark programs represented a broad swath of American history beyond more traditional political and architectural history, so too was the National Park Service aspiring to create parks that would interpret a wider segment of American life. “To identify the gaps in the System,” Hartzog and his staff recommended adding sites based on the new thematic framework developed for the National Register of Historic Places. While one-quarter of the sites added during the Hartzog years were presidential homes, along with a few new military history sites, the majority of the new parks created during Hartzog’s directorship reflected the new thematic structures established by the National Park Service.<sup>66</sup>

In its National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, proposed in 1962, the Park Service established 22 “Themes, Subthemes, and Special Studies,” ranging from prehistory to social and humanitarian movements. Category XX focused

62 Janet A. McDonnell, Oral History Interview with George Hartzog, National Park Service, 2007, 23-4, at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/director/hartzog.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/director/hartzog.pdf) (accessed July 12, 2011).  
63 [George Hartzog], “Introduction,” January 15, 1965, Hartzog Papers, Project Zip file.

64 Barry Macintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, (Washington DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1985), 66-68

65 Macintosh, 62-64

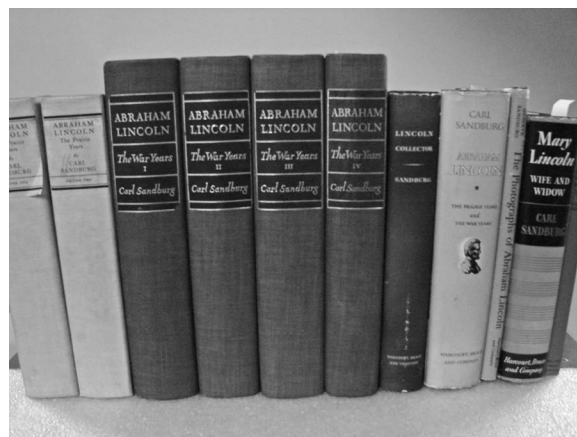
66 Macintosh, 66-68. The papers in Hartzog’s collection at HFC suggest an effort to classify all the national parks according to the new thematic structure created for the National Register of Historic Places. Hartzog and his staff seemed to want to be sure that the national parks reflected all of the themes that were important in American history.



**Figure 1.24** Stewart Udall and the National Park Service experts believed that this property was very significant because visitors could experience the poet at work through the rich collection of artifacts in the house, especially in Sandburg's study. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

on the Arts and Sciences, and one of the subthemes was "Literature, Drama, and Music."<sup>67</sup> A "Program for the Expansion of the National Park System" in Hartzog's 1966 legislative file lists the homes of Robert Frost and Longfellow for possible inclusion in the park system.<sup>68</sup> A second document recording the "Work Load" for the "Recommended Program, New Area Studies," reveals that the Park Service had begun work on proposals for both of these homes between fiscal year (FY) 1966 and 1968, with the preparation of a final report, support data, and a master plan for the Frost home and support data and a master plan for the Longfellow home.<sup>69</sup>

Carl Sandburg's home is not included on any lists in Hartzog's legislative notebooks before 1967 and thus must not have been considered in the proposed list of new Park Service sites. Still, it



**Figure 1.25** Sandburg's biography of President Abraham Lincoln was among his most famous publications. The National Park Service believed that the library that remained at Connemara was one of the site's most valuable features. (CARL Park Archive).

clearly fit the bill for Hartzog's interest in creating parks that reflected American cultural history and particularly literary figures.<sup>70</sup> Now, the Sandburg home had a willing owner, who was prepared to sell to the National Park Service at a very reasonable cost, and an influential congressional sponsor who had already introduced legislation. In contrast, the proposed Longfellow historic site lacked a congressional sponsor and bill and the Frost home did not have an agreement or department report.<sup>71</sup> Hartzog agreed with Udall to include Connemara in the expansion program.

At this time, the National Park Service was advocating the inclusion of homes of literary figures on the National Register for Historic Places. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments approved the Park Service recommendation for the Longfellow house in November 1967. In April 1968, the Park Service would present reports of four homes to the Board, those associated with Robert Frost, Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, and Carl Sandburg. At its fall meeting in October 1968, a study of Ernest Hemingway sites would appear on the agenda.

When the Park Service began preparation of historic context studies for its 22 themes, the report on "Literature, Drama, and Music" was one of the first three studies to be completed. In October 1971, the Advisory Board heard the NPS

67 National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, November 15, 1962, Hartzog Papers, Black Notebook, 1968.

68 Program for the Expansion of the National Park Service, Hartzog Papers, Project X 1966.

69 Recommended Program, New Area Studies and Master Planning, Hartzog Papers, Box Code A64.

70 [Hartzog], "Introduction," January 15, 1965; Secretary of the Interior to Director, memorandum, National Park Service, July 10, 1964, Hartzog Papers.

71 Recommended Program, New Area Studies and Master Planning.





**Figure 1.26** George Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service from 1964-1972, introduced an expansionist agenda to the agency, during which time 69 new parks were added to the NPS System. (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection, HFC Archive).

report about a national survey of historic sites associated with "American authors of poetry, prose, fiction, and drama," which recommended that 22 sites be designated as National Historic Landmarks and an additional 30 be placed in the "other sites considered" category.<sup>72</sup> Two sites related to Edward Lee Masters in Illinois had been recommended for further study, and the Advisory Board suggested that three other sites—the homes of Edgar Allan Poe, Willa Cather, and Thomas Wolfe—be studied further for possible inclusion in the Park Service. The 1971 report recognized that only two structures "related to this survey" were already included in the Park System: Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wayside" and the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.<sup>73</sup>

Superintendent Thoman called Hartzog "one of the greatest visionary directors that the Park Service ever had." He recalled that Hartzog was trying to establish "cultural parks, patterned after what the Japanese were doing, and the Japanese

72 Chief Historian to Steering Committee of 1973 Issue Papers, memorandum, Program support paper, Expansion of the National Park System, March 23, 1971, Hartzog Papers.

73 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board, 6.

even had living poets and living artists as sort of national treasures." Hartzog hoped to establish cultural sites that "weren't necessarily historic as we ordinarily think of historic, but they're important because of the cultural or artistic thing that went on there." The Sandburg property would be a natural extension of this interest in culture.<sup>74</sup>

## Advancing the Park Proposal

Momentum for creating a national park at the Carl Sandburg property built quickly in early 1968. A January 30 memorandum noted that "because of the personal commitment of Secretary Udall and the Director [George Hartzog] to include the Sandburg property in the System at the earliest date in 1968, the plan and concept report have had Secretarial and NPS Washington Office (WASO) Master Plan Review."<sup>75</sup> As the third superintendent of Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Kenneth Hulick, explains, the close relationship between the Udalls and the Sandburgs helped advance the park's development. "I believe it's fair to say that it wouldn't have happened without that relationship, because parks don't get established that quickly after the death of a major character. Somehow that happened very fast."<sup>76</sup>



**Figure 1.27** The Carl Sandburg Home sits in a picturesque setting amongst the rolling hills just outside Flat Rock, North Carolina. This photo shows the farm shortly after Sandburg's death. Ca. 1970-2 (Gordon Gay Scrapbook).

The Park Service moved forward on several fronts simultaneously over the next few months to ensure that all of its work was completed before

74 Thoman, interview, 2011.

75 Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (William R. Failor) To Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, January 30, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

76 Kenneth Hulick, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, August 16, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

the legislative hearings, which they hoped would occur in the summer of 1968. First, NPS staff needed to determine if Connemara was the most significant of the Sandburg homes to be considered for a national park. Acting Chief Historian John McDermott studied eight of the Sandburg homes, from his birthplace in Illinois to Connemara. Records in the WASO files indicate that the Office of New Area Studies and Master Planning corresponded with representatives of the other Sandburg homes to collect information about these properties.<sup>77</sup> McDermott's report, "Historic Sites Associated with Carl Sandburg," completed January 19, 1968, stated that Connemara "has perfect integrity and contains all of Sandburg's personal and literary effects."<sup>78</sup>

Second, the National Park Service began to pursue National Register designation for the farm at Flat Rock. The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act required that all historic parks be determined eligible for and be included in the National Register for Historic Places.<sup>79</sup> The Park Service recommended the Carl Sandburg site not only in the areas of Literature and People but also in Social History and Agriculture. On May 15, Udall wrote to the legislative supporters— North Carolina Senators Sam J. Ervin Jr. and B. Everett Jordan, as well as Congressman Taylor—to inform them that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic

Sites, Buildings and Monuments had determined Connemara eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>80</sup> On June 14, 1968, Mrs. Sandburg received a letter that Connemara "had been found to possess exceptional value in commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States" and was eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark.<sup>81</sup>

Third, the National Park Service continued to study and make revisions to the Master Plan presented to Udall in December 1967. The Park Service scheduled a Master Plan Review for January 10, noting that additional information was still needed, including a staffing summary, personal services and supporting costs, and a development schedule and program summary, as required in the Park Planning Handbook.<sup>82</sup> The planning team suggested that the park be administered as part of the "cluster" under the supervision of the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway. NPS staff continued to fill in the missing pieces of the proposal: recommendations for personnel services, a budget for staffing and other costs, projected visitation statistics, and a development schedule

77 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.

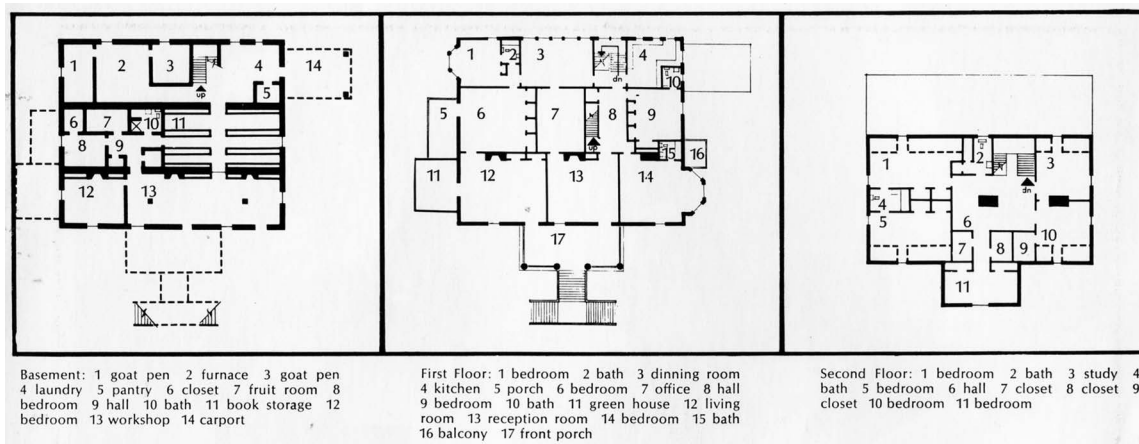
78 John D. McDermott, The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Special Report, Historic Sites Associated with Carl Sandburg, National Park Service Division of History, January 19, 1968, 4019/1, Box 1, Folder 5, CARL Park Archive.

79 Macintosh, 68.

80 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.

81 Raymond L. Freeman to Mrs. Carl Sandburg, June 14, 1968, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-1972 File, WASO Files. The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a National Historical Landmark on October 17, 1968, concurrent with President Johnson signing the authorization bill for the park.

82 Chief, Division of New Area Studies and Master Planning, (John W. Bright) to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC, memorandum, January 4, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.



**Figure 1.28** The National Park Service staff visited Connemara and documented the uses of the rooms throughout the Main House for the proposal that was shared with Congress in 1968. 1968 Proposal.

and cost estimates to include the preservation of the buildings and the establishment of roads, trails, and utilities. Specific plans were created for the house, exhibits, furnishings, and interpretive devices, including converting the garage into an information center. The Master Plan called for the inclusion of the Flat Rock Playhouse within the boundaries of the proposed national historic site, but the theater and its facilities were not "planned for federal acquisition."<sup>83</sup> The team proposed that the park establish a cooperative agreement with the Playhouse to partner on programming related to Sandburg. As Udall had requested, the Development Schedule and Costs were completed by the end of January and the approval process finalized on February 12, 1968.<sup>84</sup> The Park Service anticipated that the legislative review might occur "at any time" and continued to review and revise the plan according to appropriate Park Service policies and format.<sup>85</sup>

Fourth, the Park Service pursued the acquisition of an option to purchase the Sandburg farm. The National Park Service staff wanted to be sure to have an option on the site before presenting the proposal to Congress to certify that the land cost estimates would be enough to purchase the property.<sup>86</sup> On February 8, Lilian Steichen Sandburg officially signed an option to sell Connemara to the U.S. government for \$200,000, valid for 18 months.<sup>87</sup>

Also on February 8, Udall wrote to Mrs. Sandburg to inform her that the "study and preliminary work are now completed." That morning, he and Congressman Taylor held a joint press conference to announce that his department "warmly and enthusiastically endorsed the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site legislation introduced by

Congressman Roy Taylor."<sup>88</sup> The press release, dated February 9, stated that the Park Service "is signing an option" with Sandburg's widow "subject to passage of a bill by Congress," in the neighborhood of \$200,000, and Hartzog is quoted as exclaiming, "It's a bargain!"<sup>89</sup> Udall recognized much work still needed to be done to complete the deal. As he expressed to Mrs. Sandburg, now it was time to ensure that Taylor's bill passed "during this session," no doubt concerned about what would happen in the upcoming election. Udall believed this task could be accomplished "with an all-out effort," but "we might need a few breaks along the way to complete action before Congress adjourns in August." Perhaps to ease her anxiety, he went on to say that "I want you to know that we are bending every effort here in this Department to get legislation to the President's desk before adjournment." Udall concluded that "we are on schedule and the prospect is bright for successful action this year." He added a handwritten personal note: "Please call me collect if there are any problems." Udall also sent along a copy of the newly-completed National Park Service study of the property.<sup>90</sup>

Fifth, on a related note, the Park Service was pursuing options to purchase additional parcels of adjacent land to add to the park, which Acting Chief of New Area Studies, John Bright, hoped could be obtained before congressional hearings.<sup>91</sup> On February 20, Bright, along with Marc Sagan and Clifford Harriman from his office, met with Hendersonville residents, particularly those owning adjacent tracts to discuss the park. The team praised the work of E. B. Quinn, Hendersonville postmaster and a close friend of Roy Taylor, who had helped them gain local support from the residents, but they expressed

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83 Legislative Notebook, CARL Park Archive.

84 Carl Sandburg National Historic Site (Proposed) Development Schedule, January 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

85 Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (William R. Failor) to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, January 30, 1968.

86 Acting Chief, Division of New Area Studies and Master Planning, (John W. Bright) to Chief, Division of Land and Water Rights, memorandum, January 24, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

87 Legislative Notebook, CARL Park Archive.

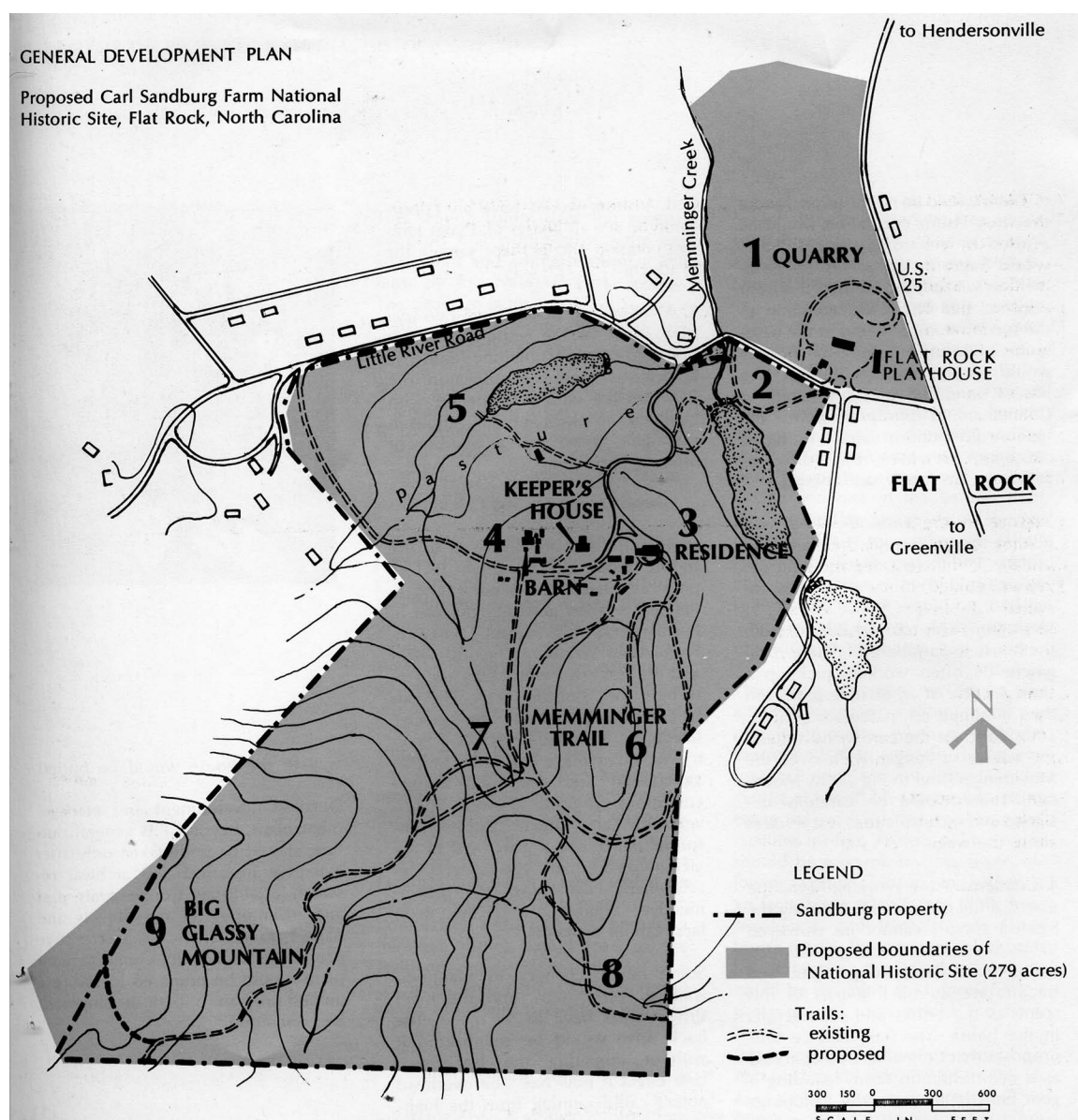
88 Stewart Udall to Lilian Sandburg, February 8, 1968, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

89 Secretary of the Interior, "Udall Endorses Acquisition of Carl Sandburg Park as National Historic Site," press release, February 9, 1967 Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The date of 1967 is incorrect; it was clearly issued in 1968 because it accompanied the letter Udall wrote to Mrs. Sandburg on this date and the press release references her as a widow.

90 Udall to Sandburg, February 8, 1968.

91 Acting Chief, Division of New Area Studies and Master Planning, (John W. Bright) to Chief, Division of Land and Water Rights, memorandum, January 24, 1968.





**Figure 1.29** To prepare the first proposal to submit to Congress for consideration, the National Park Service staff created this General Development Plan. The map shows both the boundaries of the Sandburg's property and those recommended for the proposed park. Note that the plan includes the Quarry and the Flat Rock Playhouse in the proposed park boundaries as well as some land adjacent to Big Glassy Mountain. 1968 Proposal.

concern that at least one of the residents opposed selling to the Park Service. Bright, Sagan, and Harriman also communicated with the director of the Flat Rock Playhouse to discuss how the two entities—the park and the Playhouse—might cooperate, explaining that the National Park Service was not interested in purchasing or taking over operations of the Playhouse. The NPS representatives talked with local residents about a variety of issues: where the Park Service might acquire some goats from Mrs. Sandburg's herd line, what other resources might be in the area, and whether the Park Service could obtain a new Sandburg exhibit currently on display in New York. The NPS staff noted that many of the

residents they met seemed disappointed that the Memminger name was not included in any press releases, and the team advised that perhaps this area of significance should be included in the future to garner more local support.<sup>92</sup>

The team suggested that the National Park Service add several additional pieces of land to the proposal. Hartzog wrote to the Legislative Council, Office of the Solicitor, on February 27 to

<sup>92</sup> John W. Bright, Clifford J. Harriman, and Marc Sagan to Assistant Directors, Cooperative Activities, Operations, and Interpretation, memorandum, March 4, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

amend Taylor's bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire "such adjacent or related property as the Secretary may deem necessary." The proposed 38 acres would be used for access roads, overlooks, and visitors services facilities "without encroaching upon the simple pastoral atmosphere of Connemara," increasing the total cost for land acquisition to \$415,000.<sup>93</sup>



**Figure 1.30** The Sandburgs pose in the barnyard in 1952. From left, Janet Sandburg, Lillian Sandburg, Paula Steichen Polega, Carl Sandburg, and Helga Sandburg. Some of Mrs. Sandburg's goats join them in the foreground. Late 1952 (CARL Museum Collection). Used with permission of Paula Steichen Polega.

Sixth, a bill to authorize the Sandburg Park needed to be introduced into the U.S. Senate. On February 28, 1968, North Carolina Senators Sam J. Ervin Jr. and B. Everett Jordan introduced Senate Bill S.3050 proposing the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.<sup>94</sup> The National Park Service now had a variety of reports to accompany the bill, including a "Fact Sheet" prepared that month.

By early March 1968, the National Park Service had completed a twelve-page report to share with the Advisory Board and to supply for the congressional hearings. According to a March 9 press release, the report proposed a "three-fold program" that included "preservation of the buildings and grounds as they were in Sandburg's lifetime; use of rooms in the basement of the house and in the garage for interpreting Sandburg as a poet and bearer of American traditions; and operation of Connemara as a demonstration farm including a goat herd of the type the Sandburgs kept." Edward Steichen's montage of Sandburg appeared on the cover, and other Steichen photographs filled the booklet, along with a map

of the proposed park that included the additional recommended acreage.<sup>95</sup> The National Park Service sent 300 copies of the report to Taylor to distribute and additional copies to those interested in the Parkway. Assistant Director Swem's letter to Congressman Taylor updated him on the progress in securing options on the adjacent tracts and expressed some concern about the involvement of the Flat Rock Playhouse.<sup>96</sup>

By April, the National Park Service had completed its planning tasks and prepared for the meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments scheduled for April 16-18 in Washington D.C. On April 18, the Board first considered the report of the eight Carl Sandburg sites in North Carolina, Illinois, and Michigan. This study concluded that none of his Illinois residences—his Galesburg birthplace, the three Sandburg family homes in Galesburg, his apartment in Chicago and home in Maywood, Illinois—had the same significance as Sandburg's homes in Harbert, Michigan, and Flat Rock, North Carolina. Further, the report recommended that only Connemara Farm was significant, because it was here that Sandburg completed much of his most important writing and that his personal and literary effects were preserved.<sup>97</sup> The Advisory Board accepted the report, determining that the Carl Sandburg Farm "has been found to possess exceptional value in commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States."<sup>98</sup>

Also on April 18, the Advisory Board heard and approved the proposal to establish the Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site. The memorandum from Secretary Udall argued that "the preservation and interpretation of the Sandburg farm and literary works and the continued management of the site which he loved as a living farm will lend great insight to future generations, through this one man's example, into

93 Director, National Park Service, to Legislative Counsel, Office of the Solicitor, memorandum, February 27, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

94 Legislative Notebook.

95 National Park Service, Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site: A Proposal, 1968; press release, March 9, 1968, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site file, HFC Archive.

96 Legislative Notebook. The nature of the concern with the Playhouse was not described.

97 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board, 57-8.

98 Stewart Udall to Roy Taylor, May 15, 1968, File 12-B, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.





**Figure 1.31** The Sandburg family enjoyed the outdoors, and daughter Margaret had birdhouses outside the dining room window. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

the whole chapter of American history experience by his generation.”<sup>99</sup>

In the discussion period, Advisory Board members expressed some concern regarding the 50-year rule, which had recently been passed for the National Register of Historic Places. The concept behind the rule is that sufficient time—proposed as 50 years—must be allowed to assess the significance of a historic resource. Nominating the Sandburg property when he had just passed away the previous year seemed to some members as a violation of that rule. Robert Ultey, chief historian of the National Park Service, noted that “This has given the staff a great deal of trouble; however, there has been so much interest shown in recent poets and authors (Frost, Sandburg and Faulkner) that the rule has been relaxed somewhat.” What tipped the balance regarding Connemara for the Park Service, according to Ernest Connelly, was that the property was in “pure” condition. While the Advisory Board agreed and voted to support the proposal, members noted, “It might be well to review the 50-year rule so it can’t be said that the Advisory Board ignores its own rules.”<sup>100</sup>



**Figure 1.32** The Barn at Connemara was the center of Mrs. Sandburg's goat operations. The park proposal recommended the creation of a living farm program. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

## Getting through Congress

Once the Sandburg proposal received the blessing of the Advisory Council, it moved on to Congress in the summer of 1968. This tumultuous year brought its own set of challenges, with escalating conflicts and costs of the Vietnam War, a growing budget deficit, the ongoing civil rights movement, and a wide range of other social and cultural issues. President Johnson experienced all-time low approval ratings that winter, and he announced on March 31 that he would not run for reelection. This decision must have worried both Udall and Taylor for several reasons. Johnson had been a friend of Sandburg, so it was likely he would approve legislation to establish the park. Whether Democrats would hold on to the White House remained uncertain. And even if they did, Udall must have recognized that he would likely not remain as Secretary of the Interior under a new



**Figure 1.33** Carl Sandburg's Bedroom as it appeared in 1967, not long after he passed away. The Sandburg family was willing to transfer most of the personal possessions at the farm to the NPS if a park at Connemara were established. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

99 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board, 41.

100 Minutes of the 58th Meeting of the Advisory Board, 79-80.



**Figure 1.34** Connemara had a large collection of agricultural buildings, including the Stable, Barn, and Milk House shown in this 1967 photograph. The buildings needed repair, so the NPS asked for development funding to complete the necessary preservation work. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

administration. It was time to get the job of passing legislation for the park done.

On June 17, 1968, Udall introduced a recommendation to Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to establish the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. He recommended two changes. First, he proposed that 32 acres of land adjacent to Connemara be incorporated into the site to provide "access roads, overlooks and visitors services facilities" without impacting the historic farm. Second, he requested a change in name to Carl Sandburg Farm Historic Site, based on the March proposal, "to more appropriately emphasize the nature of the site, which we propose to maintain as a working farm." Udall noted that the main reason why the Sandburgs moved from Michigan to North Carolina was for Mrs. Sandburg's farming operations, so the farm was essential to the interpretive program there.<sup>101</sup>

The Subcommittee for National Parks and Recreation began its discussion of the bill on the following day, June 18, with Congressman Taylor presiding. After an "eloquent" presentation by Taylor, Udall made a formal statement to the committee. He believed that the proposed park combined history and the "culture of this country" and illustrated the "type of preservation work we should be doing in the future." In response to the 50-year rule, Udall argued that Carl Sandburg lived to be nearly 90, and he cemented his reputation both as a historian and writer. Further, if the Park Service waited 50 years to acquire the property, the vast array of furnishings would be dispersed, changed, and destroyed, so "we lose really the

opportunity to do something at the right time." A representative from the National Park Service described how the additional 38 acres would be used to provide the "parking area, Visitor Contact Station, information and orientation facilities, comfort stations, and perhaps a small picnic area" to preserve the Sandburg farm in its current condition.<sup>102</sup>

After some humorous discussion about the prospect of creating a living history farm and raising goats, several committee members expressed concern about the price tag, especially given the growing federal budget deficits and the escalating costs of the Vietnam War. Discussion ensued on the cost of and need for the additional land beyond the original Sandburg property. The National Park Service provided a price tag of \$415,000 for land acquisition, which included \$225,000 for the 241-acre Sandburg property and \$190,000 for the additional 38 acres. Congressman Joe Skubitz of Kansas summarized the concerns of legislators when he observed that the cost per acre of the Sandburg property, which he estimated at \$800 an acre, was far less than the \$6,500 per acre he figured for the additional tracts. It appeared to the committee as if local residents were taking advantage of the government. Committee members worried that the government was paying too much for the additional property and suggested that the National Park Service instead "save" money by locating the visitor facilities and parking on the Connemara property itself. While Taylor and Udall expressed concern about the topography of the farm and the impact the visitor facilities would have on that sensitive landscape, Taylor also recognized that committee members were likely to oppose passage of the bill if the additional tracts were included. To avoid delaying "too long in taking action because of the problem over the additional land," Taylor suggested that the NPS staff review the plans and propose a minimal amount of land, and Udall agreed.<sup>103</sup>

NPS staff held a meeting to discuss this issue a few days later, on June 21. By "verbal instruction from the CAM representative," the Office of

101 Stewart Udall to Wayne Aspinall, June 12, 1968, Legislative Notebook.

102 Legislative Notebook.

103 House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, House of Representatives, Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, H.S. 13099, Tuesday, June 18, 1968, Legislative Notebook.

Resource Planning evaluated both off-site and on-site parking alternatives. To collect additional information, the Park Service asked Arnold Gustavson, a landscape architect, and Chester Brooks, acting Chief of Resource Planning, to schedule a field review of these options. When the two men arrived in Flat Rock at 11 a.m. on July 1, they were told by telephone that the congressional committee needed the alternative on-site data by 3 p.m. that day, "resulting in a hurried four-hour site review." The two men reported that they worried about developing and managing the relationship with the Playhouse to secure off-site parking. The team concluded that on-site facilities could be established between the north pond and Little River Road and be screened from the vistas and pastures with evergreen plantings. The team acknowledged that this decision would reduce the size of the parking lot to accommodate only 100 cars.<sup>104</sup> Gustavson and Brooks provided revised cost estimates that were "telephoned" to the House congressional committee by 3 p.m. that afternoon. In response, the National Park Service eliminated all but two of the additional tracts from the proposal.<sup>105</sup>



**Figure 1.35** The Sandburgs entertained guests and enjoyed musical performances in the Front Room. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

Hartzog submitted this revised proposal to Congressman Aspinall on July 2. He noted that the NPS resource planning team conducted

"additional field studies," and after a "careful analysis, including landscape considerations," the team "disclosed that these facilities can be installed within the northern portion of the Sandburg property."<sup>106</sup> The new proposal provided two options: the "original" 279 acres which included the 241-acre Sandburg tract, six acres for the Flat Rock Playhouse, and 32 other acres, and a second "alternative," which included only 247 acres, 241 from the Sandburg family and an additional six acres of the McMillen Property and one-half acre from Mrs. Barnes. The McMillen property was critical, the Park Service argued, because it was located at the top of Little Glassy Mountain, to which Sandburg loved to hike and enjoy the view. The "alternative" cost only \$225,000 compared to \$415,000 for the original plan. The revised proposal reduced the development costs from \$1,019,200 to \$952,200, maintaining \$40,000 for the buildings, increasing utilities from \$85,000 to \$98,000, cutting roads and trails from \$275,000 to \$215,000, and reducing "PS&S 25%" from \$253,000 to \$239,200.<sup>107</sup> A telegram from Congressman Taylor to Lawson Braswell of the *Times-News* on July 3, 1968, stated that the "full House Interior Committee approved the Carl Sandburg National Historic Site Bill this morning."<sup>108</sup>

Throughout the late spring and summer, the National Park Service continued its planning process. A team visited the site in late May to begin development of a more formal Master Site Plan. Participants included Granville Liles, the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway; National Park Service Planner and Interpretive Specialist Rock Comstock, team captain; and a "naturalist, landscape expert, historian, ranger, management specialist and others involved in the

<sup>104</sup> Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning (Chester L. Brooks) to Landscape Architect Lay, memorandum, July 12, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

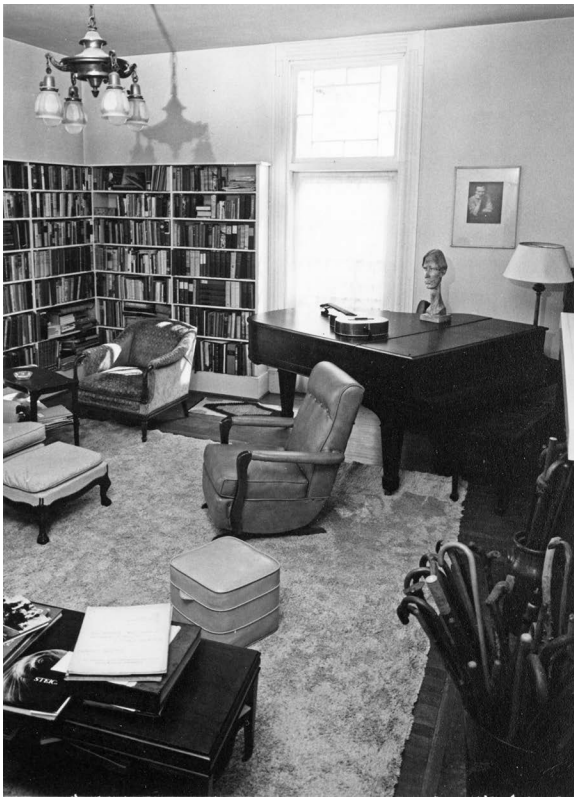
<sup>105</sup> Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (Chester L. Brooks) to Chief, Office of Design and Construction, PSC, memorandum, July 17, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

<sup>106</sup> George Hartzog to Wayne Aspinall, July 2, 1968, Legislative Notebook.

<sup>107</sup> Summary Sheet, Proposed Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site, 90th Congress, July 26, 1968, Legislative Notebook; Carl Sandburg National Historic Site (Proposed) Development Schedule, January 1968, Revised July 1968; Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (Chester L. Brooks) to Chief, Office of Design and Construction, PSC, memorandum, July 17, 1968.

<sup>108</sup> Roy A. Taylor to Lawson Braswell, July 3, 1968, File 12-B, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.





**Figure 1.36** Sandburg's extensive book collection spilled over into many rooms, including the Front Room. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

operation of such a site."<sup>109</sup> Liles had been selected as the "Project Keyman" for the Carl Sandburg proposal in March 1968. Appointed by the Park Service, the purpose of the keyman was "to insure that each active new area proposal is the personally assigned responsibility of a man in the field."<sup>110</sup>

The National Park Service pursued conversations with Mrs. Sandburg about the acquisition of personal property associated with the farm. The proposal for the park argued that the rich collection added to its significance and integrity, including the "vast floor-to-ceiling bookcases, collections of magazines and clippings, boxes of letters, and personal items scattered about." The park would need to be responsible for preserving "the immense library and manuscript

collection."<sup>111</sup> C.J. Harriman and Vera Craig of the National Park Service Museum Branch visited with Mrs. Sandburg, and on July 2, she signed a document that transferred her personal property to the U.S. government should the Congress approve the creation of the park.<sup>112</sup> This agreement included "all household furnishings and personal objects now in Connemara, on view and stored in closets, cupboards, drawers, trunks, etc including linen, china, photographs and Mr. Sandburg's clothing desired by the National Park Service to interpret Carl Sandburg and retain the interior of his home substantially the same as how he left it, except for personal objects of surviving members of the family." The agreement did not convey any of the books or manuscripts, because, the agreement noted, Sandburg had previously sold these to the University of Illinois.<sup>113</sup>

The National Park Service staff hoped to clarify what would happen to the books and manuscripts still at the house, which they considered to be of immense value to the proposed park. In 1955, Sandburg sold his papers and book collection to the University of Illinois library, but the Park Service remained unclear about whether the University would come to collect what Sandburg had created and used after that date. Udall and the NPS staff wanted to ensure that some of this material would remain at Sandburg's home. A November 13, 1967, report by Roy Basler, after his visit, stressed the value of the remaining collections "as a reflection of Sandburg's reading and research," and urged the National Park Service to explore what Basler called a "fuzzy" agreement with the University of Illinois.<sup>114</sup> On July 2, Ralph Lewis from the Branch of Museum Operations wrote to Robert B. Downs, the dean of Library Administration, at the University of Illinois Library to ask if the University intended to leave the remaining books if the site became a national park.<sup>115</sup> Downs responded on July 9 that a University of Illinois librarian had recently

109 "National Park Service is Planning Sandburg Layout," *Times-News*, May 23, 1968, in File 12-A, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

110 Revised Guidelines for Project Keyman, Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities [Theodor Swem] to All Regional Directors, memorandum, March 11, 1968, in Hartzog Papers, Black Notebook Book 2.

111 National Park Service, Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site: A Proposal, 1968, 8, 11.

112 J.C. Harriman, Inspector, Project Operations to Director, memorandum, Acquisition of personal property—Carl Sandburg, memorandum, July 2, 1968, Legislative Notebook.

113 Exhibit A, June 27, 1968, Personal Property Conveyed to the United States, Legislative Notebook.

114 Roy P. Basler to Theodore Swem, memorandum, November 13, 1967, Legislative Notebook.

115 Ralph Lewis to Robert B. Downs, July 2, 1968, Legislative Notebook.



reviewed and removed items to the library archive, and that they intended to leave the remaining collection at Flat Rock. Downs insisted, "Legally, I believe that we have a claim to the entire library, but we have no need for the books now at Connemara Farms."<sup>116</sup>

As work ensued at Connemara, congressional review of the bill continued in Washington. By mid-July, the Park Service felt optimistic that there would be Senate hearings if the House passed the authorization bill.<sup>117</sup> On July 11, Edward Peetz, Chief of New Area Studies and Master Planning, wrote to the chief of the Office of Resource Planning (ORP) to prepare for an upcoming Senate hearing. The bill that had been submitted to the Senate on July 2 included the additional 32 acres cut from the final House bill. Peetz worried about having the Senate review the original request and requested that ORP revise the General Development Plan to delete the additional 32 acres, add the visitor's facilities to the existing property, and provide a new boundary map for the Senate hearing. To assist, Peetz provided a revised schedule and budget with the reduced development costs. The National Park Service wanted to be sure that the bill would not be delayed in the Senate Committee hearing.<sup>118</sup>

116 R.B. Downs to Ralph H. Lewis, July 2, 1968, Legislative Notebook.

117 Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (Chester L. Brooks) to Chief, Office of Design and Construction, PSC, memorandum, July 17, 1968.

118 Chief, Division of New Area Studies and Master Planning to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, Washington Planning and Services Center, memorandum, July 11, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II; Acting Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC (Chester L. Brooks) to Chief, Office of Design and Construction, PSC, July 17, 1968.



**Figure 1.37** Congressman Roy Taylor poses with President Lyndon Johnson. Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

The Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs heard the request for SB.3050 to establish the Carl Sandburg Historic Site on September 12, 1968. As Secretary Udall reported to the committee that day, his original request dated July 2 included additional acreage, but it did not reflect a report completed that same day by the NPS staff that restudied the situation at the request of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and deleted that part of the request. The House had modified H.R. 13099 to exclude the additional 38 acres. In endorsing the measure, North Carolina Senator Sam Ervin recommended that the Senate committee modify the bill to reflect the changes to the House bill. Committee members agreed, although there was still some confusion about the map and the additional property that was to be removed. The only other issue to arise revolved around the interpretive program, raised by Senator Mark Hatfield. Hatfield hoped that the site would be interactive, rather than a passive shrine and he applauded potential programming proposed through the association with the Flat Rock Playhouse. The Senate Committee approved the bill, which was then passed by the full Senate.<sup>119</sup>

As the Sandburg bill proceeded through the House and then the Senate, details about the proposed park and its costs appeared in newspapers, both local and national, and the public began sending comments. Taylor kept the local North Carolina newspaper editors apprised of the bill's progress throughout 1968, and they often published articles that sparked either support or ire among local residents. Congressman Taylor's survey of his constituents in May 1968 revealed some resistance to the park, mostly focusing on the potential cost. One Asheville doctor said he read that Congress appropriated over one million dollars, and wrote, "May I ask how you reconcile this lavish spending of public funds in the face of a highway fund freeze, the War in Viet Nam and a supposed economy minded Congress?"<sup>120</sup> Another argued that the park should not be funded because of the poor economy and the need to reduce deficit

119 Legislative Notebook.

120 Eugene C. Clayton to Roy Taylor, September 20, 1968, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

spending.<sup>121</sup> Some constituents "rejoiced" in the news. A local sign company wrote to request work to establish highway signs, another resident to propose trails and campsites, and others to offer historical information about the site. A petition in support of the proposal arrived from the Bonaire Motel in Hendersonville.<sup>122</sup>

Other members of Congress also heard from their constituents about the park. Most of the surviving letters in the National Park Service files focus on the costs involved in creating the park, especially once those costs became public. A Trenton, New Jersey, resident commented, "I lived near this farm for 18 years. It is a goat farm—more adaptable to goats than farming. I can't believe the \$225,000 figure! I can't see where \$952,000 total \$1,177,000!!—can be sunk into the place unless you intend to gold plate the rock! I don't mind paying taxes . . . if Congress would use the same discretion my house uses to stay within my income."<sup>123</sup> A Florida resident wrote to her representative, Herbert Burke, that the purchase price for Connemara was too high. She said she owned a summer home in that area so she knew the value of property there. "My neighbors and I protest the spending of this kind of money for such a useless project, especially when our sons are sacrificing their lives in Asia," she wrote. "It is time that we put all our assets and energies to help finish the present war. Furthermore, we should retrench in useless spending and conserve our assets to protect the value of the 'Dollar'."<sup>124</sup>

Letters sent directly to the National Park Service focused on other issues. A Hendersonville resident expressed concern about the narrow roads and

minimal visitor accommodations available in the area.<sup>125</sup> Several scholars expressed their desire to use the Sandburg papers for their research.<sup>126</sup> One of Sandburg's friends, Archibald Rutledge, wrote from the Office of Poet Laureate of the State of South Carolina that Sandburg's notoriety came not from biography but from his poetry. Still, Rutledge claimed, "He was no poet, much less a great one . . . I cannot name a single memorable poem he ever wrote."<sup>127</sup> An Illinois resident seemed disappointed that Sandburg's North Carolina farm was selected over his Illinois birthplace.<sup>128</sup> One Florida resident supportive of the proposed park offered his own poem, "Remembrance Rock," in memory of Carl Sandburg.<sup>129</sup> Few surviving responses suggest any concern over Sandburg's political views, which might have angered some Americans at a time of such intense intellectual and cultural unrest.

The collaborative efforts of Udall, Taylor, Hartzog, and Park Service staff proved successful; the bills passed both houses of the 90th Congress that year and went to the president's desk. On October 17, 1968, President Johnson signed Public Law 90-592 to authorize the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. In a handwritten note to Lilian Sandburg eleven days later, Udall enthusiastically wrote, "Well, the President signed the bill and we got the job done . . . We will all be proud of the final result, of that I am certain. This will become the first National Historic Site dedicated to a poet and his life. Carl would like that, I'm sure."<sup>130</sup>

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- 121 John De F. Barker to Roy Taylor, August 4, 1968, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
- 122 Various letters in file 12-B, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
- 123 James Brennan to unidentified recipient, July 9, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 124 W.J. Ludovess to Herbert Burke, March 5, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.

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- 125 Theodor Swem to Mrs. D.H. Bigelow, July 22, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 126 William Sutton to Stewart Udall, March 26, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 127 Archibald Rutledge to Stewart Udall, February 15, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 128 Ann Drafts Bennet to Stewart Udall, January 1, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 129 Welbourne D. McGaheee to National Park Service, February 13, 1968, RG 79, Box 2130, NARA II.
- 130 Stewart Udall to Paula Sandburg, October 28, 1968, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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# CHAPTER 2

## Getting Started, 1968-1974

Once President Johnson signed the Executive Order to authorize the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) in October 1968, the challenge of creating the new park began in earnest. Congress approved the funds to purchase the property in August 1969, and the Sandburg family moved to a new home in Asheville that summer.

Park staff arrived later that year, working under the supervision of Granville Liles, the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Carl Sandburg Home NHS never received the “developmental funding” the National Park Service requested to “accomplish the necessary preservation and stabilization, reinforcing and minor remodeling of the existing structures and improvement” and to “provide for the installation of necessary visitor developments, such as road spurs and parking areas, trails, a picnic area, and the reception, orientation and interpretive facilities.”<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the park remained closed for almost five years as work to prepare the site progressed slowly with a small staff and limited funds. It would take the strong arm of US Representative Roy Taylor to open the park in May 1974.

### The “Changeover”

When Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall wrote to Mrs. Sandburg on October 28, 1968, expressing his enthusiasm that the President signed the bill and got “the job done,” he advised her to “Please feel free to take all the time you need to prepare for the changeover. I’m sure the Park Service people want to accomplish the transfer at your convenience—and in your way.”<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Sandburg responded by acknowledging the

“enthusiasm and dedication of the Park Service people,” adding that “by February or March we expect to have everything here shipshape for them to take over. Do you think that by then they would be ready for the ‘changeover’, as you call it? We have been wondering when the transfer can be completed.” Mrs. Sandburg added that she and her daughters, Margaret and Janet, planned to move to Cleveland to be near her daughter Helga.<sup>3</sup>

Udall explained that the process of acquiring the funds to purchase the property might not be completed that quickly. The National Park Service (NPS) needed to request the acquisition funds from Congress. Although that funding would be considered “high-priority,” Udall said he could not guarantee that the money would be available before the beginning of the next federal fiscal year, which would be on July 1, 1969.<sup>4</sup>

Worried about the security of Connemara should the Sandburg family decide to move before the property had been purchased, Udall informed Mrs. Sandburg that he asked the National Park Service to assume protection of the site during the winter or in the spring, whichever “is more convenient with your plans.” Liles agreed to oversee the park initially and promised to be in touch with Mrs. Sandburg about these issues.<sup>5</sup> Liles wrote to Roy Taylor, “Should she vacate the Sandburg Home, we shall certainly provide the necessary protection even though it is prior to the beginning of the new

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1 J.E.N. Jenson to Honorable Frank Thompson, August 6, 1968, RG 1, Box 2130, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II.  
2 Stewart Udall to Paula Sandburg, October 28, 1968.

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3 Paula Sandburg to Stewart Udall, November 12, 1968, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.  
4 Stewart Udall to Mrs. Sandburg, January 17, 1969, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.  
5 Udall to Sandburg, January 17, 1969.

fiscal year” when the NPS hoped to purchase the property.<sup>6</sup>

As they prepared for the move, the Sandburg family took time to show appreciation to those who had helped them, both with establishing the park and managing the farm. Mrs. Sandburg sent Representative Taylor a copy of her husband’s biography of Lincoln to thank him for his work in “making our home a memorial to my husband. Young and old will come here in years to come and view his library and the study where he worked, and be inspired to study the noble history of our country.”<sup>7</sup> Daughter Margaret Sandburg wrote to Taylor in November 1968 to request his help in securing a job at the new park for Leroy Levi, who had been the family’s farm hand. Taylor responded by sending a letter to George Hartzog, the director of the National Park Service, asking that the Park Service hire Levi as caretaker for the property.<sup>8</sup> The Park Service agreed, making him the first staff member at Carl Sandburg Home NHS.<sup>9</sup>

The moving process took longer than Mrs. Sandburg expected. She and her daughters changed their plans and decided to move to Asheville instead. Mrs. Sandburg wrote to Liles on July 7 that they had finally found a home in Asheville and planned to leave Connemara soon. The family moved to 160 Marlborough Road on July 12-13, 1969.<sup>10</sup>

“Mrs. Sandburg essentially packed her suitcases and she and her two daughters . . . moved to Asheville, and left everything in the house exactly the way it was,” recalled the Park’s second superintendent, Ronald Thoman. “Everything from

paper clips to income tax returns, Carl Sandburg’s clothes and underwear, all of his drawers . . . . The house was just the way, completely full of everything, as the day she left. The house literally was overflowing with Sandburg’s material. He was a pack rat. Newspapers, magazines, boxes full of Christmas cards, I mean the stuff was just everywhere.”<sup>11</sup>

Even before the National Park Service purchased the Sandburg property, requests to visit the home began to trickle in. Mrs. R. C. McBee of Hendersonville wrote to Roy Taylor on July 6, 1969, to ask for a tour of the property. The Flat Rock Lions Club was hosting the 31-A District Cabinet Meeting on August 17, and she wanted to bring the wives of the club members to tour the house. When Taylor contacted Liles about this request, the superintendent was not enthusiastic about the idea. He responded that Mrs. Sandburg would have moved by that date, and the NPS provided only a caretaker role until the property could open to the public. Liles told Taylor that he would arrange the tour “if you specifically request it, although it is a bad time for the NPS,” especially since the Park Service did not yet officially own the property. Taylor requested the tour, and on August 10, the group of 49 women became the first to tour the property under the auspices of the National Park Service. Mrs. Sandburg returned to Connemara to give the tour, assisted by four rangers from the Blue Ridge Parkway.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately, the fiscal year (FY) 1970 budget included the acquisition funding of \$203,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Congress allocated \$200,000 for the purchase of the 241-acre Sandburg farm and \$3,000 for the adjacent 5.4 acre McMillian property.<sup>13</sup>

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6 Granville Liles to Roy A. Taylor, June 3, 1969, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 28804.

7 Lillian Sandburg to Roy Taylor, January 21, 1969, Carl Sandburg papers, (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

8 Roy Taylor to Margaret Sandburg, December 3, 1968, and December 9, 1968, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession), University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

9 Granville R. Liles to Mrs. Carl Sandburg, June 23, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, Interpretive Services File, NARA II. Most likely, Levi was hired in a temporary position until funding came for permanent park positions.

10 Mrs. Carl Sandburg to Granville Liles, February 27, 1969, CARL 4014, Box 1, 109065, CARL Park Archive; Granville Liles to Mrs. Carl Sandburg, July 7, 1969, CARL 4014, Box 1, 109065, CARL Park Archive.

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11 Ron Thoman, interview with Jay Stevens, 2003, transcript, CARL Park Archive.

12 Mrs. R. C. McBee to Congressman Roy Taylor, July 6, 1969, Sandburg Papers file, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Roy A. Taylor to Mrs. R.C. McBee, July 18, 1969, Sandburg Papers file, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville; “Notes on Mrs. McBee’s request for wives of Lions to visit Carl Sandburg place,” n.d., Sandburg Papers file, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

13 Roy A. Taylor to Mrs. Eva M. Young, May 5, 1969, File 12a, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.



Once this news broke, Taylor heard more reaction from local constituents about the new park in his July 1969 constituent survey. Even though the questionnaire he mailed to the voters in his district did not ask about the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, several local residents recorded their objections on the survey form. One Hendersonville resident wrote, "I resent the money spent for the purchase of the old Sandburg place when it is so badly needed in other programs." A second resident of Hendersonville complained, "What a waste of money for the Sandburg Farm." A husband and wife from Hendersonville commented, "We are shocked at your pushing the expenditure of thousands of dollars for an abandoned GOAT FARM!" Taylor responded by saying that "experts have assured me that it is a bargain price compared to the amount the property would bring if subdivided and sold as homesites." Taylor told the couple that he was convinced the Park would become "one of our nation's most cherished and visited landmarks," adding that "a good deal of the initial cost and operating expenses will be defrayed by a modest admission fee." The husband angrily replied that "when the Vietnam War cost has been paid off; when inflation is controlled; then let us be generous with the Taxpayer's money to fulfill the wish of a widow. When the mark of 2,000 paying visitors a week to the goat farm has been reached, come and see me. I will make a pot of coffee for us to celebrate the occasion."<sup>14</sup>

Congressman Taylor presented the check for \$200,000 to Mrs. Sandburg on August 28, 1969, at his Asheville office and officially accepted the deed to the property on behalf of the National Park Service. This small ceremony received attention from reporters as far away as the *New York Times*.<sup>15</sup>

Letters of opposition from his constituents continued to arrive in Taylor's mail after the ceremony. Margaret Pittman of Tryon, North Carolina, wrote that the purchase of the farm



**Figure 2.1** After selling Connemara to NPS, Mrs. Sandburg occasionally returned for a visit or by invitation for special events. In this photo, she greets visitors at the Main House, prior to a tour. (CARL Park Archive).

was "a good example of the extravagances in government spending that many of us would like to see curtailed." She argued that the upkeep and expenses for managing the farm would be "tremendous" and that the "county in which it is situated will lose a good bit of revenue each year." Pittman did not appreciate the government spending money on "extras," even if the cost was a "drop in the bucket in comparison to other government expenses," when she did not have money to spend on extras at home.<sup>16</sup>

## Securing Funding for the New Park

Acquiring any kind of funding for the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site—for operations or development—proved to be difficult in the political climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Increased costs for the Vietnam War and skyrocketing inflation plagued the federal budget. The Revenue and Expenditure Control Act of 1968 proposed a tax surcharge to help fund the Vietnam War and brought deep cuts in the federal budget. This act initiated significant cuts to services and staff in the National Park Service. "At a time when the Congress had added more new areas to the Park System than ever before, 48 in the last five years, park personnel are being sharply reduced," National Park Service Director George Hartzog wrote. While visitation at National Park Service

<sup>14</sup> 1969 Questionnaires, File 12a; Roy A. Taylor to Mr. and Mrs. Herb Heilig, July 31, 1969, File 12a, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Herb Heilig to Roy A. Taylor, August 27, 1969, File 12a, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

<sup>15</sup> "Mrs. Sandburg to Receive Check," *Times-Citizen*, August 28, 1969, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Pittman to Roy A. Taylor, September 11, 1969, File 12a, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

units had increased, cutbacks in staff and funding endangered these resources. To support Hartzog, Congressman Taylor, in his role as chairman of the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation in the House of Representatives, requested that the National Park Service be exempt from these provisions. In January 1969, Taylor introduced legislation asking that 300 NPS staff positions eliminated through these cutbacks be filled.<sup>17</sup> Taylor must have understood that new funding for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS would face serious challenges in this budget crisis.

During his tenure as director of the National Park Service, from 1964 through 1972, Hartzog pursued an expansionist agenda to add new parks to the system. National Park Service budgets were stretched and some parks were left without the necessary funds they needed for development. Carl Sandburg Home NHS's second superintendent, Ron Thoman, recalled that Hartzog's "philosophy was let's lock these important things up while we can, and [he] was willing to take as many parks" as he could. "The authorizing committees were willing to authorize and legislate the acquisition of the new parks, but the appropriations committees were not increasing Park Service budgets [for] anywhere near the amount of money it would take to manage all those sites properly. So, the new sites were having a significant drain on the existing parks, and this created a lot of tension."<sup>18</sup>

Hartzog used the authorization of the new parks to press for more funding for the NPS. According to Thoman, Hartzog told the committees, "I'm glad you're creating these new parks, but unless we get money to operate them properly, I'm not going to open them to the public. Hartzog was playing legislative chicken with the Congress. And to a certain extent, that was working. The Sandburg home was not a particular target of his in that regard; it was just one of the parks that came in during that period of time and therefore, when the Park Service took over, we took over in kind of a caretaker status. This was going on from the time we acquired the park."<sup>19</sup>

Congressman Taylor pressed Hartzog to open the Carl Sandburg Home NHS using whatever political leverage he could muster. His congressional papers illustrate a continued effort to find funding for the park from 1969 through its eventual opening in 1974. He added a "note to the files" on July 30, 1970, recording that he had checked with the National Park Service that day about funding and was told "it would be at least one year and probably two before the Sandburg Home is ready to be open to the public." Taylor jotted down that "They need to catalogue things and authenticate them before they will be able to open the place."<sup>20</sup> While those activities were certainly needed and desirable, the biggest challenge the park faced was acquiring the development funding to restore and rehabilitate the buildings and prepare the site for visitors.

"Congressman Roy Taylor represented the district, and he was also the chairman of the Subcommittee" that proposed legislation to the House, recalled Thoman. "And thus [he] wielded a great deal of influence. He kept urging Hartzog, because obviously it was important to his constituents, and the economy of the district, and his own congressional record, and his own pride, and the Sandburgs wanted it open, and the community wanted it open and so on, but Hartzog was holding tough. George Hartzog was a good politician as well, and I think as long as he was director, he worked things out with Congressman Taylor and the status quo just sort of continued."<sup>21</sup>

## Planning for the Park

From the time the National Park Service authorized the Carl Sandburg Home NHS in October 1968 until August 1970, when the first park superintendent was hired, the primary focus for the park was protection and planning.

The superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway administered the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, effective October 17, 1968, as an "outlying district."<sup>22</sup> There were several parks in this "Blue Ridge Group," including the Booker T.

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17 George Hartzog to Roy A. Taylor, January 15, 1969, and Roy A. Taylor, press release, January 16, 1969, both in National Parks—Appropriations file, 1969, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

18 Thoman, interview, 2003.

19 Thoman, interview, 2003.

30 A History of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1968-2008

20 Note to File, July 30, 1970, ACSH 725 3-3 file, Carl Sandburg Home, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

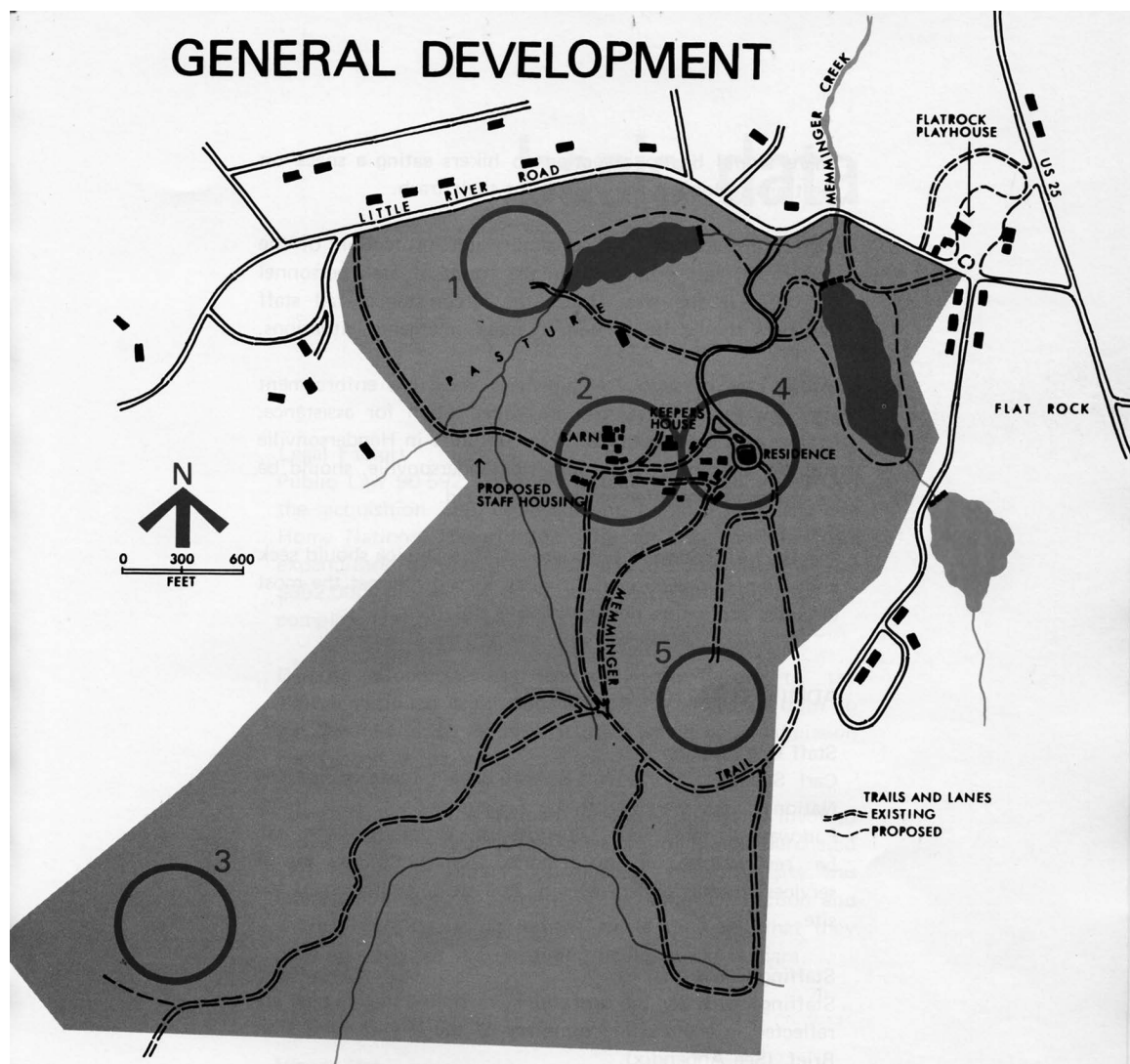
21 Thoman, interview, 2003.

22 Activation Check List, Carl Sandburg Farm National Historic Site, January 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

Washington National Monument, the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, and the Appomattox Court House National Historic Park. "It was called a group of parks, the Blue Ridge group," explained Gordon Gay, the first curator at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. Granville Liles, the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, played a significant role in planning the development of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS in its early years and in representing its interests to the regional and national offices of the NPS.

The NPS associate director of Management and Programming laid out the plan of action to develop the Carl Sandburg Home NHS in January 1969. The first priority action included several items required of the Southeast Regional Office in Richmond: writing a management statement,

preparing a complete inventory of the personal property Mrs. Sandburg was conveying to the Park Service, determining if there should be a ceremony and what it should be, and identifying how the park would be managed when Mrs. Sandburg left and how many staff would be needed. The second set of priorities included Interpretive Services (IS) at the Washington Office (WASO) developing an interpretive prospectus, the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Office of Resource Planning (ORP) preparing a resource management plan, the Office of Water and Land Management (OWL) in Washington determining action on land acquisition, and SERO developing a budget for operating and capital improvement projects, and preparing press releases and notifying appropriate congressional contacts for "important occurrences." The third set of priorities called for



**Figure 2.2** The Master Plan includes an overall map of the property, including (1) Entrance and Orientation, (2) The Farm Area, (3) Big Glassy Mountain, (4) The Residence Area, and (5) Memminger Trail and Little Glassy. Master Plan, 1971.

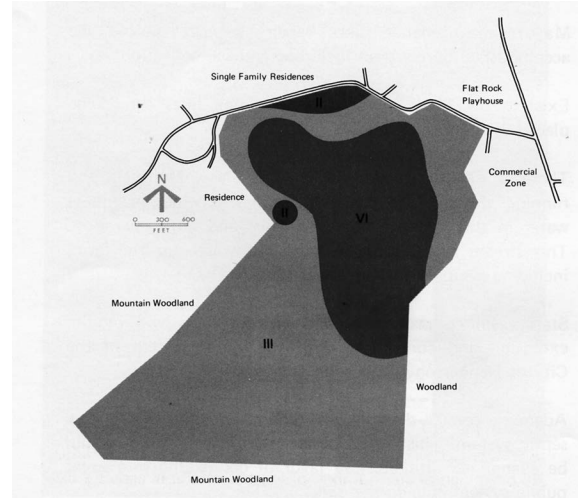


SERO and IS to develop interpretive materials for visitors and for SERO to ensure that the facilities were developed according to the Master Plan. Under the last phase, SERO would organize the files for the “park record” and revise the Master Plan to fit the enabling legislation.<sup>23</sup>

The first order of business was to begin developing the Master Plan. On May 19, 1969, the National Park Service sent a Master Plan Team to the park, including representatives from the Blue Ridge Parkway, SERO, and the Washington office. The planning team, led by Granville Liles and National Park Service Planner and Interpretive Specialist Rock Comstock, included a naturalist, two landscape architects, a historian, an interpretive specialist, and a management specialist. The team recorded four hours of interviews with Mrs. Sandburg to learn more about the family’s experiences at Connemara, and they talked with local groups, including the Flat Rock Historical Association, Flat Rock Playhouse, and Hendersonville Chamber of Commerce. One of the biggest issues, Liles reported, remained where to put the parking lot and how to manage the visitor flow both to and from the site.<sup>24</sup> Another key part of the Master Plan was the development of Management Objectives. In July 1969, the Blue Ridge Parkway submitted a draft of the Management Objectives to the regional office.<sup>25</sup> Liles expressed hope that the plan would be completed that year in time to acquire funding for the 1970 fiscal year.

Another National Park Service team conducted an interpretive planning trip to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS from September 22 through 24, 1969, to begin creating the Interpretive Prospectus. This team included Ellsworth Swift, exhibit specialist from Harpers Ferry Center, who was listed as team captain; Ron Treabess from Environmental Planning and Design at the Eastern Service Center; George Robinson, interpretive planner

from the Division of Planning and Interpretive Services at Harpers Ferry; Publications Officer Roger Rodgers from the Southeast Regional Office; Hobart Carwood, park planner from the Office of Resource Planning, Washington Service Center; Naturalist Don DeFoe from the Blue Ridge



**Figure 2.3** The Master Plan classified the land into three classes (II) those necessary for the entrance complex, including orientation and parking, (III) the “rough wooded terrain” generally surrounding the historic core, including the two ponds, springs, and stream, and (VI) the historic core of the site, “properties most intimately associated with the everyday life of the Sandburg Family.” The latter included the house and barn areas as well as the Memminger Trail and open field in front of the house. Master Plan, 1971.

Parkway; and John Davis, park manager from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Liles joined the team for the final day. Ron Treabess compiled the ideas from the meeting and circulated them to the rest of the team and others, requesting comments back in early January. He planned to make the changes in January and “get it out for review.”<sup>26</sup>

In reviewing the draft, Roger Rodgers noted that the team agreed on most points, but he raised two issues of concern. First, he hoped that the park would move parking from the proposed area, opposite a row of homes where neighbors were threatening lawsuits, to the area across from the Flat Rock Playhouse, which would “provide a more desired interpretive approach.” Second, he suggested that the park provide an area for visitors

23 Activation Check List, January 1969.

24 “National Park Service Is Planning Sandburg Layout,” *Times-News*, May 23, 1969 in Interior Committee—Carl Sandburg Property, File 12a, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Master Plan, 1971.

25 James Bainbridge, Assistant to the Regional Director, Program Coordination, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, memorandum, November 14, 1969, Legislative Notebook, CARL Park Archive.

26 This list of participants is composed from multiple memos in RG 79, Box 43, NARA II; Ron Treabess to Al Swift, memorandum, Interpretive Prospectus, December 19, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.



to sample Sandburg's work "audibly" and that the park store sell a range of his writings to visitors.<sup>27</sup>

Don DeFoe explored the team's suggestion that the park recreate a working goat dairy, soliciting information on milk sanitation and the possibility of dispensing milk to the public. He reported that one local dairy said it could buy the milk produced at the farm, pasteurize and package it, and then sell it back to the park.<sup>28</sup> The final Master Plan called for providing samples of goat milk to visitors.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. David Wallace at the Harpers Ferry Center expressed his concern at some of the statements in the draft Interpretive Prospectus. First, he noted the lack of guidance on "accession, or storage problems" at the park. Wallace wanted to be sure that the collection was preserved as is, and he chafed at the statement that some of the books and magazines in the Basement and Swedish House "may be discarded," arguing that there should be a "specific set of recommendations . . . before someone starts throwing things out." The final draft was changed to state that anything that was to be discarded be evaluated first by the curator and that the University of Illinois Library be allowed to take anything that was not needed at the park. Wallace also suggested that Sandburg's library be fully documented through a complete catalog and photographs, that copies of the volumes taken to the University of Illinois be located and placed back where they were, and that a reference library be established at the park for staff. Wallace supported the recommendation that the park not accept any Sandburg manuscripts "unless they were things he had used himself at Connemara."<sup>30</sup>

While Park Service employees were offering comments on the draft Interpretive Prospectus, the Master Plan received formal review at the regional office in Richmond on December 17, 1969. Liles and the Regional Director verbally accepted the proposed plan, including the location of the parking lot, but did not approve the document

because of what Ron Treabess and Rock Comstock called the "management objective hang-up." There is no further elaboration on what those issues were, though subsequent correspondence references discussions to reevaluate the parking lot location. Comstock expressed two concerns at this time. First, he agreed that "minor" revisions should be made to bring the Master Plan in line with the interpretive planners' ideas from the September meeting and that the Interpretive Prospectus be added as an appendix to the Master Plan. Second, he noted that the committee was still waiting for the required cost estimates.<sup>31</sup>

The Division of History and Architectural Restorations released the Preliminary Estimates of Costs of Maintenance Repairs the next month, on January 22, 1970. The estimate for restoring all 28 buildings was \$277,590, the majority of which—\$117,000—was allocated for the Main House. The Farm Manager's House at \$48,000 and the Garage and Swedish House at \$25,000 had the next highest restoration costs.<sup>32</sup> In February, the National Park Service budget staff produced a full "Estimate Summary for the General Development Plan" which totaled \$854,000 and included the costs from the Interpretive Prospectus and the costs of the "Maintenance Repairs."<sup>33</sup> NPS planners added these figures into the Interpretive Prospectus and the Master Plan. Charlie Pope of Historical Architecture took photographs of the Carl Sandburg home for these documents and sent them to Liles in January 1970.

The Interpretive Prospectus came up for review in February 1970. Liles approved the document, but offered three suggestions. First, he recommended that the location of the parking lot be reconsidered based on the field study the committee completed in December. Second, he suggested a flexible arrangement of the "audio lounge" in the Basement

- 27 Roger Rogers to Al Swift, memorandum, November 13, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II
- 28 Don DeFoe, Blue Ridge, to Ron Treabess, memorandum, November 25, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.
- 29 Master Plan, 1971.
- 30 David Wallace to Alan Kent, memorandum, December 30, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II; *Interpretive Prospectus, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site*, February 18, 1970, 34, CARL Park Archive.

- 31 Ron Treabess to Al Swift, memorandum, December 19, 1969; Rock Comstock to Chief, Office of Environmental Planning and Design, memorandum, December 22, 1969, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II. The Master Plan was approved in July 1971, but it did not include the Interpretive Prospectus.
- 32 Preliminary Estimates of Costs of Maintenance Repairs, Division of History and Architectural Restorations, January 22, 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.
- 33 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site General Development Plan, Drawing Number NHS-CS 7200, Estimate Summary, February 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

of the house. And third, he proposed that the garage could also be utilized as an auditorium.<sup>34</sup> The regional director approved the final draft, which included Liles' recommendations regarding interpretive space, and endorsed the Interpretive Prospectus on February 16, 1970.<sup>35</sup>

The approved Interpretive Prospectus included sections on interpretive themes and objectives, the visitor experience, the parking area interpretive facility, the guided tour through the house, the self-guided tour through the farm, the development of the trails, the preservation of the 'scene,' personal services, and the developmental sequence for the farm as well as the cost estimates for interpretation. The Interpretive Prospectus also included the same theme as in the draft Master Plan: to interpret "Carl Sandburg's life at his home, Connemara, and his works as a poet, historian, public speaker, and folk singer." The Prospectus identified Christopher Memminger's relationship to the site as a minor interpretive theme, and this recommendation was also incorporated into the Master Plan.<sup>36</sup>

Work on the Master Plan continued. Liles and the J. Leonard Volz, director of the Southeast Regional Office approved the Management Objectives in March 1970. The Management Objectives stated that the park would "interpret" Sandburg in his many roles—as poet, historian, and "bearer of American traditions." The park would be preserved "as a living farm to best reflect the life and times of Carl Sandburg," but part of the property would be reserved as an environmental study area. The plan delineated the historic zone, noting that no changes to the external appearance of the historic buildings would be allowed within that district, and proposed access to the park by foot, shuttle bus, or public transportation.<sup>37</sup> In its review, the Harpers Ferry Center staff suggested that the Management Objectives include an interpretive objective, and Vincent Gleeson, director of Harpers Ferry Center recommended this statement: "The interpretive program should convey to visitors of all ages Carl Sandburg's

feelings and philosophies and their relevance to the common man today. It should also encourage each visitor to evaluate for himself Sandburg's greatness, and it should encourage people to read his works." The final document, which incorporated these ideas in an "interpretive theme," was approved in the fall of 1971.<sup>38</sup>

On April 8, 1970, NPS Land Management Specialist William O. Hooper produced a Land Management Survey, based on his visit that day with Blue Ridge Parkway Assistant Superintendent Davis, District Ranger Webb, Maintenance Chief Chadwell, and the "knowledgeable caretaker, Leroy Levi." His report outlined how pastures should be used and restored. He bemoaned the bad condition of the fences, which were covered with honeysuckle. Noting that Levi was currently grazing his own livestock on the fields, Hooper recommended terminating this practice rather than issuing a Special Use Permit to Levi. Hooper argued that creating the living history farm at Connemara will be "infinitely more delicate and complicated" than at other sites, and he recommended that the Park Service hire a "permittee" and provide a Special Use Permit to save the government these costs.<sup>39</sup> In addition to Levi's cattle, he wrote that Paula Steichen Polega, Carl Sandburg's granddaughter, still kept horses there, and an older pony owned by the Sandburg family remained at the farm.

During this time, the buildings, many of which were already in poor condition, continued to deteriorate. In 1970, the park rehabilitated the roof on the rear addition to the Main House, using asphalt shingles that resembled those currently in use.<sup>40</sup>

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34 Granville Liles to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, February 13, 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

35 John W. Bright to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, March 4, 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II; Interpretive Prospectus, 1970.

36 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970.

37 Management Objectives, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, March 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

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38 Vincent Gleeson, Director, Harpers Ferry Center, to Assistant Director, Park Management, memorandum, April 7, 1970, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II; Master Plan, 1971, 31. Liles signed on August 27 and the director on September 1, 1971. Jim Kretschmann signed as the Area Superintendent. The final published version of the Master Plan, approved July 1971, states as one of the interpretive themes that "the visitor should also have an opportunity to make his or her own decision as to Sandburg's greatness."

39 William O. Hooper, Land Management Survey, Carl Sandburg Memorial, April 8, 1970, CARL 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 324, CARL Park Archive.

40 William Hendrickson, Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Manager, Denver Service Center, memorandum, February 1, 1974, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO Files.



**Figure 2.4** Caretaker and Farm Manager Leroy Levi stands outside the Barn. November 1970 (CARL Park Archive).

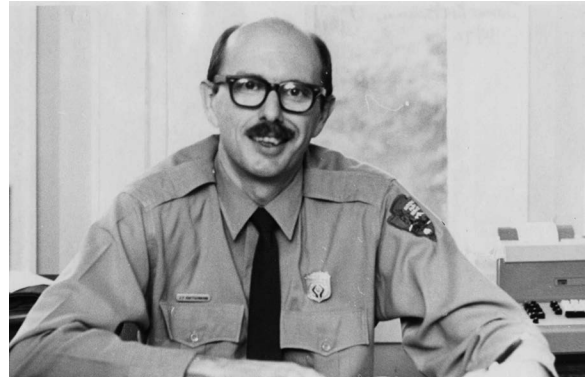
What the park desperately needed was a staff, on-site, to manage the maintenance of the buildings. The only staff person employed at the park during this period was Leroy Levi. Levi and his family lived on the park property, in the Farm Manager's House next to the Barn, and provided security and care of the property. In August 1970, the National Park Service began to hire additional staff members, including its first park manager.

## The First Park Superintendent Takes Charge

The first staffing plan, developed in 1968, specified that the Carl Sandburg Home NHS be administered by an "area Superintendent," who would report to the superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway.<sup>41</sup> This plan called for an historian, or chief of interpretive services, and a curator, both at the General Schedule (GS) 11 level. The Interpretive Prospectus and the Master Plan called the historian the "Unit Manager," adding that his responsibilities would include maintenance, interpretation, visitor services, resource management, and daily operations.<sup>42</sup> Additional permanent positions proposed included a clerk-stenographer (GS-4), supervisory park guide (GS-7), guide (GS-5), guide (GS-3), park ranger (GS-7), demonstrator or farm operator (GS-5), as well as an ungraded maintenance man and laborer

and seasonal craft demonstrators, park guides, and laborers.<sup>43</sup>

James F. Kretschmann became the Park's first historian and "area" superintendent on August 23,



**Figure 2.5** Jim Kretschmann, first superintendent for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. November 1970 (CARL Park Archive).

1970. An article in the *Times-News* called his arrival "the biggest tourist attraction development of 1970." The reporter wrote that Kretschmann and "his aides" were busy cataloging papers and books at the site. While the park still had not received the necessary development funds to complete the four-year restoration program, Congressman Taylor had committed to do "all within his power to get early approval" of this allocation.<sup>44</sup>

Kretschmann, who earned an MA in history at the University of North Carolina and was working on his doctorate at the University of Maryland, had worked for the National Park Service for ten years. In another newspaper article announcing his arrival, Kretschmann acknowledged that he had an ambitious agenda ahead of him. There were emergency repairs required for the home and

43 Carl Sandburg National Historic Site (Proposed) Staffing Summary and Staffing Justification, February 9, 1968, Legislative Notebook file, CARL 4025/5, Box 2, Folder 1, CARL Park Archive; Weber, interview 2011. Warren Weber also confirmed that there was no official superintendent here, but rather a "unit manager." Master Plan, 1971. These positions changed somewhat by the Master Plan, which included a unit manager (historian) at GS-11, curator at GS-11, clerk-stenographer at GS-4, supervisory park guide at GS-7, park guide at GS-5, park ranger at GS-7, and farmer (demonstrator) at GS-5 as the permanent positions, along with a maintenance man, charwoman, and laborer. In addition, the proposal included two park guides and laborers as seasonal positions.

44 "Sandburg Home To Be Top Tourist Attraction," *Times-News*, February 26, 1971, C-11, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

41 Staffing Plan, 1968, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files.

42 Master Plan, 1971.



other structures. The house needed dehumidifying equipment to keep the 14,000 books, recordings, and other papers dry. Kretschmann stated that his major task would be to “catalogue all the Sandburg material.” The National Park Service also announced that Leroy Levi had been hired to manage the farm, although he had been working at the park for over a year now, and that a part-time laborer and secretary would be hired soon. The article noted that a group of Blue Ridge Parkway staff had been consulting on restoration work at the Main House that week, including Administrative Officer Ira Mitchell, Chief Engineer James Bentley, and Maintenance Chief John Chadwell. As money became available, additional help came from people working under contract on specific restoration projects. An allocation of \$8,200 funded the park’s clean-up work after winter storms caused damage throughout the grounds.<sup>45</sup> Even though the site was not yet open to the public, these news articles drew attention to the park and to inform regional residents that work was taking place, in spite of the lack of larger funding, even though the site was not yet open to the public.

The Blue Ridge Parkway continued to provide a range of services to Carl Sandburg Home NHS over the next several years, even after the arrival of staff at the park. Warren Weber, the second curator at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, remembered, “As the park was getting started and didn’t have a staff, [the Blue Ridge Parkway would] send rangers out or maintenance or as things were needed or identified. Sort of a caretaker status.”<sup>46</sup> Ron Thoman, the second superintendent at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, later recalled that the Parkway offered “administrative support and visitor protection, resource protection—all kinds of expertise we got from the Parkway primarily, although from time to time, we would go to the regional office for that also.”<sup>47</sup> According to Weber, “As the park began to get a little staff, we could handle more on our own. But when it came to

budget, we never went to region with it, we went up to the Parkway and then it became part of their budget that went forward . . . But for maintenance purposes, they provided most of the maintenance. If there was a law enforcement need, which was very rare, they would provide that service.”<sup>48</sup>

Soon after Kretschmann arrived, the National Park Service began preparing for a public hearing, scheduled in December 1970, for the Master Plan. In November 1970, the *Times-News* published a four-part series of articles about the park to inform the public about the work that was underway. Without access to the development funds to start the restoration work, one article noted that the park was embarking on an inventory of the books, led by volunteer Mrs. Mary Dowling and several



**Figure 2.6** Volunteers Pitsa Johnson, Kate Trammel, Mary Jane King, Betty Leonard, and Louise Baily work with Park Technician James C. Haynes as VIP members to begin cataloging Sandburg’s library. November 1970 (CARL Park Archive).

other women.<sup>49</sup> Observing that it “wouldn’t be Connemara without a goat herd,” another article described the plan to recreate the goat herd of up to 30 goats and to restore the farm buildings that were an important part of the farm.<sup>50</sup>

The last article emphasized the importance of getting the legislation passed to appropriate the needed developmental funding for the park. *Times-News* reporter William Hackett said he had heard that these funds would likely not be in the 1971 or 1972 legislation. “The matter is further

45 “Manager-Historian For Sandburg Place Named,” no publisher, no date [1970], Flat Rock Playhouse File, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville. Levi had been hired the year earlier, but it is possible that this was the first time the NPS announced his position or that his position changed in 1970. The laborer might have been Charlie Hamm, who was hired later in 1970. The Park did not hire a secretary until the spring of 1971.

46 Weber, interview, 2011.

47 Thoman, interview, 2003.

48 Weber, interview, 2011.

49 “Sandburg Filing Was Unique,” *Times-News*, November 27, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

50 “Goat Herd Is To Be Added As Carl Sandburg Estate Feature,” *Times-News*, November 20, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

complicated by the current policy put into effect by the Administration to delay non-essential Federal spending until inflation is brought under control to a greater extent.” This angered Congressman Taylor who was determined to use his influence to gain the funding for the deteriorating buildings. The “development schedule” contained four phases of funding, beginning with the repair of the home, construction of roads, trails, and the parking lot for phase I. Other phases included undertaking additional work on the Main House and farm buildings, completing the parking lot, installing a new septic tank, putting the power lines underground, and adding a security system.<sup>51</sup>

The public hearing for the Master Plan was held in Flat Rock on December 1, 1970. Representatives attending from the NPS included Rock Comstock, planner from the Washington office; Charles Marshall, associate regional director from the Southeast Regional Office; Granville Liles, superintendent from the Blue Ridge Parkway; and Jim Kretschmann. The newspaper reported that around 100 community members came to the meeting. Mrs. Rowland Davis, president of the Flat Rock Taxpayers Association, expressed an objection, as did another individual who opposed any taxpayer money being spent on the park. Davis commented that residents living on Little River Road across from the proposed parking lot location wanted the parking area to be moved. Associate Regional Director Marshall responded that the Park Service was considering another option closer to the upper pond, which would be “partly concealed by a hill.”<sup>52</sup>

As Kretschmann and Blue Ridge Parkway staff worked to promote the park’s activities, the National Park Service turned to the serious work of stabilizing the historic buildings. NPS Architect T. Russell Jones visited the park on September 10, 1970, and wrote that the Parkway staff was planning to repaint the exterior of the Main House and to replace rotten trim. Jones added that it



**Figure 2.7** The National Park Service determined that the Conservatory, called the Greenhouse at this time, on the east side of the Main House needed to be removed due to its poor condition. June 1970 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.8** A view of Connemara in 1971, taken by a NPS photographer to document the site. April 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.9** The poor condition of some buildings, such as the Greenhouse, forces staff to act quickly to save the structures. April 1973 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

51 “Money Is Needed To Develop The Sandburg Historic Site,” *Times-News*, November 25, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

52 “Sandburg Home Plan Aired at Meeting,” *Citizen-Times*, December 2, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; “Hearing on Sandburg Estate is December 1,” *Times-News*, November 27, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; “Sandburg Hearing Ends On A Harmonious Note,” no publisher, n.d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



was imperative to have the house documented immediately by a professional photographer and that the National Park Service needed to complete a Historic Structures Report. He observed that the Front Porch needed repair and that the Greenhouse on the side of the Main House was collapsing. The “caretaker’s house,” or Farm Manager’s House, was in the “worst condition.” Jones returned to the park on September 21 to measure and record the Greenhouse before its removal due to “safety concerns.”<sup>53</sup>

Charlie Hamm came to work at the park in 1970, about three or four months after Kretschmann. Hamm grew up in the Flat Rock community and visited Connemara when the Smyth family lived there, so he knew what the property looked like before the Sandburgs acquired it. When he came back, he recalls, “The place was run down real bad. I supposed because Mr. Sandburg passed away they didn’t keep the place up. It was all grown up and the buildings were in terrible shape. We first started mowing down enough of the tall grass and weeds so we could see the place. We were cleaning up for about three to four months before we could do anything.” The back drive was “full of trees and everything else. It was close to a year before we ever got to the back drive to work on it. It was just a mess. There was no way in the world to get through it,” so the Sandburgs must have used the front

53 Russell Jones, Restoration Architect, to Chief, Office of Archaeology and History Preservation, memorandum, 12 October 2012, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files; Restoration Architect Russell Jones to Chief, History and Historical Architecture, ESC, October 7, 1970, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files.



**Figure 2.10** Renovations to the Barn Garage allow the park to re-purpose the building as the Maintenance Facility. April 1973 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



**Figure 2.11** A worker scrapes paint on the Barn Garage as staff prepares it for use as the Maintenance Facility. August 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



**Figure 2.12** The park commits to the significant work needed in renovating the Barn Garage to a Maintenance Facility. January 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.13** Lewis Smith works in the Barn Garage to prepare it for use as a Maintenance Facility. April 13, 1972 (CARL Park Archive)



drive. The dams were leaking and the ponds were full of debris.<sup>54</sup>

The condition of the Main House was particularly bad. Hamm remembered it as “very dirty and cluttered. It had hay scattered all over the house. I suppose when they were moving they had disturbed everything. Everything was just in a clutter. We had to pack it up best we could. . . . The biggest part of it we did pack up and move.” Hamm considered many of the outbuildings in even worse shape. The maintenance staff played a critical role in preserving the historic buildings at the park during these years. “We actually started on the Barn Garage. The front walls and the roof had fallen in on that. We re-did that first. We then had a place to keep tools dry enough so that we could work. What is known as the Tenant House had

about fallen through. We re-did that one . . . and then the Swedish House. It was in a bad state of deterioration.”<sup>55</sup>

In the spring of 1971, the park expanded its staff and began to develop a stronger volunteer base. The next staff member to be hired was Curator Gordon Gay, who arrived in May. By the end of June, the Park staff included James “Jimmy” Haynes, a park technician, and Margaret “Peggy” Parcell, a clerk-typist, as well as six temporary personnel. Haynes started out in maintenance and also provided some assistance in law enforcement. “There had been some arson going on in the area, and someone was burning old buildings,” recalled Gay. “I spent several nights in the house guarding it before Jimmy got there. We did everything then, maintenance and a little law enforcement . . . We didn’t have a large staff,” Gay explained. The park also had several volunteer workers, including Mrs. Kretschmann and members of the Boy Scouts and

54 Charlie Hamm and Benjamin Davis, interview with Penelope Niven McKunkin, August 16, 1984, transcript, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.14** Early park employees Charlie Hamm and James “Jimmy” Haynes chat at Haynes’ desk in the Main House. At this time, all of the administrative offices were located here. 1971 (CARL Park Archive).

55 Hamm and Davis, interview, 1984.



**Figure 2.16** Park maintenance staff member Jeff Aiden takes a break on the porch of the Main House. 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.15** Clerk-typist Margaret Parcell utilized Margaret’s Bedroom (Main House Room 104) for her office in the early years of the park’s operations. August 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.17** Russ Jones, from the Denver Service Center examines a bathtub used for watering the goats in the barnyard. 1971 (CARL Park Archive).

Girl Scouts. During this first summer, the park staff and volunteers painted the house, installed a new water system, weeded the garden, and cataloged 8,000 books and magazines.<sup>56</sup>

Gay took on the important task of managing the museum's collection. He came to the park from

the Booker T. Washington National Monument, one of the parks in the Blue Ridge Group. "The superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway asked if I wanted to be a curator," he later recalled, "And I said yes. I had the week-long training that the Park Service put on then for Curatorial Methods, and I took the transfer to the Sandburg Home."<sup>57</sup>

56 Gordon Gay, email correspondence with author, July 15, 2012; *Citizen-Times*, June 27, 1971, H-11, in Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive. The article noted that the Park had hired several new employees, including Gordon Gay as curator, Jim Haynes as park technician, and Mrs. Margaret Parcell as clerk-typist, Leroy Levi as "maintenance man," and local community member Charles Hamm as park laborer, as well as six temporary summer employees.

Gay had a huge task in front of him. "My priority was photographing all the rooms and starting to catalog things, because we had 22 rooms of furniture and 11,000 books, so that was my

57 Gordon Gay, interview with Ann McCleary, May 18, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

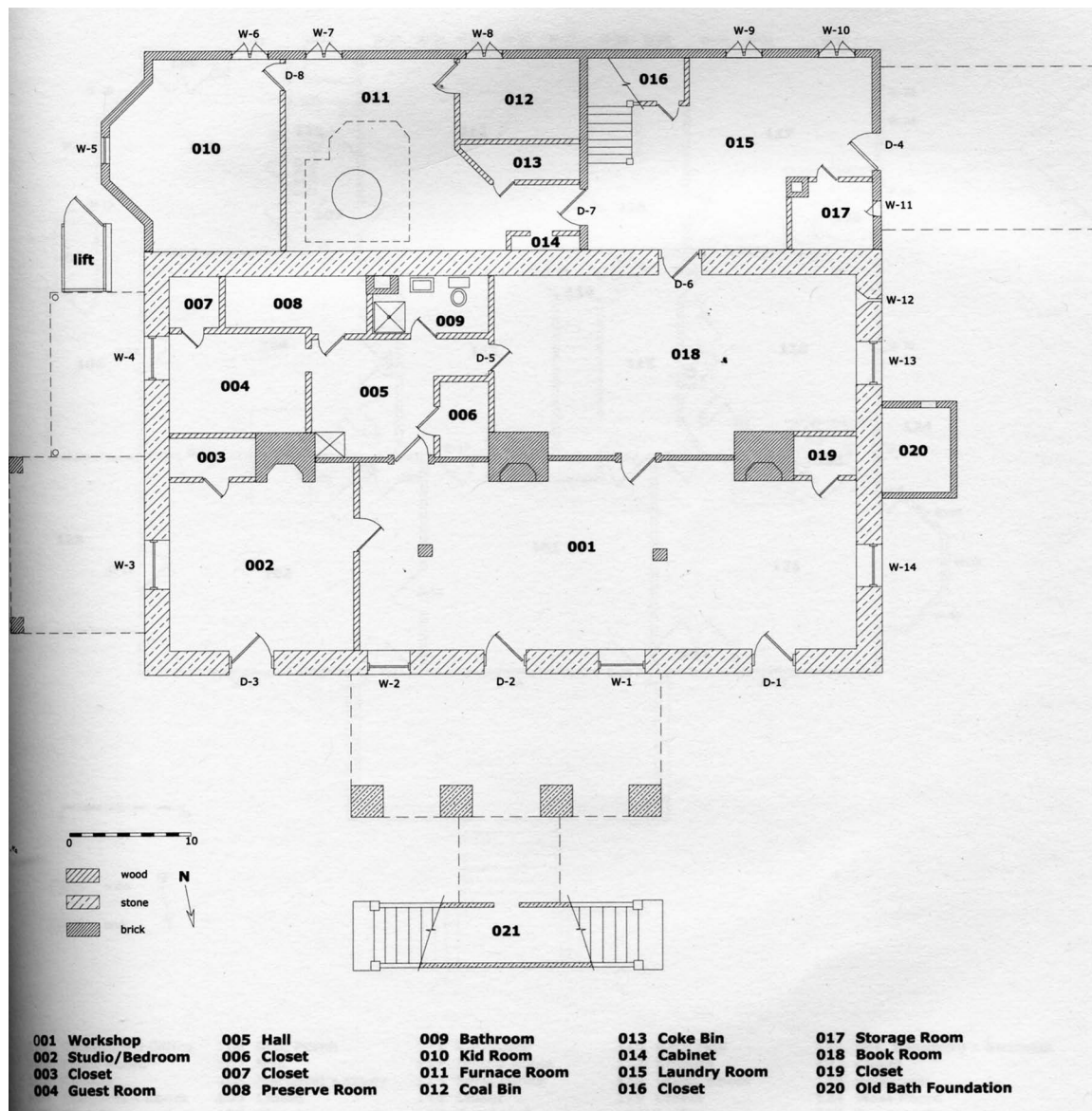


Figure 2.18 Curator Gordon Gay used Room 004 in the Basement as his office. A large collection of books and archival materials remained stored in Room 018. Historic Structure Report, Main House

big job,” he remembered. “I started cataloging one room at a time.” He laughed as he recalled having to type cards “by hand, myself.” He also put ultraviolet filters on the windows in the Main House to protect the collection from light damage.<sup>58</sup>

Little curatorial work had been done at the park, Gay recalled, except for some “cleaning up” that had involved moving and stacking objects so that they were no longer in their original locations. Warren Weber, the park’s second curator, recalled hearing that the furnishings were being rearranged in the house in the early years “to make room for those offices, and some of it had been stored in other places . . . If you notice, the early catalog books were not the things that were necessarily the most important to the Sandburg story, but they were the things that were being moved around and [Gay] tried to identify where they were originally.”<sup>59</sup> Gay was “cataloging the larger pieces of furniture” that the staff had moved in the house “so that if someone ever needed to put them back, at least the way he found them, that could be done.”<sup>60</sup>

The Master Plan suggested that the park use rooms “of less historical interest” in the Main House for administrative purposes. The plan proposed that two bedrooms on the main floor be used for administrative offices and one bedroom for storage and that the bathroom adjacent to Janet’s Bedroom be designated for employees. The Curator’s Office and Workshop was proposed for the second floor.<sup>61</sup> However, once he arrived, Gay established his office in the Basement, “which probably had the least effect on the house itself.” Gay recalled that Kretschmann’s office was in Margaret’s Bedroom, which was located “on one side of the Dining Room, so that had an effect on the building itself.”<sup>62</sup>

Gay remembers that Mrs. Sandburg and her daughters came “a couple times a year” to the house. On one occasion, Mrs. Sandburg called

to ask if she could get some special bowls that she liked to use but had left behind, the “big earthenware bowls that were in the kitchen, and she came and got them.”<sup>63</sup>

Gay also reached out to the community, “being an interpreter and talking to as many people as possible because we weren’t open. I thought that was an important thing to do.” He explained, “We wanted to get that story out about why we weren’t open and certainly didn’t deny any journalist a tour!”<sup>64</sup> He recalled that Kretschmann focused on “mostly the maintenance and getting things fixed, and keeping the thing together, and getting people to help and bringing people in, all those administrative tasks that need to be done, keeping the budget flowing.”<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, the park continued various planning processes. In May 1971, the park staff submitted a request for a Resource Study Proposal (RSP), adding that only one study was currently underway, one on Sandburg’s life. This was the biography NPS Historian George J. Svejda was completing, entitled *Carl Sandburg: Literary Liberty Bell, A Biography*, which would be published in August of that year. The park staff clarified that “all other projects required for an historic area (for instance Historic Structure Reports and development studies) will have to be undertaken.” The park requested the RSP “to determine which studies are needed, and perhaps a sequence of this accomplishment.”<sup>66</sup>

In May 1971, NPS Historian Svejda visited the park “in connection with a study on which he is currently working.” He submitted a report entitled “Status of Conditions at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site with commentary as to required research and related professional needs,” which focused on historical collections and research needs. His report to the Southeast Regional Office expressed concern about the “importance of the site to the presentation of the Sandburg image” and the enormous responsibility

58 Gay, interview, 2011.

59 Weber, interview, 2011.

60 Warren Weber, interview with Jay Stevens, 2003, transcript, CARL Park Archive.

61 Master Plan, 1971, 26, 32, 36. Note that the floor plan in this document does not show the location of the hostess lounge, though it is included in the text.

62 Gay, interview, 2011.

63 Gay, interview, 2011.

64 Gay, interview, 2011.

65 Gay, interview, 2011.

66 Resource Study Proposal, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, June 9, 1971, Correspondence 1967-1972 File, WASO Files.



that the Park Service had taken on.<sup>67</sup> Svejda's report received mixed reviews from park staff. Curator Gay wrote to Superintendent Liles that the historian's three-day visit did not address all of the staff's issues and concerns. Most importantly, Gay disagreed with Svejda's recommendations that the library be catalogued under the Library of Congress system or that books should be added to the library.<sup>68</sup>

Also in 1971, the National Park Service began the development of a Historic Structure Report (HSR), first for only the house, but then also for the

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- 67 Historian Dr. George J. Svejda, Eastern Service Center, to Chief, Office of History and Historical Architecture," memorandum, May 24, 1971, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files.
- 68 Gordon Gay, curator, Carl Sandburg Home NHS to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, memorandum, July 2, 1971, Gordon Gay Scrapbook. Ironically, Margaret Sandburg reported that she had personally added "other first editions" of Sandburg's works after the University of Illinois removed them, and that the family had also rebuilt the Lincoln library. Margaret "personally replaced" a large section of the books in the poetry shelves in the dining room "with the help of a very good second hand book store." Overall, she noted that there are over ten thousand books in the library, along with an excellent selection of primary documents. "Excellent Sandburg Library at Home," *Citizen-Times*, April 2, 1972, Gay Scrapbook. The University of Illinois gave the 12,000 volume Carl Sandburg Library to the National Park Service "so it may remain here" and become part of the permanent collection, noted Granville Liles. The Library had taken 3,000 of the original 15,000 volumes. "Sandburg Painting Unveiled," *Times-News*, February 23, 1973, Gay Scrapbook.



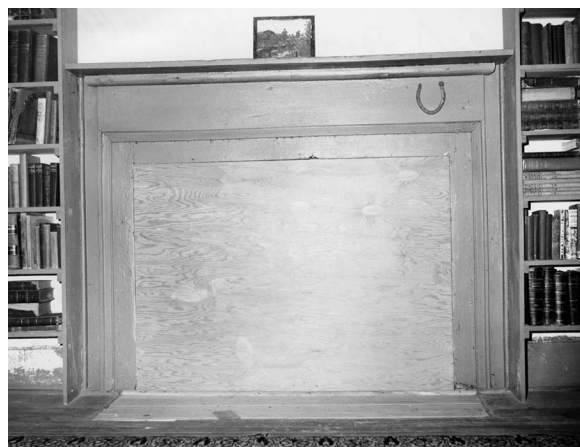
**Figure 2.19** Park staff meets to discuss preservation projects with Denver Service Center Historical Architect Russell Jones. From left to right, park maintenance staff member Buddy Wood, Superintendent Jim Kretschmann, Farm Manager Leroy Levi, maintenance staff Ronnie Pepper, Russ Jones, and maintenance staff member Steve Ford. 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.20** NPS Historian George Svejda prepared the history section of the park's first Historic Structure Report for the Main House and wrote a history of Carl Sandburg. Here, Svejda stands in front of the Swedish House on one of his visits to the park in 1971. November 3, 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.21** NPS Historical Architect Russell Jones prepared the first Historic Structure Report for the Main House and Swedish House. He took this photograph to document the exterior of the Swedish House while he was at the park to conduct field investigations. August 19, 1971 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.22** This photograph documents the mantel which remained in the Swedish House in 1971. Note the bookshelves to each side, which house some of Sandburg's library. Russell Jones took this photograph for the Historic Structure Report he was preparing. July 31, 1971 (CARL Park Archive).

Swedish House and the Family Garage.<sup>69</sup> Svejda was assigned to write the historical section and Historical Architect Russell Jones was to prepare the architectural components. Jones came to the park in August 1971 to measure the Main House and the Swedish House.<sup>70</sup> Svejda came again in November 1971 and spent a week at the park to conduct research for his section.<sup>71</sup>

## Still No Development Funding

As the 1972 federal fiscal year arrived, both state and national newspaper articles began once again to lament the lack of development funding for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS in the upcoming budget. An article in the *Charlotte Observer* on August 15, 1971, commented that the “opening of the home as a public attraction is nowhere in



**Figure 2.23** The original National Park Service sign announces that the park will open to the public as soon as improvements are completed. November 1971 (CARL Park Archive).

sight.” The reporter quoted Kreschmann [sic] as saying, “We haven’t got a dime.” An Interior Department architecture team had just completed a “two week inspection” of the property, and the journalist reported that the superintendent “was

confident that completion of their report detailing structural work necessary would edge Connemara forward on the Park Service’s list of priorities.” The National Park Service used “operational money” to paint the house, install a water system, and bury the electrical cables. The “half-dozen full-time staff members” were “arranging all Sandburg’s belongings just as they believe they were when he lived and wrote here.” Curator Gordon Gay told the reporter that he had almost completed a ten-month project to catalog Sandburg’s library.<sup>72</sup>



**Figure 2.24** Glen Barnwell makes repairs to the foundation of the Swedish House with another maintenance staff member. April 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

Four days later, the *New York Times* reported that the “Shrine to Sandburg Awaits U.S. Funds.” This reporter commented that the Vietnam War and inflation had limited appropriations for “many historic and cultural projects,” and he used the Carl Sandburg Home as an example. The reporter quoted Margaret Sandburg as saying, “If the government was using the money to take care of the poor and the unhealthy, I’d say it was being well spent, but to spend the money on a war seems a terrible waste.”<sup>73</sup>

Granville Liles also found himself addressing the lack of funding to residents within the local community. In November 1971, he told the Hendersonville Rotarians, “We are getting some work done and the place is looking a lot better. But we’re having to do it on a shoe string with what

69 George Svejda, Historic Structure Report, Main House, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1972, National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office (SERO).

70 Russell Jones, Historical Architect, to Chief, Office of History and Historical Architecture, memorandum, August 13, 1971, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files.

71 Svejda, Historic Structure Report, 1972; Gay, interview, 2011.

72 Jon Nordheimer, “Forgotten Farmhouse: They Haven’t ‘Got A Dime’ To Restore Poet’s House,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 15, 1971, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

73 “Shrine to Sandburg Is Delayed By Inaction on Requested Funds,” *New York Times*, August 19, 1971, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.





**Figure 2.25** After inspecting the Pump House, maintenance staff decides that the structure is in fair condition and needed repair. Circa 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

monies we could scrape up.” He added that the house urgently needed a new roof.<sup>74</sup>

By December, the situation attracted the attention of the staff at the Harpers Ferry Center. An unsigned memo from “Gray Eagle,” probably Alan E. Kent, at Harpers Ferry Center to “Top Cat” at “HFC,” dated December 8, 1971, references the financial challenges the Carl Sandburg Home NHS faced. The author had telephoned Kretschmann to “get things from the horse’s mouth.” Kretschmann told him that the park was not open, but that the staff would greet visitors and answer questions. The problem was that the park lacked money “to get the place in shape for viewing;” Kretschmann described the plaster coming off the walls, the unstable barns that needed repair before goats could be kept there, and the lack of a parking lot for visitors. Meanwhile, the park needed to create a visitor facility and the superintendent hoped to reduce the maximum number of visitors in the house from 25 to 10 or 15 for a more ideal visitor experience. At this time the park also was considering using actors from the Flat Rock Playhouse as guides to economize on resources and partner with a local organization. “Gray Eagle” concluded, “Sure seems a shame that the money

isn’t forthcoming to do something to get the place going. Could be embarrassing!”<sup>75</sup>

Funds for the restoration of the buildings must have been so difficult to obtain that even Mrs. Sandburg contributed money to the park. In 1971, she donated \$1,000 to repair the roof of the house, which would not occur until the summer of 1972. Acting Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Ray Brotherton wrote Mrs. Sandburg to say that the National Park was “doing all in our power to preserve the site,” particularly “stabilizing and restoring the farm buildings” as they waited for the development funding.<sup>76</sup>

NPS approved the final Master Plan in July 1971, and it included a full list of property improvements that needed to be done in addition to the building restoration. The park needed a new “interim” septic system for public use, to be replaced later

75 “Gray Eagle” [Alan E. Kent] to “Top Cat, HFC,” memorandum, December 8, 1971, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II. Kent’s name is on the memo, even though he is not officially listed as the author. Kent provided “intellectual leadership of Service-wide interpretive training” after a reorganization of the Museum Branch in 1964. See Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service* (Washington, DC: Curatorial Services Division, National Park Service, 1993), 148.

76 James Brotherton to Mrs. Carl Sandburg, August 5, 1973, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession); George Fry to Mrs. Lillian Sandburg, June 2, 1973, Carl Sandburg papers (Connemara Accession). The total cost for roof repairs was \$795, and she requested that the remaining money be used at the Park. The staff used these funds to purchase a Nubian buck for the goat herd.



**Figure 2.26** The first staff members at Carl Sandburg Home NHS pose on the Main House Front Porch. Staff included, left to right, Superintendent Jim Kretschmann, Gordon Gay, Leroy Levi, Peggy (Margaret) Parcell, Charles (Charlie) Hamm, and James Haynes. These park personnel helped coordinate work at the park in its early years. Ca. 1972-3 (CARL Park Archive).

74 “Money Holds Up Sandburg Project,” *Times-News*, November 30, 1971, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.





**Figure 2.27** Superintendent Jim Kretschmann talks with Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm (let) and Farm Manager Leroy Levi (right) about projects at the park. 1972 (CARL Park Archives).

by connecting to “a larger public system outside the park” when this opportunity became available. The stream “rising on Big Glassy Mountain” had provided “adequate water in the past for both residence and farm operation” and should provide enough for the lower pond. Still, the Master Plan stated, “Staff resource protection and visitor needs will require extension and connection with the water system of the City of Hendersonville as soon as possible.” Planners thought that existing overhead power and telephone lines should be placed underground. For security, the plan proposed that two staff members live on the site to provide “24-hour protection” and that two residences be built at the park for that purpose.<sup>77</sup>

## Work at the Park Goes On

Over the next two years, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS remained in a holding pattern, waiting for development funding to prepare the site and provide an opportunity to open. In the meantime, the staff continued to make steady progress, as possible, using the limited operational funding available. Budgets remained low, at \$155,492 in 1972 and dropping to \$116,642 the following year. The budget covered management and protection, buildings, utilities, roads and trails, forestry and fire control, and quarters.<sup>78</sup>

While newspaper articles constantly emphasized the lack of operational funding, they noted that some “minor repair” work was underway with “limited funds from the miscellaneous account of the Department of the Interior,” which enabled the installation of a new roof on the house.<sup>79</sup> Another article noted that the Park Service utilized “regular funds to take emergency actions” to prevent further deterioration of the main buildings.<sup>80</sup>

The size of the park staff remained stable, with six permanent positions and temporary employees “as needed” in 1972. The Annual Report for the following year, 1973, listed five full-time positions, including the superintendent, curator, technician,

79 “Great Number of Visitors Expected at Sandburg Estate,” *Times-News*, February 28, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

80 “Sandburg Estate Awaits Go-Ahead for Restoration,” undated, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.28** The staff repairs the Stable, which was in poor condition. Circa 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



**Figure 2.29** James C. (Jimmy) Haynes serves as park technician during the park's early years. June 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

77 Master Plan, 1971, 43, 27, 36.

78 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1972.

clerk-typist, farmer, and the “maintenance worker,” Charlie Hamm, who remained a 37-hour appointment. Two temporary employees—the tractor operator and laborer—were converted to subject-to-furlough positions. In addition, the park reported twenty additional personnel helping in 1973, including five seasonal employees assisting with maintenance and curatorial work, three participants in the National Park Service Volunteers in Parks program (VIPS) performing curatorial work, and twelve young people hired through the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC) and paid by the state.<sup>81</sup> Part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty and established through the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the NYC provided summer employment opportunities for young people to help the park with a variety of activities. Ron Thoman recalled, “Some of the kids worked for Charlie Hamm in maintenance and restoration, some worked for Leroy in farm work, and some might even have worked with Jim Haynes in resource management activities.”<sup>82</sup>

81 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972 and 1973. The National Park Service created the VIP program in 1969. See Chapter Eight for more information and the development of the VIP program at CARL.

82 Ronald Thoman, email correspondence with author, May 29, 2013. Thoman recalls that that “even though that was a federal program, the money was passed through and the program operated by the state. In fact, I think that the state passed it down even further, and it may have been the county that did the hiring, administration, etc.” He added, “Since they were paid out of the NYC funding source and were no cost to the park, they could be a very valuable, no-cost asset, if the jobs they were assigned to were appropriate to their backgrounds, or interests, or aptitudes. They were not meant to be cheap labor, however. This was a 1964 War on Poverty program and meant to give job experience, work, etc. to 16-21 year-olds from poverty areas, and also encourage them to stay in school. So wise managers tried to find jobs that benefitted both the park and the NYCer.”

Maintaining and stabilizing the deteriorating buildings took center stage during these years. Once again, the maintenance crew led these efforts to stabilize the buildings. One of the biggest concerns remained the roof on the Main House. The leaks in the back part of the house and two other areas were damaging the ceilings and the walls.<sup>83</sup> Curator Gay sent information about the roof to the historian of the Eastern Service Center

83 “Visitors To This House Should Walk ‘On Little Cat Feet,’” *Citizen-Times*, March 26, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.30** Park staff repairs the leaking roof as one of the first major preservation tasks on the Main House. Summer 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



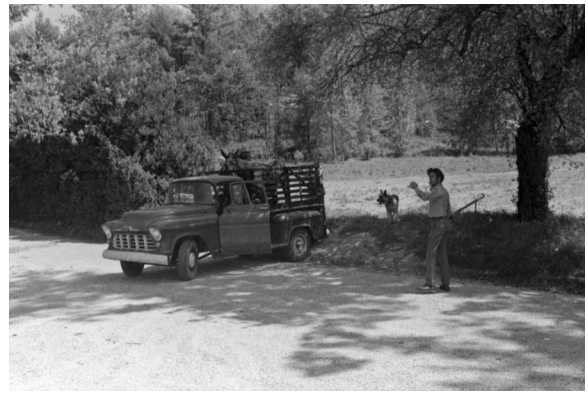
**Figure 2.31** Workers put tar paper on the roof of the Main House before installing the new roofing material. Summer 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



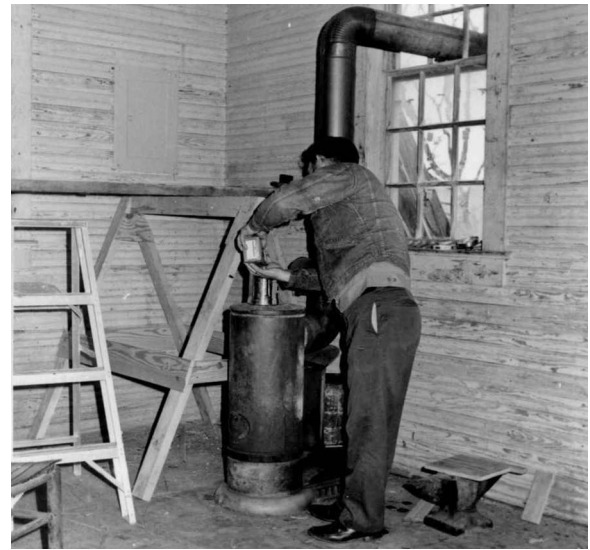
(ESC) on February 2, 1972, to plan for the repairs.<sup>84</sup> In the summer of 1972, the roofing materials and some of the rafters on the house were replaced and a temporary asphalt shingle roof installed. A photograph in the *Times-News* on June 3, 1972, showed workers roofing the Sandburg House. Afterwards, the maintenance staff repaired the water damage inside the Main House by replacing the plaster and painting “most” of the rooms on the main floor. Maintenance staff also rebuilt the roof and the front of the Barn Garage and painted the Barn and several other farm buildings.<sup>85</sup>

Park maintenance staff also worked on stabilizing the cultural landscape features at the park. They repaired and rebuilt fencing, especially in anticipation of a new goat herd, cut overgrown plantings, and put the shrubbery and flower beds “back into good shape.” The maintenance staff improved the trails to accommodate a four-wheel drive vehicle in case of fire.<sup>86</sup>

Reestablishing the goat herd became a high priority, especially since the Master Plan listed the “living farm concept” as one of its resource management objectives. Mrs. Sandburg had sold her remaining “small” Chikaming goat herd two months after her husband died, but she helped the National Park Service find descendants of the herd’s bloodlines, which included Nubians, Toggenburgs, and Saanens.<sup>87</sup> Gay remembered park staff consulting with Mrs. Sandburg, who kept excellent records on where she had sold the goats.<sup>88</sup> To prepare for the new goat herd, Leroy Levi, Charlie Hamm, park maintenance staff, and members of the Neighborhood Youth Corps renovated the Barn and three farm buildings during the summer of 1972.<sup>89</sup> Gay explained that



**Figure 2.32** Leroy Levi moves a horse in preparation for clearing the field. Sinbad, a former Sandburg dog, is in the background. Spring 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.33** Zeb Lindsey, park maintenance staff member, works in the Barn Garage. April 3, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

these buildings had “been kind of neglected for a few years.”<sup>90</sup>

In September 1972, the park acquired its first goats: three descendants of Toggenburgs from the Sandburg Chikaming herd that Mrs. Sandburg had sold to Helen Hunt, a breeder in Washington, Connecticut. Leroy Levi and Gordon Gay drove to Connecticut to pick up the two does and a buck. The arrival of these goats established the first elements of the living history program, which the park sought to have in place for the Establishment Day event scheduled for the following month. Gay and Levi also looked for Nubians and Saanens with the Chikaming bloodlines, and they purchased two Nubians, one using the funds remaining from Mrs. Sandburg’s donation for the Main House

84 Gordon Gay, Acting Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, to Historian, Eastern Service Center, memorandum, February 2, 1972, Gay Scrapbook. Gay noted that the roof of the Main House had been a buff red asbestos slate, but now the color was various shades of gray and black with a few red slates showing. The roof over the kitchen, dining room, and study addition had a modern asphalt shingle roof.

85 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

86 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

87 See handwritten notes in the University of Illinois Carl Sandburg collection plus some other notes about rebuilding the herd.

88 Gay, interview, 2011.

89 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

90 Gay, interview, 2011.



roof.<sup>91</sup> Some goats came from the Flat Rock area, but two were shipped by plane from Seattle, Washington. By the end of 1973, the farm had 17

91 "Sandburg's Goats Back," *Times-News*, September 29, 1972, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive. Gordon Gay, "Chikaming Herd Revised," n.d., Gay Scrapbook. Mrs. Sandburg donated \$1000 towards the new house roof in 1971, but the Park only spent \$795 of that donation. She requested that the remaining funds be used at the Park. The staff utilized this money to purchase a Nubian goat.



**Figure 2.34** Workers repair the Main Barn roof to ensure its preservation and to provide a home for the first goats. July 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).



**Figure 2.35** A worker visits with the new goats at the park while the others are completing a Barn repair project. July 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

goats, including one Saanen, six Toggenburgs, and ten Nubians.<sup>92</sup>

Gay also continued his focus on the curatorial work. An article in the *Citizen-Times* on March 26, 1972, noted that Gay was cataloging everything in the Main House "down to the cigar butts in Sandburg's old sheet iron stove" and much of his clothing along with "other items."<sup>93</sup> A scrapbook prepared by the staff when Gay left included one of those cigar butts for him to remember what had been become a popular joke about what the park should catalog.

92 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973; Gay, interview, 2011.

93 "Visitors To This House Should Walk 'On Little Cat Feet,'" *Citizen-Times*.



**Figure 2.36** Leroy Levi milks the goats at the park. Ca. 1971-3 (Gordon Gay Scrapbook).



**Figure 2.37** Volunteer (Volunteer In Park) Beth Petty, from Mars Hill College, works in Janet's Bedroom (Room 211). The park depended on seasonal and volunteer labor to complete many essential museum functions. January 1972 (CARL Park Archive)

There were a variety of curatorial challenges at the Sandburg home. Gay consistently encountered problems with moisture and humidity in the Main House. He wrote to David Wallace at Harpers Ferry Center to request assistance on how to “keep down mold on clothing” and for information about different types of devices available to monitor humidity. He was also working with a photographer who offered to make negatives of the photographs displayed in the house. Gay planned to send the photographs, cut out of magazines and placed on Sandburg’s office wall, to the photographer to copy the originals and then he wanted to send them to HFC for “deacidification and lamination.”<sup>94</sup> For research and interpretive programs, Gay conducted tape-recorded interviews with people who knew Sandburg.<sup>95</sup> The already large museum collection grew when Hendersonville native Jan Clausing donated a painting she made of Sandburg to the park and the University of Illinois agreed to leave Sandburg’s remaining 12,000 books from his personal library at the park.<sup>96</sup>

94 Gordon Gay to David Wallace, memorandum, March 2, 1972, Gay Scrapbook; Gordon Gay to David Wallace, February 23, 1972, Gay Scrapbook.

95 “Great Number of Visitors Expected at Sandburg Estate,” *Times-News*.

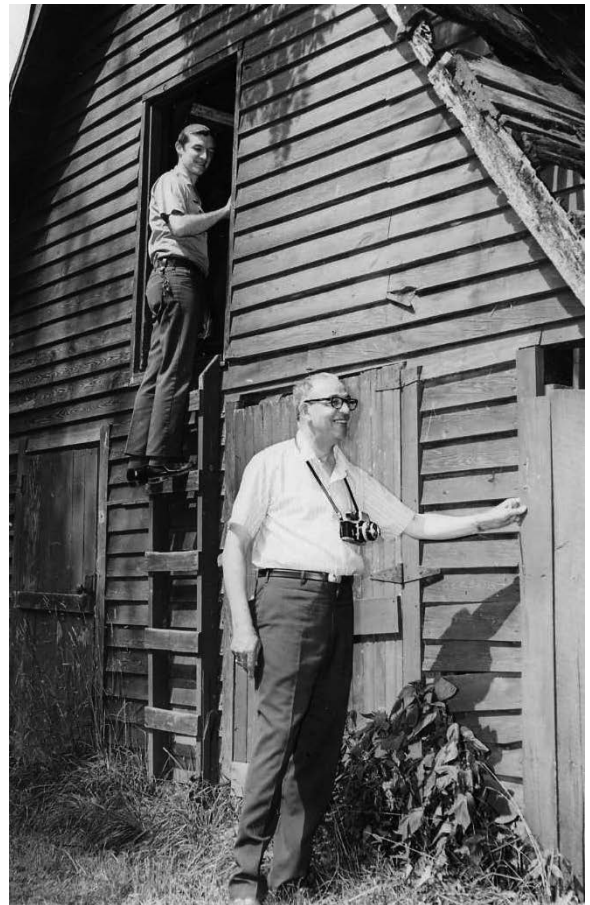
96 “Carl Sandburg’s Personal Library Coming From Illinois to Flat Rock,” *Citizen-Times*, February 23, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.38** After the NPS purchased Connemara, park staff assessed the condition of the collection all around the farm. Several pieces had damage and needed repair. These two old chairs had been in the toolshed and were reported as “damaged, needs to be worked on.” Ca. 1970-1 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.39** Curator Gordon Gay stands on the Front Porch of the Main House. Circa 1971-3 (Gordon Gay Scrapbook).



**Figure 2.40** Curator Gordon Gay (on the ladder) and Russ Jones from the Eastern Service Center of the National Park Service examine the Stable before its repair. July 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



To raise visibility for this new park, the Harpers Ferry Center created an exhibit on Carl Sandburg that would travel around the United States between 1971 and 1977. The Interpretive Prospectus first proposed this idea. When Sandburg died, the Hallmark Gallery in New York City produced a “national” exhibit on the poet utilizing photographs taken by his brother-in-law, Edward Steichen. The exhibit ran from January through February 26, 1968. After it closed, the Gallery sent the exhibit’s 100 large photo panels to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. The Prospectus proposed that the NPS utilize these Hallmark Gallery images to produce an exhibit that could travel around the country to acquaint Americans with Carl Sandburg and to announce the opening of the park. The Harpers Ferry Center redesigned the Hallmark exhibit, making it 85 panels and including slide presentations, quotes from Sandburg’s books and writings, and audio recordings of Sandburg singing.<sup>97</sup>

The traveling exhibit opened its nationwide tour at the Henderson County Public Library in June 1971. Park staff helped to install the exhibit. News media snapped photographs of Mrs. Sandburg eagerly touring the exhibit with her daughters Margaret and Janet.<sup>98</sup> Warren Weber recalls that the exhibit “would fill up a fairly good sized space. It traveled all over the country, and it was picked up by a lot of Swedish American societies around the country.”<sup>99</sup>

Although not yet officially open to the public, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS allowed limited

visitation on the property. Staff led “organized groups” on tours of the Main House, offering 209 tours to 2,102 visitors from March 1972, when they began counting, through December 1972. The park permitted visitors to drive around the grounds in their cars “during duty hours” and reported 338 cars with over a thousand visitors in 1972. In addition, visitors also walked on the trails, but the park staff was unable to keep a headcount on this visitation.<sup>100</sup>

To reach out to the community, the park organized several public programs.<sup>101</sup> “Connemara Day,” on April 8, 1972, brought 300 Cadette Girl Scouts from western North Carolina to visit the Sandburg home and to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Girl Scouting and the “100<sup>th</sup> year of National Parks,” with the establishment of the first national park at Yellowstone. Mrs. Sandburg and her daughter Margaret, Representative Roy Taylor, and Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Granville Liles attended the event. Participating scouts studied Sandburg and the history of the home to earn a new badge and assisted with yard work on the property. The scouts also prepared a cake in honor of the centennial of the first national park, which they presented to Superintendent Kretschmann.<sup>102</sup>

100 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

101 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

102 “Cadette Scouts Plan ‘Connemara Day,’” n.d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

- 97 “Display on Sandburg Is Opened at Library,” June 17, 1971, and “Mrs. Sandburg In Visit to Exhibit,” n. d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 32-3; and “Carl Sandburg Exhibition Opens at Hallmark Gallery,” press release, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II. Mrs. Sandburg wrote to Marc Sagan to tell him that the photographs would be shipped and that she would keep them “intact for the National Historic Site.” The other items on display included his guitar, typewriter, eye shade, glasses, and other items which would also be returned. Mrs. Carl Sandburg to Marc Sagan, Division of Planning and Interpretive Services, March 2, 1968, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.
- 98 “Display on Sandburg Is Opened at Library,” June 17, 1971, and “Mrs. Sandburg In Visit to Exhibit.”
- 99 Weber, interview, 2011. Weber added, “The Park Service, not long after I came here, abandoned it because it was too costly to ship around. So we got it.” The Park put it in the Barn and used parts of it “from time to time” but then disposed of it.



**Figure 2.41** Park employees gather on Connemara Day, including (left to right) Charlie Hamm, Zeb Lindsey, James Haynes, and Louis Smith. April 8, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



The Carl Sandburg Home NHS took advantage of the centennial anniversary of the establishment of the first national park to offer two special programs. Over the weekend of April 21 through 23, 1972, the park hosted a six-panel exhibit for the anniversary and provided “limited visitation” of the Main House between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Seventy-five people toured the home.<sup>103</sup> On July 1, the park invited local artists to come to the house and paint the buildings and grounds. Their art would then be displayed during the October open house planned at the site.<sup>104</sup>

103 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1972.

104 “Public Programs To Be Held At Sandburg Site,” *Times-News*, March 8, 1972, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figures 2.44** Roy Taylor and Jim Kretschmann join Mrs. Sandburg and her daughter, Margaret, for a photo in front of Sandburg's extensive library during the Girl Scouts' visit to Connemara. April 8, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figures 2.42 (above) and 2.43 (below)** The Girl Scouts enjoy a tour and special program at Connemara with Congressman Roy Taylor and Mrs. Sandburg. April 8, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.45** Roy Taylor examines items on Sandburg's desk, with Jim Kretschmann in the background during the Girl Scouts' visit. April 8, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.46** Congressman Roy Taylor, Superintendent Jim Kretschmann, Margaret Sandburg, and Lilian Sandburg meet with Girl Scouts on a tour of the Main House. April 8, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

As part of the national parks centennial, and no doubt to show that some work was taking place, the park hosted an Establishment Day ceremony on October 27, 1972. Over 300 people, including Mrs. Sandburg, attended the event on the cold, windy, overcast day, punctuated by drizzling rain. The most distinguished guest was National Park Service Director George Hartzog who officially dedicated the site as a unit of the National Park



**Figure 2.47** This NPS exhibit was installed in the Main House for the National Park Service Centennial in 1972. Although the official park opening was still three years away, the NPS opened the Main House to the public for that weekend. April 22, 1971 (CARL Park Archive).

system after stating that “a large measure of thanks must go to Roy Taylor.” Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National P. Reed, gave the principal address.<sup>105</sup> Reed praised local supporters of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS as well as North Carolina Senators Sam Ervin and Everett Jordan. Other speakers included Representative Roy Taylor and Chairman of the National Parks Centennial Commission Edmund B. Thornton. Superintendent Granville Liles represented the Blue Ridge Parkway, and members of his staff helped prepare for the event.<sup>106</sup>

Taylor reminded the crowd that he had been “pleading with the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior and with the Administration to place in the President’s budget and to recommend to Congress sufficient funds” so

<sup>105</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972.

<sup>106</sup> “Connemara Dedicated As Historic Site,” *Citizen-Times*, October 27, 1972, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; “Connemara Now a Historic Site,” *Times-News*, October 27, 1972, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.48** Granville Liles, center, and Congressman Roy Taylor enjoy the Establishment Day ceremonies in 1972. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.49** Curator Gordon Gay holds an umbrella for Mrs. Sandburg as she observes the presentations at Establishment Day. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.50** National Park Service Director George Hartzog addresses the audience at the Establishment Day ceremony at the park. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.51** National Park Service Director George Hartzog shakes hands with Mrs. Sandburg at the Establishment Day ceremony. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 2.52** Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Nathaniel Reed speaks to visitors during the Establishment Day ceremony. The stage, set up in front of the Main House, added to the formal atmosphere of the event. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.53** A crowd gathers for the Establishment Day ceremonies in front of the Main House. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive.)



**Figure 2.54** National Park Service Director George Hartzog and Nathaniel Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, share a few moments on the Front Porch of the Main House during Establishment Day. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

that the Carl Sandburg Home NHS could open to the public. He argued that it was “poor economy” to acquire the property and then not allocate funds for repairs so that the public could use it, adding, as a reminder to Hartzog, “May this ceremony hasten



**Figure 2.55** Superintendent Jim Kretschmann shares stories about Carl Sandburg with Nathaniel Reed, as they talk in Sandburg's Study on Establishment Day. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

the opening of this Historic Site for the Public's enjoyment.” Hartzog replied, “We got the message. Even Secretary Reed got the message. I saw him flinch.” Taylor pledged to initiate legislation to get the additional funds needed to prepare the historic site to open to the public.<sup>107</sup>

## A New Park Superintendent

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS experienced a change in leadership in 1973. Superintendent Kretschmann left effective February 4 to accept a position as superintendent at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park.<sup>108</sup> Curator Gordon Gay served as acting superintendent until April 1973 when Ronald Thoman arrived to begin his first park superintendent position.<sup>109</sup>

107 “Connemara Dedicated As Historic Site,” *Citizen-Times*; “Connemara Now a Historic Site,” *Times-News*; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1972.

108 “NPS Promotes Jim Kretschmann,” n.d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

109 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973. The report states May but the press release says Thoman began on April 28. See “Hatteras Man to Oversee Sandburg Home,” *Citizen-Times*, April 29, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1; CARL Park Archives.





**Figure 2.56** Mrs. Sandburg enjoys the goats, recently acquired by the park, at the Establishment Day activities. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.57** Congressman Roy A. Taylor addresses the crowd gathered at the Establishment Day. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.58** National Park Service Director George Hartzog greets Mrs. Sandburg at the Establishment Day event. October 27, 1972 (CARL Park Archive).

Thoman began his career with the National Park Service in 1967, working as a park historian at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, and then as a unit manager of Federal Hall National Memorial and Castle Clinton National Monument in the Manhattan Properties unit of the New York City Group.<sup>110</sup> “I was assistant chief of interpretation at Cape Hatteras National Seashore and was also simultaneously unit manager of Wright Brother’s National Memorial and Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. As part of that, I was in a National Park Service program called the mid-level manager program, which was an attempt to train new superintendents to sort of feed into the pipeline as time went by. Once you finished it, you were immediately assigned to your first superintendency.” The Carl Sandburg Home NHS was perfect for him. “My academic major in college was English and literature and I was fascinated with the Sandburg story, had been all my life very familiar with it. It was just a wonderful coincidence that I got sent there for that job.”<sup>111</sup> Thoman had degrees in secondary education, English, and American History from Kent State University, and he taught English and history for two years before entering the National Park Service.<sup>112</sup>

“When I first got there, they were in a holding action,” Thoman later recalled. “Their primary job was just security, number one. Number two, just trying to keep the place from falling apart and keeping up whatever, mowing the lawn, or whatever maintenance chores had to be done. And number three, trying to get some handle on the curatorial collection, because there were literally, probably millions of items in the house. I was even stunned when I got there. And then fourthly, the relationship with the community because there were a whole lot of people who didn’t like Sandburg very much and there was kind of a split attitude in the community.”<sup>113</sup>

In his Annual Report for 1973, Thoman said the park staff focused on “preservation and restoration of the farm buildings, gardens, and pastures.” The park maintenance staff continued to lead this work.

110 “Hatteras Man to Oversee Sandburg Home,” *Citizen-Times*.

111 Thoman, interview, 2003.

112 “Ronald G. Thoman Named Superintendent of Carl Sandburg National Historic Site,” press release, April 28, 1973, Carl Sandburg File, HFC Archive.

113 Thoman, interview, 2011.

A newspaper article that year noted that the park had performed some type of preservation work on more than 20 buildings, including stabilizing, weatherproofing, and applying chemical treatments to deal with fungus and insects. To weatherproof the buildings, the maintenance staff repaired roofs, patched siding, replaced window glass, installed window vents, dug ditches to move water away from the buildings, and cleaned around the buildings to help eliminate moisture and pests.<sup>114</sup>

114 "Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in '74," *Times-News*, n.d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973.



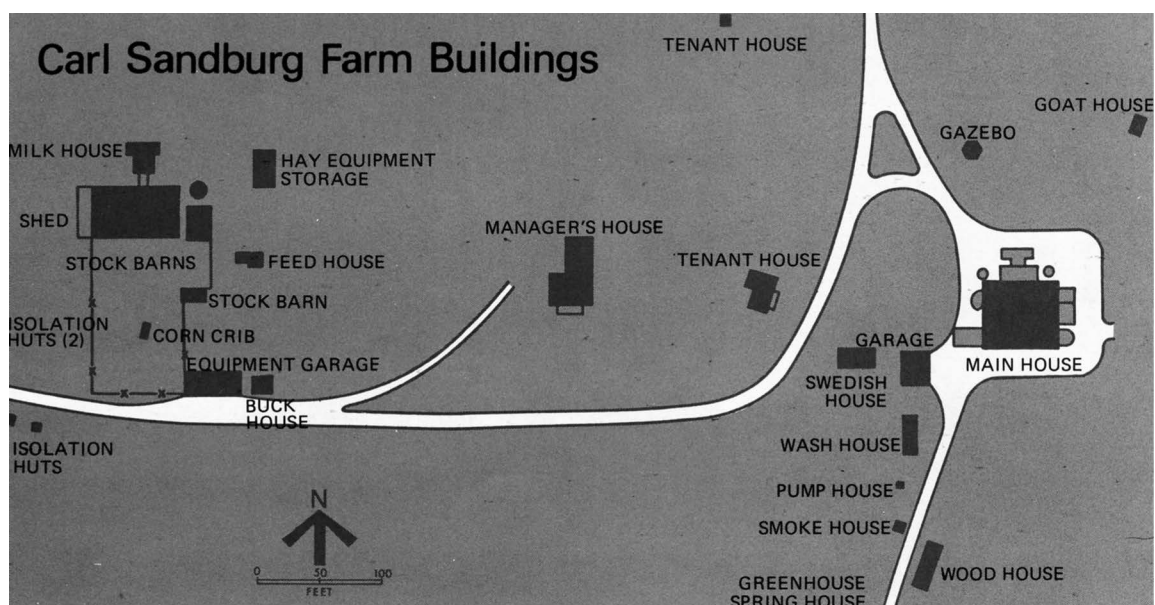
**Figure 2.59** Repair work is underway on the Stable, adjacent to the Main Barn. May 1973 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

Thoman recalled the “many, many” challenges he faced with the historic structures. “We had very little money. We had no professional staff to deal with them. We did what we could. We got some assistance from the regional office, some assistance with the Blue Ridge Parkway, mainly just to keep things from falling down and deteriorating any further.” Thoman drew heavily upon the maintenance staff, led by Charlie Hamm, whom he considered an “excellent carpenter, excellent maintenance person, and very, very sensitive to historic preservation, and learned very quickly what that was all about. He wasn’t a professional in that regard, but he learned very quickly.”<sup>115</sup>

After Thoman’s arrival, NPS attention to the deteriorating condition of the buildings at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site increased.<sup>116</sup> One of the reasons for the added attention was the creation of a staff historical architect position, filled by John C. Garner, Jr., and a historian at the new Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta in 1973. These new SERO staff members established a Cultural Resource Management Program for the region’s parks. Thoman reported

115 Thoman, interview, 2011.

116 “Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in '74,” *Times-News*; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973. The article notes that NPS staff from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Southeast Region and Washington offices as well as the Denver Service Center provided assistance in planning and in finding solutions to the problems that arose.



**Figure 2.60** The Master Plan, completed in 1971, provides a plan of the buildings in the historic core when the National Park Service purchased the property. Master Plan, 1971.

both formal and “incidental” visits by Historical Architects Jim Askins, Hugh Miller, and John C. Garner Jr. to assist with a variety of preservation issues. Besides the house, the primary buildings of concern that year were the Buck Quarters, Farm Manager’s House, and Tenant House, along with the stone walls along the entrance drive and the dams on the lake, all of which were deteriorating.<sup>117</sup>

About a month after Thoman began work, Garner visited the park with Andy Ketterson, historian at the Blue Ridge Parkway, to meet with Thoman and Gordon Gay. Garner expressed concern about a number of issues. Lamenting the fact that the Master Plan team did not include a historical architect, he disapproved of statements in the plan, including those which proposed the “redesign” of several historic interiors, the resurfacing of the existing drive which could endanger a historic building, and the remodeling of the Family Garage into restrooms. Second, he worried about the damage he observed from rot and powder post beetle. Third, he noted that the fire protection devices installed in the Main House may have permanently damaged the historic features of the home. And fourth, he was troubled about the damage to the goat barns by powder post beetles and gnawing by the goats.<sup>118</sup>

At Garner’s recommendation, Thoman wrote to William Hendrickson, the associate director for professional support in the Southeast Region, to request updated cost estimates. The previous estimates for this work dated to February 16, 1970. Thoman added, “We have been doing some emergency-type repairs on some of the

buildings.”<sup>119</sup> Hendrickson assigned Garner to provide these estimates, but he warned Thoman it might take several months before Garner would have the time to complete the task.<sup>120</sup> Once again, Thoman would have to wait.

Thoman described the frustration that he felt after the visits from Garner. “He would say to me, ‘Hey this building’s falling down.’ Take the goat house, for example. ‘This thing is going to fall down and will be lost forever very quickly. You need to do something about it.’ I said, ‘Well, what am I going to do about it? I don’t have any money. And the best I can do is shore it up or do what I could with the staff that I had there.’ ‘Well, do what you can.’ ‘Okay, we’re going to do this.’ ‘Well, wait a minute, you can’t do that. Do you have a Historic Structures Report? Do you have Section 106 clearance? Do you have all these other research documents and compliance documents completed before you do any work?’ ‘No, and I don’t even have as much money to do those as I might have to do some of the stabilization work.’ So we got into that kind of tug-of-war with the professionals, who were in my opinion, totally unrealistic, doing their thing, dedicated to preserving that resource, but didn’t have a clue about the reality of dollars, and time, and working against time and nature, and what was happening to those buildings. So we did what we could, and frankly, probably did some things that technically we shouldn’t have done.”<sup>121</sup>

For Thoman, one of the greatest obstructions was not having the studies necessary to proceed. “We didn’t have any plans. We didn’t have anything that was giving us guidance about, no interpretive prospectus about what the building’s going to be used for in the future. How should we treat it now? How should we stabilize it? What direction should we work on? That was the most confounding

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117 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973; John C. Garner, Jr., *Cultural Resource Management Program, 1983-1993*, Southeast Regional Office, 1982, 1-2, SERO Archive.

118 John Garner, Jr., Historical Architect, Branch of Planning and Design, Southeast Region to Associate Director, Professional Support, Southeast Region, memorandum, May 3, 1973, Correspondence 1967-1973 File, WASO Files. In June, Garner proposed a chemical treatment plan for the beetle infestation, but the plan was not implemented due to concerns about the chemical. John Garner, Historical Architect, Branch of Planning and Design, Southeast Region, June 7, 1973, Correspondence 1967-1973 File, WASO Files.

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119 Ronald G. Thoman to Associate Director, Professional Support, memorandum, June 6, 1973, Carl NR/DOE Correspondence, SERO; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973. The earlier cost estimates were prepared for the Master Plan.

120 William H. Hendrickson, Associate Director, Professional Support, Southeast Regional Office to Superintendent, Blue Ridge, memorandum, July 30, 1973, Correspondence 1967-1973 File, WASO Files.

121 Thoman, interview, 2003. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 required that all federal agencies consider the impact of any work on properties in or eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.



problem that I worked with on a daily basis.”<sup>122</sup> The only guidance available at that point was the Master Plan, and architects such as Garner and others had already begun to raise concerns about the recommendations it offered.

Even the process of preparing the Historic Structure Report (HSR) had been delayed. In April 1972, Historian George Svejda submitted the historical sections of the HSR, after spending a week in November 1971 at the farm and requesting descriptions of all the rooms from Gordon Gay.<sup>123</sup> However, the historical architect assigned to the project, Russell Jones, had not been able to complete the architectural data due to other demands in his schedule, so his recommendations were not included in the 1972 document.<sup>124</sup> This



**Figure 2.61** Goats enjoy a sunny day in the barnyard. Ca. 1971-3 (Gordon Gay Scrapbook).

was the type of information that Thoman wanted and would have used, had it been available. In February 1973, William Hendrickson, acting regional director of the Southeast Regional Office,

responded to what he called the “draft” Historic Structures Report Svejda prepared by commenting that “Carl Sandburg is a preservation problem and the report needs to speak to preservation of the resource.”<sup>125</sup> Historical Architect Russell Jones wrote a draft of the architectural data section of the Historic Structure Report for the Main House, Family Garage, and Swedish House in August 1973. While Thoman was told that this report would be finished in early 1974, the final document was not submitted until 1976, two years after the park opened.<sup>126</sup> In 1973, the NPS began work on compiling the architectural data for Historic Structure Reports for the Tenant House and Farm Manager’s House, both of which were in poor condition.<sup>127</sup>

Fortunately, in 1973, the Park received \$40,000 in “lump sum emergency historic preservation funds” to “treat” some of the most deteriorated structures.<sup>128</sup> The \$40,000 allocation was to be combined with park operating funds to stabilize and hopefully begin restoration of these buildings, based on the Historic Structure Reports.<sup>129</sup> The park needed to get clearances from the Section 106 Review to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) to use that money, but that process would ultimately be delayed until 1975. This process required the park to submit the 106 Review forms first to the Southeast Regional Office for approval. Then the forms would be sent to the North Carolina State Preservation Office for an official response to determine if there was any potential adverse impact to the resource before any work could take place.

In the meantime, the park maintenance staff and seasonal personnel continued to clean up the grounds. They worked with the US Forest Service and Soil and Conservation Service to “preserve” the farm vegetation and the two lakes and dams. Staff and volunteers cut breaks in the trails to

122 Thoman, interview, 2003.

123 Svejda, Historic Structure Report, 1972. Curator Gordon Gay recalls that Svejda spent a week at the park. Afterwards, Svejda wrote to Gay to ask him to write a “simple description of the rooms,” which Gay did. Gay recalls that the final report included Gay’s descriptions almost “verbatim.” Gay, interview, 2011.

124 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972. The final report was completed in January 1973; see Carl Sandburg Home NHS, 1973 File, WASO Files. In late spring 1972, Svejda was completing the history component of the Historic Structures Report. In July 1972, Robert Utley returned the Architectural Data (history) section to Svejda because it did not include the required information. (Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO Files). His report was determined to be unacceptable. In August 1972, according to a memo in Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO Files. Svejda wrote a critical letter to Utley questioning his qualifications as a historian and his work with the NPS.

125 Hendrickson to Manager, Denver Service Center, memorandum, February 1, 1974.

126 F. Ross Holland, Acting Manager, Historic Preservation Team, Denver Service Center, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, August 30, 1973, Correspondence 1967-1973 File, WASO Files; Russell Jones, Historic Structure Report: Architectural Data, Home, Garage, Swedish House, September 1976, Denver Service Center, National Park Service.

127 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

128 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

129 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

prevent soil erosion, added new gravel to the drives, and removed non-historic plant materials that threatened the historic landscape.<sup>130</sup> “We tried to put the gardens back into some kind of use,” Thoman recalled. “It would probably be prohibited today, but at that time it was mostly park employees who wanted to have a garden spot and we invited and encouraged them to do that, just so that we could keep those gardens clear and in use as gardens, as well as kind of maintain the historic scene for the public to the degree we could. And generally cleaning up the site and picking up stuff that had been there probably ever since the Sandburgs had been there, pieces of fence that were down, old equipment.”<sup>131</sup>

The ever important curatorial work, on the other hand, “ground to a halt” when Gordon Gay was promoted to regional curator and moved to the Santa Fe NPS Office in August of 1973. An NPS hiring freeze left the Carl Sandburg Home NHS curator position unfilled, a challenge for an already understaffed park.<sup>132</sup>

Although still closed to the public in 1973, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS organized several events for the community. The park provided tours of the Main House to special groups, serving 2,603 visitors, which was up 25 percent from the previous year, including the Historic Flat Rock Association, Piedmont North Carolina Dairy Goat Association, and various garden clubs. One of the most prestigious visitors that year was poet Rod McKuen on March 22. He came to East Hendersonville High School to read his poetry in memory of a high school student killed by a hit-and-run motorist, and he visited the park while he was in Hendersonville. The staff met all park visitors at the gate and walked them up to the Main House. Scout groups and many other visitors walked the trails that year, but the park did not record those numbers. In addition to site tours, the park offered two off-site programs that year, including an exhibit of some of the park’s dairy goats at the Western North Carolina Fair.<sup>133</sup>

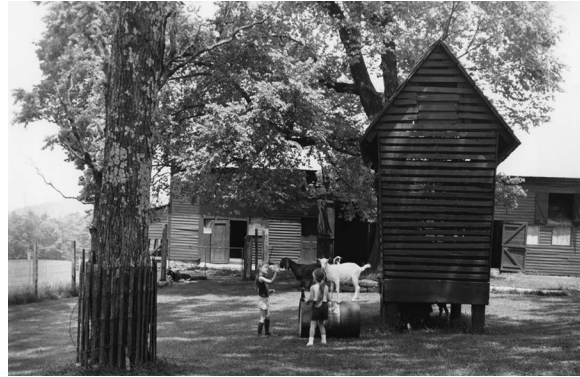
130 “Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in ‘74,” *Times-News*; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

131 Thoman, interview, 2003.

132 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

133 “Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in ‘74,” *Times-News*; “Rod McKuen Pays Tribute to East Henderson Student,” *Citizen-Times*, March 23, 1973, Gay Scrapbook.

In 1972, the park’s main gate remained open all day during regular business hours, allowing visitors to drive around the property. However, to protect the site, Thoman made the decision to close the park gate to visitor traffic, effective July 9, 1973. Thoman later recalled that visitors would often come expecting to see Mrs. Sandburg’s goat herd. “They didn’t know that she wasn’t there. . . . A lot of people, goat people, would travel from



**Figure 2.62** Two young girls visit with the new goats in the barnyard. June 1972 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

far away to visit with her and see the goat herd and the whole operation. When they noticed that ‘the government’ was there and that the farm had become a national historic site, they would say, ‘Oh you mean Mrs. Sandburg and her goat herd’s going to get recognized!’” Thoman chuckled, “There were people who knew who Mrs. Sandburg was because of that [goat herd] but they didn’t know . . . who Carl Sandburg was or they didn’t know she was married to him.”<sup>134</sup>

As early as July 1973, Thoman must have had an idea that a limited opening could occur at some point because he sent a memo to Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) asking for help with producing an “interim mini-folder” or park brochure. The Harpers Ferry Center had contacted the Sandburg staff several weeks before regarding the development of a mini-folder for the park to use that summer. Thoman apologized for the delay in sending the text, adding that “several questions were pending regarding the status of our proposed development, opening date, etc.” He recommended against including maps in the folder, since the park was not open and not encouraging visitation and “we are uncertain as to when development money will be available.” “It could be as late as 1977,” he wrote. Thoman added, “We

134 Thoman, interview, 2011.



**Figure 2.63** The new goats enjoy the barnyard at the park. Ca. 1971-3 (CARL Park Archive).

are currently studying a plan that would provide for limited opening prior to complete development and restoration. Further, when development does occur, it is programmed in stages, so we do not know when everything will finally be operational.” Still, Thoman believed that the park needed a brochure for mail requests as well as for visits by special groups and “VIP visitors.” He told HFC



**Figure 2.64** Gordon Gay and Leroy Levi pose with some of the new goats the park purchased prior to the opening. September 9, 1972 (Gordon Gay Scrapbook).

staff that a folder “would also be useful if we would ever open on a limited basis, since such an opening prior to stabilization of [the] Main House would consist mainly of exterior tours only.”<sup>135</sup>

Still, Thoman said he had no idea of when the opening of the park would occur. “All these numbers about what should be done and how much would it cost to do it, and what in reality you’re going to get has always been two different things. I remember the feeling was none of this is going to happen any time soon, and we’ve got to keep this place from falling down.”<sup>136</sup>

Newspapers continued to express uncertainty about when the park might open. An article in the *News and Observer* on April 15, 1973, speculated that perhaps Sandburg’s early socialist writing and his campaigning for Democrats had led to a lack of support for the bill required to provide appropriations for the park. Granville Liles forwarded this article to Thoman, who scribbled, “This article is GARBAGE!” on the bottom of the page. Author Gary Owens also argued that North Carolinians did not identify with the “rough-hewn” poetry of this outspoken poet and that his poems did not reflect the character of his adopted North Carolina home.<sup>137</sup>

It was not Sandburg’s poetry that delayed the park opening; the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was one of many authorized national parks sitting in a holding pattern until a political change came about. For the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, that finally occurred a few months later.

## Congressman Taylor Finds an Opportunity

By 1973, the National Park Service was no longer pursuing an expansionist agenda. Ronald Walker,

<sup>135</sup> Ronald G. Thoman, Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home, to Chief, Division of Publications, Harpers Ferry Center, memorandum, July 30, 1973, New Folder—July 1973 File, HFC Archive. The full text proposed for this folder is also included with this memo. Note that the description of the building use reflects the proposed use, and these uses changed by the time the park opened.

<sup>136</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

<sup>137</sup> “Connemara: Sandburg in North Carolina, But Not of It,” *News and Observer*, April 15, 1974, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.



who replaced George Hartzog as director in January 1973, emphasized the “consolidation of past gains above further expansion at the previous rate, believing that Service funding and staffing would be insufficient to sustain such a continued influx.”<sup>138</sup> With a new director, Congressman Taylor saw an opportunity to make a move to push for funds to open the Carl Sandburg Home NHS.

Anticipating that a new National Park Service director would bring different priorities, Taylor called a Briefing and Oversight Hearing for the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation for March 13, 15, and 16 to acquire information to “develop our legislative program for this Congress.” Taylor stated, “We are charged with the responsibility to exercise oversight over the programs which we have helped to create. It is our job to see to it that they are administered in conformity with the intent of the Congress when they were created.”<sup>139</sup>

Certainly, the unfunded park in his own district must have been on Taylor’s mind throughout this hearing. On his copy of Director Ronald Walker’s prepared written statement, Taylor underlined Walker’s sentence, “I believe it is very important that we follow up as soon as possible after the authorization of these areas with funds necessary to manage and protect them for the public.” This situation had been the problem at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. Walker said in his speech that the National Park Service needed \$15 million to “complete areas authorized since 1960.”<sup>140</sup> On a typed page of a speech from that hearing, describing how many new parks had been established since 1960 but not provided adequate



**Figure 2.65** Congressman Roy Taylor shows representatives from the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation around Connemara as Taylor pushed for funding to open the park. August 5, 1973 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.66** Representatives from the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation enjoy a meal at Connemara during their visit to the park. August 5, 1973 (CARL Park Archive).

funding, Taylor jotted, “Are we being honest with [the] public and with people whose property [we are] taking when [we] set up Dev. [Development] Plans and [do not] not carry [them] out. Carl Sandburg.”<sup>141</sup> A summary of the 1974 budget included in that file states that the “largest portion” of NPS funding for the fiscal year is “proposed for initial operations of new areas.”<sup>142</sup>

For an article in the *Citizen-Times* explaining the lack of funding for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS a few weeks later, Roy Taylor reported that the lack of support was “part of a much larger, nationwide problem.” Without the necessary developmental funding, the National Park Service had to use money “already appropriated and

138 Macintosh, *The National Parks*, 80.

139 Roy A. Taylor to All Members of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, memorandum, March 12, 1973, 1973 National Parks Folder, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Statement by Roy A. Taylor to the Subcommittee Oversight Hearings, March 13, 1973, National Parks Folder, Taylor 1973, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

140 “Statement of Ronald H. Walker, Director, National Park Service Department of the Interior, Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,” March 1973, 1973 National Parks Folder, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

141 Untitled page, Roy Taylor, 1973 National Parks Folder, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

142 Summary of Fiscal Year 1974 Budget, n.d., National Parks Folder, Roy Arthur Taylor Collection (1959-1977), D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collection, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

shuffled within the service to keep up the Carl Sandburg Home.” Taylor added that in January of that year, he had asked Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton and George Schultz, director of the Office of Management and Budget “to appear before his subcommittee.” Schultz refused to appear, adding that the “Administration’s views would be expressed by the Secretary of Interior.” At the meeting, Taylor “used the Sandburg site as an example to show how authorized developments have not been carried out and the public denied their availability.”<sup>143</sup>

A May 1, 1973, editorial in the *Times-News* expressed continued frustration over the lack of funding for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. Congressman Taylor told the editor that this park was one of several affected by an impoundment of funding by President Richard Nixon’s administration. He claimed that funds to pay for outdoor recreational facilities were available in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but the “Administration” did not like the projects and thus had impounded the funds. Questioning whether the focus of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was an issue, the editor wrote, “The simple fact is there is little regard for style, culture, and the arts in the Administration. It is sad, too, because art is about the only lasting impression most cultures and civilizations make on the world.”<sup>144</sup>

In a talk to a conservation group at Fontana Village, in western North Carolina, a few weeks later, Taylor continued to lambast the “administration impoundment” of funds that Congress had designated for new parks and the “paper parks” that resulted. He claimed that Congress was also frustrated about the administration’s “apparent disregard for the overall national outdoor recreation program.” Once again, Taylor cited the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site as a casualty of the political situation, observing that “practically nothing has been done” due to the lack of funding. “The public has not been permitted to make any use of the property for lack of funds to create a parking lot and a shuttle bus service. To me, this is poor economy.”<sup>145</sup>

143 “Visitors To This House Should Walk ‘On Little Cat Feet,’” *Citizen-Times*.

144 “The Congressman Is Right!” *Times-News*, May 31, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

145 “Taylor Raps ‘Hold’ on Park Funds,” *Citizen-Times*, May 19, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1 (with article from May 30, 1973), CARL Park Archive.

Not all local constituents agreed with Taylor. Hendersonville resident L. H. Means sent a letter directly to President Nixon expressing his agreement with “your policy of withholding some of the money which congress voted to spend.” Means said that he and “hundreds” of other residents in western North Carolina “were happy to see you hold up some of the money voted for the Carl Sandburg memorial,” adding, “This was really a ‘deal’ put up by someone in our local paper and Congressman Roy Taylor.” Means argued that a “granite boulder” with a plaque on about six acres would save taxpayers “over a million dollars.”<sup>146</sup>

To help bring attention to the plight of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS and to lobby for funding, Taylor arranged for members of the National Parks Subcommittee of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee to visit the park as part of a three-day summer tour. On August 5, the group visited Connemara and the Biltmore in Asheville, and then headed into South Carolina for a trip down the Chattooga River. Attendees included Congressmen John F. Seilberling of Ohio, Robert G. Stephens Jr. of Georgia, Paul W. Cronin of Massachusetts, and Delegate Ron de Lugo of the Virgin Islands, along with several of the participants’ family members.<sup>147</sup> Stanley W. Hulett of the Department of the Interior, NPS Southeast Regional Director David Thompson, and Blue Ridge Parkway Assistant Superintendent Richard Steeves also participated in the tour of the Sandburg Home National Historic Site, as well as various city and county officials.<sup>148</sup> Superintendent Thoman gave a tour of the park and Taylor presented a speech about the “significance of the farm and the need for developmental funding.”<sup>149</sup> Taylor expressed his “pride in being able to assist in creating the National Historic Site, which was the first in the National Park System devoted to any American poet.”<sup>150</sup>

An article in the *Times-News* expressed hope that Representative Taylor’s August tour would serve as

146 L. H. Means to President Richard Nixon, March 21, 1973, 1967-73 File, WASO Files.

147 “Congressmen Visit Sandburg Home,” n.d., Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

148 “Congressmen Will Visit Sandburg Home Aug. 5,” *Times News*, July 27, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

149 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

150 “Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in ‘74,” *Times-News* photo.



**Figure 2.67** Congressman Roy Taylor talks with representatives from the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation on the Front Porch of Connemara. August 5, 1973 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.68** Curator Gordon Gay talks with one of the wives participating in the U.S. House Subcommittee tour of the park. August 5, 1973 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.69** Congressman Roy Taylor discusses the living farm operation with members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation when they visited Connemara. August 5, 1973 (CARL Park Archive).

a catalyst to get funding for the park. The author of the article noted that while “Congress has still not loosened the purse strings of the U.S. Department of the Interior to the extent that the Carl Sandburg Home National Historical Site could receive sufficient funds to enable the National Park Service officials to open it to the public, there is still hope that sufficient money will be available from regular appropriations to open the site on a limited basis.” The author wrote that the property had been closed due to lack of funding for a parking lot and to “strengthen” the home for visitation.<sup>151</sup>

While Taylor’s visit no doubt helped alert the House committees to the challenges which newly authorized but unfunded parks faced, there were other issues at play that would help turn the tide and lead to the opening of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. The Paris Accords of January 27, 1973, officially ended the Vietnam War that had been draining the federal budget for the several previous years. Warren Weber, the second curator for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, recalled that when he met George Hartzog and talked with him about the park, Hartzog commented, “All the money at that time was going to Vietnam.”<sup>152</sup> The end of the war would certainly help to get the Sandburg home opened.

In addition, President Nixon’s replacement of NPS Director Hartzog with Ronald Walker offered an opportunity for Congressman Taylor to make his move. While Taylor had worked with Hartzog to advance the Director’s vision for an expanded national park system, Taylor had been unable to get Hartzog to budge on securing funding for the Carl Sandburg Home. He hoped a new director might be more receptive.

Ron Thoman recalled, “Roy Taylor had worked with George Hartzog for so long that I don’t think Roy wanted to buck George, although I had heard stories that he argued with him a lot about ‘I know you’re not going to open all these other parks because you don’t have money but why don’t you open mine as a favor?’ Hartzog was kind of holding the line, but then when Hartzog left and Ron Walker came, of course he was a Republican and Taylor didn’t care, and that was his opportunity.”

151 “Connemara May Be Open On Limited Basis in ‘74,” *Times-News* photo.

152 Weber, interview, 2011.





**Figure 2.70** Leroy Levi (left), Zeb Lindsey (center), and Ron Thoman debut a buck goat. Levi ran the farm operations, and Lindsey was a farmhand who worked with Levi. June 5, 1973 (Courtesy of Ron Thoman).

And because Walker was not a “parks person,” Thoman remembers, Walker “had no relationship, good or bad, with Roy Taylor.”<sup>153</sup>

Taylor also had tremendous political clout as chair of the subcommittee, and he decided to use it. Weber recalled, “It was my understanding that the Park Service went to [Taylor] for the budget for one year and he said, ‘Well I will be glad to talk about your budget when you tell me when you are going to open the Sandburg home.’”<sup>154</sup> Ron Thoman recollects a similar story. Taylor “called Ron Walker and asked him for a meeting. And at that meeting, Roy Taylor essentially told Walker, ‘I want the Sandburg site opened in short order, and in fact, until it is opened to the public, no further National Park Service legislation will pass through my committee and therefore will not pass for the Congress, period.’ Obviously that was a very significant play and Walker had no choice. And so things started happening.”<sup>155</sup>

Despite the discussion of a limited opening over the past year or so, Thoman said that the call to open the park still “came from out of the blue.” He came home late one evening and “got a phone call, ‘This is Vince Gannon from the Regional Office,’ and I’m immediately thinking what in the world is he calling at 10:00 on a Saturday night for? And the first thing he said to me was, ‘How soon can you get that place open to the public and how much money will it take?’ and I was shocked. I

<sup>153</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

<sup>154</sup> Weber, interview, 2011.

<sup>155</sup> Thoman, interview, 2003.

was completely stunned. I can remember saying, ‘I haven’t got a clue, Vince. You’re going to have to let me think about this and I’ll get back to you.’ And he says, ‘Yeah, well, don’t take too much time. I want to hear from you by Monday.’”<sup>156</sup>

Thoman recalled, “Gannon was, I believe, the budget officer at the time in the Southeast Regional Office. Obviously this was very strange . . . This thing had gone from Taylor’s office, through Ron Walker, down to the region, very fast as a direct order: ‘Get that place open as soon as you can. Cost is not an issue.’ So I told Gannon that I would get back to him on Monday, but I would have to talk to a variety of people about all the things that needed to be done to get that place open and we would get back to him with the numbers . . . I do know we had essentially a blank checkbook. And some other pretty open support in terms of hiring some people and all of the things that needed to be done fast to get that place open.”<sup>157</sup>

“I called Vince back on Monday, Thoman remembered, and asked, “What are the boundaries, what are the limits on this? He [Gannon] responded, ‘There is no limit at this point. They want it open. Cost is not an issue. How much do you need?’” Thoman said he gave Gannon a “ballpark figure.” “I do remember sitting down with the staff right there, Charlie and the others, and well port-a-potties probably cost this much, and cost this to build them, and we need this many seasonals, and runners for the house and some

<sup>156</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

<sup>157</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.



**Figure 2.71** Superintendent Ron Thoman utilized office space in the Main House during these early years and moved the existing furniture to other storage areas in the park. Thoman recalled that there were two original pieces of art work on the wall to the left of the desk, including a painting by Alexander Calder. Ca. 1973-5 (Courtesy of Ron Thoman)

things across doorways . . . So we very quickly put a figure together at a minimum.”<sup>158</sup>

While the specific date of this conversation was not recorded, the 1973 Annual Report notes that “In the fall of 1973, NPS director Ronald Walker committed to opening the park on a ‘limited basis’ in the summer of 1974, and ‘work began in earnest.’” Thoman later said, “I don’t recall any plan for opening . . . We didn’t anticipate it, so nobody was drawing up interpretive prospectus, master plans, or anything else. So when they said we had to open, that’s what we had to figure out.”<sup>159</sup>

Thoman credited Taylor with getting the park open. “Now in terms of others who were important in pushing for the opening, to my knowledge there were none. There were other people who wanted it open, of course, in the community and the family and I did, too, for that matter, but my impression always was that it was Roy Taylor single-handedly who made that happen.”<sup>160</sup>

While the park would not secure the developmental funds it so desired, it would acquire funding to do some preliminary work and hire the necessary staff to open the park the following spring.

### Preparing for the opening

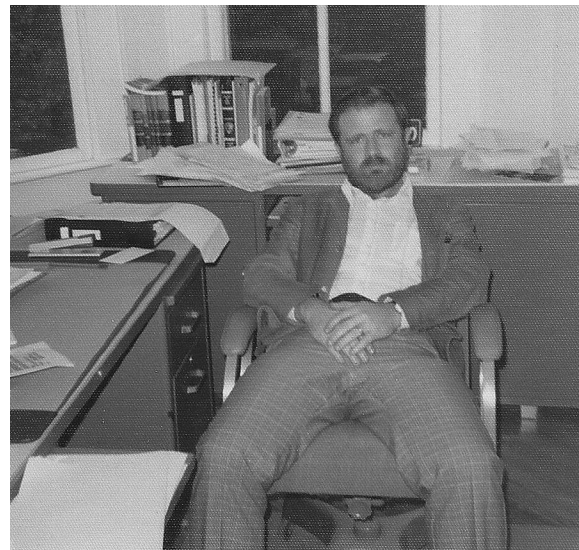
On November 23, 1973, Thoman submitted a memorandum to Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Granville Liles to outline the work that needed to be done before the park could open. After a “pretty thorough review of all the possibilities, problems, and available resources,” Thoman said that the park staff was “certain” that NPS could open “nearly all of the park” the next summer. The park would require the current operating budget plus the \$40,000 “lump sum money allotted to us this year” for the Historic Structure Reports and emergency repairs and “the \$50,000 additional operations money Region indicated would be available.” But Thoman added that the park would need “additional temporary maintenance employees and interpreters, my staff, and certain of your Parkway staff” as well as

technical expertise from NPS offices, including Harpers Ferry Center, Denver Service Center, the Southeast Regional Historical Architecture Office, and Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association.”<sup>161</sup>

Thoman outlined the plans his staff had developed for the opening. New signage would need to be produced, including directional signage on U.S. Highway 25, a sign at the parking lot, a new entrance sign, and some trail signage. Visitors would park their cars at the Flat Rock Playhouse, and he noted that the Playhouse offered “enthusiastic tentative approval” of this idea. The park would purchase shuttle busses to pick up visitors at the Playhouse parking area and drive them up to the Main House. Visitors would begin their tours in the Main House, starting in the Basement, which would have a “temporary visitor reception area.” Architects had determined that the main floor of the Main House could hold groups of fifteen to twenty visitors, but they recommended against using the second floor without a more detailed structural study. Before the opening, Thoman specified that the Front Porch would need to be repaired and the Main House and Barn rewired. Thoman proposed purchasing a trailer

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161 Ronald G. Thoman, Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home to General Superintendent, Blue Ridge Group, memorandum, November 23, 1973, CARL Legislative Notebook file, 4019/3, Box 1, Folder 62, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 2.72** Ron Thoman sits at the desk in his office in Margaret’s Study (Room 108) in the Main House. Late 1974 (Courtesy of Ron Thoman).

158 Thoman, interview, 2011.

159 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

160 Thoman, interview, 2003.

with restrooms “after additional study of several alternatives.”<sup>162</sup>

The park needed additional personnel to drive the shuttle, staff the information and sales desk, and provide maintenance. Thoman planned to hire four “laborers” from January through April to help with repairing fences and trails, clearing the lake and creek banks, and rehabilitating the historic buildings for “safety and appearance reasons.” He requested that the curator position, which had been frozen since Gordon Gay left, be filled to help tell the park story, to hire and train seasonal interpreters, and to develop the interpretive programs. Thoman asked for the assistance of the Harpers Ferry Center to develop an audio-visual program, as well as the Southeast Regional Office historical architect to plan and execute the work that needed to be done with the buildings. He concluded by noting that he was reserving the \$40,000 lump sum funding for “critically needed historic structures work either incidentally or not at all related directly to the opening.” He noted the Farm Manger’s House, the Tenant House, Buck Quarters, Wood Shed, and the stone walls along the entrance drive were in the most deteriorating conditions and needed immediate attention.<sup>163</sup>

To complete the “emergency work” needed to open the park, including hiring additional staff, the Washington Office and Southeast Regional Office contributed \$64,000 in reserves. With the \$40,000 in Emergency Historic Preservation Lump Sum money, the park budget for calendar year 1974 almost doubled to \$208,400.<sup>164</sup>

The plans to open the park helped kick the National Park Service planning process into high gear, as some immediate decisions had to be made. NPS had approved the Master Plan in July 1973, but in December, after the decision to open the park was announced, the Denver Service Center began working on the Development Concept



**Figure 2.73** Park Staff gather at the going away party for Lewis Smith (bottom right). Back row, from left to right, includes Zeb Lindsay, Charlie Hamm, Leroy Levi, and Roy Thoman, with Peggy Parcel to the left in the front row. The photograph is taken in Margaret’s Bedroom, where James “Jim” Haynes, Peggy Parcell, and Leroy Levi had their offices. Photograph by James “Jim” Haynes. January 14, 1974 (Courtesy of Ron Thoman)

Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.<sup>165</sup> In February 1974, after assessing the current status of the park, the team proposed establishing a parking area outside the historic zone; creating a picnic area, Visitor Contact Station, and restrooms near the parking area; providing access from the parking area to the historic zone; creating a “terminus and overlook for the trail to Big Glassy;” providing two residences for park staff to serve as protection for the collections and historic buildings; moving electric lines and telephone lines underground, except for historic lines; and providing water hook up and “interim sewage disposal” for the park.<sup>166</sup>

Thoman recalled, “A whole variety of things had to be done to open the place to the public, starting with the very simple thing of how would visitors access the site and where would they park without destroying the scene and creating any resource damage.”<sup>167</sup> The park had no signage, so both directional and interpretive signs had

162 “Plans for Opening Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site—May 1973,” November 23, 1973, Legislative Notebook, CARL, 4019/3, Box 1, Folder 62, CARL Park Archive.

163 “Plans for Opening Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site—May 1973,” November 23, 1973.

164 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

165 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973. Files at the National Archives state that on February 21, 1974, a proposal was put forward to update the Development Concept Plan and cost estimates “in accordance with the Master Plan and Management Objectives” and to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement was necessary. Planning Directive, Development Concept Plan, February 21, 1974, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

166 Planning Directive, Development Concept Plan, 1974.

167 Thoman, interview, 2003



to be produced before the opening.<sup>168</sup> The Blue Ridge Parkway helped put up signage, working through the local community. Although Thoman had wanted signage on the major highways, he remembered, “I don’t think we had much signage at all until you got fairly close to the place. In fact, the approach to Little River Road was probably the first signage we had. People had to find their way there, as I recall.”<sup>169</sup>

For parking, the NPS signed an agreement with the Vagabond School of Drama to allow park visitors to use the parking lot and the restrooms at the Flat Rock Playhouse. In return, park maintenance staff would help clean the restrooms and parking lot.<sup>170</sup> “I made it a point to meet, develop, and maintain a good working relationship with Robroy Farquhar, who was the director,” recalled Thoman. “Right from the beginning, when I approached him, he saw it as a win-win situation for him, and it was, so it was not a problem at all.”<sup>171</sup> Farquhar used this opportunity to put up signs to promote the plays at the Playhouse to park visitors. The use of this parking lot would limit the park’s initial operating hours, requiring it to close at 1 p.m. on

Wednesdays and Saturdays due to the afternoon matinees at the Playhouse.<sup>172</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS purchased shuttle buses to take visitors from the parking lot to the Main House, an idea recommended in the Interpretive Prospectus. An intercom system was created at the parking lot, so that visitors could call the park office to request the shuttle. The park installed and extended new telephone lines to the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot for the intercom. By the time the park welcomed its first official visitors, an electronic automatic gate-opening device was connected to the front gate for the shuttle system.<sup>173</sup>

By far, the most complicated issues related to the Main House. What work would be necessary to prepare the building for the opening? How would tour groups circulate through the house? What stories would the guides tell? One of the most debated issues became the renovation of the Basement into a Visitor Center, an idea proposed in the Master Plan. Concerns about the loss of integrity to the building and potential damage to the collection were on the minds of many National Park Service employees involved with planning at the park.

David Wallace, chief of Museum Services at Harpers Ferry Center, came to Carl Sandburg Home NHS on October 20 and 23 to assess issues with the furnishings and collections. He wrote that he was most impressed with how the environment provided an impression of Sandburg, but warned that the National Park Service had a “peculiarly difficult task . . . very similar to that of preserving a sand dune or a marsh.” The resource was fragile, and faced many challenges. Wallace recommended several actions: to photograph the buildings and collections thoroughly, to inventory the contents of all the buildings, to interview key people who knew Sandburg, to set up a Museum Records System, to fill the curator position, to clear up the question of library ownership, and to dispose of Sandburg “documents, periodicals, etc.” He did not believe that the park should maintain a study collection at the house, so the historic documents should be

168 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

169 Thoman, interview, 2011.

170 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

171 Thoman, interview, 2011.



**Figure 2.74** Park technician James “Jim” Haynes took this photo of Ron Thoman preparing coffee in the Main House Kitchen. As Thoman recalls, “Despite historic preservation preferences, we did indeed use the historic facilities for office purposes.” January 17, 1974 (Courtesy of Ron Thoman)

172 “Sandburg Historic Site to be open to Public,” *Times-Citizen*, March 11, 1974, Gordon Gay Scrapbook.

173 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974. The park followed the recommendations of the Interpretive Prospectus.

packed up and moved out. He concluded, "Now is the only chance we will ever have to show it like it was at the home of Carl Sandburg."<sup>174</sup>

NPS Architect Hugh Miller expressed similar concerns about the "fragile quality" of this new resource after his visit on November 29. Miller worried that the park was going to open without the developmental funding needed to properly restore and preserve the historic buildings. Under a section of his trip report titled NPS Blunders, Miller wrote that park staff had repaired some of the historic buildings without proper documentation. He did not believe that any "serious errors" had occurred, but he commented that the park desperately needed historic structure studies and that any future repairs must be documented. He felt that park staff had made changes "under the guise of development . . . without understanding the characteristics of the historic resources," including moving the historic power lines underground, though he may not have realized that the latter was recommended in the Master Plan.<sup>175</sup> Miller concluded, "The fragile quality of the buildings as well as the collection cannot be underemphasized. The need for continuing as well as emergency professional services must be stressed." In particular, the Front Porch needed immediate stabilization before the park opened.<sup>176</sup>

Southeast Regional Historical Architect John C. Garner agreed. He shared his "great concern" for the park resources in a December 1973 memorandum. "Carl Sandburg is perhaps this region's most fragile historic resources." Garner emphasized the immediate need for Historic Structure Reports and stabilization projects. "In my visits to parks in this region, I cannot recall an instance of more critical priority."<sup>177</sup>

Concerns about the renovation of the Basement drew criticism far and wide, from top NPS historians to the park's superintendent, Thoman. The Master Plan and Interpretive Prospectus called for the creation of a reception area, audio facilities, exhibits, and sales in the Basement of the Main House and proposed that some rooms in the Main House be used for administrative offices. The Interpretive Prospectus suggested that the Basement "be remodeled for the most part, retaining only the character of the stone walls and fireplaces and the two rooms in the rear. It will not retain the character of a basement but instead will have carpeting and acoustical ceiling throughout."<sup>178</sup> The Acting Director of the Southeast Regional Office, William Hendrickson, argued that the Basement should not be altered to provide the visitor services area, since this building fabric represented the era of Sandburg's residency.<sup>179</sup> NPS Architect Hugh Miller believed that the renovation of the Basement for the Visitor Center and the inclusion of office space within the historic house were "serious oversights" in the Master Plan and Interpretive Prospectus.<sup>180</sup>

Superintendent Thoman was also sensitive to the potential damage of the historic house, including both the current administrative offices and the proposed Basement renovation. He recalled starting work on the Tenant House to use as park headquarters, an idea Hugh Miller supported.<sup>181</sup> "I know that there was a good deal of pressure to get us out of the house. The entire staff, except for the maintenance staff and Leroy Levi, were in that house and using it as offices, using the restrooms, using the kitchen sink and the refrigerator and the whole nine yards, and there was some concern that wear and tear and things being moved around, that we needed to get out of there."<sup>182</sup> Thoman also opposed the renovation of the Basement. The park copy of the Interpretive Prospectus had a handwritten "No!" in Thoman's handwriting over the

174 David Wallace, HFC, Trip Report, November 23, 1970, Harper's Ferry Center, National Park Service, Correspondence 1967-73 File, WASO Files.

175 Architect Hugh C. Miller to Chief Historical Architect, memorandum, December 12, 1973, Correspondence 1967-73 File, WASO Files.

176 Miller to Chief Historical Architect, memorandum, December 12, 1973.

177 John C. Garner, Jr., Historical Architect, Planning and Design Division, Southeast Region, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Support, memorandum, December 20, 1973, Correspondence, 1967-1973 File, WASO Files.

178 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970. The copy in the CARL archive has scratched "No!" over the statement of remodeling the Basement and the Swedish House. See 4025/1, Box 1, CARL Park Archive.

179 Hendrickson to Manager, Denver Service Center, memorandum, February 1, 1974.

180 Miller to Chief Historical Architect, memorandum, December 12, 1973.

181 Miller to Chief Historical Architect, memorandum, December 12, 1973.

182 Thoman, interview, 2011.

sentences that proposed gutting the Basement for a visitor center.

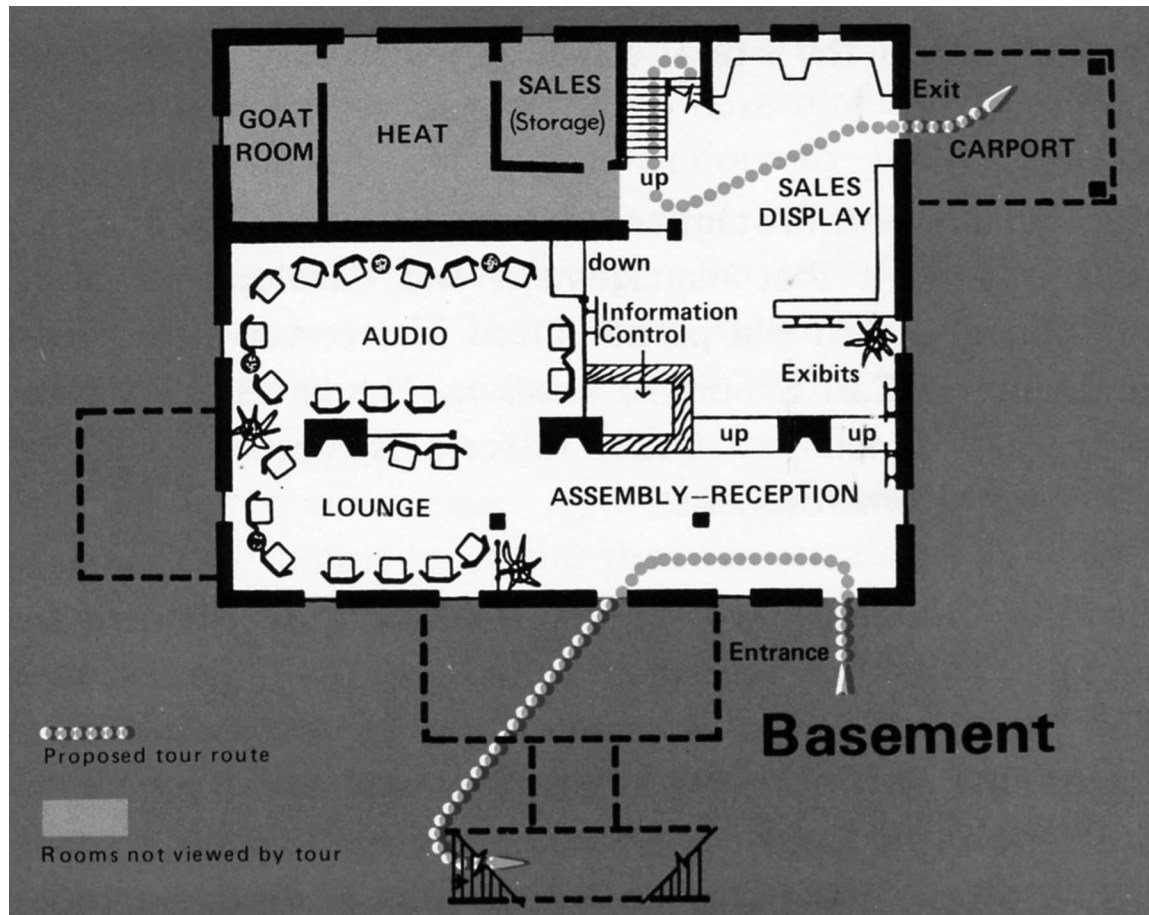
Senior staff from the Washington office, no doubt worried about the issues at the park, visited the site and raised concerns about what they called the proposed “mutilation” of the Sandburg home in a memo to NPS Assistant Director for Park Historic Preservation Robert Utley and others.<sup>183</sup> Utley agreed with their objections and wrote to the director of the Southeast Regional Office, reminding him that the proposed plan would involve the removal of water and heating pipes, a load bearing wall, and particularly the Sandburg’s laundry, bookshelves, and a bedroom, which were historically significant to the house. Utley argued that these historic features “should be preserved if at all possible.” He also warned against the use

of the upstairs rooms for administrative purposes, as it “diminishes the historic character of the house” and “creates wear and stress for which the house was not designed.” Utley stated that such uses of the house would have an adverse impact and require a Section 106 review. His office recommended that these plans be reconsidered and alternatives developed.<sup>184</sup>

Thoman later recalled, “We looked at all the options, given the condition of all those other buildings, the only place to have a visitor reception and starting area became the Basement.” But, rather than use the entire Basement, Thoman and

183 Clary, Notes on Follow-Up Slip, March 24, 1974, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO File. The team references “our discussions during the Atlanta trip” and the attachment of “a draft memorandum to SERO regarding the proposed mutilation of the Sandburg house.”

184 Robert Utley, Assistant Director, Park Historic Preservation to Regional Director, Southeast Regional Office, memorandum, April 19, 1974, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II. The Interpretive Prospectus recommended removing “a maze of water and heating pipes now suspending from the ceiling,” noting that they will not be needed as only two of the five bathrooms would still be in use. Again, Thoman wrote a large “No!!” next to these sentences on page 13 in the park draft copy of the Interpretive Prospectus.



**Figure 2.75** The Interpretive Prospectus and the Master Plan called for considerable remodeling of the Basement to create a reception area, but other Park Service staff disagreed. They argued that it was not appropriate to remove historic features in the Main House. Master Plan, 1971.



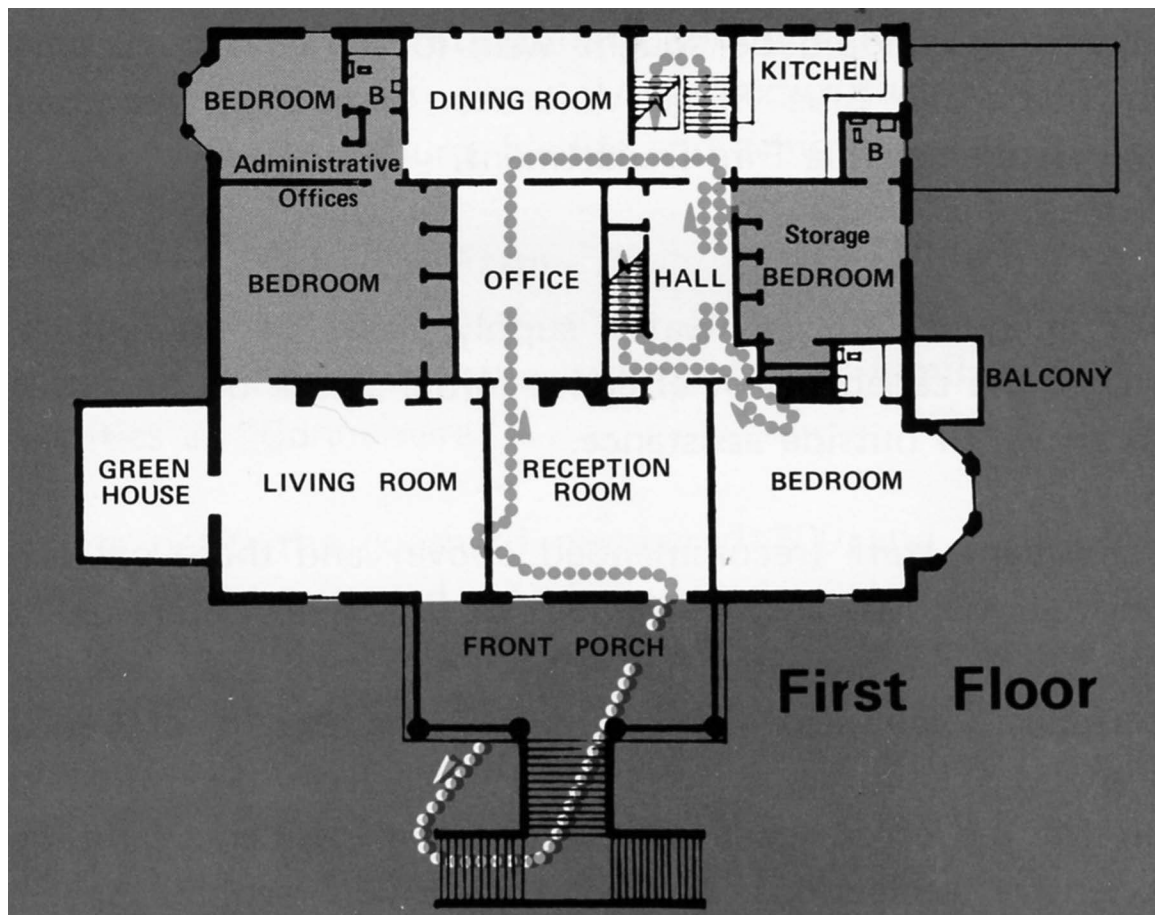
his staff utilized only the “one front room in the Basement . . . The rest of it still had packrat Carl’s shelving full of Christmas cards from day one, and all that kind of stuff. So, we cleared out that front room and . . . put an information desk and some temporary exhibits and all that.” Previously, that room had been “relatively empty. I think they used it as a workshop. There was a workbench in there, and there was a pegboard up on the wall where tools had been hung.” Thoman said, “We were very sensitive to not doing any permanent changes to things. I mean, we knew that was not going to be the permanent reception area for the park.” Even after they renovated the front room, “We left everything exactly the way it was. In fact, we interpreted it as it was. We told folks, ‘This room that you’re standing in was used for ...’”<sup>185</sup>

185 Thoman, interview, 2011. Gordon Gay concurred that there was much in that front room and that it had been used primarily for storage. See Gay, interview, 2011. This space has continued to serve as the Visitor Center to the present day.

Previous to the opening, the curator’s office had been in the Basement. “We had a little desk there where all the bookshelves are in the Main House in the Basement,” Curator Weber recalled. But the staff “was becoming more and more aware of the historical character of the Park Service’s historical features. There was an emphasis being given to that at the time and not to go in and just destroy that . . . That’s part of the historic fabric of that house. So that’s another part of the Master Plan that was modified from a perspective of a change in looking at historical properties by the Park Service, by operational procedures and that type of thing.”<sup>186</sup>

Another critical issue needing resolution was the Front Porch, which was in poor repair and could not accommodate visitors. On February 11, 1974, the North Carolina State Preservation Office approved the proposed repairs to the Front P

186 Weber, interview, 2011.



**Figure 2.76** The park staff used the two bedrooms designated here as administrative offices before the park opened. These spaces continued to be used as curatorial work space after the opening, but Thoman worked to remove most of the offices from the Main House. Master Plan, 1971.

orch.<sup>187</sup> The 1974 Annual Report noted that crews from the park and the Blue Ridge Parkway rebuilt the Front Porch of the Main House, using plans from Denver Service Center Historical Architect Jim Askins and \$14,000 in Southeast Regional Office reserves.<sup>188</sup> Cultural resource specialists in the SERO “contacted Washington, and they sent me a historical architect” Thoman recalled. He described Askins as “a real character. In fact, he was sort of a renegade architect himself in the Park Service, so I was glad he came out. He came out personally and brought a crew and they did that Front Porch work. Charlie and the local staff supported him with whatever he needed.”<sup>189</sup> The work on the Front Porch remained underway when the park opened in May.<sup>190</sup>

The park staff hoped to complete more work on the buildings but faced delays in obtaining Section 106 clearance. The park had sent the Section 106 review documents to the Southeast Regional Office in July 1973, but the Superintendent’s Annual Report for that year notes that they “were lost and had to be rewritten” and then resubmitted.<sup>191</sup> As a result, \$35,000 of the \$40,000 given to the park that year in emergency lump sum funding had to be pulled in 1974 and reallocated back to the park in 1975, because the Section 106 clearances had not been completed.<sup>192</sup>

Thoman expressed his frustration with the Section 106 review process and the challenges in getting the projects done. “The buildings were literally falling apart on us” as cultural resource management staff, the regional office, and Blue Ridge Parkway staff “kept trying to tell me that you cannot” do any repairs. He praised the work of Charlie Hamm, an “excellent carpenter,” adding “I didn’t even tell them what I was doing, but using Charlie and whatever resource we had, we started doing work on things. I felt my first responsibility there was to keep those structures from falling down and to keep the contents of the house and



**Figure 2.77** Repairing the Front Porch was a critical task for the park before opening. Here workmen have removed the porch floor and are undertaking the repairs. Spring 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figures 2.78 (above) and 2.79 (below)** Using plans from Denver Service Center Historical Architect Jim Askins, park staff repairs the front porch to prepare for the park’s opening in May. Ca. 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.80** Metal columns temporarily support the Main House Front Porch portico during the repair process. Ca. 1974 (CARL Park Archive)

187 See Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO Files. The Historic Structure Report suggests that it was likely the floor framing that was rebuilt in 1973, although this work would have occurred in the spring of 1974. Historic Structure Report, 1976, 115-6.

188 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

189 Thoman, interview, 2011.

190 Ron Thoman, email communication with Ann McCleary, June 27, 2013.

191 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1973.

192 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974 and 1975.

the other outbuildings from disappearing and decaying.” Thoman remembered, “It got kind of hot with the regional people particularly, and I said, ‘We’ll I’m going to do this.’ When they knew what I was doing, I said, ‘You guys do whatever you want about it.’ But I think in their heart-of-hearts, they knew this had to happen because the buildings were going to fall down and they didn’t want to see that happen either, but being the officials and the bureaucrats, they couldn’t tell me to go ahead. We had to do whatever we could.” Thoman added, “Charlie Hamm and his crew were real good scavengers and we just did what we could do.”<sup>193</sup>

While there had been some discussion about putting the restrooms in the Family Garage, Thoman did not agree. Besides the changes that would occur to the structural fabric of this historic building, he voiced some very practical reasons why this was not a good location. “If you put them in the garage, how are you going to access them to clean them? And then you’ve got an enclosure with odors. I remember saying, ‘Let’s stay away from that.’ For right now, we just need to get the restrooms. We have to get the place open.” The park staff decided to create a separate but temporary enclosure for restrooms near the house. Thoman described it as an open building, “a screen more than anything else,” which hid the port-a-potties. “They were behind some trees and rhododendrons and we put some paths in to them. Charlie Hamm actually came up with the idea of what to build and surround them with.”<sup>194</sup>

Another important task the park faced was developing the interpretation for the Main House. The park hired Paula Steichen Polega, Carl Sandburg’s granddaughter, as a seasonal employee to help prepare the rooms in the house for interpretation, to develop the historic gardens appropriately, and to work with the photograph collections. Thoman remembers spending a considerable amount of time with her to create the interpretive story line. “How should we interpret the place? What should it look like? I laid out that whole tour with Paula.”<sup>195</sup> Helga Sandburg, Polega’s mother and Carl Sandburg’s daughter, also helped. “We decided the best way to work our way through the house, both in terms of interpreting

the story as well as protecting fabric as much as we could,” was to “put runners down on the floor. We put ropes across some of the doorways, and so on. And then put together a training package for the seasonals and trained them to get started.”<sup>196</sup>

Thoman considered his work with the Sandburg family, especially with Paula Steichen Polega and Helga Sandburg, one of his greatest



**Figure 2.81** To prepare for the opening, the park staff installed a temporary “comfort station” near the Main House. In 1975, the trailer pictured here replaced the temporary port-a-potties. Although the trailer was considered temporary as well, it remained in use for more than thirty years. (CARL Park Archive).

accomplishments. “I think both of them had been fairly suspicious of the bureaucracy of the government, and what might happen to the site, and how Sandburg’s story might be presented. I think just generally suspicious of how a government bureaucracy was going to handle something that was very, very important to them, and, they thought, to the history and culture of the country. . . . I think I completely won their trust and respect . . . We would sit around with their family photo albums, and looking at pictures, and walking around the Main House, and walking through the farm and recording their recollections.”<sup>197</sup>

Thoman worked with Helga Sandburg and Paula Steichen Polega to pick a “point in time, even a season and a time of day” to interpret the house, “or at least the point in time that the rooms in the house would appear and the grounds would appear, and what was going on.” They picked “the year that would have been the most active, the most productive for Carl, when the most things were

<sup>193</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

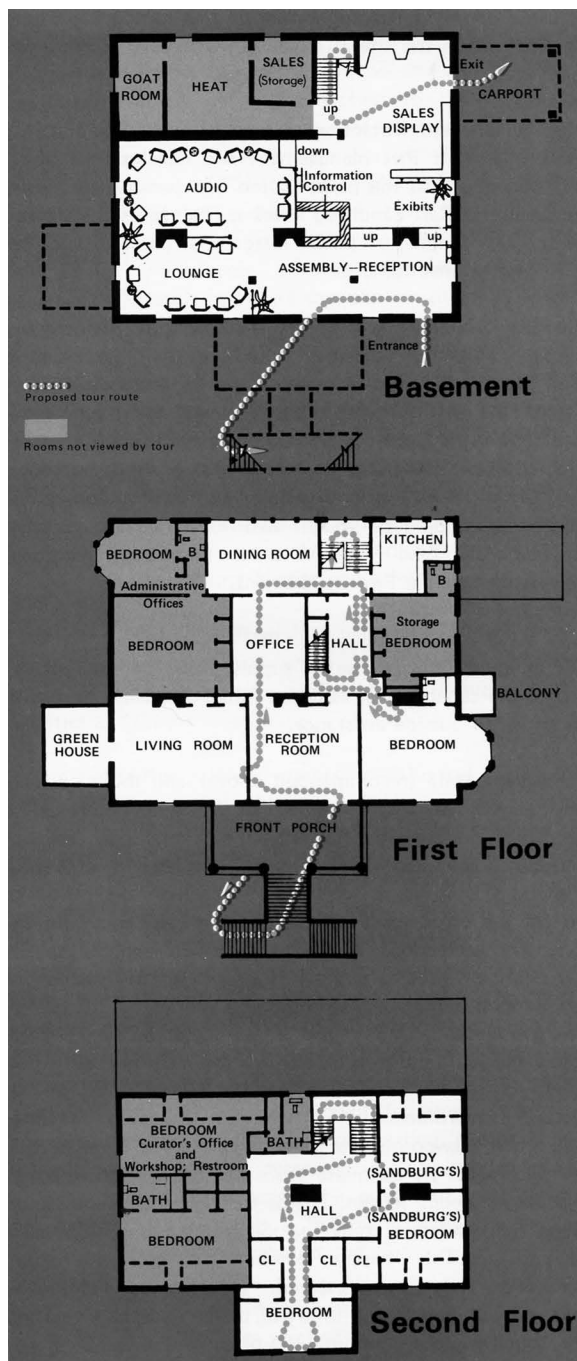
<sup>194</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

<sup>195</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

<sup>196</sup> Thoman, interview, 2003. Many of these ideas, including runners and ropes, are included in the Interpretive Prospectus. The tour of the house followed the recommendations of this Prospectus. Interpretive Prospectus, February 18, 1970.

<sup>197</sup> Thoman, interview, 2003.





**Figure 2.82** The 1971 Master Plan included a proposed tour route for the Main House. Superintendent Ron Thoman and Curator Warren Weber drew upon this proposal when developing the house tour for the park's opening. However, the Basement was not remodeled as recommended here. Master Plan, 1971.

going on,” and the time as being after lunch when he would “work on” his mail at the Dining Room table. They wanted to interpret the early years of the Sandburg residency at Connemara.<sup>198</sup>

By April 1974, barely a month before opening, the park hired Warren Weber as its second curator.

<sup>198</sup> Thoman, interview, 2003.

A Tulsa, Oklahoma native, Weber earned a BA in History and began work with the National Park Service at the Independence National Historic Site. His job at Carl Sandburg Home NHS included coordinating visitor services and park interpretation. He also became an agent for Eastern National Parks and Monument Association and opened the store, which operated in the Basement Visitor Center.<sup>199</sup>

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS gained two new permanent positions in 1974, a park ranger and a maintenance position. However, the personnel ceiling increased by only one position to accommodate the maintenance position hired in 1973. As a result, the two new positions remained vacant. The park utilized seasonal employees and volunteers to help prepare for the opening.<sup>200</sup>

The park still needed to resolve several other issues regarding the property before the opening. While the Master Plan recommended a new septic system, all the park could do at this point was to install a temporary system to handle the impermanent restrooms.<sup>201</sup> The park maintenance staff closed off several “unsafe and deteriorating areas” from visitors, including the Ice House, the Farm Manager’s House, and the Buck House.<sup>202</sup> After focusing on the “big things,” Ron Thoman began to notice the “little details. You’d walk around and there was just a lot of junk around the farm . . . old equipment and bales of wire and stuff like that. So I was kind of beside myself for a few days trying to make sure all the details were just right.”<sup>203</sup>

Another concern that emerged was that the National Park Service realized that part of the Memminger Trail was not on the property. The Park Service hoped to acquire a .77 strip of land so it would own the entire trail. In October 1973,

<sup>199</sup> Warren Weber, Agent, ENP&MA, “A Brief Biography,” Legislative Notebook file, 4019/4, Box 1, File 77, CARL Park Archive.

<sup>200</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974. The Annual Report notes that the park drew upon up to twenty seasonal employees and eight VIPs to help with curatorial and interpretive programs and seven New York City young people to work, the latter primarily in the summer months. It is unclear how many of those volunteers and seasonals helped with preparations to open the Park.

<sup>201</sup> Thoman, email communication, June 27, 2013.

<sup>202</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

<sup>203</sup> Thoman, interview, 2011.

NPS Land Acquisitions Officer William Hooper and CARL Park Technician James Haynes went to talk with the property owners. The family asked for \$15,586 for this property but also required that NPS build a stone masonry wall the full length of the property line to collect and divert the runoff waters to flow into the gutters on the property. The Park Service considered the price and request unacceptable for the less than an acre of land,



**Figure 2.83** The oldest building on the site, the Buck House, demanded immediate attention due to its particularly poor condition. April 1973 (Harpers Ferry Center Archive).

and NPS staff began to discuss the possibility of condemnation proceedings, but no action was taken at that time.<sup>204</sup>

NPS specialists helped with two other key areas. Harpers Ferry Center completed the Park “mini-folder” submitted to them in July of 1973, so it was available for the May 1974 opening. The NPS also began work on developing an Interpretive Plan in February 1974 to be completed by June of that year. Robert Falkner served as team captain and Jim Massey was the interpretive planner.<sup>205</sup>

Park staff scurried around trying to get everything completed by the opening. Weber recalled, “It was chaos trying to get it open to the public. The buildings here were about ready to fall down. The huge museum collection, we had no storage facilities or anything for that and it was in chaos.”<sup>206</sup>

Thoman explained, “They kept saying, ‘So, when are you ready to open? Taylor wants to know. We need to set up the dedication ceremony.’ Well, pretty much everything got in place because Blue Ridge Parkway Administrative Office Ray Brotherton really expedited the hiring of seasonals, but you know, we don’t do this until this Front Porch is fixed because they’ve got scaffolding and all kind of stuff and it’s just too hazardous. That was fast-tracked.” Was there pressure to get it done quickly? “Absolutely,” Thoman said. “When Roy Taylor tells the Director, until that place is open to the public, I’m not considering one piece of Park Service legislation, you can imagine. So it all fell on me.”<sup>207</sup>

## Opening Day

The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site officially opened on Saturday, May 11, 1974. “I remember it was really hectic getting everything ready,” Ron Thoman later said. “I did lose some sleep for a few nights, getting ready for that, because the deputy director was going to be there and Roy Taylor and lots of big wheels, and the Sandburg family, so we needed to make sure everything went right.”<sup>208</sup>

One hundred people attended the ceremony, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior Douglas Wheeler, Deputy Director of the National Park Service Russell Dickenson, Congressman Roy Taylor, Carl Sandburg’s daughters Margaret and Janet Sandburg, and his granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega. Mrs. Sandburg was too ill to attend. Although Ronald Walker, the director of the National Park Service, could not participate, he sent a letter to be read, in which he proudly announced, “This is the first park created to commemorate a giant in the world of literature.”<sup>209</sup> The speech proclaimed, “So unchanged are the Sandburg home and its environment that no other historical park conveys

204 William O. Hooper, Negotiators Progress Record, October 23, 1973, National Park Service, 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 324, CARL Park Archive.

205 The first folder is archived in the CARL collection at Harpers Ferry Center. See the “Interpretive Services” file for correspondence related to the development of the Interpretive Plan in RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

206 Weber, interview, 2011.

207 Thoman, interview, 2011. Brotherton worked at the Blue Ridge Parkway.

208 Thoman, interview, 2011. Warren Weber recalls that the Front Porch repair work was not completed by the opening day but Thoman believes it was finished. Weber, interview, 2011, and Thoman, email correspondence with Ann McCleary, July 15, 2012.

209 “Sandburg Home Is Opened,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 12, 1974, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archives.





**Figure 2.84** The Blue Ridge Parkway staff constructed the stage for the Opening Day in front of the Main House. May 11, 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 2.85** Charlie Hamm and Volunteer Ellen Weber pose at the stage set up for the Opening Day ceremonies. May 11, 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

more intensely the presence of a great American.”  
210

Superintendent Thoman welcomed the guests to the park that day. “A lot of meticulous preservation and restoration work, and a lot of love and interest, by a lot of people, have gone into this site to bring us all to this day. And, of course, our work continues, as you can see behind me on the porch,” he commented. “But now we have reached the point that the public can enjoy Connemara while we proceed with preservation efforts. Personally, and on behalf of the staff here at the Carl Sandburg Home, I would like to thank Congressman Taylor for the interest and support he has given our efforts

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210 Draft speech by Ronald H. Walker, May 11, 1975, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1967-72 File, WASO Files.

over the years . . . It’s a great day for me and my staff.”<sup>211</sup>

Congressman Taylor delivered the keynote address for the park, which he played such a pivotal role in creating. He observed that Connemara had served as a home of both a leading member of the Confederacy and the biographer of Abraham Lincoln and thus speaks about “the best in American life—of courage and of its faith, hope, and freedom.” He concluded, “Carl Sandburg knew how much we needed the tonic of wildness and the sense of natural wilderness to restore our spirits and recall us to the deep sources of life.”<sup>212</sup>

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211 Thoman, email communication, June 27, 2013. The quote is from a handwritten copy of his speech that Thoman still has in his collection.

212 “Sandburg Home Is Opened,” *Charlotte Observer*.



**Figure 2.86** Curator Warren Weber stands in front of the Main House at the Opening Day ceremonies. May 11, 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



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# CHAPTER 3

## “The Foundation Laid,” 1974–1986

Superintendent Ron Thoman and his staff must have breathed a sigh of relief as the opening ceremonies at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) concluded. The frenzied months of preparations to ready the house and grounds, develop the house tour, make arrangements for visitor parking and access, and complete emergency work on the Main House Front Porch and utilities paid off, and the park finally opened to the public in an official ceremony in May 1974.

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS opened without the development funding the National Park Service (NPS) requested, so the work on the historic buildings and visitor services facilities proposed in the Master Plan and the Interpretive Prospectus remained undone. The park used the skills and expertise from the maintenance staff and cobbled together enough funding to keep the historic structures “from falling down and to keep the contents of the house and the other outbuildings from disappearing and decaying,” Superintendent Ron Thoman recalled, “because that clearly was the treasure that we had to take care of.”<sup>1</sup> Nor was the park “ready to open in terms of facilities to take care of visitors,” remembered Curator Warren Weber.<sup>2</sup>

Much work remained to be done, including the construction of a parking lot and Visitor Contact Station, improvement of trails, and development of interpretive programming, as well as the building of adequate maintenance, administrative, and curatorial facilities. The park’s first Master Plan, approved in 1971, created four “development packages,” but the park would not receive the major allotment of development funding the NPS expected due to the political and economic climate

between 1974 and 1986.<sup>3</sup> A recession began around 1974, when the park opened, leading to inflation. President Ronald Reagan implemented budget-cutting economic policies when his administration took office in 1980, further curtailing any new funding. Arguing that “government is the problem,” Reagan and Congress implemented significant cuts in domestic programs. According to Weber, “Budgets were tight; they were always tight during [Reagan’s] years.”<sup>4</sup>

Over the next twelve years, the park would undertake what must have seemed an overwhelming charge with limited staff and financial resources. Still, during this time, the park accomplished much of the work proposed in the Master Plan (1971) and the Development Concept Plan that followed (1979). This success speaks to the dedication and commitment of the park staff and to the National Park Service specialists, at both the regional and national levels, who recognized that the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site was a fragile but significant resource that desperately needed preservation.

These first twelve years after the park’s opening, briefly under the leadership of Superintendent Thoman and then primarily under Superintendent Benjamin Davis, were the formative years for the park’s development, laying a strong foundation for achieving the park’s management goals and establishing the necessary administrative and physical infrastructure.

### Park Management and Staff

When the Carl Sandburg Home NHS opened, it was still under the “administrative oversight” of the Blue Ridge Parkway (BLRI). Ron Thoman was an

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1 Thoman, interview, 2011.

2 Weber, interview, 2011.

3 Master Plan, 1971, 42.

4 Weber, interview, 2003.

area superintendent who reported to Granville Liles, superintendent of the BLRI. Thoman recalled that the Blue Ridge Parkway continued to provide "administrative support, visitor protection, [and] resource protection," although "from time to time we would go to the regional office" for that assistance.<sup>5</sup>

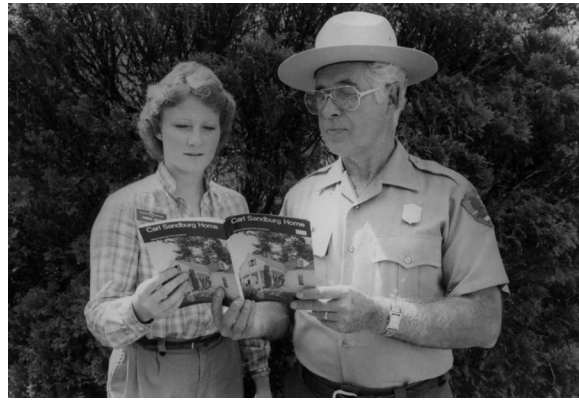
Thoman helped the park get off on a solid footing, continuing the momentum begun during the months leading up to the opening. After the park



**Figure 3.1** Ron Thoman was superintendent of the park when it opened in May 1974. He entered duty at CARL on April 29, 1973, and served through February 14, 1975. Here he is standing with his daughter, Emily, shortly before he transferred to another national park. February 20, 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

opened in 1974, he assisted with developing operational procedures for the park and planning for the future. His tenure would be short-lived, however, as he was transferred to Point Reyes National Seashore in California only nine months later, in February 1975. Granville Liles appointed Andrew Ketterson, superintendent for history at the Blue Ridge Parkway, as acting superintendent for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS.<sup>6</sup> Ketterson served in this position until Benjamin H. Davis took over as superintendent on April 27, 1975.

Benjamin Davis came to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS from the Southeast Regional Office, where he had worked for three years in the Division of Interpretation as bicentennial coordinator for the region. He was a seasoned historian with 29 years of experience in the Park Service. A native of Kentucky, he attended Berea College and then studied American history at the University of Kentucky Graduate School. Davis began his career at Mammoth Cave National Park in 1936, and



**Figure 3.2** Superintendent Benjamin Davis and Eastern National Bookstore employee Pam Saltz look at a copy of the park's new Guidebook September/October 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

then held interpretive assignments at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Kings Mountain National Military Park, the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, and the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. Davis served as superintendent of the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, the Antietam National Battlefield the Roosevelt parks in New York, and the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. He had a special connection to Carl Sandburg because he remembered Sandburg speaking at his college graduation in 1940.<sup>7</sup> Warren Weber recollects hearing that Davis had seen Sandburg twice; in addition to the graduation, Sandburg had been interviewed at one of the parks where Davis was working, probably the Andrew Johnson home, and Davis met him at that time.<sup>8</sup> Davis's wife Lillian was from Weaverville, near Flat Rock, and one of their sons was attending Mars Hill College north of Asheville, so accepting this new assignment at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS must have felt like a homecoming for the Davis family.<sup>9</sup>

Davis negotiated for the superintendent position to be upgraded to a GS-13. As Thoman recalled, "I was a GS-11 when I was there, and they upgraded the job to a GS-13 when Ben Davis went there, mainly because he was already a 13 and they wanted to protect his grade. And I would guess

<sup>5</sup> Thoman, interview, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> *Times-News*, February 14, 1975, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archives.

<sup>7</sup> "Davis Named Superintendent of Sandburg Historic Site," *Times-News*, April 18, 1975, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archives; "Ben Davis New Superintendent at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site," press release, Southeast Regional Office, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archives.

<sup>8</sup> Weber, interview, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> "Ben Davis New Superintendent at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site," press release, Southeast Regional Office Park Scrapbook1, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 3.3** The park staff gathers together at the eve of Superintendent Benjamin Davis' retirement. May 1986 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.4** Superintendent Benjamin Davis stands in front of the Main House upon his retirement from the park that he helped to build. May 1986 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.5** Superintendent Benjamin Davis at his retirement party. May 28, 1986 (CARL Park Archives).

that a part of the way they did that was to make the park report directly to the regional office, and the superintendent report directly to the regional director."<sup>10</sup> According to Weber, when Davis accepted the position, he told the regional director, "Well, I'll come up and manage the park, but I don't want to report to the Blue Ridge Parkway. I want it to be a stand-alone, where I report directly to the regional office."<sup>11</sup> From this point on, Carl Sandburg Home NHS became an independent park, although it would still partner and work with the Parkway staff as needed.

The number of staff at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS grew slowly over the next decade. While the park hired temporary staff to assist with the preparation of the buildings and grounds for the opening, more staff was needed to serve visitors, lead tours, tend the animals, and maintain the grounds—the basic operations of a functional park. According to Weber, most of the new positions were temporary, but the park continued to make use of volunteers. The first year it opened, in 1974, the park employed up to twenty seasonals at any one time, depending upon the season and workload. In addition, eight VIPs, participants in the national Volunteers in the Parks program, assisted with interpretive programs, historic garden restoration, and curatorial activities, and seven young people from Neighborhood Youth Corps worked during the summer (see Chapter Two). The

10 Thoman, interview, 2003. Thoman added, "That's an assumption on my part," but it appears to be what happened.

11 Weber, interview, 2011.



**Figure 3.6** Young people participating in the Youth Conservation Corps provide a much needed labor force in the early years of the park. CARL participated in the program in the 1970s. The program was designed to provide employment to youth of all backgrounds in a "healthful outdoor atmosphere" in the National Park Service and other federal agencies. The program aspired to nurture an appreciation of the country's environment and heritage. 1977 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 3.7** The park offers an ideal place for games and activities for the YCC youth working here. Circa 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

Superintendent's Annual Report in 1974 stated that the "lack of permanent positions and Servicewide, as well as . . . GSC restrictions on temporary employment was one of the park's greatest difficulties."<sup>12</sup> With the tough budget years of the early 1980s, the park depended on volunteers and partnerships to accomplish its essential tasks.

While several Annual Reports from this period note considerable staff turnover, this usually



**Figure 3.8** Seasonal summer park staff provides needed assistance in the early years. In this photo, the seasonal staff members take a break from tours at the Main House. They are identified as Berry, Robertson, and Weber. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

occurred in the technician positions, including those associated with the maintenance, interpretive, and curatorial programs. The park maintained a stable management team during these years with Davis as superintendent, Weber as curator, and Charlie Hamm in charge of maintenance. Hamm, one of the first park employees, worked as chief of maintenance through 1985, assisting Davis with managing

12 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974. The use of young people from New York City seems to be a continuation of previous years.



**Figure 3.9** Curator Warren Weber joined the CARL staff shortly before the park opened. In the early years, he oversaw the development of the museum and visitor services programs at CARL. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

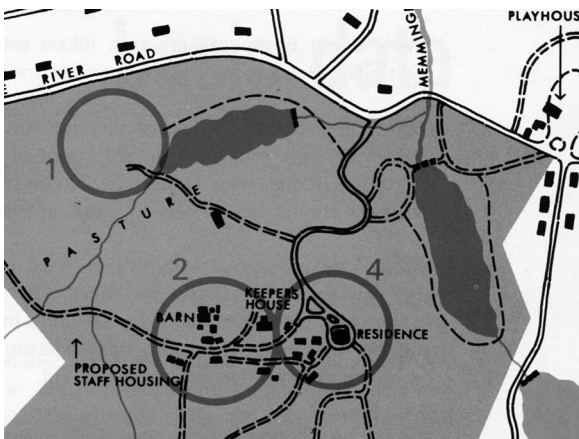
the new construction projects, preserving and repairing the historic buildings, and providing routine maintenance work. Weber, who began one month before the opening, was responsible for visitor services, interpretation, and curatorial work. "I had the visitor services program and I had the museum collection," recalls Weber. "Of course, most of my time the first year or two, actually more than that, was the visitor services program because it [had] taken a while to build staff."<sup>13</sup> These three men—Davis, Hamm, and Weber—comprised the management team at the park during most of the Davis superintendency.<sup>14</sup>

## Planning for the Park

One of the challenges of the park from these early years, according to Superintendent Ron Thoman, was the lack of adequate planning documents. The Interpretive Prospectus and the Master Plan, both developed during the first few years, were produced quickly, and some of the

13 Weber, interview, 2011.

14 Weber, interview, 2003.

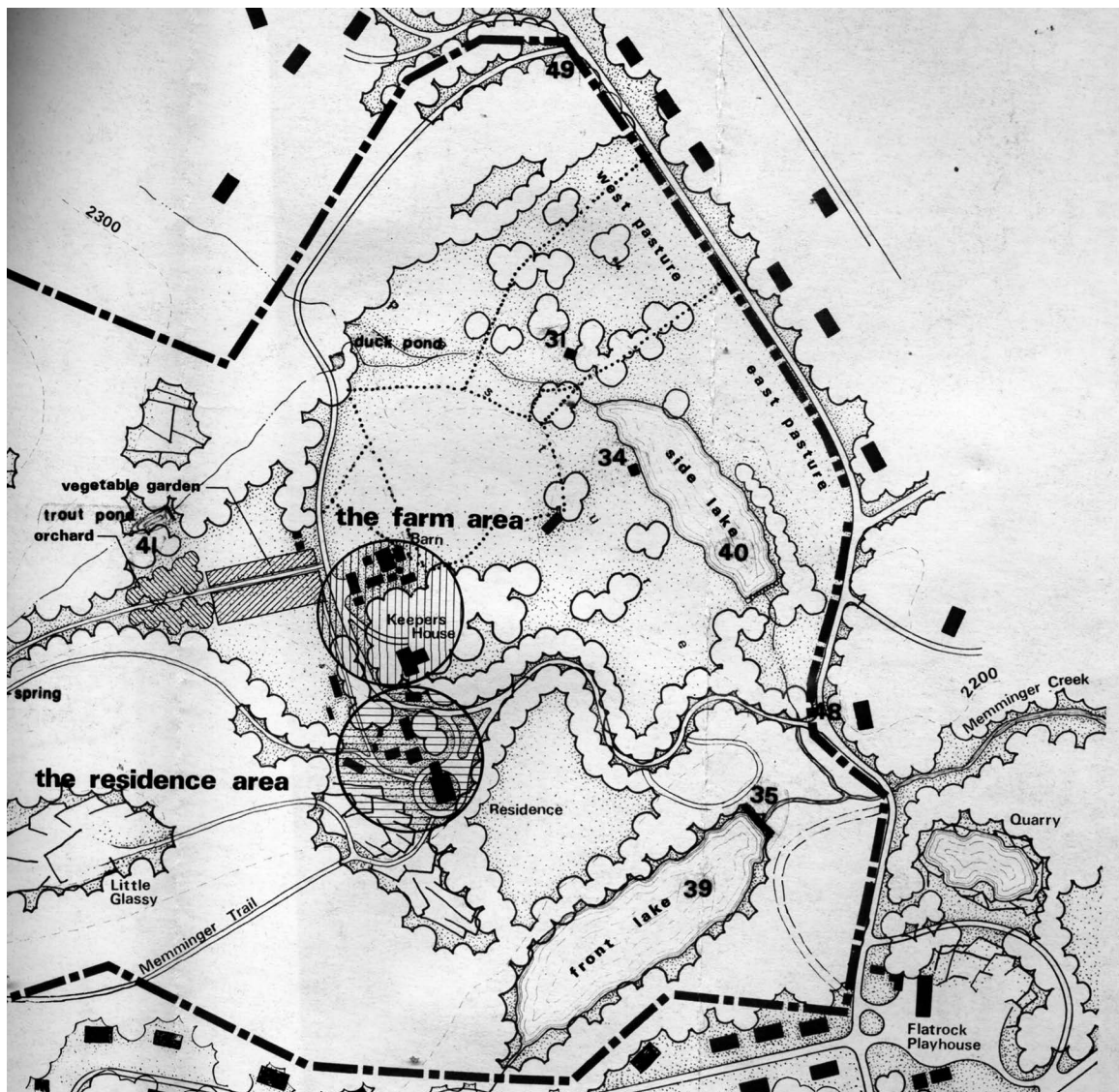


**Figure 3.10** The Master Plan outlines the two historic areas, area 2 for the farm and area 1 for the residential core, as well as the proposed area for a park residence. This residence was never built here. Instead, the park added a trailer for Leroy Levi near the back entrance road. Master Plan, 1971.

recommendations had already been challenged by Park Service specialists at the regional and national offices, as well as at the park itself. The Master Plan “addressed in broad conceptual terms how visitor services and management needs could be accommodated and in general what was envisioned for the park historic structures.”<sup>15</sup> Thoman considered the Master Plan “pretty useless, as I recall.” He added that “so much needed to be done and it was tricky. We just needed some direction and some priorities and things to establish budget requests and all of that. I do remember pushing the powers that be hard to get those things done.”<sup>16</sup>

15 Development Concept Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, 1980, 1, CARL Park Archive.

16 Thoman, interview, 2011.

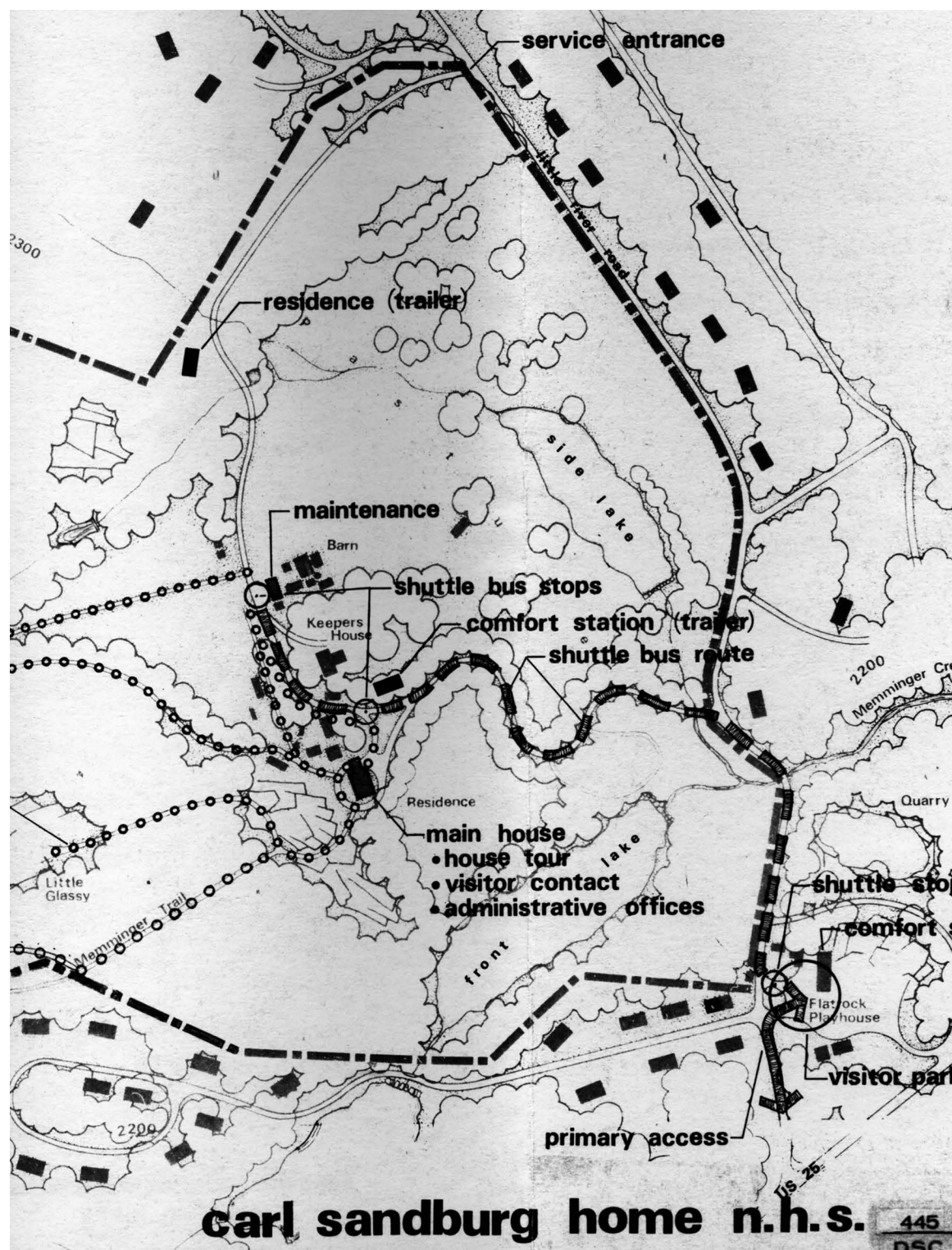


**Figure 3.11** The Historic Base Map, prepared for the 1980 Development Concept Plan, documents the many cultural landscape features of the park. Development Concept Plan, 1980.



In February 1974, three months before the opening, the National Park Service approved a planning directive to create a Development Concept Plan (DCP) for the park. Bob Felker, a landscape architect and Jim Massey, an interpretive

planner, respectively, from the Denver Service Center, were assigned to the project. As the authors state in the introduction to the Development Concept Plan, creating the document was "required to further the draft master plan



**Figure 3.12** Superintendent Ron Thoman wanted the Development Concept Plan to "bring everything into focus." The document provides a plan for how visitors will engage with the new park. This plan shows the park using the parking area at the Flat Rock Playhouse. Development Concept Plan, 1980.



proposal." Felker and Massey made their first visit to the park in April 1974, right before the opening.<sup>17</sup> They circulated their first draft report in September 1974, but it would take over five years before the park and the Southeast Regional Office approved the DCP in November 1979.<sup>18</sup>

Thoman asked Felker and Massey to develop a coherent, "forceful," and "final-sounding" document. He wrote to Massey, "I would suggest that in the DCP we hit these items very hard, clearly and specifically; that we not just re-evaluate but take a stand and definitely set the direction for the future. Since the Master Plan and Interpretive Prospectus came out, a lot of thinking by a lot of people—including managers, historical architects, historians, planners, exhibit people, interpreters, etc.—has been given to Sandburg development. And a consensus of thinking has evolved which in many instances contradicts the Master Plan/ Interpretive Prospectus thinking and calls for formal, documented changes."<sup>19</sup>

Thoman hoped that the DCP could bring "everything into focus" and get "everything straightened out." He noted that there was "still a confusion when planners, managers, designers, programmers, etc. attempt to communicate and do their jobs, and we find we are often working at cross-purposes, duplicating work, contradicting one another, spinning our wheels, waiting, and so on. A Master Plan says one thing, Historic Structure Reports say another; designers get caught in between; management wants something else; estimators are confused and estimates are haywire, and programmers hold up funding pending clarifications." Thoman wanted the final DCP to be "straightforward, precise and aggressive—not just another speculation. It should be clear and firm enough to guide architects, exhibit planners, etc."<sup>20</sup> Though Thoman helped the park begin the process, he would not stay there long enough to see the Development Concept Plan completed. Still, he played an instrumental role in developing the ideas that were utilized in the document.

The DCP process required the development of a new Statement of Management. Park staff wrote this document and the regional office approved it in 1976, but final approval of this document did not occur until 1978.<sup>21</sup> Superintendent Davis described this statement as "essentially a simple layout of the purpose of the historic site, the significance of the resources, a listing of factors influencing management, and a description of land use."<sup>22</sup> The new Statement of Management closely followed the first one produced for the 1970 Master Plan and often used much of the same wording. The most significant difference occurred in objective three, which widened the range of partnerships. Whereas the first document recommended "close cooperation" only with one organization—the Flat Rock Playhouse—the 1978 Statement of Management advised cooperation with "federal, state, and local agencies and groups to secure perpetuation of the site's historical and natural values." This new list of partners included the Playhouse as well as the Flat Rock Historical Association, the Flat Rock Taxpayers Association in "planning and management" for their concerns and requirements, and the North Carolina Highway Department to maintain "proper and adequate signage and assure safe park access at the entrance." Lastly, under this objective, the new Statement for Management noted that the park should work with "other government agencies" to try to reduce or eliminate damage to trees from infestations of the Southern Pine Beetle, White Pine Borer, and Dutch Elm disease." While preservation of the landscape as Sandburg knew it had been a goal from the beginning, the new management objectives reflected a growing environmental movement and awareness of key natural resource management issues in the region at that time.<sup>23</sup>

As a first step in preparing the Development Concept Plan, the National Park Service conducted

17 Planning Directive, Development Concept Plan, 1974. The directive includes a list of "program requirements," "present needs," and "proposed action" items.

18 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 1.

19 Ron Thoman to Jim Massey, memorandum, October 9, 1974, Carl Sandburg DCP—Interpretive Plan, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

20 Thoman to Massey, memorandum, October 9, 1974.

21 The bibliography of the Development Concept Plan provides a date of 1978 for the Statement of Management, but the Superintendent's Annual Reports and primary documents reference the date of 1976 when the Statement of Management was approved by the park.

22 "Sandburg Home Statement For Management Complete," *Times-News*, January 30, 1978, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1665&dat=19780130&id=Tz5PAAAAIBAJ&sjid=OiQEAAAAIBAJ&pg=5619,2601267> (accessed September 3, 2012).

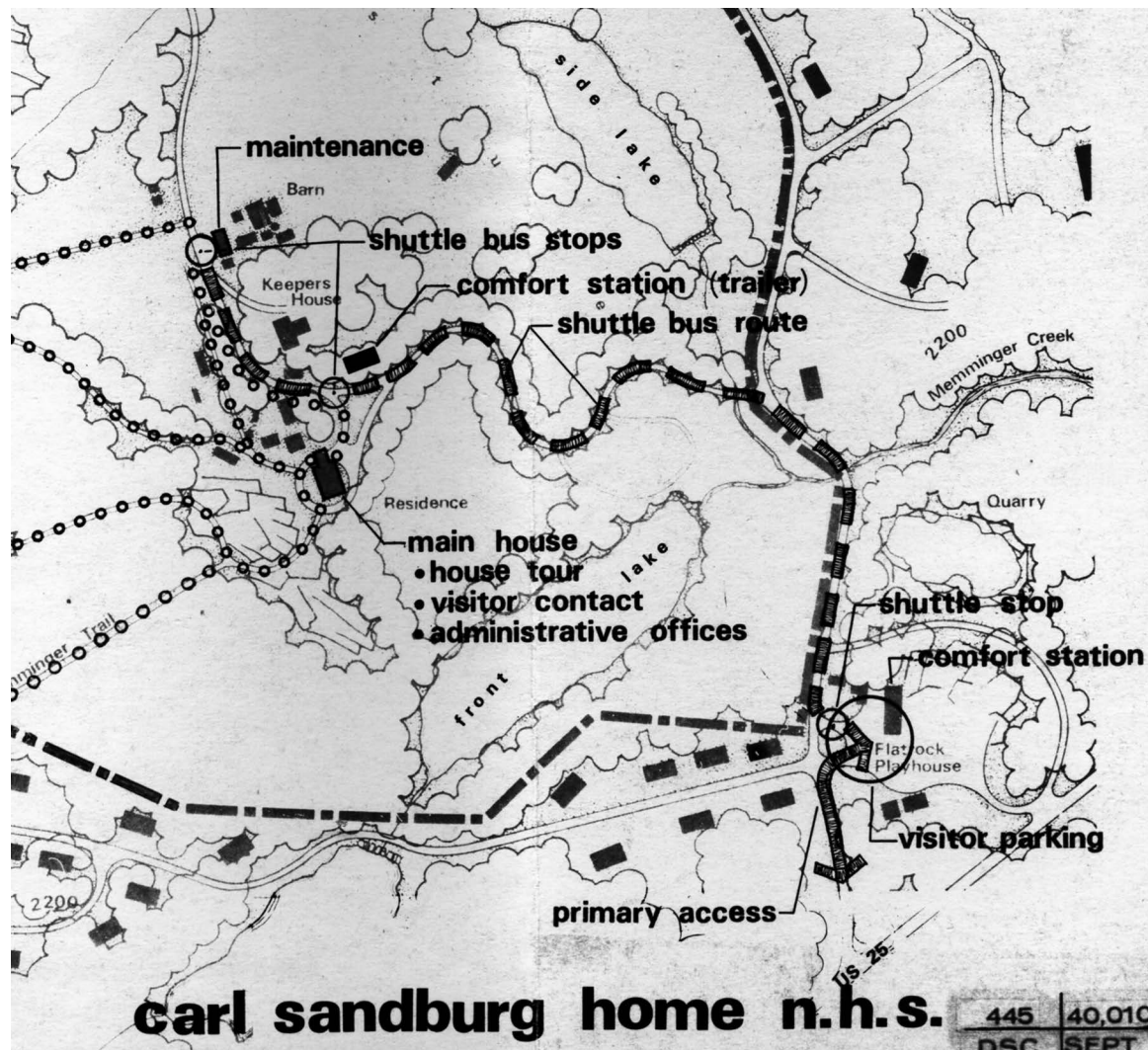
23 Master Plan, 1971, 201; Development Concept Plan, 1980, 5.



**Figure 3.13** The new Visitor Contact Station includes an Eastern National Bookstore, selling publications about Sandburg and the park. November 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.14** The park rebuilt the bridge across the Front Lake to match the older bridge once at this site, shown in this historic photo. Now, visitors from the new Visitor Contact Station walk across this bridge to come into the park. (CARL Museum Collection).



**Figure 3.15** The Development Concept Plan shows the proposed shuttle bus stops in the historic zone and identified the Main House as the location for visitor contact as well as administrative offices. Development Concept Plan, 1980.



an environmental assessment to evaluate the environmental impact of the locations for the park facilities proposed in the Master Plan.<sup>24</sup> Completed in December 1977, the environmental assessment identified and assessed alternative locations for five key facilities that planners considered essential for the park: the Visitor Contact Station and parking lot, maintenance facilities, administrative area, two park residences for security and farm management, and restrooms near the house. The report also included a "Cultural Resource Management Statement" produced by the National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in 1978. The park held hearings and collected input on the environmental assessment in March 1978, and then the team established its final recommendations for the Development Concept Plan "following an evaluation of the chosen alternatives and their

effects on the quality of human environment as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969."<sup>25</sup>

The Development Concept Plan made recommendations for both park management and the visitor. It described the existing resources and the changes proposed through the planning process and the environmental assessment. The document gained final approval from the Denver Service Center, the park, and the regional office by November 1979 and was published in January 1980.<sup>26</sup> Besides Bob Felker and Jim Massey from the Denver Service Center, the other planning team members listed on the report were current Superintendent Benjamin Davis and former Superintendent Ron Thoman.<sup>27</sup>

24 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 1.

25 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 1.

26 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 1.

27 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 30.

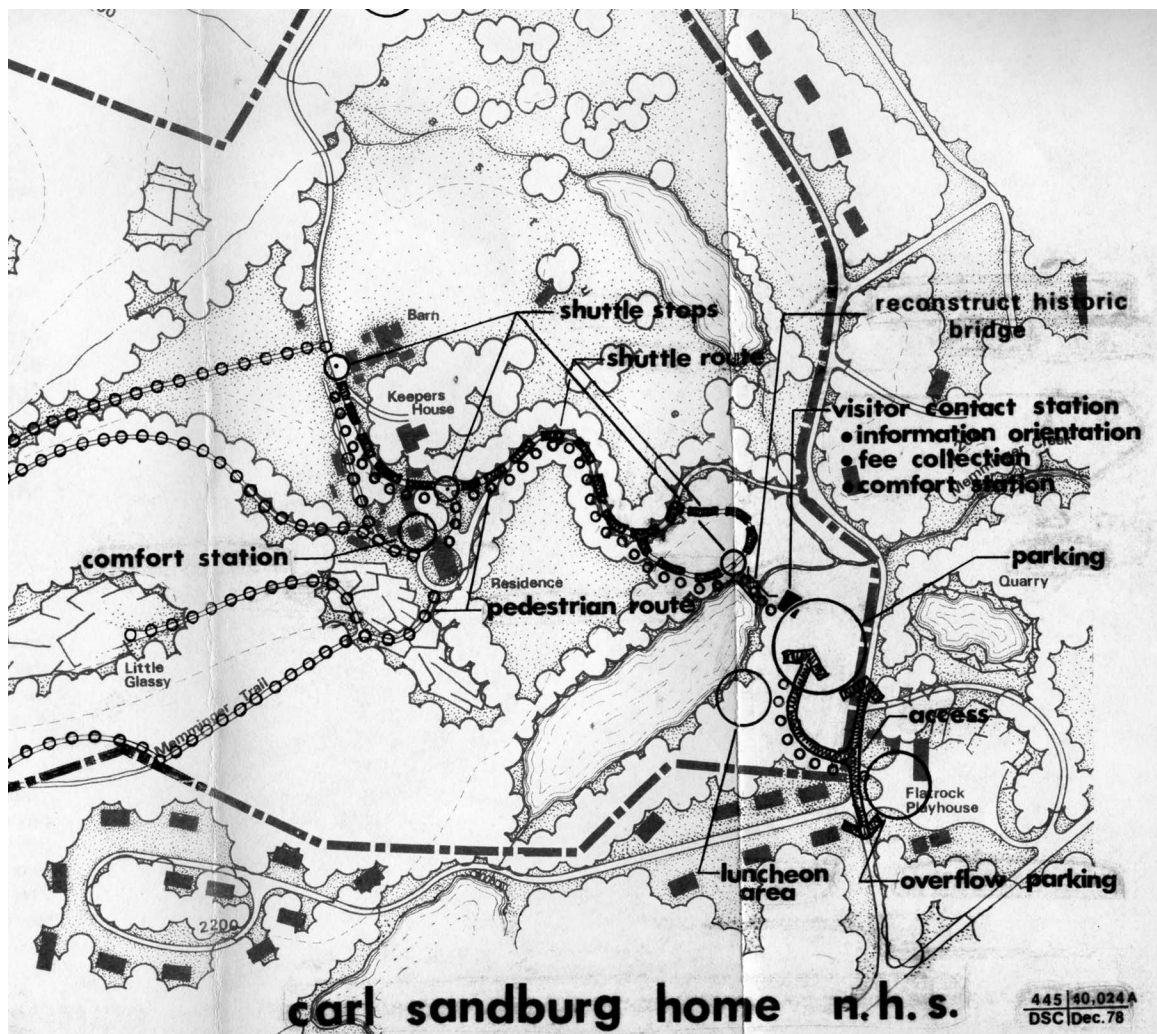


Figure 3.16 The Development Concept Plan recommended a location for the new Visitor Contact Station and parking lot, after reviewing four options. Funding for the project became available in FY 1979. Development Concept Plan, 1980.



The Development Concept Plan provided a much more realistic estimate of the costs for creating the park than those included in the original development funding proposal. In 1979 dollars, the Visitor Contact Station would cost \$306,000; the residential area, \$196,000; the maintenance facilities, \$118,000; the administrative offices, \$164,000; and the comfort station, \$92,000. Added to the \$611,000 still needed for historic building repair and restoration, plus planning, supervision, and contingency, the new total for park development was \$2,171,000, more than double the original estimate.<sup>28</sup> The National Park Service provided funding to implement some of these proposed projects during the Davis superintendency.

## Infrastructure and Utilities

Before opening, the park needed to complete critical infrastructure improvements based primarily on recommendations in the Master Plan. The Development Concept Plan reconsidered some of the original ideas and recommended

changes. One of the requests in the DCP Planning Directive was to produce a plan for "backbone" utility systems at the park, including water, sewage, electricity, and telephone.<sup>29</sup>

The Sandburgs had obtained their water from a spring on Big Glassy Mountain, which also fed the Trout Pond, the Duck Pond, and the two lakes and provided water for the farm operations at the Barn. Before opening in 1974, the park installed a new system for pumping, storing, and adding chlorination to the water at the restored Pump House, located near the Barn. This project involved adding new pipes and mechanical apparatus inside the "original" Pump House and allowed the removal of a "non-historic block building" the National Park Service had erected after it acquired the property.<sup>30</sup> Three 1,000-gallon underground tanks stored the water. The water was chlorinated here and stored in a 5,000-gallon underground reservoir, the latter providing potable water for the park. Since chlorine could make the animals sick, a two-inch pipe diverted water to the Barn before

28 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 26-27.

29 Planning Directive, Development Concept Plan, 1974.

30 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

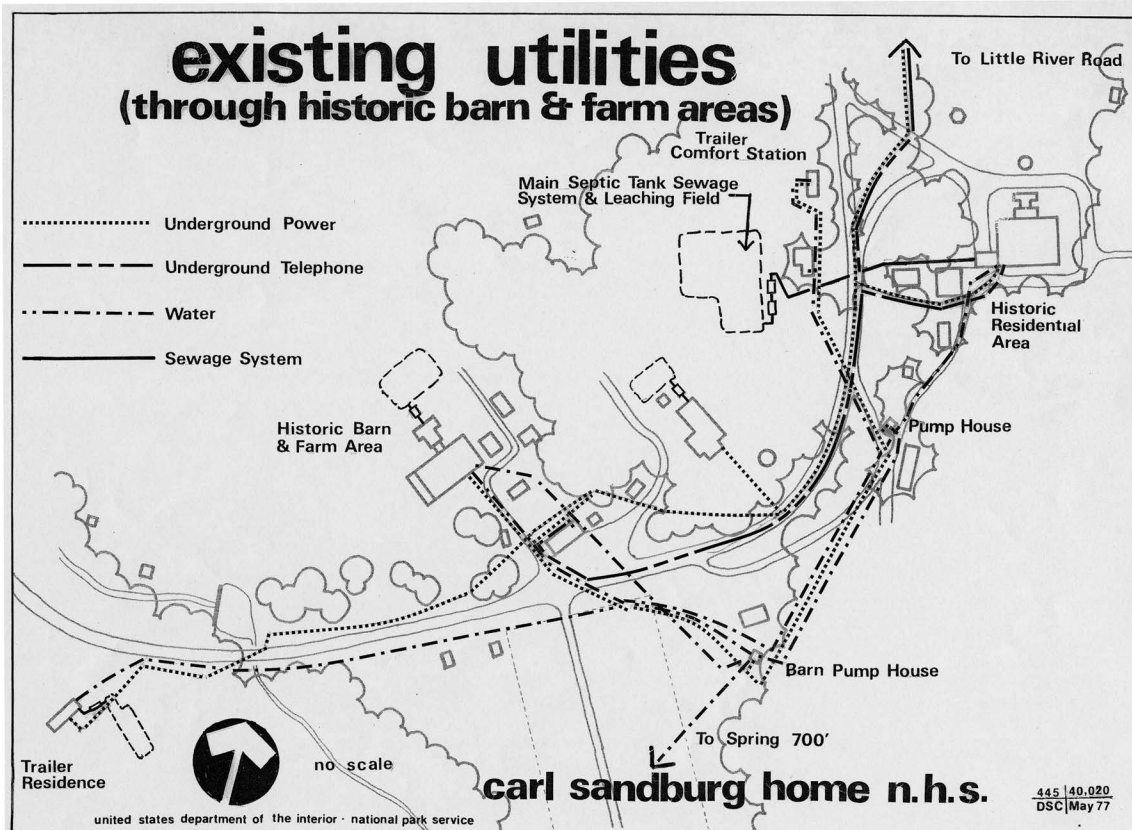


Figure 3.17 Planning for the necessary utilities was an important part of the Development Concept Plan. 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

it was chlorinated.<sup>31</sup> A 15,000-gallon reservoir halfway up Big Glassy Mountain provided water for fire protection and emergency farm operations and supplied the pool, fountain, and cow trough in front of the Main House.<sup>32</sup> In 1979, the park installed a larger, 8,000-gallon fiberglass water storage tank near the spring for its potable water source. This new tank provided a "reserve of water the park" had lacked, "since the spring output flowed through a two-inch pipe directly to the pump house and chlorinator."<sup>33</sup> Warren Weber noted that the new tank helped to improve the water supply until the park could get city water.<sup>34</sup>

While the Master Plan and the Development Concept Plan stated that the water supply was adequate for the Sandburg family and farm needs, both recommended that the park connect to the City of Hendersonville water system as soon as possible.<sup>35</sup> The DCP anticipated that city water would be available within the next five years along Little River Road and referenced a "new" water main along US Highway 25.<sup>36</sup> This development occurred sooner than expected. In November 1982, after hearing that the park would receive funds to connect to the city water lines, park staff began negotiations with the City of Hendersonville to connect to its water supply. The park received \$100,000 in cyclic funds for this project in 1983. In June 1983, the park entered into a contract with the City of Hendersonville for the city to install the water line.<sup>37</sup> The eight-inch line to the park connected to the main water line on Little River Road and provided hydrants in the park "at several points near clusters of buildings." The project was completed in 1984.<sup>38</sup>

Over the next decade, the park continued to use many of the "temporary" utilities installed for the opening. The Master Plan stated that an "interim" septic tank sewage system would be necessary. The park installed one in 1974, prior to opening, near the Tenant House to serve the area around



**Figure 3.18** In 1975, the park replaces its temporary "comfort station" facilities, built for the park opening, with this trailer. These temporary trailer restrooms remained in use for over thirty years. (CARL Park Archive).

the Main House and the new comfort station. The Farm Manager's House and the barn area had separate septic tank systems, as did the trailer residence built for the farm manager.<sup>39</sup> The Master Plan recommended that the park connect to a "larger public system outside the park," but there was no opportunity at that time to link to the city's sewer line.<sup>40</sup> The DCP predicted that city sewage treatment facilities "should" be available within ten years.<sup>41</sup>

When the National Park Service acquired the Sandburg property, the electric and telephone wires were all above ground "from building to building." The Master Plan recommended that all electrical and telephone lines be placed underground, and the park completed this work in 1970. Thoman called this a "practical move from the maintenance standpoint," but ultimately it was unwise and "probably in violation of the [National] Historic Preservation Act of 1966." Thoman believed that this action "drastically altered the historic appearance of the farm." He proposed to Felker that all lines be restored to "the historic appearance of the farm" when Sandburg lived there.<sup>42</sup> In 1982, the underground lines were replaced by above-ground lines similar to those that existed during the Sandburg years. A "live" line was run from the Main House to the Family Garage, the Swedish House, the Tenant House, and the trailer restrooms; a "dummy line" was run from

31 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, December 1977, Denver Service Center, 7, 19, CARL Park Archive.  
32 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 15.  
33 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979.  
34 Weber, interview, 2011.  
35 Master Plan, 1971, 37.  
36 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 15.  
37 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982 and 1983.  
38 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1984.

39 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 19.  
40 Master Plan, 1971, 27.  
41 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 15.  
42 Ron Thoman to Bob Felker through Granville Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972, Development Concept Plan/EIS, RG 79, Box 43, NARA II.

the Tenant House to the Milk House; and then another "live" line was run from the Barn Garage to the Pump House.<sup>43</sup>

Security and fire prevention continued to be a concern for the main historic structures in particular. The Master Plan proposed building two residences on the park for security. Leroy Levi, the farm manager, had been living in the Farm Manager's House, but the house was in disrepair and needed stabilization. The park established a trailer residence for Levi and his family along the back entrance road. Also, prior to the opening in 1974, the park developed a proposal for upgrading and expanding the security system.<sup>44</sup>

The Master Plan recommended that the park develop cooperative agreements with rescue units in Hendersonville and with the sheriff's office.<sup>45</sup> The 1979 Annual Report notes that the park was continuing arrangements with the Blue Ridge Fire Company for fire control and with the Henderson County Sheriff for law enforcement and monitoring systems.<sup>46</sup> The 1982 Annual Report notes that the park had negotiated a contract of over \$162,000 for the installation of a fire suppression system, a fire alarm, and an intruder alarm system in four of the historic structures: Main House, Tenant House, Swedish House, and Family Garage.<sup>47</sup>

Another challenge for the park in the early years was to establish signage for visitors to get to the park. The park was not easy to find. "During the first years of the Park's existence, you had to make a real effort to get here and visit," remembered Weber. "There wasn't much of the way of signage on the highways. I do not remember when the first signs went up, but it did not come early."<sup>48</sup> The preparation of signage was done in cooperation with the state. In 1979, Davis reported that the park staff met several times with representatives from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to talk about putting up signage in the vicinity of the park, and while "some positive progress was made," no signs had yet been installed.<sup>49</sup>

## Development of Administrative and Maintenance Facilities

The 1977 Environmental Assessment noted that most of the park's management facilities were still in "temporary or historic structures."<sup>50</sup> The Development Concept Plan provided recommendations on the location of permanent facilities. The park completed several of these facilities during the Davis years.

One of the key issues to be resolved was the location of the administrative offices. The Master



**Figure 3.19** Margaret "Peggy" Parcell, the first secretary at the park, works in the Main House in the early years after CARL opened. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

Plan proposal that the administrative offices—for the management "assistant," the curator's office and workshop, the hostess lounge area, and the storage areas and restrooms—be incorporated in the Main House drew quick fire from National Park Service staff in Washington, the regional office, and the park.<sup>51</sup>

The Development Concept Plan proposed creating an "administrative services" area outside of the house at the back service entrance. This area would not be in within view of the historic zone, and it could accommodate parking and deliveries and allow staff to work outside the historic zone and more easily meet with those visiting the park on business. Thoman did not like this idea. He responded to Felker that the only administrative offices needed would be for the superintendent and the secretary, as the curators and interpreters would "need to be in the Main House." Sometimes he and his secretary were pulled into visitor

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43 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

44 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

45 Master Plan, 1971, 36.

46 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979.

47 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1985 and 1986.

48 Weber, interview, 2011.

49 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979.

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50 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 19.

51 Master Plan, 1971, 36.



services issues or giving tours, so that location would create "unnecessary isolation and travel distance."<sup>52</sup>

Thoman did recognize, however, as did others at the time, that these offices for the superintendent and secretary should not be in the house "because of wear and tear on the fabric of our prime historical resource and mutual interference of visitor services and administrative operations." Thoman's proposal was to put these administrative offices in the Tenant House because it was near the Main House, had utilities and a restroom, and provided three rooms that could be used for the superintendent, the secretary, and a conference space. Additionally, using the Tenant House would provide climate control to the building and thus would help preserve it, and no major changes to the building fabric would be required.<sup>53</sup> Thoman moved this plan forward, relocating the administrative offices into the Tenant House in 1975, after its rehabilitation.<sup>54</sup>

The Environmental Assessment confirmed that the administrative offices were located in the Tenant House, which had two offices, a secretary/reception area, and restrooms, but that there were also offices in the Farm Manager's House in 1977.<sup>55</sup> However, the report noted that the Tenant House was not really adequate for administrative use: it lacked space for a meeting room, any additional offices, and parking and was located in the historic residential zone.<sup>56</sup> The Environmental Assessment proposed a second option: to construct a new administrative office building just inside the back service entrance. This recommendation, adopted for the Development Concept Plan, proposed a 1,200-square-foot building with parking, three offices, a reception area, and a conference room.<sup>57</sup>

Although the park did not have funding to build a new administrative facility near the back

entrance, Davis decided to move the administrative offices out of the Tenant House and into the larger Farm Manager's House in 1981.<sup>58</sup> In 1982, the park converted the Tenant House into collections storage. Cyclic funds provided the money necessary to create a climate-controlled environment in the Tenant House, completed by contract.<sup>59</sup>

The park also needed to create a better maintenance facility. Maintenance staff members were still using the Barn Garage to store tools and supplies. The DCP and Superintendent Thoman identified several problems with this site. The building was located in the heart of the farmyard historic area, at the shuttle stop, where visitors gathered to catch the shuttle or to view the goat herd. The building itself was small, with no heat or air-conditioning, and lacked adequate parking space for maintenance vehicles. Further, the sound of power tools intruded on the historic environment. Thoman wrote in his 1974 Annual Report that the draft Development Concept Plan had introduced "several new ideas," including the creation of a Maintenance Facility with a new headquarters office and residence complex inside the back gate.<sup>60</sup> Thoman noted, and the Environmental Assessment agreed, that if the maintenance functions could be moved elsewhere, the Barn Garage could be used to store and exhibit Sandburg's farm equipment, which was currently outside and exposed to the weather.<sup>61</sup>

After reviewing alternative locations for the Maintenance Facility, the Development Concept Plan recommended the first option, which moved the maintenance building out to the administrative services area proposed inside the back service road. The DCP suggested a 1,500-square-foot maintenance structure with two garage stalls, tool and supply storage, and workspace, along with a parking area.<sup>62</sup>

In FY 1983, the park acquired cyclic funds to build this new Maintenance Facility, and the contract was let in October 1984. The park hired Moretti Construction Company to undertake the project.

52 Thoman to Felker through Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972.

53 Thoman to Felker through Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972.

54 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975; Thoman, interview, 2003.

55 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 19.

56 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 19.

57 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977; Development Concept Plan, 1980, 11–12, 72.

58 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975 and 1981.

59 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

60 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

61 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 70–71.

62 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 12.



**Figure 3.20** The park maintenance staff puts up the piers and beams for the sheds being built near the Maintenance Facility. February/March 1985 (CARL Park Archive).



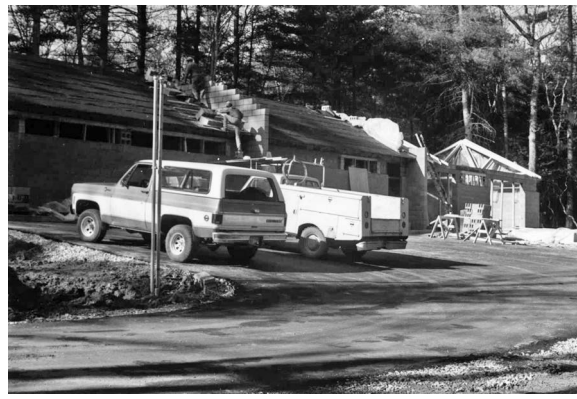
**Figure 3.21** The park staff completes the block and truss work on the new Maintenance Facility. December 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.22** Staff installs the roof on the sheds at the new Maintenance Facility. March 1985 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.23** Roofing work is underway on the new Maintenance Facility. December 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.24** The new Maintenance Facility, located inside the back service road, provides much needed space for the staff. December 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.25** The park staff celebrates the construction of the new Maintenance Facility with a luncheon. 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

The facility was completed and ready for use in July 1985. That year, the staff began relocating the maintenance activities into the new area so that the Barn Garage could be used for its “historic” purpose as an equipment storage building.<sup>63</sup>

The third element of the proposed administrative services area was the construction of the two residences for park employees recommended in the Master Plan. The Development Concept Plan stated that two residences were needed for park employees to provide 24-hour security for the property and to assist with the farm operations.<sup>64</sup> The National Park Service had first used the Farm Manager’s House, near the Barn, to house the farmcaretaker, Leroy Levi. Levi had lived in this home when he worked for the Sandburgs, and it was convenient to the farm operations, but the house had fallen into disrepair. “At some point,

63 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1983, 1984, and 1985.

64 Master Plan, 1971, 36. The DCP has several options for staff residences and notes the location of the trailer. Development Concept Plan, 1980, 61.



I guess there were problems with that house," recalled Thoman. "And so a trailer, a mobile home trailer, was acquired and located on the farm up a ways from what we called the back entrance off the Little River Road." Levi was living in the trailer by 1973, when Thoman arrived at the park.<sup>65</sup> The Development Concept Plan recommended removing this "temporary" trailer home because it was visible from the historic barn area. Further, the DCP advised that "clustering these management facilities" would permit "efficient development" of the property by concentrating the utilities in that area.<sup>66</sup> These two residences were never built.

The Development Concept Plan also evaluated where to locate a permanent "comfort station" to replace the temporary trailer restrooms situated adjacent to the Tenant House. Added in 1975, the trailer replaced even more temporary port-a-potties brought in for the park's opening.<sup>67</sup> The park needed a comfort station in the historic zone. The Environmental Assessment proposed remodeling either the Family Garage or the Chicken House into a restroom by adding a "shell

type of construction," but both adaptive-use projects would involve some permanent impact and loss of integrity to the historic structures. The third alternative was to build a permanent restroom at the location of the present facility.<sup>68</sup> After weighing these three options, the DCP recommended placing the restrooms in the Family Garage, the alternative Thoman preferred, because there were no interior walls and the location was "ideal" since it was located just outside the back door, where visitors concluded their tour.<sup>69</sup> Thoman commented that the Chicken House was of "considerable interest" to architects as and the renovations would involve major structural changes and cost more. Built circa 1841, the Chicken House was originally built as quarters for enslaved people by the Memminger family.<sup>70</sup>

- 65 Thoman, interview, 2003; Thoman, interview, 2011.  
66 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 15.  
67 Weber, interview, 2011. Weber recalled that the trailer cost \$8,000 and added that "It wasn't removed until three or four years ago!"

- 68 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 79–80.  
69 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 9.  
70 Thoman to Felker through Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972; Joseph K. Opperman, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Chicken House/Wash House Historic Structure Report, Cultural Resource Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, September 2007, 1.B.1.

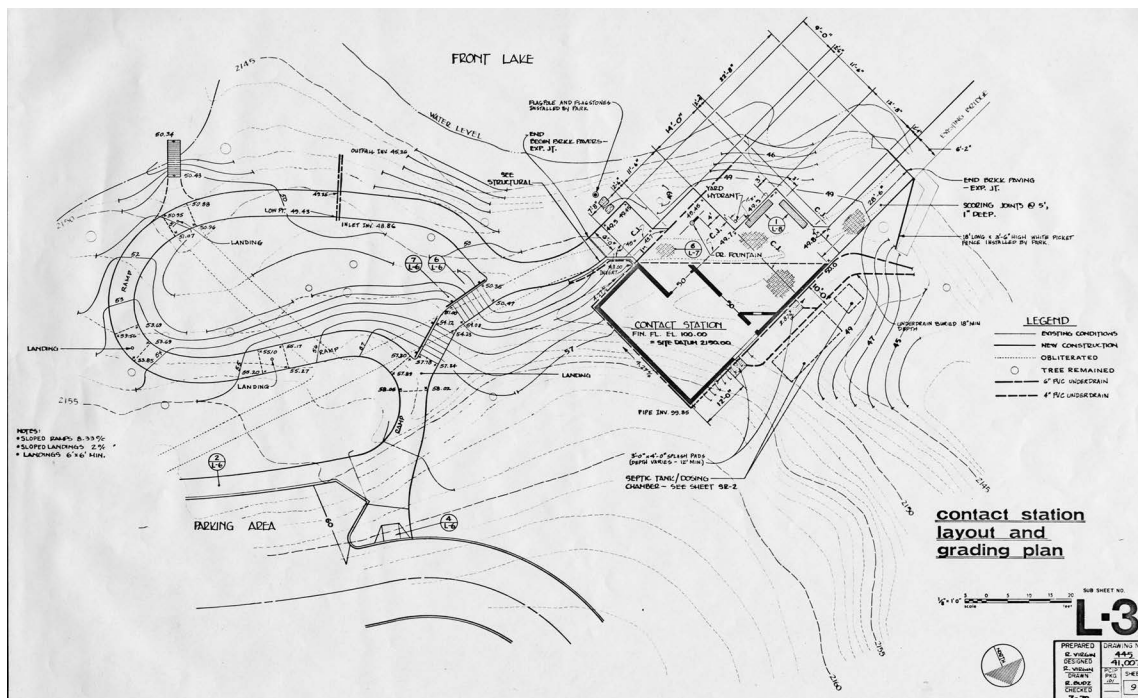


Figure 3.26 The plans for the Visitor Contact Station recommended that the building be nestled into the landscape, adjacent to Front Lake. 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



## Visitor Contact Station and Parking Area

From the park's founding, one of the most controversial but critical issues was where to construct a parking area. The location of the parking lot generated uproar among park neighbors along Little River Road in the public hearing for the Master Plan. However, the park had no resources to build a parking lot at that time, so the National Park Service contracted with the Flat Rock Playhouse to provide parking for visitors. After parking, visitors could either walk across the road and follow a trail up to the park or call for a shuttle on an intercom phone in the Playhouse parking lot. This agreement with the Playhouse, while expedient, did pose some problems: visitors to the park could not use the lot on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons as well as some Sundays



**Figure 3.27** This sign located in the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot directs visitors to call the park to catch the shuttle bus up to the Main House. From the park opening in 1974 to completion of its own facilities around 1982, the park depended on the use of the neighboring Playhouse parking lot for its visitors. May 15, 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.28** Visitors take the shuttle bus from the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot to the Main House. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

in the summer due to matinees and performances at the Playhouse.<sup>71</sup>

Not surprisingly, the location of the Visitor Contact Station took center stage in the Development Concept Plan process, both because of local residents' concerns about its location and because it was central to the visitor experience. The environmental assessment proposed a complex that would include a parking area for forty cars and three buses, a Visitor Contact Station with restrooms and an information counter, a luncheon area with up to five benches, a shuttle bus stop and turnaround, a shuttle connector road to the main entry drive, and trails to lead to the historic home and barn complexes.<sup>72</sup>

Three of the four proposed locations for this visitor services area were in the pasture along Little River Road, in an area near the one contested by neighbors in the original Master Plan hearing. Several homes overlooked the pasture, and park neighbors did not want to look across the road at a parking lot. The only other alternative, and the one recommended in the DCP, was situated in a wooded area across from the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot and below Front Lake. This site offered convenient access to overflow parking at the Flat Rock Playhouse parking area and heavy vegetation that would allow for better screening from the road and from the historic core of the park. Additionally, the site provided only one access to the park, and walking across the bridge at the lake would suggest a "sense of arrival." There was also adequate space for a small picnic area at this location.<sup>73</sup>

The DCP proposed that the Visitor Contact Station feature an "open air" design with restrooms, an information desk, orientation materials, and a phone to request a shuttle. The final award-winning design, produced by the Denver Service Center, was a low, poured-concrete and stone structure that nestled into the landscape and was barely visible from Little River Road. The architectural design featured an open-air exhibit and orientation area that faced onto Front Lake

71 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 51.

72 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 29.

73 Environmental Assessment, Development Concept Plan, 1977, 29-30.

and offered scenic views of the Main House.<sup>74</sup> From there, visitors could walk up a trail that paralleled the old entrance road or take the shuttle. An older roadbed made a convenient location for the shuttle to turn around. To re-create the historic character of the farm, the DCP proposed replacing the temporary bridge over Front Lake with a reproduction of the wooden trussbridge visible in old Sandburg photographs. The only drawback to this site was that the number of parking places would need to be reduced from 40 to 30 cars, but there was still adequate space for three buses.<sup>75</sup>

Funds for the new parking area and Visitor Contact Station became available in FY 1979 as the Development Concept Plan was gaining final approval from key NPS staff. In July 1979, the National Park Service sent the plans and specifications to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in Atlanta to contract with a minority business to complete the project. A Greensboro, North Carolina, contractor picked up plans from the SBA in September, and submitted

a bid of \$440,000. The company lowered its bid to \$348,000, which was well below the engineer's estimate.<sup>76</sup>

Since the contract with the Flat Rock Playhouse was scheduled to expire in 1980, the park had to negotiate a new memorandum of agreement that extended the 1974 agreement through 1980 "due to the delay of the Small Business Administration in negotiating a contract for the construction of our own parking area."<sup>77</sup> Work proceeded slowly on the project; the 1981 Annual Report stated that the contractor had completed only 44 percent of the work as of June 1, 1981, and "all efforts to prod him have failed and by December 1981 he had completed 85 percent of the work." With the delays in the construction, the park asked employees to use the parking lot at Blue Ridge Technical College during the busier summer months. Finally, in April 1982, the contractor completed his work to the extent that the park could "accept" the facility, while the company finished its punch list.<sup>78</sup>

74 Weber, interview, 2011.

75 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 8.

76 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979. The SBA has an Office of Government Contracting that works with federal departments and agencies in federal procurement activities.

77 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1978.

78 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.



**Figure 3.29** Workmen lay stones for the retaining wall at the parking lot. April 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.30** Workmen pave the new parking lot at the Visitor Contact Station. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



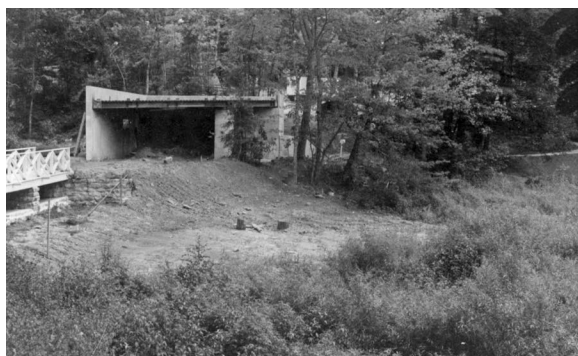
**Figure 3.31 (above) and 3.32 (below)** The poured concrete walls are under construction. June 1981 (CARL Park Archive)







**Figure 3.33** This photograph shows the main structure of the Visitor Contact Station still under construction. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.34** The structure of the Visitor Contact Station is nearly complete in this photo, and work was beginning on the walkway from the parking lot. 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.35** The contractors work on the roof of the Visitor Contact Station. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.36** A view of the inside exhibit area of the Visitor Contact Station under construction. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

## Expanding the Park Boundaries

During these years, the National Park Service faced two issues related to property boundaries at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. The first involved about 400 feet of the historic Memminger Trail that was situated outside park boundaries. As



**Figure 3.37** The Visitor Contact Station and related paths are near completion by the end of 1981. November 1981 (CARL Park Archive)



**Figure 3.38** Contractors put gravel in the pathways from the Visitor Contact Center to the parking lot and to the footbridge across the Front Lake. July-August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.39** The park anticipates using its new parking lot. The facility passed inspection and was almost ready for use when this photo was taken. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 3.40** A park ranger greets the public at the new Visitor Contact Station. The facility, when completed, included a desk where rangers and volunteers worked as well as a small Eastern National bookstore. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.41** Exhibits on Carl Sandburg fill the space within the Visitor Contact Station to orient visitors to the park. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 3.42** In 1982, the new Visitor Contact Station provides an opportunity to orient visitors to the park through exhibits, a desk staffed during the busy seasons, a small Eastern National bookstore, and restrooms. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

the National Park Service completed the initial survey of Connemara, it became clear that this part of the trail was not on the Sandburg land, as the family had believed. The original Sandburg tract was actually only 241.18 acres, instead of 242

acres.<sup>79</sup> The Master Plan proposed that the NPS either acquire this property or reroute the trail. In October 1973, National Park Service officials met with the property owners to discuss purchase of this tract before the park opened, but they felt that the owners proposed an unrealistic price and unreasonable conditions of sale. Park Service staff discussed whether to take the 0.77-acre tract by condemnation but did not take any action at that time.<sup>80</sup>

Superintendent Ron Thoman asked the DCP team to push for acquiring this additional land, noting that this action would preserve a historic trail that Sandburg used and one of the “gentlest and nicest trails” for the “older folks.” Having to redirect the trail “above the privately owned land” would be a “significant” amount of work that would need to be added to the DCP.<sup>81</sup> Surprisingly, the 1980 DCP stated that the park had bypassed this part of the trail, rather than continue to work towards acquiring the property, now estimated at 0.79 acres, and the site plan showed the bypass.<sup>82</sup> However, park staff recall that visitors were still using the original trail bed that traversed through private property.<sup>83</sup>

The second issue concerned a 17-acre tract of land adjacent to the park along the northern summit of Big Glassy Mountain. This land contained most of the remaining portion of the rock outcropping that the Sandburgs enjoyed. Property owner James Barrett wanted to donate the property to the park, but the land could not be acquired without an act of Congress. Instead, Barrett conveyed it to the Nature Conservancy of North Carolina in 1977 to hold in trust until the title could be transferred to the park.<sup>84</sup>

79 Land Acquisition Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, January 4, 1980, CARL 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 328, CARL Park Archives.

80 Thoman to Felker through Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972.

81 Thoman to Felker through Liles, memorandum, October 2, 1972.

82 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 10.

83 A 1989 memorandum from subsequent Superintendent Ken Hulick noted that visitors still hiked the trail that extended through the “back yards of three of our park neighbors.” Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, to Associate Regional Director, Planning and Assistance, Southeast Regional Office, memorandum, December 8, 1989, 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 326, CARL Park Archives).

84 Land Acquisition Plan, 1980.

In 1979, with this potential land donation on hold, the park staff developed a Land Acquisition Plan to address these two boundary issues and submitted it to the Southeast Regional Office.<sup>85</sup> The Land Acquisition Plan argued that the 17-acre tract would help the park fulfill its mission and needed to be acquired. At the same time, it addressed the ongoing concerns with the Memminger Trail land. Since the park's opening, this land had been sold and subdivided among three owners. The Land Acquisition Plan suggested that the park no longer pursue acquiring these three tracts totaling 0.79 acres, consider them as "acquisition unscheduled," and remove them from the authorized park boundary. In contrast to Thoman's belief that the trail was important to the park story, the new Land Acquisition Plan stated that these pieces of property were not considered "critical to interpretation of the Carl Sandburg story nor posing any threat to the historic resource."<sup>86</sup> Perhaps the staff thought sacrificing the Memminger Trail might help gain more support in the community for the larger piece of land it wanted to acquire.

The next step was to take this proposed Land Acquisition Plan to Congress. H.R. 3757 passed the House of Representatives in May 1979 and was sent to a Senate subcommittee for consideration on July 19, 1979.<sup>87</sup>

As the bill made its way through Congress, the park held a public hearing about the Land Acquisition Plan in January 1980. Superintendent Davis informed those attending the hearing that this property "would insure preservation of lands associated with Sandburg and extend a buffer along the ridges against adverse impact." Because the park could not acquire the property yet, it had been deeded to the Nature Conservancy of North Carolina, which would convey it to the government when the legislation, already through the House, passed the Senate.<sup>88</sup> Davis reported to the director of the Southeast Regional Office that there were no

negative comments from the public regarding this proposed plan.<sup>89</sup>

On March 5, 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed the Channel Islands National Park bill, Public Law 96-199, which included the authorization for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS to add 17 acres to the site and thus to accept the donation of this tract from the Nature Conservancy of North Carolina.<sup>90</sup> The park moved ahead with the acquisition process. In 1981, Davis reported that the park had received a quitclaim deed for the land, and a local attorney had prepared a contract for title insurance and a warranty deed. Fe Wan Associates surveyed this new land for the park in 1982.<sup>91</sup>

Superintendent Benjamin Davis retired on May 24, 1986, closing out a forty-year career with the National Park Service. He remained in Hendersonville. A year before his retirement, in an interview conducted with both Davis and Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm, Davis explained, "We hope that we have a foundation where the first steps have been taken and the foundation laid."<sup>92</sup>

These early years involved a juggling of many priorities at the park, from visitor services and interpretation, to preservation of the buildings and collections, to construction of new park facilities. "When you open a park up to visitors, that creates a whole new situation because you have to take your visitor load into consideration," Davis reflected. "You're trying to carry on your other facets of the total program and then at the same time coming into it were new developments. All of these were part and parcel of the total program, Development Concept Plan, Master Plan. It fell on top of our trying to keep the preservation going on historic structures. We're just trying to keep everything running along, at least progressing."<sup>93</sup>

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85 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979. Land Acquisition Plan, 1980. While the Development Concept Plan suggested that the Memminger Trail be rerouted and the Land Acquisition Plan declined to pursue acquisition of the three tracts, park records reveal that the trail remained along its original course through 1994.

87 Land Acquisition Plan, 1980.

88 "Sandburg Home May Add Land," *Times-News*, January 14, 1980.

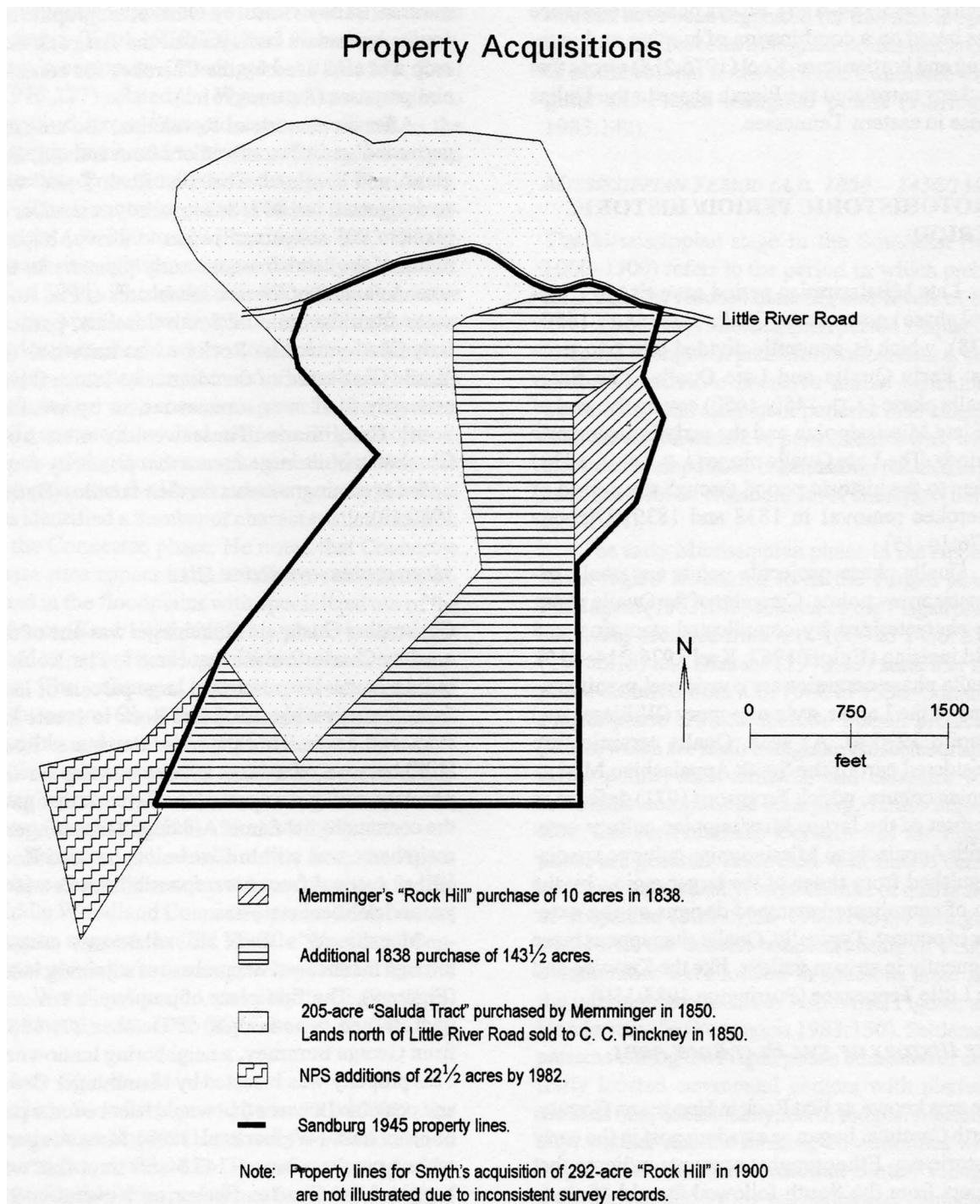
89 Benjamin Davis to Regional Director, Southeast Regional Office, memorandum, January 24, 1980, CARL 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 328, CARL Park Archives.

90 Benjamin Davis to Thomas Massengala, Director, North Carolina Nature Conservancy, memorandum, March 19, 1980, CARL 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 330, CARL Park Archives.

91 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

92 Hamm and Davis, interview.

93 Hamm and Davis, interview.



**Figure 3.43** This map shows the 22 acres acquired in 1982 to protect the park's viewshed. Architectural Overview and Assessment, 1998.





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# CHAPTER 4

## “We had a Preservation Program,” 1974-1986

One of the greatest challenges at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was to preserve the significant cultural landscape at the park, which included 51 historic structures and additional archeological resources that had yet to be identified. The lack of development funding prior to the opening prohibited any large-scale attempts to preserve the buildings, leaving the small staff to work as best it could with its limited resources to prevent further deterioration. After the opening in 1974, the park began a major campaign to preserve the historic structures and the cultural landscape. Although the park never received the anticipated funds, Superintendent Benjamin Davis spearheaded this effort with a talented park maintenance staff, working closely with National Park Service staff at the Southeast Regional Office, the Denver Service Center, and the Washington office. By the end of Davis’s superintendency, the park had restored or rehabilitated the majority of its historic buildings. “We had a preservation program!” Davis proudly explained at the eve of his retirement.<sup>1</sup>

Resource management was gaining more attention in the National Park Service and across the nation during the 1970s and early 1980s, in part due to the tremendous growth in the National Park system. During George Hartzog’s nine-year tenure as director, from 1964 through 1973, the National Park Service experienced its greatest expansion in history. The NPS added 72 sites, including national parks, historical and archeological monuments, recreation areas, seashores, riverways, memorials, and cultural units. Hartzog also helped to spearhead the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which sparked a growing historic preservation movement throughout the United States, including within the national parks. As the

1985 report *National Parks for a New Generation* observed, “Park managers have until recently been given little technical assistance or staff support for determining which buildings were historically significant, for repairing and renovating them, or for finding uses for them.”<sup>2</sup> Superintendent Davis would find the technical support he needed to accomplish this significant undertaking at the park.

After moving from Richmond to Atlanta in January 1972, the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) did not have a regional preservation program or any professional preservation staff. By 1974, the year the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) opened, SERO had hired Historical Architect John C. Garner Jr. and a historian. At the time Garner assumed this position, he observed that the condition of historic structures in the region was “abysmal.” Garner wrote that the Southeast Regional Office faced a sizeable challenge: to “place in maintenance condition” 600 historic buildings in 45 areas in the region, potentially costing an estimated \$45 million.<sup>3</sup> By 1985, the number would grow to over 3,000 historic buildings in 53 areas, “characterized as natural, recreational, or historic.” Garner observed that preserving cultural resources gained greater focus in the Southeast Region between 1975 and 1985 due both to the Historic Preservation Act and “the recent shift within the National Park Service from a development mode to one of rehabilitation of existing physical resources including cultural elements.”<sup>4</sup>

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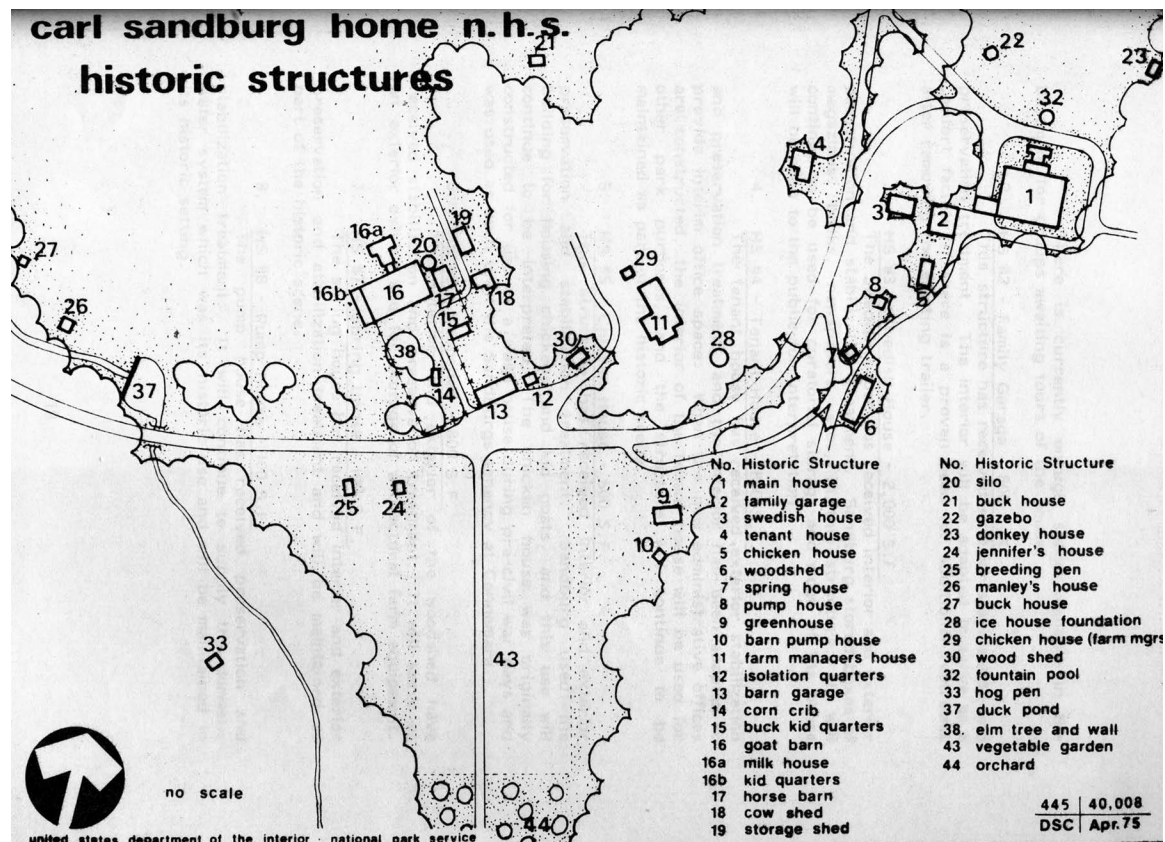
1 Hamm and Davis, interview.

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2 The Conservation Foundation, *National Parks for a New Generation: Visions, Realities, Prospects* (Washington, DC: Conservation Foundation, 1985), 114-5.

3 Garner, Cultural Resource Management Program, 1982, 2-3.

4 Garner, Cultural Resource Management Program, 1982, 3-6.



**Figure 4.1** This map, prepared in April 1975, shows the 44 classified historic structures identified at the park. Development Concept Plan, 1980.

As one of the most fragile resources in the Southeast Region, the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site benefited from these changes in Park Service practice and from the dedication of Superintendent Davis and the park's able maintenance staff. While none of the maintenance crew came to the park as trained building conservators, they were able to learn on the job and to use the available funding to get the work done. The park also worked with contractors to complete some of the larger projects. In addition to the historic structures, the park focused on preserving the entire cultural landscape and documenting some of its archeological resources as well.

## Establishing a Preservation Ethos

The Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site is full of significant cultural resources. The 241-acre site includes the home where Sandburg lived as well as 48 other historic structures classified as "category A," meaning that these buildings must be "preserved and maintained."<sup>5</sup> The majority of the buildings at Connemara were constructed before

the Sandburgs acquired the farm, although the Sandburgs built the Milk House, Pump House and two buildings for Mrs. Sandburg's goat operation.<sup>6</sup> The site also includes a significant cultural landscape that requires preservation, including lakes, dams, gardens, historic drives, stone walls, and fences.

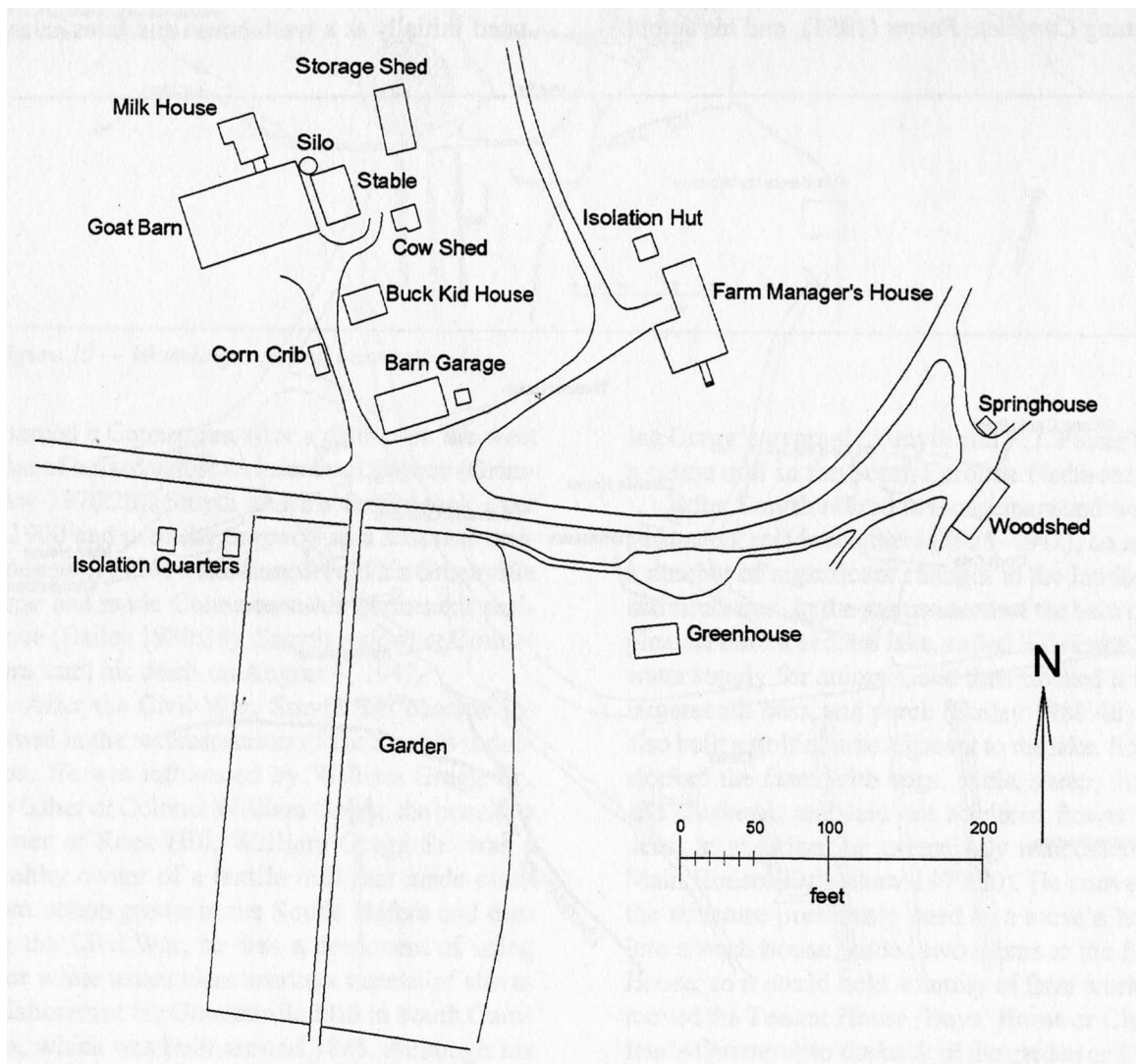
The Master Plan, finalized in 1971, articulated the preservation ethos that would guide the program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. First, the plan established the primary resource management goal as to "preserve and perpetuate the landscape as Carl Sandburg knew it," between 1945 and 1967.<sup>7</sup> The buildings were experiencing "deterioration due to lack of high-quality maintenance," but the plan noted that they were essentially in the same condition as when Sandburg was living. The Master Plan declared that the "first priority" for the National Park Service should be "to establish protection and maintenance procedures which will

<sup>5</sup> Garner, Cultural Resource Management Program, 1982, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*, Division of Cultural Resources, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 1993, Revised and reprinted by Eastern National, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Master Plan, 1971, 21.





**Figure 4.2** The structures in the historic farm area served the Sandburg's agricultural operations. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archaeology Overview and Assessment, 1998.

ensure preservation of these historic buildings." All of the buildings would require some "rehabilitation work" while the Main House would need "extensive" rehabilitation.<sup>8</sup>

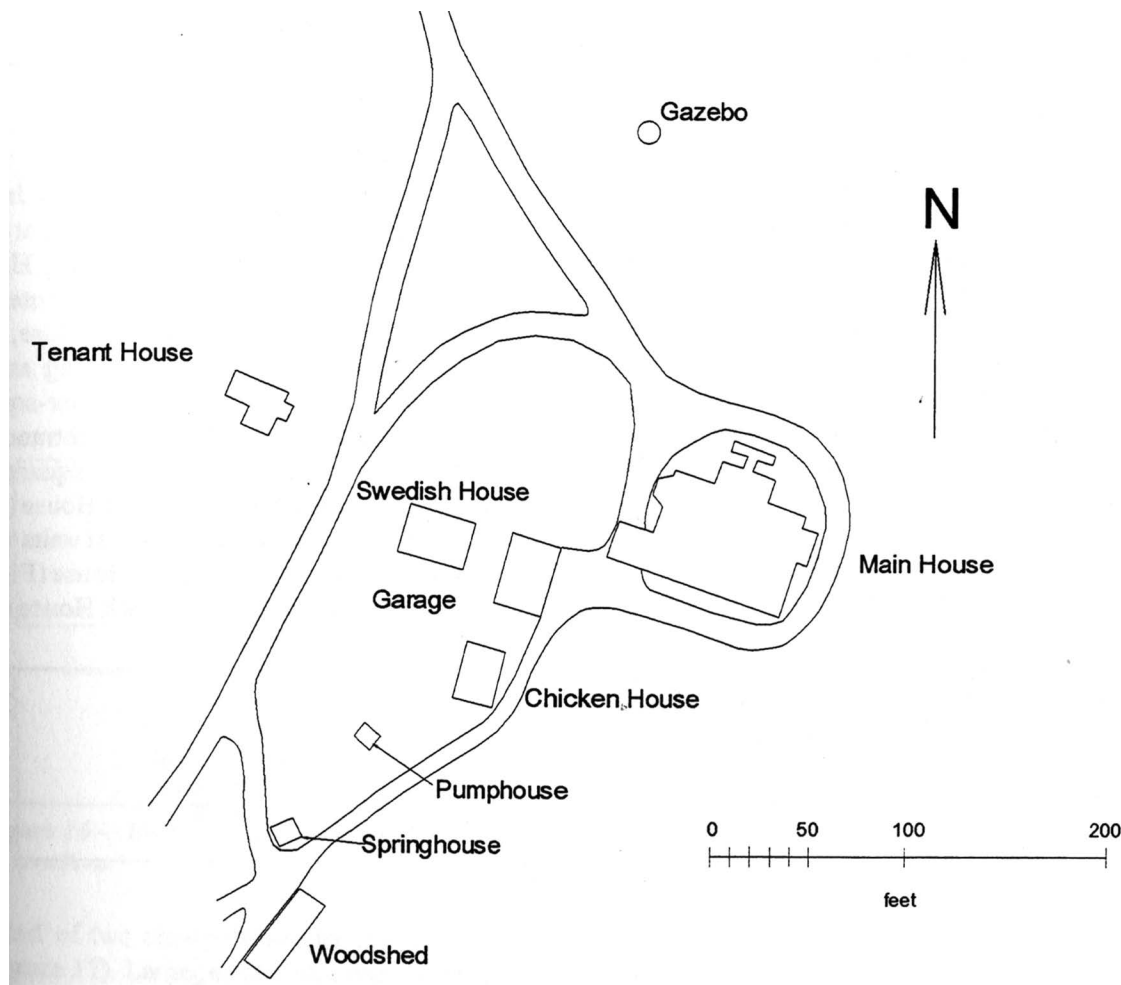
Second, the Master Plan proposed that no changes be made to the external appearance of the buildings in what it established as the two "historic zones." The "farm unit" was the focus of the goat operations and included the Barn, Keepers Quarters, and the equipment storage shed as its most "significant elements." The second zone was the cluster of buildings around the Main House. In addition to the house, the plan described the Swedish House as one of the most important resources.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the Master Plan emphasized the value of the cultural landscape, stating that the "happy combination of semi-natural conditions must be preserved," including the "mowed fields, undeveloped ponds, informal paths, and the woodland areas" which re-created "the place where Carl Sandburg lived". Sandburg "found enjoyment every day" in his daily walks and the beautiful mountain views. The Land Classification map in the Master Plan included the cultural landscape as part of the historic "core of the site," listing the "pasture lands, Memminger Trail area, and open field in the foreground of the view from the house" as some of these significant features.<sup>10</sup> The Interpretive Prospectus from 1970 similarly emphasized the importance of the landscape, positing, "Together, the land, buildings

<sup>8</sup> Master Plan, 1971, 21-2.

<sup>9</sup> Master Plan, 1971, 21, 16-7.

<sup>10</sup> Master Plan, 1971, 25, 28.



**Figure 4.3** This plan shows the historic structures in the residential historic core of the park. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archaeology Overview and Assessment, 1998.

and furnishings embody the character of Carl Sandburg” and tell his story.<sup>11</sup> Thus, from the beginning, there would be an overlap between the natural and cultural resources at the park.

11 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 6.



**Figure 4.4** Park employees working in the vegetable garden, near the Barn, share their work with visitors. June 29, 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

From the park’s inception, questions arose about the appearance of the cultural landscape. Early park documents argued that the park should “avoid manicured appearances” in restoring the cultural landscape. While the Smyths had maintained the farm as “a very formal, country estate,” Sandburg and his family used it as a working farm and they had not kept it as well preserved as previous owners.<sup>12</sup> The Master Plan stated that the cultural landscape should not be overly restored and that, except for the main drive, “roads need not be surfaced or widened beyond the width of a single-lane farm road.”<sup>13</sup>

The philosophical approach articulated in the Master Plan continued to guide subsequent park planning documents. The Management Objectives from 1978 and the Development Concept Plan (DCP), approved in 1980, confirmed that the

12 Hamm and Davis, interview.

13 Master Plan, 1971, 43.

buildings and landscape should be preserved as "Sandburg knew it," and both directives established preserving the full cultural landscape. The Management Objectives contended "these man-made and natural resources are the surroundings and the settings with which Carl Sandburg was associated so intimately." Both the historic and landscape resources "are managed so that they will be preserved as nearly as possible as they were when used by the Sandburg family." This document lists the "main historical resources" as the 32 historic structures as well as the "dams, roads, trails, stone walls, and fences" and refers to the natural resources as the "200 acres of forests; the pastures, hayfields, crop land, garden; numerous large white pines, poplar and oak specimen trees that line the drives, and streams and ponds."<sup>14</sup>

- 14 Management Objectives, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1978, National Park Service, 1-2, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 4.5** Trail restoration was an important part of the cultural landscape work at the park. Maintaining the trails demanded constant attention. March 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.6** The park had many gardens to preserve, including the lily garden and boxwoods, viewed from the Main House Front Porch. 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

The DCP states preservation of the "mountain farmscape environment" of Carl Sandburg's home, including the structures, vegetation, and farming operations as the great writer knew them" as the first management objective. The second and third objectives were to protect the historic structures and to ensure "perpetuation of the sites' historical and natural values." But within the third objective, the DCP established a new goal: to "eliminate" damage to the mature tree s that is caused by the southern pine beetle, white pine borer, and Dutch elm disease as well as from air pollution."<sup>15</sup>

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) of 1982 continued to emphasize that all of the resources within the park, including natural resources, "are managed as cultural resources for they make up the composite surroundings in which Carl Sandburg worked and lived." By this time, however, the park staff realized how much natural resource management was intertwined with the preservation of the cultural landscape. The 1982 plan noted that some features "will have to be managed by principles and practices required for natural resources per se, yet such practices and their end results will be to maintain such natural features or resources as an integral part of the total historical or cultural composite that is the Historic Site." The goal of resource management was to maintain the "historical integrity of the park."<sup>16</sup>

Thus, from the beginning, resource management included both a large array of historic structures as well as an extensive collection of cultural landscape features. Additionally, the park needed to document its archeological resources as stabilization and preservation work began on the cultural resources at Connemara.

## Preserving the Historic Buildings

The Sandburgs had not needed nor used all of the historic structures on the farm, so they maintained only those structures and resources necessary for their farm operations and family lifestyle. The Sandburgs added a few new buildings needed for the goat operations and generally kept "wild

15 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 5.

16 Resource Management Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, October 22, 1982, National Park Service, ii, 2, CARL Park Archive. The disk we received from the park identifies this plan with the date 1984, but that date does not appear on the document.



growth" out of the landscape. However, after about 1960, with both Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg in failing health, they began "slowing down their maintenance activities."<sup>17</sup> Further, after the Park Service acquired the property in August 1969, there was little maintenance work done on the buildings until 1970.<sup>18</sup>

Charlie Hamm was hired as the park's first maintenance staff member in 1970 and he became



**Figure 4.7** Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm and Pete Callum meet inside the Barn Garage, used as the Maintenance Facility, to discuss projects at the park. May 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

the chief of maintenance as the park operations expanded. Hamm had grown up in the Flat Rock community and remembered the first time he saw Connemara in the early 1930s, when Captain Smyth owned the property. "At that time the place was kept quite differently from what it is now or was in Mr. Sandburg's time. It was a very clean and neat operation; it was well-kept." When Hamm returned to the park to begin his new job, the farm was "run down real bad. I suppose because Mr.

17 Master Plan, 1971, 22.

18 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 2-3.



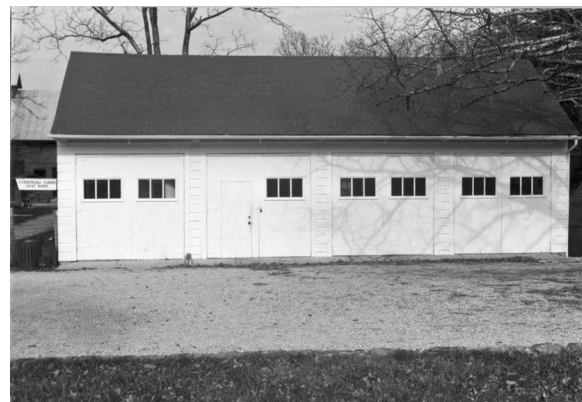
**Figure 4.8** Charlie Hamm, chief of maintenance, makes feeding troughs for the goats. He is standing in front of the Barn Garage, which was used as the Maintenance Facility at this time. Spring 1974 (CARL Park Archive)

Sandburg passed away, they didn't keep the place up. It was all grown up and the buildings were in terrible shape."<sup>19</sup>

Hamm described the park's frustration in trying to get control over the condition of the buildings and the farm. He explained that it took about three to four months of mowing the grass and weeds "so we could see the place."<sup>20</sup> Much of the early work at the park, before it opened in 1974, involved clearing the brush and undergrowth and stabilizing the most fragile historic structures using a very small maintenance staff and seasonal positions. Press releases and other documents and reports before the opening continually noted that the park staff was performing maintenance on the buildings, often without consultation from the regional office, to keep them from collapsing (See Chapter Two).

19 Hamm and Davis, interview.

20 Hamm and Davis, interview.



**Figure 4.9** In this early photo, the Barn Garage serves as the Maintenance Facility. In 1985, the building was restored to its historic purpose as the equipment storage shed. Circa 1985 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.10** The Barn Garage provided space for the maintenance activities. In 1985, the maintenance department moved into a new facility. Circa 1985 (CARL Park Archive).

When the call came to open the park to the public in the fall of 1973, Superintendent Ron Thoman and his staff faced considerable challenges in preparing the park for visitors. The condition of many of the buildings was still quite poor. However, with the National Register nomination for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS formally approved in 1973, a new historical architect starting at the regional office that same year, and the opening of the park in 1974, the Carl Sandburg Home became more visible to Park Service personnel both in the region and in the Washington and Denver offices. The park would now be under greater scrutiny to pursue Section 106 compliance for any work on the historic structures.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that all federal agencies consider the impact of any work on properties in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Now that Connemara was listed in the National Register, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer needed to review and approve any work on the park's historic structures or cultural landscape features through the Section 106 review process. First, the park staff prepared a plan of work in association with the regional office. Then, the Southeast Regional Office submitted the plan to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, which would review the document, assess the impact, and determine if there would be an adverse effect. If no threat of adverse effect existed, the project could proceed; if a threat of adverse effect did exist, then that impact would need to be mitigated.

Completing the Section 106 compliance documents and sending these paper forms through the required approval process took time, which frustrated Thoman. He complained that the lack of Section 106 clearances caused delays of "major historic preservation work" on the Tenant House and the Farm Manager's House in 1973 and 1974. The park had been allocated \$40,000 in Emergency Historic Preservation Lump Sum funding in FY 1974 for these two projects but had to return \$35,000 because Section 106 clearance had not been obtained.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, as Charlie Hamm later recalled, "the Tenant House had about fallen through."<sup>22</sup>

New questions concerning the recommendations in the original planning directives complicated the review process. The National Park Service worried that there were inconsistencies between the changes proposed for the Tenant House and the Farm Manager's House in the Master Plan and the Development Concept Plan (which was in process) and in the Section 106 Statements, including the new idea to use the Tenant House as an administrative office space. Thoman wrote, "Because of concerns that certain adaptations of the two structures specified in the Section 106 Statements would preempt the DCP underway in 1974" and thus would require changes to the Master Plan, it was determined that this request would be an "improper use of the \$40,000 Emergency Historic Preservation Lump Sum funds." And despite Thoman's "pleas" that the clearances "not be tangled up in planning or funding sequences," the funds still had not been approved by the end of December 1975.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the park received the clearances and money from the 1975 Lump Sum Fund, and work began on the Tenant House and the Farm Manager's House that year.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 4.11** The Farm Manager's House provided space for different park operations. The park completed preservation and adaptive use activities on this building with FY 1976 funds, and then painted it in 1981. Superintendent Davis moved the administrative offices into the Farm Manager's House in 1981. Circa 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

In the meantime, the park maintenance staff was performing stabilization work on the buildings. In June 1973, Thoman wrote that "we have been doing some emergency-type repairs on some of the historic structures," adding that some of the estimates for repairing the buildings in the Interpretive Prospectus may now be a little high

21 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

22 Hamm and Davis, interview.

23 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

24 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975.

given the work the park had completed.<sup>25</sup> The 1974 Annual Report describes "minor" preservation work and "emergency measures" done that year, including patching roofs, replacing rotten wood, roofing, treating the buildings with chemicals to "ward off weather and insects, removing non-historic vegetative growth, repairing doors and windows, stabilizing floors, bracing walls," and painting.<sup>26</sup> Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm remembered that the park staff completed substantial work on the Barn Garage, the Kid Barn, the Horse Barn, the Main Barn, and the "little isolation quarters" before Superintendent Davis arrived in April 1975.<sup>27</sup> This work would have fit the NPS definition of stabilization: an "act or process of applying measures designed to reestablish a weather resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present."<sup>28</sup> These repairs did not go through the Section 106 review process.

25 Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home, to Associate Director, Professional Support, memorandum, June 6, 1973, SERO Archive.

26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

27 Hamm and Davis, interview.

28 Hart, Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report, 77.

When Davis began as superintendent in 1975, he worked closely with Regional Architect John Garner to expedite the preservation work at the park. Carl Sandburg Home NHS appeared annually on Garner's list of historic preservation projects through the Southeast Regional Office from 1973 through 1981. (See Table 4-1) While the amounts of funding were not large, the number of projects suggests that the park was one of the prime targets of Garner's attention. His list documented 18 projects undertaken at the park between 1976 and 1981.<sup>29</sup>

Garner's 1983 report on the Cultural Resource Management Program in the Southeast Region stated that the Park Service spent \$234,000 on 21 preservation projects at the park between 1974 and 1981, although one project in 1981 for \$15,000 involved the artifact collection. (See Table 4-1) Garner estimated in 1983 that the 49 historic structures at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS required \$366,200 in preservation costs, though it is not clear if this amount was in addition to the funding already spent. His report admitted,

29 Garner, *Cultural Resource Management Program*, 1982, Appendix A.

**Table 4-1**  
**Historic Preservation Projects at Carl Sandburg Home NHS**

Fiscal Year	Historic Preservation Projects	Costs
1974	Historic Structure Report—Farm Manager's House Historic Structure Report—Farm Tenant's House Farm Tenant's House—preservation and adaptive use	0 0 30,000
1975	No projects	
1976	Buck House—preservation Stone Walls—preservation Wood Shed—preservation Farm Manager's House—preservation and adaptive use	25,000 17,000 10,000 25,000
1977	Swedish House—preservation Wash House—preservation Greenhouse—preservation Springhouse—preservation Gazebo—preservation	15,000 15,000 10,000 6,000 2,000
1978	Painting Main House and Barn—preservation Springhouse and Wash House—preservation	17,500 15,500
1979	Sandburg Home and Garage—foundation stabilization	18,000
1980	Paint Interior Main House Paint Exterior Farm Manager's House Repair Dams Main House—structural—investigate and repair	12,000 3,000 10,000 15,000
1981	Reroof Main Barn Roof Catalog Museum Items	16,000 15,000
	<b>Total preservation expenditures for this period, 49 buildings Category "A"</b>	<b>\$234,000</b>



however, that the estimated costs for preservation work on historic structures in all of the parks in the region would require additional field work to confirm, as many of the estimates he had were out of date.<sup>30</sup>

Since the park never received the initial development funding, the staff utilized a variety of funding sources to stabilize and preserve the historic buildings. "I have to give everybody credit that helped with funding," Davis reflected, but first and foremost, he credited John Garner.<sup>31</sup> For example, in 1976, the park utilized three different sources of money. A "Lump Sum allotment" funded work on the Woodshed, Buck House, and Farm Manager's House. The Regional Historic Preservation Account provided funding for preservation work on the Gazebo, Donkey Shed, Swedish House, Chicken House, SpringHouse, and Greenhouse. That same year, the park used funds from the regional cyclic program to repair stone walls along the drives and trails.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 4.12** Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm inspects the front of the Swedish House while it is being preserved. The siding has been removed for repairs. April 1977 (CARL Park Archive).

Navigating this maze of potential funding proved challenging. Garner wrote in 1983 that there were eight types of funding that could be used for preservation purposes, but complained that there was "no consistency in the allocation of these funds, nor usable criteria nor program strategies from which to make meaningful and consistent allocations." Additionally, there was "no objective

methodology established" to help make decisions between history, archeology, or historic structure projects.<sup>33</sup>

Superintendent Davis recalled requesting funding "from half a dozen different sources at one time. We worked hard to identify our needs and present the needs as realistically as we could, no embellishing or apologizing in any way but representing them and getting them into various programs for funding. ... Some for this project, some for that project, and some for something else." The Park worked with "small amounts here and small amounts there."<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 4.13** This photograph shows the Barn foundation under repair. April 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

Davis, Charlie Hamm, and the park staff developed a list of priorities for preserving the buildings, since the Master Plan did not provide more specific guidance on the preservation program. "We said the most important buildings come first. We prioritized that with the big home being the first priority. Then we took other buildings on down lower and lower down to the bottom of the list,"

33 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976.

34 Charlie Hamm and Benjamin Davis, interview.



**Figure 4.14** Youth Conservation Corp members assist with some of the preservation work on the historic buildings. 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

30 Garner, Cultural Resource Management Program, 1982, Appendixes A and B. See Table 4-1 for a summary of the information about CARL from these report tables.

31 Hamm and Davis, interview.

32 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976.

Davis noted. "You'll always see more ahead than what is behind. You just take them in priority. Then you start running up your resources and go on ahead on all fronts if possible, or if you have to, concentrate on the one that has the highest priority." The park had a limited budget, and the staff worked within that budget to accomplish the preservation tasks.<sup>35</sup>

The park staff took advantage of the excellent collection of historical photographs and the available research they had "to tell us how to do something to a building." Davis believed that the park had "a very good documentary base by which we can pretty much determine what each building has looked like. I would say that we have a much better collection to work with than any park I've ever seen." The staff collected information about the buildings from Sandburg's daughters Helga, Janet, and Margaret, and his granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega.<sup>36</sup> The park also worked closely with Garner at SERO and other experts at the Denver Service Center to ensure that they preserved the buildings as accurately as possible.

At the same time that the historic resources at the park were receiving more attention, important documentation was still often unavailable. Historic Structure Reports (HSR) provided "information and guidance for preservation and use of the historic buildings," but the lack of these reports could slow down a project.<sup>37</sup> The NPS completed Historic Structure Reports for the Farm Manager's House and the Tenant House in FY 1974, but the

need to prepare these reports delayed work on the two deteriorating buildings for over a year. Due to staff schedules, the full HSR for the Main House, Family Garage, and Swedish House was not finished until 1976. NPS Eastern Service Center Historian George Svejda completed the history component in 1972, but Historical Architect T. Russell Jones from the Denver Service Center was unable to finish the architecture sections until October 1976.<sup>38</sup> Along with the completion of the Historic Structure Report in 1976, the National Register nomination for Connemara was revised in June of that year and sent to the National Register staff in December 1976.<sup>39</sup> But the park still lacked Historic Structure Reports for the majority of

38 Resource Management Plan, 1982.

39 The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places approved this revised nomination on January 23, 1978.



**Figure 4.16** Park employees Rusty Skogg and Beau Dowling work on the Tenant House to convert it to use as an administrative office soon after the park opened. May 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.115** Park staff rebuilds the Greenhouse (later called Conservatory) addition to the Main House. It had been removed shortly after the Park Service acquired the property due to its poor condition. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.17** After completion of a Historic Structure Report for the Farm Manager's House in FY 1974, park staff began repair to the foundation in June 1975. A FY 1976 allocation provided the funding necessary for preservation and adaptive use of this building. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

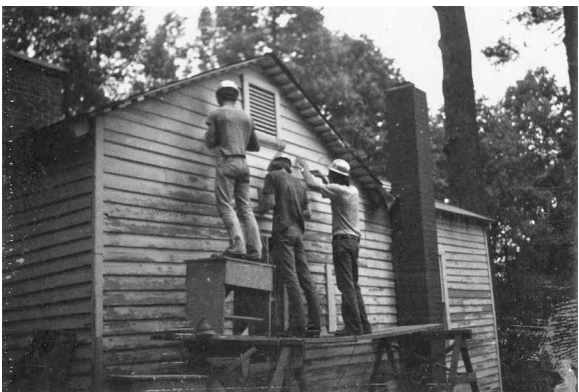




**Figure 4.18** The park undertook major restoration work on the stone foundation wall of many buildings, including the Farm Manager's House shown here. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.19** The Tenant House receives a new roof in preparation for its use as administrative space. Funding became available for this project in FY 1974. April 25, 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.20** The park maintenance staff repaints the Tenant House as part of the restoration work. Circa 1985 (CARL Park Archive).

its buildings. In 1979, Davis submitted a request for HSRs for what he considered the seven most significant buildings at the park: the Main House, Family Garage, Swedish House, Wash House, Main Barn, Horse Barn, and Buck House.<sup>40</sup> He wrote that reports had not been completed on all of these

buildings, although they had for the first three. However, perhaps the haphazard way in which these reports had been completed—by different people at different times—had not produced the quality he desired.

By 1974, the park was submitting Section 106 Statements before beginning any preservation work. These statements assessed the impact of potential preservation work and provided treatment options for the buildings. The Section



**Figure 4.21** This photo of the Buck House documents its deterioration prior to restoration. The Buck House is one of the oldest buildings at Connemara. The park acquired funding for its restoration in 1976. March 1975 (CARL Park Archive)



**Figure 4.22** This photo shows the Buck House during restoration, with funds from FY 1976. (CARL Park Archive).

106 Statement for the Main House was completed on December 22, 1977, after the HSR report was done, and over the next several years, the park undertook several major preservation projects on this structure. The Section 106 Statement specified preservation treatment of the masonry and wood and prevention treatment of painting, roof, and rainwater disposal systems and landscaping. In 1978, the house was painted, in 1979 the foundation stabilized, and in 1980 the interior painted and structural repairs made to stabilize the house for the heavy load of books within it. Regional Architect John Garner developed the "structural drawing for the steel post I-beam and

40 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 71.



heavy timber supports."<sup>41</sup> The park maintenance staff installed this new support system. Park maintenance employee Austin Ducker recalled, "That was a pretty neat deal when we had to do that. A lot of people don't know what's under that floor."<sup>42</sup>

The park completed this significant agenda of stabilization and preservation of the historic buildings by contracting larger projects out to specialists while still performing much of the work with its own maintenance staff. The Annual Reports suggested that the park contracted out major painting and roofing projects, while undertaking smaller projects and stabilization work in-house. In 1978, a contractor painted the exterior of the Main House and Barn, but that same

41 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1978-81.

42 Austin Ducker, interview with Jay Stevens, July 10, 2003, transcript, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 4.23** This photo captures images of the damage caused by roof leaks at the Main House. Plaster was damaged in Sandburg's Downstairs Office (room 101). Circa 1980 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.24** Park staff members install steel beams and posts in the Book Storage Room (Room 018). Worried about the weight of the Sandburg Library in the Main House, NPS Historical Architect John Garner developed a structural support system which included the new beams and posts. February 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

year, the park staff painted many of the smaller buildings. In 1981, a contractor replaced the roof on the Barn, while park staff installed a structural system in the Basement of the Main House to support the weight of the books and restored the



**Figure 4.25** The park staff reroofs the Farm Manager's House. November 13, 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

Greenhouse (later called Conservatory) addition to the house. In 1982, the park hired a contractor to put mineral-fiber shingles on the house and replace the roof added in 1972, but the staff worked on the Milk House and used laborers from a federal jobs program to paint several of the historic buildings. The park hired a contractor to paint the Main House, Barn and five other buildings in 1984, but the following year, park staff painted the Swedish House and Wash House.<sup>43</sup>

Charlie Hamm supervised the park maintenance crew, comprised of seven to ten people, including carpenters and electrician Glenn Barnwell, but never "a painter as such." When the park

43 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1978-84.



**Figure 4.26** Glenn Barnwell helps to rebuild the roof for the Greenhouse (Conservatory). The structure had been removed soon after the NPS acquired Connemara because of its poor condition, but the park reconstructed the Greenhouse addition in 1980. 1980 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.27 (above) and 4.28 (below)** Park staff assists with reroofing the Milk House. October 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.29** Contractors work on repainting the Chicken House. October 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

needed additional expertise, it hired individuals knowledgeable in those trades. For example, the park hired a stonemason, Alexander Carlone, who worked three years on a variety of projects, from repointing and repairing foundations for the buildings to restoring the stone walls and stone-lined gutters and drains. Sometimes, the park hired laborers through the local employment office for specific jobs.<sup>44</sup> In 1983, the park received \$70,000 from a federal "jobs program" to hire people to help with projects.<sup>45</sup>



**Figure 4.30** Park employee Glen Barnwell at the Barn showing a door that needs to be repaired. October 1986 (CARL Park Archive).

Hamm noted that most of the men who worked at the park were "very conscientious about keeping things in shape and putting things back in their original shape." He acknowledged that the park was fortunate to hire individuals who were concerned about doing the job correctly. Superintendent Davis explained that the park also "had to indoctrinate them right when we brought them in. This wasn't ordinary work. This was work that we were doing for perpetuity, and it was

<sup>44</sup> Hamm and Davis, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1983.





**Figure 4.31** Stonemason "Rocky" Carlone spent several years at the park repairing stonewalls and foundations. Here he is reconstructing the chimney for the Swedish House. April 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.32** The chimney reconstruction for the Swedish House was a major project. April 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

to be as nearly as possible typed to the original work." The permanent crew "had that attitude completely."<sup>46</sup> As Glenn Barnwell recalled, "It's been a challenge, but I've enjoyed the challenge of putting these buildings back the way they originally belonged. Each building's got its own little challenge to get it back, every one of them."<sup>47</sup>

The park maintenance crew participated in a wide variety of projects. Austin Ducker, who started in 1978, recalled that typically he and his

46 Hamm and Davis, interview.

47 James Glenn Barnwell, interview with Jay Stevens, June 6, 2003, transcript, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 4.33** The Youth Conservation Corp participants assist with repair work on the historic buildings. 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.34** The Youth Conservation Corp assists with repair work inside the Family Garage. July 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.35** Several Youth Conservation Corp members help with repainting the historic buildings. July 1979 (CARL Park Archive).



colleagues worked on projects involving plumbing, landscaping, carpentry, and even a little electrical work. When discussing his role in preserving the buildings, Ducker said that he put in a heating system, painted, and "roofed about every building on this place." He also worked with the mason to repair the stone walls. Even though some of the



**Figure 4.36** Park employee Glen Barnwell works on the restoration of the Farm Manager's House. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive)

bigger projects were performed under contract, Ducker recalled that the park crew "did the majority" of the work to stabilize and preserve the buildings as well as maintain the cultural landscape. When work needed to be done, the maintenance crew pitched in to help with almost any task. As Ducker commented, when it came to rehabilitation, restoration, and maintenance, they were involved in "you know, everything!"<sup>48</sup>

Electrical work became a concern right after the park opened. In 1974, the park reported that

<sup>48</sup> Ducker, interview.



**Figure 4.37** Austin Ducker makes repairs to the Front Porch on the Main House. May 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.38** Glenn Barnwell removes the glass roof of the Greenhouse, off the Main House prior to its restoration. Circa 1977-8 (CARL Park Archive).

"old and faulty" wiring in the Main House had become "brittle and frayed." Because the Main House was "underfused," overloaded circuits were causing fuses to blow. To temporarily alleviate the problem, the park turned off several of the electrical appliances, including the water heater and the stove. In 1975, the park rewired the entire house with new circuits, but still left the old wires and deactivated them. "We simply ran the new ones alongside or in such a way that the old wires stayed in place," recalled Ben Davis. "Receptacles were replaced and the old ones taken out and have been cataloged as artifacts, building artifacts so you see what the old ones looked like. The new one is in there behind the plate for safety sake."<sup>49</sup> In 1983, the park rewired the Main Barn, Milk House, and Horse Barn.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Hamm and Davis, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1983.



**Figure 4.39** Throughout the Main House, park staff finds electrical challenges such as those pictured here. They had to rewire the Main House soon after it opened. Spring 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

All of the historic structures at the park received some type of treatment in the first decade after the park opened, some with more extensive preservation than others. The 1982 Resource Management Plan described one objective as stabilizing and preserving the buildings to "maintain their historic appearance."<sup>51</sup> Superintendent Davis wrote in the report, "To date, we consider the major structures to have been stabilized and are now on a routine maintenance schedule." Still, much work remained to be done. Davis said that his ten-year cyclic program budget included the "remaining stabilization work and funding for major maintenance and preservation projects beyond which base funding for park operations cannot bear." He also requested Preservation Guides to assist with performing routine maintenance on the buildings, especially the significant structures in the house and barn area.<sup>52</sup>

In August 1984, Davis stated that the park staff had now reached "the bottom" of the list of priorities. He said that there were a "few minor little buck houses Mrs. Sandburg built" that needed work, and the park needed to "restore the original roof"



**Figure 4.40** Superintendent Benjamin Davis (left) congratulates the park's maintenance crew on their work in restoring the park's historic buildings and the cultural landscape. Chief of Maintenance Charlie Hamm is pictured on the far right. The work on rebuilding the Greenhouse (Conservatory) addition to the Main House is underway in the background. August 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

on the Kid- Buck House and the Horse Barn. In his interview with Charlie Hamm that year, Davis chuckled, "If we can stay around here long enough, we'll get it done eventually."<sup>53</sup>

## The Cultural Landscape

While the buildings attracted immediate attention as some of the most visibly fragile elements of the Sandburg landscape, park staff and National Park Service experts expressed concern about the cultural landscape. Many of the landscape features were created before the Sandburgs moved there but some were added by the poet and his family. All were elements of the landscape that the Sandburgs



**Figure 4.41** Park staff repair the Isolation Hut next to Jennifer's House. (HS25). December 1983 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.42** After its 1981 renovation, the Farm Manager's House provides needed space for the park administrative offices. Circa 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.43** Park staff reconstructs the Wood Shed at the Farm Manager's House. Spring 1986 (CARL Park Archive).

51 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 9.

52 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 9.

53 Hamm and Davis, interview.



used and enjoyed, including the stone walls, older "specimen" trees, ponds and dams, gardens and flower beds, fences, hay fields, and historic trails. Park maintenance staff was charged with preserving this historic landscape along with the historic buildings.

One of the key issues mentioned throughout the park records both before and after the opening was the need to remove "non-historic vegetative growth" throughout the site from pastures, creek banks, the lakes and ponds, orchard, trails, paths, and fence rows. The park had become overgrown from a decade or more of neglect. The rationale, expressed in documents such as the 1982 Resource Management Plan (RMP), was that the Sandburg family removed such growth during the 1950s, which was identified as the period of interpretation. The 1982 RMP described this undesired growth as "underbrush, vines, briars, poison ivy, pine and poplar saplings, and other young trees and wild shrubs."<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the park planning documents specified that the Sandburg family did not keep the farm well-manicured.<sup>55</sup> Landscape architect Susan Hart, who prepared the Cultural Landscape Report, wrote that the staff interpreted "preserving the Carl Sandburg landscape as a cleaning-up effort" during the early years of the park. The result produced "a cleaner, more refined park-like setting than Connemara had ever had since the Sandburg purchase in 1945."<sup>56</sup>

From the beginning, the "specimen" trees drew attention. These large, old trees were especially worrisome. Among the most significant were those that lined the front entrance drive. The "winding drive with one-hundred foot pine trees" impressed Mrs. Sandburg when she and her family first looked at the farm, but by the 1950s, many had died and others were losing their branches from ice storms. Mrs. Sandburg planted one hundred hemlock trees along the drive behind the pines "to reinforce the tree-lined avenue."<sup>57</sup>

The park faced on-going maintenance of these trees. In 1975, the park received funds to remove

several dead "specimen" trees and prune others. The next year, the park maintenance staff made a "concerted effort" to take out dead trees, cut dead or diseased branches, and remove trees that were damaging or potentially dangerous to people or structures. By 1978, infestations of the Southern Pine Beetle and White Pine Borer as well as Dutch Elm Disease began to damage the "old specimen" trees.<sup>58</sup> One of the new management objectives that year included working with other government agencies to try to prevent further insect damage.<sup>59</sup> Besides assisting with insect infestations, the local U.S. Forest Service Laboratory identified a "peculiar ailment" called ozone poisoning at the park, which "causes white pines to brown out, lose their needles, and eventually die."<sup>60</sup> Park trees constantly suffered from weather, including ice and wind. The park created a plan to remove and replace with "in kind" young trees, a plan it argued the Sandburg family also followed, to "maintain the historical integrity of the scene."<sup>61</sup>

The park encompassed a variety of other trees and plant materials considered part of the cultural landscape. Connemara had an apple orchard, but the Sandburg family did not maintain it.<sup>62</sup> Only one historic tree remained. In the mid-1970s, park staff planted a variety of apple trees to reestablish the orchard.<sup>63</sup> The 1982 Resource Management Plan noted that the farm had featured other fruit and nut trees, but most were now dead. The plan recommended that they be replanted.<sup>64</sup>

The 1982 RMP also identified the many exotic plant materials that the Sandburgs introduced and maintained on the farm, including azalea, rhododendron, bamboo, cedar, mimosa, ginkgo, and dogwood. The remaining formal boxwoods, planted primarily by the Smyths, had grown larger and needed to be pruned. The park replaced some of the boxwoods that had died.<sup>65</sup>

54 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 2.

55 Master Plan, 1971, 25.

56 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 60.

57 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 29.

58 Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1975-1978.

59 Management Objectives, 1978.

60 Resource Management Plan, 1982.

61 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 3-4.

62 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 50-2.

63 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 72.

64 Resource Management Plan, 1982.

65 Resource Management Plan, 1982.



Other important cultural landscape features were the "several thousand feet of stone walls" along the roads and trails. In 1974, Superintendent Thoman reported these as being in poor condition and among the cultural resources needing "major historic preservation work." By October 1975, the park had acquired funds from the Southeast Region Cyclic Maintenance Program to repair the stonework, and this activity continued into 1976. Much of the masonry work was done by Alexander Carlone, the stonemason who spent three years at the park "restoring stone walls, the foundations



**Figure 4.44** Stonemason Alexander Carlone works on the stonewall along the drive from the Main House to the Barn. Carlone spent several years at the park doing masonry projects. November 13, 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figures 4.45 (above) and 4.46 (below)** Park maintenance staff assists the stonemason building the stone walls and drains near the Buck House. June 1983 (CARL Park Archive).



to the buildings, any stone work," recalled Superintendent Davis.<sup>66</sup> Austin Ducker said that he and Glenn Barnwell assisted Carlone and "repaired a lot of the walls."<sup>67</sup> Barnwell explained, "Just about every stone wall has been worked on and put back. About the only wall that really hasn't been pretty much tore all the way down is the big one down along the front drive. We had to do a lot of repair work to it but it's all pretty well the way it was." The park maintenance staff also repaired and rebuilt the stone-lined gutters, or drainage features, through funding from a federal jobs program in 1983. These drains were created before the Sandburgs moved to Connemara and Barnwell believes that the Sandburgs did not really maintain them.<sup>68</sup> In 1982, the park maintenance staff stabilized one of the two stone pillars at the main entrance and replicated three wooden gates.<sup>69</sup>

The lakes and dams were also very important to the character of Connemara. During Superintendent Thoman's tenure, he put them on his list of "major preservation projects in 1974." The Memmingers constructed the Front Lake in 1855, and the Smyth family added the Side Lake in the 1920s. Silt filled both of these lakes by the time the Park Service acquired the property, and the NPS worried that if these lakes and dams were not stabilized or restored, "there is a real danger of collapse with subsequent flooding" and thus would make "incomplete the historic sense of the natural scene."<sup>70</sup>

As an emergency measure, the park maintenance staff repaired some of the east wall of the Front Lake Dam and built a 45-foot wooden bridge over it, so visitors could walk from the parking area to the Main House in 1976.<sup>71</sup> Two years later, a Section 106 Statement was approved to conduct a core sampling of the park's dams to prepare for repairs.

The park maintenance staff spent the next several years repairing the dams and lakes. By early

66 Hamm and Davis, interview.

67 Ducker, interview.

68 Barnwell, interview.

69 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

70 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 16; Task Directive, Stabilize Dams and Restore Lakes, Historic Structure Report, Denver Service Center, December 1977, Carl Sandburg Home NHS 1974-File, WASO Files.

71 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976.

1978, work was underway on two compliance documents for the two larger lakes and dams. The Denver Service Center prepared the Task Directive for the Historic Structure Report on the Front Lake and Dam, Side Lake and Dam, Pond Bridge and Duck Pond in December 1977 and revised the document in June 1978 to incorporate funding for archeological salvage when construction work began. Craig Frazer and John Page of the Denver Service Center completed the final HSR report in November 1981. In the meantime, Section 106 Statements for the restoration of the lakes and dams were begun in 1978.<sup>72</sup> The park submitted the Section 106 Statement to Dredge the Front Lake and Reconstruct the Front Lake Bridge in February 1980 and the following month another Section



**Figure 4.47** Park maintenance staff members help the stonemason, Alexander Carlone, with repair on the Duck Pond stonewall. The park hired Carlone for several years to complete the many masonry projects at the park. 1980 (CARL Park Archive).

106 Statement to Dredge the Side Lake. The NPS allocated \$10,000 for historic preservation work to repair the dams in 1980.

The Sandburg family did not dredge the Front Lake during their occupancy. Charlie Hamm remembered that it was "filled with debris and lilies of all kinds."<sup>73</sup> The development of Ravenwood Estates upstream brought additional deposits of silt into the lake and the water "became choked with vegetation."<sup>74</sup> Park maintenance employee Austin Ducker explained that the lake "leaked like a sieve."<sup>75</sup> Davis remembered that the dam leaked

so badly that "there really wasn't a lake bed. It was grown over with trees, some of them a foot in diameter."<sup>76</sup>

In 1981, the park rebuilt the Front Lake Dam, stabilized the masonry spillway, and dredged the Front Lake, with assistance from the Denver Service Center through the Southeast Regional Office.<sup>77</sup> Ducker described how the park staff drained the lake and "took it plumb down to the bottom, re-washed her down, re-pointed it, and poured concrete in the bottom. And then had it dredged out."<sup>78</sup> Davis remembered that the contractor dredged "some 14,000 cubic yards of junk out of that bed and hauled it away. Then we let it fill up so it went back to its original contours."<sup>79</sup>

A Section 106 Statement proposed rebuilding the historic footbridge over the masonry spillway. The bridge was still standing when the Sandburgs purchased the property, but the family removed the bridge in the 1950s and the support piers in the early 1960s.<sup>80</sup> The footbridge over the lake had "completely disappeared," recalled Ben Davis. Now the bridge was needed for one of the paths that visitors would follow from the proposed new Visitor Contact Station to the Main House. Charlie Hamm's maintenance crew reconstructed the

76 Hamm and Davis, interview.

77 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 73.

78 Ducker, interview.

79 Hamm and Davis, interview.

80 Hamm and Davis, interview; Reconstruct Front Lake Bridge, A Statement in Compliance with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act of 1966, February 1980, 4, Carl Sandburg Home NHS 1974-File, WASO Files.



**Figure 4.48** The park staff builds a footbridge over the Front Lake Dam to provide better access for visitors walking from the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot into the park. February 10, 1976 (CARL Park Archive).

72 Associate Manager, Denver Service Center, to Regional Director, Southeast Regional Office, memorandum, February 24, 1978, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, 1974-File, WASO Files.

73 Hamm and Davis, interview.

74 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 52.

75 Ducker, interview.





**Figure 4.49** The reconstructed footbridge provides a safe and attractive path for visitors walking from the Visitor Contact Station to the Main House. July 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

footbridge to look as it had when the Sandburgs came, copying the design from old photographs.<sup>81</sup>

The park maintenance crew made an exciting discovery in the Front Lake: an old fountain the Smyth family created. A pipe from the mountain reservoir ran down into the bottom of the stone cairn in the lake, and when the staff "turned the water on, it sprayed water way up in the air over the lake." Davis reported that the park staff did not disturb the remains nor did they reconstruct the fountain since they did not believe the Sandburgs used it. "It's still just sitting there as it was when we found it," said Davis.<sup>82</sup>

In 1981, the park stabilized the Side Lake Dam with funds from Denver Service Center through the Washington Office. "I guess it was actually in worse shape than the Front Lake," recalled Hamm. "It was leaking bad. It was full of debris of all kinds." The park staff drained it, dug it out, repaired the dam, and had it dredged at the same time as the Front Lake, in 1989, under the same contract.<sup>83</sup> Each of the two lakes consumed "a summer's work" for about five or six men, recalled Davis and Hamm.<sup>84</sup>

Other projects continued after the dams and ponds were restored. In 1982, the park rebuilt a stone retaining wall at the Front Lake Dam and rehabilitated the historic trail around the Front Lake, which required rebuilding four footbridges. That same year, the staff restored the stone walls



**Figure 4.50** Superintendent Benjamin Davis stands on the Side Lake Dam in 1981, the year that the park stabilized the dam. 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

and retaining wall and stabilized the Duck Pond Dam. The Duck Pond was in better shape, having been used by the Sandburgs to water the animals.<sup>85</sup>

In May 1978, the Park Service submitted a Section 106 Statement to stabilize the Trout Pond Dam. The Sandburgs had never used the Trout Pond because a tree had weakened the dam, and it was now in "complete disrepair."<sup>86</sup> As a result, there was little water and considerable vegetation in the pond bed. In addition to recreating the historic landscape, this project created a reservoir of water that could be used in case of fire.<sup>87</sup> The park hired day laborers to stabilize the Trout Pond Dam and refilled the pond in 1980.<sup>88</sup>

85 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982; Resource Management Plan, 1982; Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 73.

86 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 72.

87 Benjamin Davis, Task Directive, Stabilization of Trout Pond Dam, Carl Sandburg Home NHS 1974-File, WASO Files.

88 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 52.



**Figure 4.51** Park staff plows the garden in front of the Main House as part of the landscape preservation efforts. Spring 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

81 Hamm and Davis, interview; Appendix G in Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 73.

82 Hamm and Davis, interview.

83 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981.

84 Hamm and Davis, interview.





**Figure 4.52** Mountain Bloomers Club members work near the Gazebo. In the park's early years, the club helped with the landscape work. July 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.54** Warren Weber assists with the garden restoration work. Summer 1978 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.53** Taken from the offices within the Main House, this photograph shows the Mountain Bloomers Club working in the Lily Garden. Volunteer labor was essential to restoring the historic gardens. July 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

Restoration of the historic gardens was also a goal for park staff. Connemara had multiple gardens: flower beds and gardens in front of and around the house; Margaret's "wild" but "beautiful" summer garden with shrubs, perennials, and some annuals along the front entry drive as one neared the house; another "wild and overgrown" spring garden with boxwoods and spring bulbs along the road to the barn; and a large vegetable garden near the Barn. Superintendent Thoman tried to maintain the vegetable garden in the early 1970s by allowing staff to plant gardens here for their own use. (See Chapter Two) In the spring and summer of 1974, when the park opened, Paula Steichen Polega prepared histories of the gardens, including drawings depicting the plant materials and locations. She assisted staff and volunteers, including the Mountain Bloomers Garden Club, with developing the gardens.<sup>89</sup>

Restoring the flower beds and gardens proved to take considerable time, even with the assistance of volunteers. Davis reported that the park was still working to restore flower beds in 1982.<sup>90</sup> In his 1984 interview, Davis recalled that the flower beds "were overgrown and taken up with weeds" when the National Park Service acquired Connemara. "We have most of them back in their original conditions. Some, we still do not."<sup>91</sup> The staff continued to develop a small vegetable garden at the same location as the one the Sandburgs used.<sup>92</sup>

The living history farm was an important part of the park program and cultural landscape. To maintain the farm operations, the park needed to repair the fencing around the fields. The Annual Reports from the Davis years described the fences as covered in honeysuckle, when they could be found at all. Fencing was an ongoing maintenance issue, observed Austin Ducker. "That was just a continuing work. That was just about an everyday job, just about going fixing a fence."<sup>93</sup> "The fences, the wire, had pretty well rotted," recalled Ben Davis. "It had grown up so that in some places, you didn't even know there was a fence there—just briars and bushes." In the early 1980s, the park worked to "restore, replace in a lot of cases, all of the fences so that we now have them animal proof." In 1983, the park reported repairing three miles of interior pasture and other fencing.<sup>94</sup> "Before that, anything could have gotten out!"<sup>95</sup>

90 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

91 Hamm and Davis, interview.

92 Hart, Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report, 70.

93 Ducker, interview.

94 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1983; Hamm and Davis, interview.

95 Hamm and Davis, interview.

89 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 5.



**Figure 4.55** Youth Conservation Corp workers build fences at the park. Maintaining the fences was an on-going responsibility. June 1978 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.56** Several Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) workers help build fences at CARL. Groups of YCC workers were assigned to the park for several summers in the late 1970s. June 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

The park had about 35 acres of pasture land, which it used for the goats as well as other animals, including horses and, early on, cattle. The park managed the meadows and fields, with the goal of providing hay for the goats and other animals. The 1982 Resource Management Plan called for applying fertilizer at least once a year, liming, reseeding as needed, and harvesting hay “at least once a year.”<sup>96</sup> Usually the park rented out the fields for hay on shares, but when they were not successful, park maintenance staff would cut the hay themselves. By the 1980s, the park began to “lease all the fields out as pastures to a man to keep his Appaloosa horses pastured,” reserving a few small lots to mow and get hay for the park animals. “That way, we minimize the amount that we have to mow,” Davis said in 1984. “We bush-hog some of the areas, rough mow some of the areas, and then just simply lawn-mow this very small acreage.”<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Resource Management Plan, 1982, 7.

<sup>97</sup> Hamm and Davis, interview.

The park cut back the goat operations by the early 1980s. The herd had grown to between 30 to 35 goats by the late 1970s, and the costs were increasing. As Hamm recalled, “So here again, we



**Figure 4.57** Park staff members use the Sandburg family's trailer and manure spreader to mow the pasture lands in 1975. Maintaining the pasture was an essential part of the cultural resource management program. Spring 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

had to set priorities. At the same time, we were very busy trying to do our restoration and preservation and that was taking a lot of money. We just had to reduce that particular function down to what we considered manageable and adequate.”<sup>98</sup> (See Chapter Six) Goats were kept in the pasture by the Barn, where they would be more visible to visitors.<sup>99</sup>

Historic trails were also part of the cultural landscape. The Memminger and Big Glassy Trails continued to be used extensively by visitors. The park staff and volunteers maintained the trails and repaired the stone walls along the trails, where they existed. In 1981, the Secretary of the Interior designated Big Glassy Trail as a National Recreation Trail. The National Trail System Act of 1968 authorized the creation of several types of national trails significant at the local and national level, adding them to a national system of trails. Benefits include promotion, technical assistance, and access to government funding. The park celebrated this recognition with a dedication ceremony in June 1981.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Hamm and Davis, interview.

<sup>99</sup> Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 74.

<sup>100</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981; The National Recreation Trails Program, National Recreation Trails, <http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/about.htm>, accessed May 31, 2013.





**Figure 4.58** Youth Conservation Corps workers assist the limited park staff with undertaking much of the work on the trail and with the building preservation program. July 1977 (CARL Park Archive).

Superintendent Davis reported managing the forests as well. The park allowed the “woods, the mountains, the timberland [to] just act naturally, take care of itself.” Besides managing insect infestations or fire, “we just let the mountain sides here do whatever nature wants.”<sup>101</sup> However, the 1982 Resource Management Plan stated that the park attempted to stabilize trees and plant materials “not in good health.” To combat infestations of insects as well as disease, the park utilized “detection patrols” to survey the forests for potential problems.<sup>102</sup>

Landscape architect Susan Hart described the Sandburg family’s management of the farm as not one of simply neglect but rather of “appreciation of nature, expressed in a relaxed management policy and resulting in a variety of managed and unmanaged landscapes.” She wrote that the

101 Hamm and Davis, interview.

102 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 5-6.



**Figure 4.59** Superintendent Ben Davis observes the view from Big Glassy Mountain during the dedication of the Big Glassy Trail as a National Heritage Trail. The Sandburg family enjoyed and cherished this view. Federal conservation efforts ensure that the view will be available for visitors climbing there for years to come. June 20, 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 4.60** Superintendent Davis accepts a plaque in recognition of the designation of Big Glassy Mountain as a National Heritage Trail. Dedication ceremonies for Big Glassy Trail mark its special distinction as a National Trail. Park personnel provide oversight for the trail. June 1981 (CARL Park Archives).

National Park Service, without knowledge of this history, “created a park-like setting at Connemara by maintaining the landscape with careful mowing, pruning, and raking.” The landscape the NPS created thus did not show “these visual qualities of variety and change.” Further, the seemingly “untidy and overgrown” landscape evolved out of the Sandburgs’ love of nature and the focus primarily on the goat operations and secondarily on the landscape.<sup>103</sup>



**Figure 4.61** Youth Conservation Corp members assisted with a variety of tasks, including litter pick up, building fences, and garden work. Here, they are digging trenches. June 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

## Archeological Resources

While the majority of the cultural landscape was above ground—in both historic structures and landscape features—the park also had archeological resources to document and protect. In addition to any prehistoric sites that might be on

103 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 9.



the property, the park knew that the Christopher Memminger family purchased the land in 1838 so there would be historic sites dating back to that year, if not earlier. The Memmingers constructed several buildings in their early years: a residence, completed circa 1838-9; a kitchen in 1839; two slave quarters circa 1840; a privy circa 1840; a stable and carriage house in 1839; a corn crib in 1842; a wagon shed in 1843; an ice house in 1848; a shed room in 1853; and a smoke house in 1853.<sup>104</sup> The Jones Gregg family owned the farm briefly from 1888 through 1899, but does not appear to have lived there. In December 1900, the Ellison Smyth family purchased the property and resided at the farm through 1945, when Smyth died.<sup>105</sup> The Memminger and Smyth families left their mark on the property through not only the buildings and cultural resources but also in the archeological record.

Most of the archeology work undertaken at Carl Sandburg Home NHS was for projects that

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- 104 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, 16; Heather Russo Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Archeological Overview and Assessment*, Southeast Archeological Center/ National Park Service, 1998, 47; Tommy Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, National Park Service, 2005, 5-41.
- 105 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS Cultural Landscape Report*, chapter 2.



**Figure 4.62** Little remains of the Ice House at CARL. The Ice House collapsed before the Park Service acquired the property. Although included on the original list of Classified Historic Structures, it was later removed and described as "Ice House Foundation." Circa 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

required Section 106 compliance. In 1975, for example, Dr. John Dorwin of Western Carolina University completed archeological testing at the Spring House, Tenant House, Farm Manager's House, and the Buck House. He conducted "larger excavations" at the Buck House.<sup>106</sup>

Archaeologist John W. Walker completed more extensive reconnaissance testing at the Buck House in January and February 1976 due to the installation of a drainage system near the structure. The Buck House is one of the oldest buildings on the property. A. S. Willington, publisher of the *Charleston Courier*, owned the tract of land on which the Buck House is located before Memminger bought the property in March 1842 and added it to his farm. The archeological investigations in 1976 identified the original floor plan of the Willington House as well as additions and porch locations.<sup>107</sup>

Also in 1976, Walker conducted investigations at the Woodshed before its rehabilitation. He evaluated archeological sites for the Environmental Assessment prepared for the Development Concept Plan, testing four proposed locations for the new Visitor Contact Station, two for the proposed residential area, two for the maintenance area, and one for the administrative area.<sup>108</sup>

Later that year, Walker and Steven Shephard undertook excavations in November at the

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- 106 Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS: Archeological Overview and Assessment*, 36.
- 107 Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS: Archeological Overview and Assessment*, 66.
- 108 Pence, *Carl Sandburg Home NHS: Archeological Overview and Assessment*, 29.



**Figure 4.63** Archeologist John Walker conducts reconnaissance testing at the Buck House in January and February 1976 before installation of a drainage system near the structure. January/February 1976 (CARL Park Archive)

Swedish House, the Chicken House/Wash House, the Tenant House, the Farm Manager's House, and around the Barn. This testing was done prior to the installation of drainage systems, an oil tank outside the Farm Manager's House, and an electric cable line from the Farm Manager's House to the Barn.<sup>109</sup>

Walker conducted several investigations in April 1979 for the Section 106 compliance to stabilize nine historic structures, including the Main House, Family Garage, Isolation Quarters, Barn Garage, Buck Kid Quarters, Goat Barn, Milk House, Horse Barn, and Cow Shed. The Annual Report for that year noted that the archeologists had investigated the interior earthen fill of the Family Garage, previously an exterior kitchen building, and the undisturbed soil around the perimeter. Archeologists discovered that the original L-shaped building, with doors on the northern and southern ends, dated between 1838 and 1845. Walker speculated that the kitchen was in the north end of the building and the servants' dining room in the south end. In August of that year, he also surveyed the location of a proposed water storage tank.<sup>110</sup>

The 1984 Resource Management Plan (RMP) listed two archeological projects among its list of priorities. One was an archeological survey of the

entire park site. The justification noted that only 40 percent of the park had been "systematically surveyed" and 20 percent had been "tested." Although originally submitted in 1978, this project request was being resubmitted as a Development Package Study Proposal by the Southeast Archeology Center in 1982, as part of the Resource Management Plan. Executive Order 11593 required an "archeological resource inventory," which would locate historic and prehistoric sites and identify needs for additional research. The project would produce an archeological base map that would show the "location, density, and distributional pattern of the resources." The written report offered suggestions for sites that might be significant and require more research and possibly evaluation for the National Register. A final product would be "the development of a generalized predictive model for the location of sites in the park from which management may determine future development areas."<sup>111</sup> This project was not funded.

The 1982 RMP also proposed "archeological research and investigation" around the summer kitchen (the Family Garage) and "the location of the Memminger residence on the historic property prior to the construction of the Main House."<sup>112</sup> The RMP included two Development Package Study Proposals submitted by Superintendent Davis in April 1978. The first proposal suggested conducting archeological investigation of the Family Garage, which was the site of the Memminger's "summer kitchen," which "should reveal historical information about the earlier owners of the estate." This work needed to be done before the masonry foundations could be rehabilitated.<sup>113</sup> The second proposal, submitted in April 1978, recommended to locate and test the "Willington Site," a house site believed to have been located on the property before the Memminger's purchase. This project would shed light upon the earlier history of the farm.<sup>114</sup> While some preliminary work had been done on both of these sites, the park hoped that this additional research might produce more information.

In 1984, just short of retirement, Superintendent Davis described the preservation work as an

109 Pence, Carl Sandburg Home NHS: Archeological Overview and Assessment, 41-2.

110 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979; Pence, Carl Sandburg Home NHS: Archeological Overview and Assessment, 51.



**Figure 4.64** In FY 1979, the park received funding to stabilize the foundation of the Family Garage and the Main House. Because the Family Garage is one of the oldest buildings on the property, once serving as the kitchen, archaeologist John W. Walker conducted reconnaissance archaeological testing in April 1979. No date (CARL Park Archive)

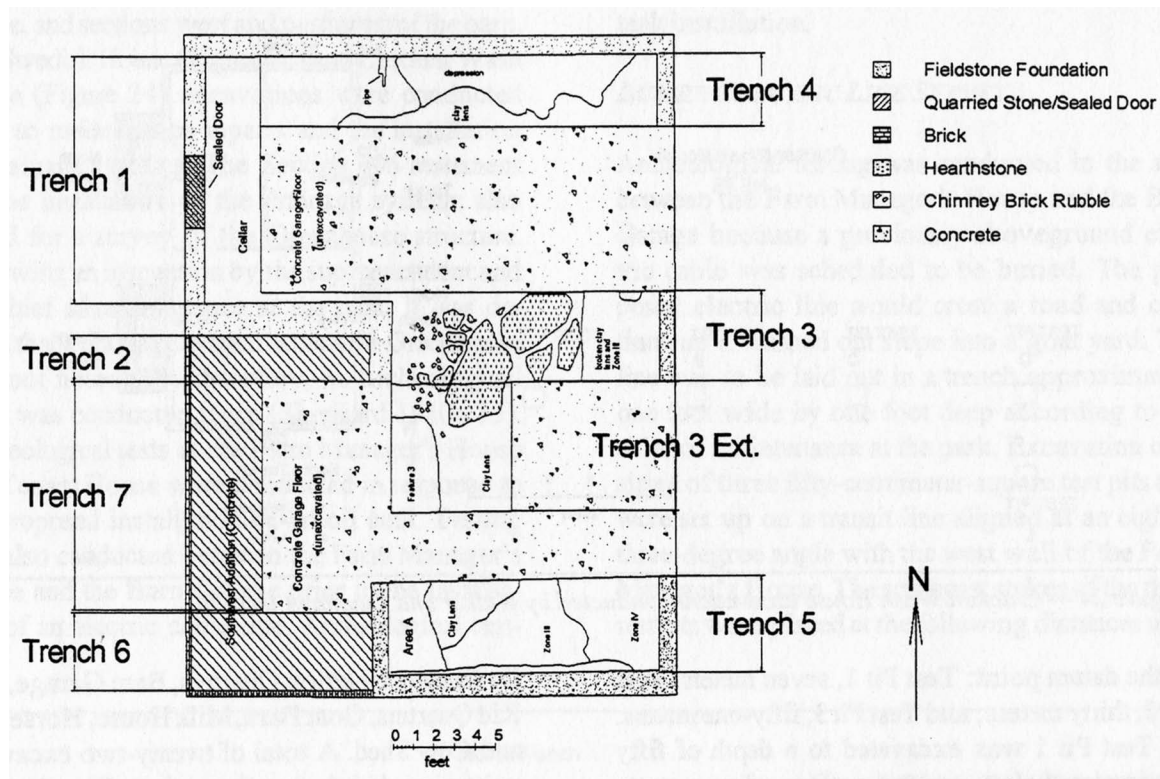
111 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 81.

112 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 29-30.

113 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 79.

114 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 80.





**Figure 4.65** Archeologists John Walker and Dennis Finch conduct archeological investigations around the Family Garage, which had previously served as a detached kitchen, in 1979. They undertook this work in association with the stabilization of this historic structure, as part of the Section 106 Review process. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archaeology Overview and Assessment, 1998.

ambitious challenge that he and Charlie Hamm tackled together as a “real team effort.” “We had to go ahead and do the best we could with what we had, knowing full well that we might make a mistake . . . But at least we’re holding it together, giving everybody else time to do research. I guess you could call us preservationists.” Anticipating

his retirement in a few years, he proudly stated, “We have preserved and stabilized the facilities that are here into a maintainable condition.” Recognizing that additional information might surface, he added, “Now if research would show that something needed to be added or taken away, then that’s a decision that would need to be added later.” He concluded, “Fortunately, we were able to do a few things, the finer things you want to do after you have taken care of the bulk of your ‘have-to.’”<sup>115</sup>



**Figure 4.66** The Family Garage welcomes visitors as an interpretive space. Superintendent Benjamin Davis considered the Family Garage to be one of the most important buildings at the park. The Memmings had built it for a kitchen, but the Smyth family remodeled it into a garage. The 1982 Resource Management Plan recommended archaeology at this site as part of the preservation work on the building. Circa 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

Besides the historic buildings, the cultural landscape, and the archeological sites, one additional set of resources garnered growing attention during the Davis superintendency: the vast museum and archival collection.

115 Hamm and Davis, interview.



**Table 4-2**

**Preservation Work on Historic Buildings during Davis Years  
Carl Sandburg Home NHS**

	Building name from Interpretive Prospectus, 1970	Work recorded in 1983 Garner Report	Years reported in Superintendent's Annual Report (as available)	Names from List of Structures by Facility Management Asset Number, updated January 17, 2007
1	Main House	1978-83	1974 porch	Main House
2	Garage		1979	Family Garage
3	Swedish House	1977	1976, 1985	Swedish House
4	Tenant House	1974	1975	Tenant House
5	Wash House	1977, 1978	1976, 1985	Chicken/Wash House
6	Wood Shed	1976	1975-6, 1986	Wood Shed
7	Smoke House	1977, 1978	1976-	Spring House
8	Pump House		1979	Pump House
9	Greenhouse	1977	1976-	Greenhouse
10	Spring House			Barn Pump House
11	Manager's House	1976	1975-6	Farm Manager's House
12	Buck House	1976?	1975	Isolation Quarters
13	Equipment Garage		1986	Barn Garage
14	Corn Crib		1979	Corn Crib
15	Stock Barn		1979	Buck Kid Quarters
16	Stock Barn	1978, 1981	1979 1982 1986	Goat Barn/Main Barn
16a	Milk House		1979, 1982-3	Milk House
16b				Kid Quarters
17	Stock Barn		1979, 1982	Horse Barn
18	Feed House		1979	Cow Shed
19	Hay Equipment Storage			Storage Shed
20	Circular Storage		1982	Silo
21	Tenant House		1975-6	Buck House
22	Gazebo	1977	1976-	Gazebo
23	Goat House		1976-	Donkey House
24	Isolation Hut			Jennifer's House
25	Isolation Hut			Breeding Pen
26	Isolation Hut			Manley's House
27	Isolation Hut	1976?		Buck House
28	Ice House			Ice House Foundation
29				Chicken House (farm manager's)
30			1974 park crews	Wood Shed
31				Cow Shed in pasture 2
32				Fountain Pool
33				Hog Pen

"We had a Preservation Program," 1974-1986

	Building name from Interpretive Prospectus, 1970	Work recorded in 1983 Garner Report	Years reported in Superintendent's Annual Report (as available)	Names from List of Structures by Facility Management Asset Number, updated January 17, 2007
34				Duck cage
35				Front Lake Bridge
36				Roadway Retaining Walls
37				Duck pond and dam
38				Elm tree and wall
39				Front lake and dam
40				Side lake and dam
41				Trout pond and dam
42				Mountain reservoir
43				Vegetable garden
44				Stone drains
45				Front drive
46				Trails
47				Fences and gates
48				Front gate and wall
49				Back Entrance gate
50				Martin House
51				Watering Tub

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# CHAPTER 5

## Managing the Sandburg Collection, 1974-1986

With limited staff, historic buildings in disrepair, and then the push to open the park in 1974, the museum collection fell to the lower end of the priority list during the first years after the park's establishment. It was not that the National Park Service or the park staff did not appreciate the value of the collection at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS); in fact, all of the preliminary planning documents emphasized that the artifacts, books, and manuscript collection enhanced and added tremendous value to the significance of the historic site. Still, the collection was large and gaining control over it was an overwhelming undertaking. While the estimated numbers of objects and archival materials would not be known for many years, ultimately, the collection would total over 333,143 items.<sup>1</sup>

Gordon Gay, the park's first curator, dedicated time to cataloging the furniture and books, but he was also pulled in a variety of other directions and unable to focus full time on the collection. When he left the park in 1973, his position remained vacant for a year, and it was not filled until the park began to prepare for opening. Warren Weber, who replaced him as curator in April 1974, was responsible not only for the museum program but also for visitor services and interpretive programs, and he served as the park's agent for the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. While the museum collection did not take center stage under Superintendent Benjamin Davis, whose focus was more on preserving the historic structures, the park still made progress in managing the collection under Weber's direction. Additionally, the park staff played a significant role nationally in helping to create the automated

collections management program for the National Park Service (NPS).

### Museum Collections in the National Park Service

During the years of Davis' superintendency, museum collections garnered more attention in the National Park Service. Arthur Allen, who began as chief of the new Division of Museum Services in 1974, the year Carl Sandburg Home NHS opened, believed that few park managers truly appreciated the value of their collections. Allen pushed National Park Service management, regional office staff, and park superintendents to pay more attention to assessing, preserving, documenting, and caring for their collections.<sup>2</sup>

Up until about 1977, "curatorial work in the Park Service had traditionally fallen under the umbrella of interpretation," with a greater focus on the use of collections in interpretation rather than its care. In 1978, the National Park Service established a new position for an assistant director for Cultural Resource Management to assume responsibility for museum collections. Two years later, in 1980, NPS created the position of chief curator in the Cultural Resources division of the Washington Office. Anne Hitchcock, the first chief curator, spearheaded an aggressive and ambitious agenda for Park Service collections over the next three decades. The Carl Sandburg Home NHS benefitted from this growing commitment to museum collections in the National Park Service and the increased service-wide expertise in managing and cataloging them.<sup>3</sup>

The collection at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was distinctive from most National Park Service

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1 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collections, "Inside NPS," [http://inside.nps.gov/index.cfm?handler\\_museumcollections%altphacode=carl](http://inside.nps.gov/index.cfm?handler_museumcollections%altphacode=carl), assessed 2/1/2013.

2 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 188, 202-3, 267.

3 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 212-3.



properties. Mrs. Sandburg donated the majority of the items within the house and farm buildings to the NPS. Only a few other parks at the time had most of the “authentic furnishings in place,” such as the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site or Sagamore Hill National Historic Site.<sup>4</sup> The furnishings greatly enhanced the value of the Sandburg home when the National Park Service considered its acquisition; in fact, Mrs. Sandburg’s commitment to including the furnishings enhanced its appeal as a potential NPS site. When Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall visited the site, he praised the house but added that “most important of all” were “the furnishings and mementos” that remained behind and spoke to the character of a “great American—Carl Sandburg.”<sup>5</sup> The “working library of a man-of-letters” appealed to Ray Basler, director of the Reference Department at the Library of Congress. While the individual books were not as significant on their own, Basler considered the “historical value” of Sandburg’s full library together with his home as “tremendous,” capturing the “spirit” of Sandburg.<sup>6</sup> The park’s Interpretive Prospectus of 1970 argued that the visitor “can best come to know this man and his beliefs” not just by looking at the outside of the house but “by being in his rooms among his things.”<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Sandburg officially donated this personal property on June 27, 1968, while the farm was being considered for inclusion in the National Park system, on the condition that title to Connemara “vests in the United States of America.” She wanted to be sure that the Congress would accept Connemara as a national park first. Her donation comprised “all household furnishings and the personal objects now in Connemara, on view and stored in the closets, cupboards, drawers, trunks, etc.,” including photographs and Sandburg’s clothing, “to interpret Carl Sandburg and retain the interior of his home substantially the same as during his life.”<sup>8</sup>

4 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 282.

5 Stewart Udall to Assistant Secretary Cain and Director Hartzog, memorandum, November 1, 1967, Stewart L. Udall Papers, AZ 372, Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries.

6 Master Plan, 1971, 15.

7 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 7.

8 Lilian Steichen Sandburg to the United States of America, Appendix A, “Personal Property Conveyed to the United States,” Deed of Gift, June 27, 1968, CARL Collection, HFC Archive.

In addition to the furnishings, household goods, and farm equipment, the Sandburg collection contained memorabilia related to President Abraham Lincoln and significant works of art that Sandburg collected, including Hokusai prints, Navajo rugs, and photographs by well-known photographers Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen, Sandburg’s brother-in-law. According to biographer Penelope Niven, Sandburg “enjoyed Japanese and Chinese art, literature and culture” popular in the United States. He purchased woodcut prints produced by Japanese artist



Figure 5.1 Carl Sandburg’s library was one of the most significant components of the park collection. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

Hokusai (1760-1849), displayed some in his home, and gave others to friends.<sup>9</sup> Sandburg also collected Navajo rugs from his excursions into the southwestern United States. Sandburg had become friends with Stieglitz and his wife Georgia O’Keefe during the 1920s, and they enjoyed conversations about “art, literature, photography, and the visual arts.”<sup>10</sup> Photographs by Lilian Sandburg’s brother, Edward Steichen, adorned the rooms of the Sandburg home, illustrating the close friendship between Steichen and Carl Sandburg. The park acquired 60 original Steichen prints with the home.<sup>11</sup>

Excluded from Mrs. Sandburg’s donation were personal objects from the surviving family

9 Penelope Niven, *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, 365.

10 Diana Pardue, Susan N. Munro, Gordon Gay, and Bill Kay, Carl Sandburg Collection Project, grant application, University of Illinois, in Collections Preservation Guide, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site (Harper’s Ferry, WV: Division of Museum Services, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, 1980) CARL Park Archive.

11 Miriam Farris, email communication with Ann McCleary, January 4, 2013.



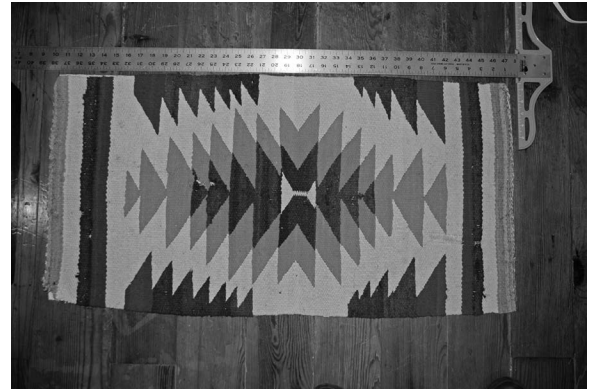
**Figures 5.2 (above) and 5.3 (below)** The museum collection includes common items such as these potholders and this can full of household items, with scissors, brush, and pencils. (CARL Park Archive).



members and a handful of other items, including four objects from the china closet and an original signed and framed photograph of Sandburg lecturing at the University of Illinois. Also excluded was Sandburg's library. The agreement stated, "none of the books and/or manuscripts of Carl Sandburg's library which are stored throughout the house are transferred to the United States by

this instrument, since they have previously been conveyed to the University of Illinois."<sup>12</sup>

Carl Sandburg sold his library to the University of Illinois in 1955 for \$30,000. The following year, in 1956, staff members from the University of



**Figure 5.4** Sandburg collected a wide variety of art that became part of the museum collection, including this Navajo rug. (CARL Park Archive)

Illinois came to Connemara and took 150 boxes of first-edition books, books with inscriptions, and manuscript materials related primarily to Sandburg's research on Abraham Lincoln. Sandburg requested to keep many of his books at home to use in his work. When he passed, Mrs. Sandburg honored her husband's agreement by signing a Deed of Gift in 1967 that transferred her husband's collection, including "books, papers, letters, clippings, and items of memorabilia, all owned by Carl Sandburg," to the University of Illinois. Library staff came to Connemara after his death and selected additional materials for the University of Illinois collection based on this agreement. Mrs. Sandburg did not include her papers in the agreement, so all of these remained at the farm and became part of the National Park Service collection.<sup>13</sup>

The park's first Master Plan expressed concern over the University of Illinois' ownership of the library because "it is so representative of the man"

12 Sandburg to the United States of America, Appendix A, "Personal Property conveyed to the United States," Deed, June 27, 1968.

13 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript, 1, CARL Park Archive; David Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report, Main House and Swedish House at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Flat Rock, North Carolina*, National Park Service, 1984, CARL Park Archive. The published version of this report has the 1984 date on the cover sheet, but subsequent correspondence and park Annual Reports suggest that the final draft was completed in 1986.

and recommended that the National Park Service pursue a “formal agreement to ensure that the remaining collection at the site remains intact on the shelves of Connemara.”<sup>14</sup> On February 24, 1970, Granville Liles, superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway and also of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS at the time, wrote to Robert B. Downs, the Dean of Library Administration at the University of Illinois, to request clarification on the University’s plans for the part of Sandburg’s library that remained at Connemara. Downs responded two days later that the University of Illinois did not plan to remove any additional books from Connemara beyond those taken after Sandburg’s death. Downs added that a library representative had reviewed the collection “several years ago” and removed any books “of interest to us.” The Dean concluded, “So far as we are concerned, the remainder of the books at Flat Rock can be considered a permanent part of the home.” He added that he was unaware of any inventory of the book collection.<sup>15</sup>

The Interpretive Prospectus of 1970 incorporated a “scope of collection” statement, as was typical of these planning documents.<sup>16</sup> The Prospectus stated that the collection for the park would include the furnishings of the home and the “memorabilia” associated with Carl Sandburg, such as his books, papers, magazines, photos, and records. The Prospectus similarly expressed concern about the status of the remaining books from Sandburg’s library and encouraged the Park Service to develop a formal agreement with the University of Illinois to clarify what would stay. If the National Park Service were to remove any items from the collection, the Interpretive Prospectus suggested that the books be offered first to the University of Illinois Library. The scope of collection statement concluded that because the park’s collection of Sandburg “artifacts” was “so vast,” there would be no need for the National Park Service to add more items. The Prospectus recommended that any potential donations to the park be referred instead

to another repository, such as the University of Illinois or the National Archives.<sup>17</sup>

While the majority of the collection would come from the furnishings and Sandburg memorabilia left behind at the house and farm, the park did acquire a few objects that related to Sandburg in those early years. In early 1978, the park received a donation of a bust of Lincoln.<sup>18</sup> But such donations were rare in the park’s early years.

Recognizing the significant value of the collections to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the Master Plan stated, “an immediate Service responsibility, as with the historic structures, will be the proper



**Figure 5.5** The books in Sandburg’s library were an important and valued part of the museum collection. (CARL Park Archive).

protection and preservation of these collections.” The plan recommended that the National Park Service hire a curator “as soon as practicable to undertake the immense task of cataloging and preventative action which must be accomplished to protect these items from loss or deterioration.”<sup>19</sup> Although not all parks needed a full-time curatorial position, the National Park Service recognized early on that a curator would be required at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS to manage this substantial collection.

14 Master Plan, 1971, 23-4.

15 R. B. Downs to Granville Liles, February 26, 1970, Books and Manuscripts University of Illinois File, SERO Archive.

16 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 294. Lewis notes that the draft Interpretive Planning Handbook of 1965 called for a scope of collection section, and that this was usually considered as the “first standard under curatorial activities.”

17 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 33-34.

18 “Carl Sandburg’s Personal Library Coming From Illinois to Flat Rock,” *Citizen-Times*, February 23, 1973, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive; “Sandburg Home Given New Bust of Lincoln,” *Times-News*, April 9, 1978, Carl Sandburg Home 1973 File, WASO Files.

19 Master Plan, 1971, 23.



## Cataloging the Sandburg Collection

In October 1970, soon after he arrived at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Superintendent James Kretschmann received a visit from Dr. David Wallace, chief of the Division of Reference Services at Harpers Ferry Center. Wallace visited Connemara to offer his advice on the curatorial issues the park faced. Raving about the “environment” created at the site, from the bird feeders and outbuildings to the “utilitarian household arrangements and furnishings,” Wallace expressed his strong commitment to preserving the park’s collection as it was when Sandburg

lived there. “We cannot move into this man’s house and alter or remove those parts which seem to us insignificant without upsetting the balance of history.” He added that it would be “harder to recreate” the house and its environment later and that even the most basic aspects should not be altered. “It’s very typical collection of laundry equipment will be as strange to 21st century visitors as parlor stoves and coal ranges are to today’s [visitors].”<sup>20</sup>

Wallace said that the contents of all the buildings should be documented through a room-by-room

- 20 David Wallace, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site,” memorandum, November 23, 1970, Carl Sandburg NHS File, HFC Archive.

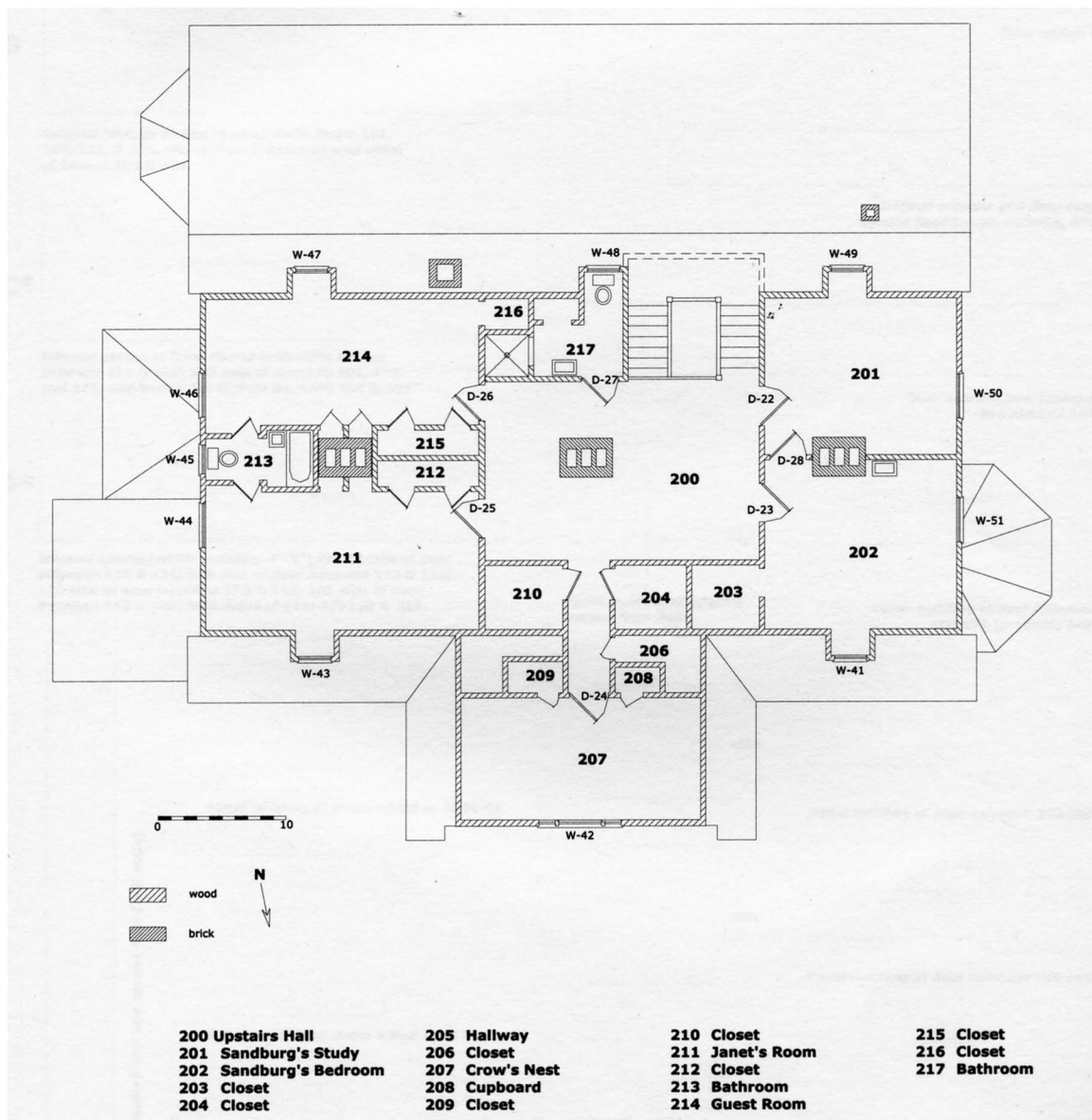


Figure 5.6 Carl Sandburg's office on the second floor of the house, in room 201, housed a large collection of papers and research materials. Historic Structure Report, 2005.



**Figure 5.7 (above) and 5.8 (below)** The Sandburgs enjoyed listening to recordings in their extensive record collection on this record player. One of the recordings in the collection is this one by the Weavers, who were popular musicians in the Folk Music Revival of the 1950s. (CARL Park Archive).



inventory, including items that might not normally be considered historically significant. “Significance can be decided later,” he added. Wallace left a sample of the inventory forms with the park and informed the staff that Vera Craig from the Branch of Museum Operations would come later in the year to help with starting the cataloging process. He further recommended that the curator position be filled as soon as possible. Wallace envisioned this as a two- to-three-year position,

after which the collection would be cataloged and a preservation and maintenance plan scheduled. Then the park would need “only occasional curatorial assistance” from the regional office or Harpers Ferry Center.<sup>21</sup> Little did he anticipate at the time that cataloging the collection would take twenty years to complete.

Kretschmann began the cataloging work in the fall of 1970, soon after Wallace’s visit. He told a Hendersonville newspaper reporter that he was cataloging the library with his wife and some volunteers and that they were “making a record of every book” and identifying it by the shelf on which it was found.<sup>22</sup>

In 1971, Gordon Gay accepted the first curator position (hired at a GS-9 rather than the GS-11 proposed in the Master Plan). After taking the Curatorial Methods class offered at Harpers Ferry Center, Gay arrived to work at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. He reported that he was cataloging books in the library and also some furnishings, trying to document the original locations of furnishings in the two rooms off the Dining Room, known as Margaret’s Bedroom and Margaret’s Study (Rooms 104 and 108), as staff had been moving the furniture around to create office space there. Gay obtained a good camera and started “photographing each room in situ and made a good record of that, and then just started with one room” and began “cataloging one room at a time.” In addition to the furniture, Gay completed the cataloging of Sandburg’s library of over 10,000 volumes. He had other duties as well, such as helping to reestablish the goat herd, conducting oral histories, and assisting with maintenance and law enforcement. “We did everything back then,” he recalled. Collections management was only one of his responsibilities.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, questions arose over what to catalog, as Wallace had predicted. And the collection was so large that it was hard to know where to begin. Superintendent Ronald Thoman, who arrived in 1973, recalled, “It was a huge, huge collection, probably one of the biggest, I

21 Wallace, “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site,” memorandum, November 23, 1970.

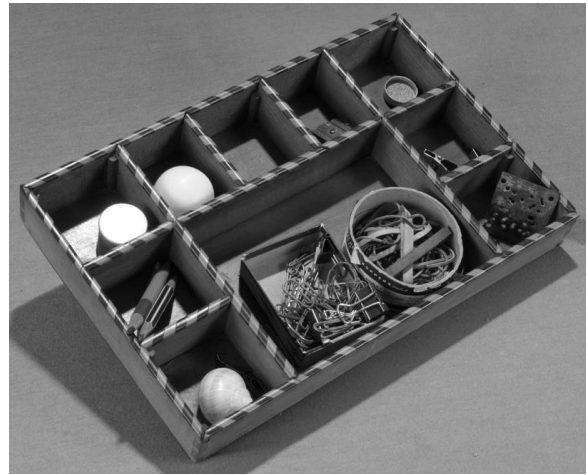
22 “Sandburg Filing Was Unique,” *Times-News*, November 27, 1970, Park Scrapbook 1, CARL Park Archive.

23 Gay, interview, 2011.

don't know if it was the biggest, one of the biggest collections all at once the Park Service ever had. And then it wasn't truly so much truly historic the way we were used to dealing with things. There was a controversy about what ought to be kept." He recalled "a thousand paperclips in drawers, what do you do with those?" Similar questions arose around cataloging the cigar butts in the pot-bellied stove in Sandburg's office, and staff joked about how many cigar butts should be kept and cataloged. The kitchen was "full of 1940s, refrigerator and range and all of that, and which at that point people didn't think about it being historic. But all of a sudden now, because of its connection with these people, you had things that were sort of modern." Thoman said that there was "disagreement from Harpers Ferry down through the regional office and the Blue Ridge Parkway . . . I had a lot of arguments with the staff at the Blue Ridge Parkway and the regional office over historic preservation and curatorial things." Thoman thought that the park was "treading new water here." He added, "There was a lot to do and setting priorities and having one curator and not very much money."<sup>24</sup>

When Gay transferred to a regional curator position in Santa Fe in 1973, the National Park Service froze the curator position. Any curatorial work would have to be performed by the superintendent or volunteers until the Park Service filled the position the month before the park opened. Warren Weber, the park's second curator, began in April 1974. Like Gay, he benefited from taking the Curatorial Methods class taught at Harpers Ferry Center before he began. Weber would be tasked with both curatorial responsibilities and visitor services. Because the park was opening as Weber arrived, visitor services would become the primary focus of his position at first, including hiring and training staff and managing the Eastern National Park and Monument Association agency at the Visitor Center. "I had the visitor services program and I had the museum collection. Of course, most of my time the first year or two, actually more than that,

24 Thoman, interview, 2011; Gay, interview, 2011. When he left the park, the staff gave Gay a scrapbook, which included a catalog sheet and a cigar butts from Sandburg's cast iron stove, with the note, "And just think of all these living farm artifacts left uncatalogued!" Gordon Gay Scrapbook, personal collection, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.



**Figure 5.9** The collection at CARL was so unusual that it was difficult to determine, at first, what to catalog. The Main House contained items such as those shown in this photo, from paper clips to rubber bands. (CARL Park Archive).

was the visitor services program because it had taken a while to build staff."<sup>25</sup>

Still, Weber reported doing an impressive array of curatorial work in 1974, his first year. Assisted by eight participants in the Park Service's Volunteers in the Parks (VIP) program, the park catalogued 1,500 items "from kitchen utensils to awards Sandburg won." In addition, he and volunteers "sorted, identified, and classified historic photographs;" inventoried Sandburg's collection of records, tapes, and wire recordings; and surveyed the archival material in the Basement, including "manuscripts of published and unpublished works, research data, handwritten notes, correspondence, galley proofs, etc. and began an inventory of this material." Weber also developed a "master plan to guide curatorial activities to a routine maintenance condition" and conducted a security audit for the already cataloged 10,000 volume Sandburg book collection.<sup>26</sup>

Weber also spent time on collections care that first year. He checked the library and manuscript collections for possible insect infestation. Most of the leather goods in the house received "preventative treatment." The park staff and volunteers also treated lawn furniture and some fabrics. Other items were sent to Harpers Ferry Museum Center for treatment, including "fading paper goods, an old radio, and some original Steichen photos." Now that tours were underway, the park added carpet runners to protect the floor

25 Weber, interview, 2011.

26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.





**Figures 5.10, 5.11, and 5.12** The artifacts found in the kitchen were quite typical of homes in the 1950s and 1960s, including this Fiesta Ware bowl, these two metal canisters, and these ice cube trays. (CARL Park Archive)

coverings and Plexiglas shields over the bookcases and shelves to prevent theft and handling.<sup>27</sup>

Some artifacts were particularly fragile. Superintendent Thoman remembered a wire recorder that the family used during the holidays and at other times to record conversations and occasions when Sandburg played music and sang. The family kept the wire recordings in a cupboard. Thoman realized that the recordings were “very



**Figure 5.13** Curator Warren Weber works at his desk. May 5, 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 5.14** Muriel Potts works with the park collections. She began as a volunteer but then accepted a seasonal museum position at the park. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive)

susceptible to the data being lost,” so he asked the Southeast Regional Office and Harpers Ferry Center for help. Neither office had the time nor the money to preserve them, so Thoman “personally cut a deal with the Library of Congress with the caveat that they would translate those to regular tape, and they would give us copies so that we could use them.” The Library of Congress would keep and preserve the original tapes. Thoman reflected, “There was a whole lot of things that I had to take action on that really had no authorization or approval from anywhere else, and sometimes got my hand slapped, but we did what we had to do.”<sup>28</sup>

27 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

28 Thoman, interview, 2011.



**Figure 5.15** Curator Warren Weber processes collections in the Sandburg Kitchen as the park opens. Spring 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

Cataloging continued to be the focus of curatorial activities at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS (CARL) through the 1970s, though it would proceed at a relatively slow pace over the next five years, given the limited staff time to devote to these tasks.<sup>29</sup> In 1976, Superintendent Davis reported that almost 5,000 items had been cataloged.<sup>30</sup> Annual Reports list cataloging photographs, records, and documentary materials. The park also removed some of the original equipment from use—such as a Ford tractor, a Jeep, and farm implements—and purchased replacements with funding from the regional office.<sup>31</sup>

The challenges in the museum program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS brought David Wallace to visit the park again on September 29, 1976, “in response to a long standing request for a consultation on furnishing problems and on the procedures to follow with the large collection of documents, correspondence, pamphlets and magazines left in the house when the family moved out.”<sup>32</sup> Wallace praised the sensitivity of the staff to the objects, but expressed concern about the “unwise risks with the Sandburg memorabilia in the house.” While the runners and Plexiglas had helped, he was worried about protecting “the very



**Figure 5.16** The Sandburg family used this wire recorder to make recordings of music and conversations. Thoman worried about preserving the recordings, so he worked with the Library of Congress to make copies that could be kept at the park and gave the originals to the Library. (CARL Park Archive).

objects that make it come alive.” Wallace listed six goals for the park: (1) to photograph all of the rooms in the house; (2) to inventory all “papers, envelopes, pictures, books and pamphlets” in the house that people can reach; (3) to widen the area of the runners to protect the carpets and floors; (4) to put protective covers over the books and magazines on the top floor; (5) to adjust cataloging priorities to document the most vulnerable items first; and (6) to change the tour route so that visitors have less access to the “highly vulnerable exhibits like Sandburg’s desk and the highly congested top floor.”<sup>33</sup> Wallace concluded, “I would simply say, something has to give. Looking at it in long range terms, it seems to me preservation of the collection must be paramount, since the quality of the interpretation here depends on the quality and integrity of the collection.”<sup>34</sup>

Wallace also expressed apprehension about the “array of documents in the house,” noting that he could not “get more than an impression of their

29 Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, memorandum, April 11, 1991, SERO Archive.

30 Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site to Associate Regional Director Administration, Southeast Region, memorandum, Reporting of Cataloged Museum Specimens, June 21, 1976, SERO Archive.

31 Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1975 and 1976.

32 Manager, Harpers Ferry Center, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Trip report re Carl Sandburg NHS, October 21, 1976, Carl Sandburg Home NHS file, HFC Archive.

33 David Wallace, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, memorandum, September 29, 1976, Carl Sandburg Home NHS file, HFC Archive.

34 Wallace, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, memorandum, September 29, 1976.

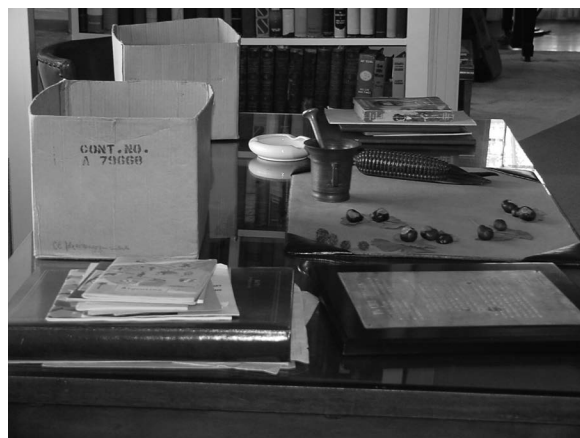
number on a short visit. There are thousands of manuscripts and pieces of printed matter stored without any apparent order in cardboard cartons, metal and wood file drawers, etc.” While many of these items related to the history of Connemara, Wallace noted that the bulk were associated with Sandburg’s career as a professional writer and as such should be “preserved with the rest of his personal papers.” But first, the park needed to hire an experienced manuscript librarian/curator to inventory all of these papers. He estimated that this review process would take about one year and cost approximately \$25,000.<sup>35</sup>

Wallace’s recommendation for the archival materials followed the philosophy of the National Park Service at the time, which discouraged the creation of archival study collections at the parks. While collections that related to the park story were considered important to preserve, the National Park Service’s museum handbook noted that manuscripts and photographs required special storage facilities and staffing “beyond the proper functions of the Service. Therefore, extensive manuscript and photographic collections will normally be deposited in archives or libraries outside the park.”<sup>36</sup>

Wallace’s report raised two key issues that would soon be addressed: the importance of preserving the collection and the processing and ownership of the Sandburg papers and books.

35 Wallace, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, memorandum, September 29, 1976.

36 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 276.



**Figure 5.17** As the park developed the house tours, museum staff worried about the collections that were in easy range of visitors, such as Sandburg’s desk. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

## The Disposition of the Sandburg Library

While the issue about the future disposition of the books in the Sandburg home appeared to have been resolved by the February 1970 letter from Robert Downs, the University of Illinois dean, Granville Liles wrote to Downs again on December 9, 1971, asking the library for an “official release of this material.” Since Downs had retired, Robert Cram from the University of Illinois Library responded, on December 11, that he would forward Liles’ request to the Chancellor, provide background on the issue, and report “that the Library does not wish to hold further claim.”<sup>37</sup> In 1972, the University of Illinois officially donated the books remaining in the Main House to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS (accessioned as CARL-0030).<sup>38</sup>

Even after this decision, the park continued to transfer a few materials to the University of Illinois Library. Gordon Gay remembers an incident involving a few items he found that he thought should be donated to the University. While working in the Main House, Gay decided to look inside a safe located in the Basement. He discovered “original, hand-typed chapters that Sandburg had written of the Lincoln biographies.” He contacted the archivist at the University to see if he wanted the items. Gay recalled, “I think that was the main thing that the University was after. So I wrote them, and of course they wanted them, so we established a relationship with the university.”<sup>39</sup>

Following the trip to Connemara after Sandburg’s death, the University staff had not returned to Connemara, due to changes in staffing at the library and a lack of awareness about the manuscript materials that remained behind. Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven would ultimately discover the quantity and quality of papers still at the Sandburg home and bring these to the attention of the University of Illinois librarians. Niven had a strong background in nineteenth-century American literature, and she had taught English in high school, preparatory school, and college. In the

37 Robert W. Cram to Granville Liles, December 21, 1971, Books and Manuscripts University of Illinois File, SERO Archive.

38 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript, 2.

39 Gay, interview, 2011.



summer of 1976, Niven visited the Carl Sandburg Home NHS with her mother-in-law and daughter, and she was “absolutely enchanted,” particularly by the “writer’s workshop.” She remembered, “You could see all the evidence of the writer’s work. You could see it in the books on the shelves... You could see it in the papers and boxes and files of papers downstairs, upstairs. So it was those papers that most of all drew my attention.” Niven worried about the “conservation and preservation” of these papers after seeing letters from John F. Kennedy and Robert Frost in the home, within easy reach of visitors. She understood that the focus of the park had been to “repair the physical property. They had to get that old house ready for thousands of people to troop through it.”<sup>40</sup> But she had an idea.

When she returned home to Maryland that fall, Niven wrote to Superintendent Davis to ask if she could volunteer to organize the papers. She hesitated to send the letter but finally put it in the mail, and she was pleasantly surprised with the quick response. Davis replied that the National Park Service had not had time yet to focus on the papers, and he welcomed her help. Although the park could not pay her, Davis asked if she would like to participate in the Volunteers in the Park program. She agreed and began her work in the summer of 1977. Niven spent four to six weeks the next few summers, from 1977 through 1983, working with the Sandburg papers.<sup>41</sup>

Niven discovered what she described as a “mass of papers throughout the house.” In the Main House, “there were papers not only in the visible areas of the house, but papers in a mass in the cellar downstairs, papers up under the eaves, papers everywhere.” She found more in the Swedish House, which was full, “floor to ceiling, two stories of that little house, full of papers.” “They just kept turning up in odd places,” Niven recalled, as she searched in the attics, in the cellar, even, she joked, “in the stove under the ashes, everywhere there might be papers.”<sup>42</sup>

Niven remembered, “Nobody knew the scope of those papers. The Park Service had not gotten to that thoroughly yet.” Nor did the family or estate know. “And very significantly, the University of Illinois library did not know,” she remembered. The University of Illinois had removed “what they wanted, number one, and what he [Sandburg] would let them take, number two.” Niven recalled that the University was primarily interested in the research materials for the Lincoln books at that time. But then “there had been a turnover of people at the University library and I think, quite simply, they just left it alone,” and the collection was put on the “back burner.” Niven began to realize the magnitude of the collection and its “huge research value.”<sup>43</sup>

Niven researched the 1955 agreement between Carl Sandburg and the University of Illinois and realized that “it was indeed the intention of the University of Illinois to go back” to the Sandburg home to consider other potential archival materials, particularly Sandburg’s research materials, and she discovered they were “legally



**Figure 5.18** Penny Niven reviews some of the Sandburg manuscript materials with park staff member David McCormick during her first summer as a volunteer at the park. Summer 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

entitled to do so.” Niven commented, “When I came across documents that clearly indicated the intent of the agreement that Sandburg had signed, I called those to the attention of Ben Davis, and he called those to the attention of the University of Illinois Library and the Sandburg estate, and they began to talk about what to do.”<sup>44</sup>

Niven wrote to Davis in July 1978 to inform him of what she had learned about the situation. She

40 Niven, interview. At this time, Niven used her married name, Penelope McJunkin, but she later dropped this last name after her divorce. However, the documents and records from this period refer to her as Penelope McJunkin.

41 Niven, interview; Niven, *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, xiv.

42 Niven, interview; Niven, *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, xiv.

43 Niven, interview.

44 Niven, interview.

had visited the University of Illinois Library in June 1978, where she reported that the Sandburg collection was receiving “excellent professional attention” from “highly skilled librarians” and was stored in appropriate archival collections. She concluded, after her two summers of work at Connemara, that “the Connemara papers ultimately and undeniably belong to the papers housed at the University,” adding that “it is almost impossible for [park staff] to deal with the quantity of papers which still are housed here.” She argued that the collection was “too valuable and significant to be broken up,” and that the papers should be stored in appropriate conditions, they needed a full-time cataloguer, and the University had the expertise to do this work. Niven recommended a plan for transferring the materials from the park to the University, including the Carl Sandburg papers, as well as Mrs. Sandburg’s records of the goat farm. She believed that materials relating specifically to Connemara should stay on-site in the park collection, but copies should be provided to the University. Niven proposed the development of an on-going relationship between the Carl Sandburg Home NHS and the University of Illinois Library.<sup>45</sup>

As Superintendent Davis reflected in 1982, the conditions of the 1955 sale “left a cloud over title to the items we assumed came to the National Park Service in 1969.”<sup>46</sup> In the park’s 1979 Annual Report, Davis commented that the University of Illinois requested to review the archival materials still at the park and to potentially add some of these items to its collection, pursuant to the 1955 agreement with Sandburg.<sup>47</sup> The NPS solicitors reviewed the 1955 agreement and declared it to be “binding and valid,” which allowed the University to once again review and remove materials of interest. In describing this process, the 1979 Annual Report states that issues were “clarified and discussed with University of Illinois officials to resolve the situation to mutual satisfaction and benefit,” but in reality, the issues would not be resolved for two more years.<sup>48</sup>

On the recommendation of David Wallace and others, the park hired an archive aide and archive technician by the end of 1979, using \$30,000 of operating funds programmed through FY 1980 for the archival project. Additional funding came from a National Endowment for the Humanities collections development grant. Niven worked first for the Park Service and then for the University of Illinois to identify which papers should stay at Connemara and which should be relocated to the University. She recalled that papers “of research value” were sent to the University of Illinois Carl Sandburg Collection and “the papers that were “fan letters and general correspondence—papers that were not of research value--could stay in the house for the furnishing and demonstration of the rooms in the house.” Niven explained, “I was hired by the University and the Park Service to make those decisions and work with others to make those decisions about what was of research value and what could stay at Connemara as part of the National Park collection.” If she “had any doubt” about the research value, then my “decision was that it should go to the University.” Sometimes, she would confer with Margaret and Helga Sandburg, who were knowledgeable about their father’s work. Niven also worked with Scott Bennett, the University of Illinois librarian who was responsible for the Carl Sandburg Collection. “We would do a rough catalog and index, and pack up the papers that were going to the University, and set aside the papers that were going to stay forever in Carl’s house.” In 1979 and 1980, the papers designated for the University of Illinois were loaded in a van at the end of the summer and transported to the library at Earlham College in Indiana, where Niven’s husband was on staff. She had an office at the Earlham College Library where she would spend the winter “processing and cataloging.” Then a representative from the University of Illinois “would come over and get them and take them to Urbana.”<sup>49</sup>

Park staff members, working during this time, remembered this process. Weber recalled that the university took 100 gray archival boxes “filled with letters and documents” in 1979 and not quite as much in 1980.<sup>50</sup> They also took some

45 Penny McJunkin to Benjamin Davis and Warren Weber, memorandum, July 19, 1978, The Carl Sandburg Collection at the University of Illinois and Sandburg’s Connemara Papers, 4012/1, Box 1, Folder 14, CARL Park Archive.

46 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 11.

47 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979.

48 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979.

49 Niven, interview; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979.

50 Weber, interview, 2011.

books, often with valuable inscriptions.<sup>51</sup> Kathleen Triggs Byrne, the museum aid who worked as the historic housekeeper, remembered occasionally finding important books in the collection as she was cleaning, such as an original edition of *The American Songbag*, which she brought to the attention of the park administration. Several of these items were shipped off to the University of Illinois Library.<sup>52</sup>

The University's renewed interest in removing more of the Sandburg papers raised concern among the National Park Service officials. While the Park Service had not expressed an interest in building an archival collection when it first acquired the Sandburg property, personnel at the national and regional offices now seemed increasingly concerned about this revival of interest in the collection from the University of Illinois and were reluctant to remove additional Sandburg documents from the park. Niven called this a "sensitive issue," noting that there was "no clear channel of communication in place for the central parties."<sup>53</sup>

Warren Weber remembered the mixed reactions to the situation. On the one hand, the park did not have an appropriate place to store the collection and there were no plans to build a high-quality collection facility at the park in the immediate future. He did not think that the park could adequately store papers that were not going to be on exhibit, "so there's where the Park Service conflict came in. We wanted to keep things that would be on exhibit." In the end, Weber said, the University of Illinois Library received "what they thought they needed, and the park had what they needed for museum exhibits." Many important papers were left behind for the park collection, including Civil War maps.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand, some National Park Service officials involved with this issue, particularly at the regional and national levels, as well a few park staff members, worried that the University of Illinois

might continue to come and take materials that the National Park Service staff believed should be left at the park. Weber recalled the concern expressed by some that if the University wanted "to get active" and remove more materials, it might be enough to "destroy the visitor experience in the house."<sup>55</sup>

The Harpers Ferry Center team completing the Collections Preservation Guide for the Sandburg Home NHS also chimed in on this issue in late 1979. The authors, who included Southeast Regional Curator Bill Kay, noted that "transferring these papers to the University will enable the curatorial team at Connemara to spend more time with the remaining archival materials and collections at the site." Still, the team argued, "For legal purposes, the Park should have the University of Illinois Library donate whatever archival material is left to the National Park Service." Their report proposed that the park establish an archival storage area in the Tenant House to store the remaining documents.<sup>56</sup>

This "seasonal harvesting" of archival materials by the University of Illinois troubled Dale Durham, who was then at the Harpers Ferry Center. Durham, who became the Southeast Regional Curator in 1981, believed the park was "losing too much." Further, he questioned the evaluation process, stating that he did not believe professionals were involved in determining which papers were personal and should stay and which should go. He wished that the National Park Service archivist could have been involved in the process.<sup>57</sup> Durham, among other Park Service officials, advocated for an agreement to draw closure to the process.

In 1980, the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office and the University of Illinois negotiated an agreement regarding the disposition of the papers still located at the park. The final agreement was signed in January 1981. The University surrendered any rights to the remaining books and archival materials at the park and thus left those items in the park collection. (These were accessioned as CARL-0086.) As a result, many items in Mrs. Sandburg's 1967 deed of gift

51 Warren Weber, personal communication with Ann McCleary, August 26, 2012.

52 Kathleen Triggs Byrne, personal communication with Ann McCleary, August 27, 2012.

53 Niven, interview; Dale Durham, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, August 30, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

54 Weber, personal communication, 2012.

55 Weber, personal communication, 2012.

56 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, 7.

57 Durham, interview, 2011.



were never removed, including books and cartons of clippings.<sup>58</sup> Both the University of Illinois and the National Park Service agreed to work together to promote the Sandburg papers; to share photographs, recordings, and other materials that they both had; and, according to curator Warren Weber, “to work together if we had projects of common interest.” A National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant provided funding to catalog and to make the Sandburg Collection at the University more accessible to the public.<sup>59</sup>

## The National Endowment for the Humanities Grant Project

The University of Illinois Library had become increasingly interested in building a collection of Carl Sandburg materials, utilizing not only documents from Connemara but from other sources as well. In a 1980 grant application for a NEH Collections Development Project, the University library outlined its ambitious two-year agenda to “bring together and establish archival control over three large bodies of Carl Sandburg research material,” including “research papers transferred to the Library by Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, material still held by the Sandburg Family Trust and personal friends, and the recollections of Sandburg’s many professional and personal friends to be recorded in an oral history project.”<sup>60</sup>

Between February 1, 1981, and January 31, 1983, the archive staff hoped to add these materials to the “massive collection” already at the library, to “survey” materials at other repositories, and “to produce a Research Guide to Carl Sandburg.” This project would culminate an effort begun “over twenty-five years ago,” when Sandburg agreed to sell his library to the University, and was “supported by the Sandburg Family, the National Park Service and other concerned parties.” The

grant application argued that the project would benefit the academic community as well as a public audience at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS “through an ambitious publication, interpretive, and exhibit program.”<sup>61</sup>

The grant proposal stated that there was strong public interest in the life and work of Carl Sandburg, evidenced in part by two recent television specials. Yet proposal author Scott Bennett noted, “Large groups of papers at Connemara and in the possession of the Sandburg Family Trust are altogether inaccessible,” which made research studies of Sandburg’s work very difficult.<sup>62</sup>

The National Endowment for the Humanities grant proposal provides insight into the scope of the collection the University hoped to build. The university aspired to create a 130 cubic foot collection of papers including “family correspondence, the manuscripts of many published and unpublished works, proofs and other pre-publication forms of most of his books, and hundreds of other documents and photos.” The existing collection of materials, obtained in the late 1950s and then again after Sandburg passed, totaled approximately 60 cubic feet. The library had acquired approximately ten cubic feet of papers from family members and the Sandburg Trust “over the last few years,” but expected to obtain another 25 cubic feet from those sources during the grant period. The Sandburg family had taken some papers with them when they moved, although not all would have fallen under the scope of the 1955 sale. Through the grant, the University of Illinois Library planned to help Margaret Sandburg “organize her papers and develop a schedule” to donate them to the University of Illinois. Last, the grant referenced approximately 60 cubic feet of materials recently removed from Connemara, most likely the 1979 and 1980 van loads of archival documents appraised by Penelope Niven.<sup>63</sup>

While the grant application states at one point that the “removal of research papers now held

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58 Durham, interview, 2011; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript.

59 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript, 2; Weber, interview, 2011; Durham, interview, 2011. Dale Durham recalled that he was not completely satisfied with the final agreement, but the Park Service was clearly relieved to have an agreement in place.

60 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, cover sheet.

61 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, cover sheet.

62 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, cover sheet.

63 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, 2-20.

at Connemara” would be complete by October 1980, the remainder of the grant suggests that the University of Illinois wrote much of the application when the staff still hoped to obtain more of these materials from the park. At another point, the application narrative describes the transfer from Carl Sandburg as “half done” and the research proposal states that one of the goals of the grant is “to secure for the library the papers still held by the Family Trust and the National Park Service.”<sup>64</sup>

The application explained that the University had been working with Penelope Niven “over the past several years” and with the Sandburg family and the National Park Service “to secure these uncollected papers” of “research value” and to establish “intellectual control” over these papers. Both the Eastern National Park and Monument Association and the NEH had provided financial support for Niven’s efforts, the latter through a summer stipend to “work with the Connemara papers in preparation for their transfer to the University of Illinois.”<sup>65</sup>

Even after the agreement of January 1981, Niven continued to sort through the papers at the park. During the summer of 1982, she identified additional materials at CARL that would be relevant to the University of Illinois’ Sandburg collection. The park staff shared this information with the University and offered to loan the materials, but the University did not request to borrow them at that time.<sup>66</sup> While no reason was given in the park’s Superintendent’s Annual Report, the University was no doubt busy working to process the papers they had already acquired under the NEH grant.

Niven played a significant role in the grant project. The application narrative stated that she would sort and describe the estimated 60 cubic feet of papers at Earlham College, using the guides provided by Project Director Scott Bennett. The grant requested funds to hire a research assistant and clerk-typist to help her prepare the finding aid.<sup>67</sup>

## The Carl Sandburg Oral History Project

When Niven started reviewing and organizing Sandburg’s papers, she began producing a list of people who were “important in his life at least to identify the important correspondence.” She went to Ben Davis and Warren Weber to ask if “we could interview these people.” As a result, “We got some seed money for me to do some interviews, and that grew, and we got a grant through the University of Illinois.” Additional support came from the National Park Service and the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, with both contributing \$5,000 towards her work.<sup>68</sup>

The oral history project was included in the NEH Collections Development grant application. The proposal narrative noted that the first phase of the project, interviews with Sandburg’s family and close friends of declining health, was already underway. The application requested funding for another 100 interviews, including oral histories with Sandburg’s friends from his Connemara years (phase II) but then widening to a circle of over 80 friends and associates, from publicly important individuals and other contemporary artists to personal friends.<sup>69</sup> Niven estimates that she conducted over 150 interviews between 1978 and 1984.<sup>70</sup> The master copies of the interviews compiled as part of the grant were to be archived at the University of Illinois Library.<sup>71</sup> Copies of the interviews and correspondence, photographs, records, training notebooks, and other materials related to the project were accessioned into the park collection in 1984 and 1985.<sup>72</sup>

Niven recalled, “I was able to interview journalists from the early *Chicago Daily News* period. I tried to interview some of his critics as well. I talked to people who loved and were devoted to him and interviewed public figures who knew him well.” Many people helped her compile the list of interviewees, including Margaret

64 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, 5, 10.

65 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, grant application.

66 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982.

67 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, grant application.

68 Niven, interview; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1981 and 1982.

69 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, grant application.

70 Niven, interview.

71 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, grant application.

72 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1984 and 1985. The CARL archive records record the accession date as 1994.



**Figure 5.19** Local historian Louise Howe Bailey holds her book *From Rock Hill to Connemara: The Story Before Carl Sandburg*. August 1980 (CARL Park Archive).

and Helga Sandburg, who made contact with some of his friends, as well as the National Park Service and Louise Bailey, a Flat Rock neighbor, who introduced Niven to others around Hendersonville. “It was a great experience,” Niven reflected. “People you had heard of, and people you never had heard of, and just an astonishing spectrum of people. And, that said so much about Sandburg, about the nature and diversity of his friendships and associations.”<sup>73</sup>

Drawing upon this experience of working with Sandburg’s papers and conducting these interviews, Niven wrote what has become the definitive work about the poet’s life—*Carl Sandburg: A Biography*—published by Charles Scribner’s and Sons in 1991. She remained very accessible in working with the park staff and with the public to share what she learned. “I’ve loved going back and doing programs, working with interpreters,” Niven explained. “I’m very much impressed with the evolution of this special place and do everything I can possibly do to be of help in any small way. It’s a pleasure.”<sup>74</sup>

73 Niven, interview.

74 Niven, interview.



**Figure 5.20** Penny Niven, Lucy Kroll, and Perry Miller prepare for the PBS film special “Sandburg: Echoes and Silences.” 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

## Preserving the Collection

Perhaps because of the fragile condition of its collection, Carl Sandburg Home NHS would be one of the first parks to get a Collections Preservation Guide (CPG), a new document produced by the Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), in 1980. Beginning in the late 1970s, the HFC produced these documents in response to concerns that parks were not able to adequately preserve their collections. Initially called Collections Management Plans, the name was changed to Collections Preservation Guides to “avoid review and approval procedures that seemed inappropriate.” The Harpers Ferry Center staff completed 32 of these plans over the next seven years, and the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was one of the parks to receive one.<sup>75</sup>

A team composed of Diana Pardue, Susan Munro, and Gordon Gay from the Division of Museum Services at Harpers Ferry Center and Regional Curator Bill Kay from the Southeast Regional Office spent a week at the park, from October 29 through November 3, 1979. Gay was the park’s first curator, so he brought extensive knowledge about the collection and its history. The team talked about collections management issues with Superintendent Davis, Curator Weber, and Park Technician Joan Pryor and viewed the park collections and facilities.<sup>76</sup> In his 1979 Annual Report, Davis noted that the resulting plan would “concentrate [on] 1980 work, including the necessary action for funds, personnel, etc.”<sup>77</sup> The regional office received the final CPG in July 1980,

75 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 208.

76 Pardue et al., *Collections Preservation Guide*, 1980, 1.

77 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979.





**Figures 5.21, 5.22, 5.23, and 5.24** One of the unusual aspects of managing the furnishings at CARL was that the objects were recent and many people did not consider them "historic." The Kitchen, shown here in these four photographs, included a variety of ordinary objects, many of which present challenging preservation issues. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

with a memo noting "we regret that this plan took a little longer to assemble than most similar reports required," but "the delay may well be worth the wait as there seems to be full agreement on how the manuscript material will be handled."<sup>78</sup>

The CPG began by discussing the problems inherent to a house museum. The guide's authors observed that in a home like Connemara, the value of the objects "derives from their ownership by Sandburg," and they are significant in recreating the "setting of Sandburg's life" and in presenting his "values." The challenge, however, was in balancing preservation and education, since keeping the objects on "continual exhibit" constituted consumptive use. The report urged the park staff to make "hard decisions" about using copies rather than original documents in the house. Further, the CPG noted that the house suffered "unstable interior environmental conditions," including poor circulation, fluctuating temperatures and humidity, and light from the windows and fluorescent lamps. Wear on the rugs and floors and "display of objects upon or within other objects" also worried the specialists. The CPG authors recommended that the park limit tours to no more than twenty visitors due to the "tight flow" of the space.<sup>79</sup>

The guidelines addressed the problems of twentieth century homes, adding that the "Sandburg House is a study in 20th C. conservation problems." These included "low grade materials," such as plastics and synthetics. Much of the "ephemera"—such as newspapers, magazines, notepaper, and paperbacks—were meant for temporary use and thus degraded easily. Modern, mass-produced furniture was produced from lower-grade materials and thus was very fragile, as were the "loosely woven cotton shag" and "worn area rugs" that covered much of the floor.<sup>80</sup>

The CPG authors proposed that the park undertake a furnishings plan, especially since the staff had access to the family and considerable information about the use of the house was still available. They also made a recommendation that

78 Arthur Allen, Chief, Division of Museum Services, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Carl Sandburg Collection Preservation Guide, July 24, 1980, CARL [CASS] file, SERO Archive.

79 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.

80 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.

would be pursued later: they suggested that the curator's office and workroom be moved out of the house, and that the furnishings previously used in these rooms, currently stored in the Farm Manager's House, be returned to furnish these spaces.<sup>81</sup>

The report suggested that park staff was not treating the historic objects as well as the authors would like. The CPG distinguished between "Sandburg objects" and those "used by staff," such as lamps, tables, trash cans, ladders, chairs



**Figure 5.25** The Collections Preservation Guide, completed in 1980, warned the park about keeping original documents on display in the house and suggested that staff make "hard decisions" about making copies and removing originals. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

and farm equipment. Sandburg objects, when not on display, should be placed in storage and not used. Staff lounge areas were to be moved to a "restricted" area in the Basement, and they recommended that no eating or smoking be allowed within the house, except for in the lounge. The authors strongly advocated that the curator was responsible for the collections, that authority be delegated to him, and that his position be "respected."<sup>82</sup>

The report provided recommendations for museum storage, noting that there was currently no single area at the park designated for this purpose. As a result, objects and archival materials could be found everywhere—including in drawers, cabinets, and closets. The authors proposed that the current Administration Building (the Tenant House) be converted into storage for the archival collection and the two upstairs bedrooms of the Farm Manager's House be used for object storage.

<sup>81</sup> Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.

<sup>82</sup> Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.



**Figure 5.26** Collections items such as Sandburg's visor presented particular challenges due to the plastics it included. (CARL Park Archive).

Both areas would need fire detection, security, and climate control. They noted that future plans called for an Administration Building, and the park should include space for collections storage, a "vault," and a collections work area.<sup>83</sup>

Archival collections were clearly an important issue in late 1979 when the team visited the park. The authors argued that the archival materials were the "most fragile in the museum collection." They urged park staff to remove these from the house, put them in storage, and make copies for use in the home. The curator "must set priorities" to move the "most valuable and significant materials" into storage first, and less valuable materials, such as the magazines in the Swedish House, should be moved later.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.

<sup>84</sup> Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980.



**Figure 5.27** Margaret's Bedroom had been used as the curator's work room when the NPS acquired the property, but the park still had the furniture that Margaret used in storage. The Home Furnishings Report recommended that the park restore this room to its 1967-9 status, shown here in this 1967 photograph. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).



The authors observed that the park's catalog records were "usually complete and accurate." The report noted that Museum Technician Joan Pryor and volunteer Muriel Potts were finishing up the photograph collection, but "cataloging the books is a continual massive project." The authors asked the park to be more careful in assigning numbers, given that multiple people were cataloging, and in obtaining more accurate values for the objects.<sup>85</sup>

The report also tackled the need for a full-time curator, noting that the current curator had been "so pressed by the needs of maintaining a visitor services program that he has been unable to function as a curator." In addition, "it has been necessary to press the present museum technician into interpretive use and protection duties." The authors urged the park to "take seriously the stewardship of the culturally important and unique Sandburg Collection." The report recommended that the recently vacated "less than full-time 026 position" be replaced with a "less than full-time curator" who would report directly to the superintendent. "With an immensely complex collection such as this one, in which more than 14 work years of cataloging alone remains, it is important to have a professional curator." The report included a job description for this curatorial position. The authors concluded with a dire warning that "without such a scheduled program, nothing, in time, will be left to curate."<sup>86</sup>

While the NPS Collections Preservation Guide did not require compliance, most individual park superintendents, and their curatorial staff members, took action to implement the recommendations.<sup>87</sup> This proved true for CARL as well. After receiving this document, park staff addressed a variety of issues related to collections preservation over the next decade.

In 1981, the park moved the administrative and curatorial staff to the Farm Manager's House and began renovating the Tenant House with climate control to use as collections storage, using cyclic funds from FY 1982.<sup>88</sup> In 1982, the park added

85 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, 25.

86 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, 1980, 27.

87 Lewis, Museum Curatorship, 208.

88 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Museum Collection History, undated manuscript, 2.



**Figure 5.28** The Swedish House was full of Carl Sandburg's magazines, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera that he saved. The Collections Management Plan observed that collections were being stored all over the farm. December 1969 (CARL Park Archive).

a heat pump to control the temperature and humidity in the Tenant House. The park staff began using the Tenant House to store "small objects, photographs, sound recordings, and documents including correspondence."<sup>89</sup> Kathleen Triggs Byrne, a museum technician who began working

89 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.



**Figure 5.29** Volunteer Muriel Potts and Museum Technician Joan Pryor process the museum collection. Here, they are working in the curatorial office space in the Basement of the Main House. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 5.30** Museum Technician Joan Pryor performs collections work in the Curator's Office, located in the Basement of the Main House. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



at the park as a seasonal in 1983 and then as a museum technician in 1984, recalled that the park installed museum shelving and cabinets in the Tenant House, following CPG recommendations, but the space was “small and cramped.”<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 5.31** Museum Technician Joan Pryor helped Warren Weber with museum collections work in the years after the park opened. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

The park staff also addressed preservation issues in the house. They covered all the windows, doors, and skylights with a clear ultra-violet light filter Plexiglas and gray-tinted film to reduce light damage, using money from the “operating program.” The park purchased three hydrothermographs “suggested in the report and a high quality light measuring device to monitor humidity and light conditions in the Sandburg Home and other museum storage facilities.”<sup>91</sup> By 1982, the park had produced the requested yearlong readings of temperatures and relative humidity and a “complete light survey” at various locations throughout the house. Also in that year, the park staff moved farm yard objects into a centralized location to provide “better security, safety, and environment.”<sup>92</sup>

90 Kathleen Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions by Ann McCleary, October 15, 2012, CARL Park Archive.

91 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1981

92 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982

The staff pursued a variety of preservation projects in the years after the CPG. In 1981, they sent several Edward Steichen photographs and one Alfred Stieglitz photograph and framed prints to Harpers Ferry Center for treatment. With funding from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1982, the park hired a “young person” to do “preservation maintenance” on a large group of metal dairy artifacts, which had been deteriorating.<sup>93</sup> Triggs Byrne sorted objects in the Barn loft and covered them with plastic, painted the manure spreader, and drove the Jeep up the park roads once a week. “At the time, the prevailing thought was that it was better to keep museum pieces like the Jeep in working order,” Triggs Byrne recalled. “Eventually museum guidance said otherwise, but it was great fun to drive it.” She also helped preserve the television antennas and lightning rods when the roof was replaced in 1983.<sup>94</sup>

## Cataloging the Collection

By the 1980s, changes to the cataloging process were also underway. In the early 1970s, when the park started to catalog, each NPS site was responsible for creating its own catalog. During that period, David Wallace began arguing for the creation of a National Catalog when he became assistant chief of the Branch of Museum Operations at Harpers Ferry Center. Funding for the National Catalog project was not available until 1977. This proposed catalog would provide a list of where the collections were and their significance. Parks would send the original copy of the catalog record to the Washington Office and then keep the working copy to use at the park.<sup>95</sup> As Warren Weber recalled, “The Park Service was trying to get copies of records from every park in a central location, so that anybody doing research could go there, and take a look [at the records], and see what might be” available at a specific park.<sup>96</sup>

93 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1981 and 1982. This “young person” may have been Kathleen Triggs Byrne, who reported doing work in the Barn and Milk House. Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

94 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

95 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 209.

96 Weber, interview, 2011.

Trying to establish a standardized cataloging system revealed problems with the existing Park Service classification system. After a 1979 conference called by Curator of the National Catalog, Gordon Gay, the Park Service adopted Robert Chenhall's *Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging: A System for Classifying Man-Made Objects for its Historical Collections*.<sup>97</sup> Weber liked the new system. "They finally decided that what an object was created



**Figure 5.32** Kathleen Triggs Byrne remembers driving the Sandburgs' Jeep around the farm. At the time, the park staff thought using the vehicle would help to preserve it. (CARL Park Archive).

for, its original purpose is the way it should be cataloged, even though it might be used for advertising or something else later on." Although the Park Service "went through a complete system change there," Weber remembered, "We weren't so far along that we couldn't adapt to that new system and we began to hire staff." In 1982, the park hired a temporary archive technician to "convert over 4,000 catalog cards" to the Chenhall's Nomenclature, which "completed the backlog in that project area." By the end of that year, the park sent 5,000 new catalog cards to the curator of the National Card Catalog and another 4,500 cards the following year, in 1983.<sup>98</sup>

Recognizing that the cataloging would be going on for "several more years," the park began a "survey/inventory task" in the Main House in 1982. They were able to "locate, inventory, classify, and catalog over 700 significant letters to and from Carl Sandburg, culled out of the overall collection through the survey function." The park also submitted ten completed catalog books to Harpers Ferry in 1982.<sup>99</sup>

Weber observed that the cataloging at the park began to pick up steam in the 1980s. "We got a permanent curator and they spent all their time with the collection. They had some part-time help and some short term employees, temporary employees, and moved forward with the funding."<sup>100</sup> However, even after the CPG report, primarily museum technicians and seasonal staff were performing curatorial work. Staff cycled in and out of these jobs after a few years, sometimes taking their skills on to other parks or to the regional or even the national NPS offices. For example, James Eldredge transferred into the museum technician position in June 1981, in which he performed cataloging and housekeeping, but he left in 1983 to return to law school and the position remained unfilled.<sup>101</sup>

Kathleen Triggs Byrne came to the park as a volunteer interested in learning more about the goat herd, and she began working with Mrs. Sandburg's papers. She accepted a seasonal position to help with historic housekeeping in 1983 and continued to do this work and help with cataloging and other collections task once she became a permanent museum aid in 1984. As she completed her Master's thesis on Mrs. Sandburg's goat herd, Weber encouraged her to apply for other positions in the Park Service. Her experience at CARL proved so valuable that she transferred to work for the chief curator at the Washington Office in September 1985.<sup>102</sup>

The museum aides also assisted with interpretive tours of the Main House because Weber thought it "gave them a basis for knowing the house and the story of the house so they could put things in context."<sup>103</sup> Eldredge assisted with public programs and Triggs Byrne helped occasionally as well. "It was a sore point with the museum staff that we were called on to do museum tours," recalled Triggs Byrne, "because the interpretive staff never was real willing to help us with the cataloging." Triggs Byrne also helped with the goat herd,

97 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 209-10.

98 Weber, interview, 2011; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982 and 1983.

99 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982. There is considerable correspondence on this topic in the CARL [CASS] File in the SERO Archive.

100 Weber, interview, 2011.

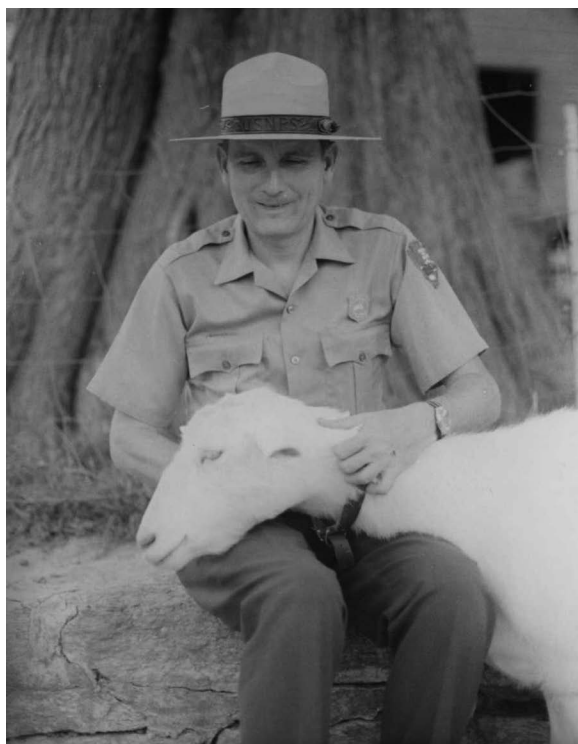
101 Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1981 through 1985.

102 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981-5; Judy Hellmich-Bryan, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, July 21, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive; Triggs Byrne, personal communication, 2012.

103 Weber, interview, 2011.

“dehorning some of the kids” and giving medicine, because she had experience working with goats.<sup>104</sup>

Some of the seasonal interpretive staff members did take an interest in the cataloging. One of these staff members was Bess Gibbs, a seasonal guide in the house, who began cataloging the collection when visitation was slow.<sup>105</sup> “When we weren’t busy, Warren would have me go upstairs and catalog,” Gibbs remembered. “When a tour would come in, a ranger downstairs would call me.”<sup>106</sup> Janene Donovan, who began as a seasonal in 1982, also remembered volunteering to assist with cataloging over the winter months, when tours were slow, and then again in the summer.<sup>107</sup>



**Figure 5.33** Curator Warren Weber enjoys spending time with the goats in the barnyard. July 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

Triggs Byrne recalled that Shirley Payne was “more or less the head of cataloging” at the park while Triggs Byrne was there. Payne had her own office, while the others, sometimes four or five people, shared the room next door. She “kept track of the

104 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

105 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1985; Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

106 Bess Gibbs, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, March 8, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

107 Janene Donovan, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, March 9, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

cataloging.” Payne provided blocks of numbers for the catalogers to use, and they would come to her when they finished up their block to get more numbers.<sup>108</sup>

In 1982 when Triggs Byrne began work as a seasonal at the park, the main furnishings in the house had already been cataloged. She worked mostly on “odds and ends from closets or drawers or occasionally things that I found while cleaning.” She also assisted in processing a small archeological collection. Besides her housekeeping work at the Main House, she worked on cleaning the Swedish House and the Wash House, as well as the Tenant House, where many of the collections were stored. She helped sort objects in the Barn



**Figure 5.34** Bess Gibbs joined the park staff in 1981 as a seasonal ranger and assisted with cataloging the museum collection when visitation was slow. July 1981 (CARL Park Archive)

loft and covered them with plastic and also cleaned the collection in the farm buildings. Triggs Byrne remembers Superintendent Davis being “very interested” in the work the museum staff was doing. “He would tour the park in the afternoon and almost always stopped by to see how the cataloging was progressing.”<sup>109</sup>

In January 1985, the park hired Judy Hellmich-Bryan as a museum technician. When she came

108 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

109 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.



from the Southeast Archeological Center to work as “unofficially the lead museum technician,” she was responsible for “supervising the historic housekeeper, another museum technician, and managing the collection, working on cataloging.” Hellmich-Bryan remembered “there were a lot of volunteers doing cataloging back then, too.” The scale of the collection did not overwhelm her, as she came from an archeological center where half of the objects had not been cataloged. Still, she added, “It was a totally different type of cataloging.” In the Archeology Center, they cataloged “by lots as opposed to individual items.”<sup>110</sup>

One of the particular challenges at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was not only the sheer number of objects but also the size of the archival collection and the manner in which it was being processed. “There were just boxes and boxes of stuff in the Basement, and the Tenant House, and the Swedish House, that had not been done,” Hellmich-Bryan remembered. The park staff had started processing the archival materials item by item, with each piece of paper documented through its own catalog sheet, as if they were artifacts, a process that continued through the 1980s. “The Park Service didn’t really have any archivist at the time,” Hellmich-Bryan recalled, but “in hindsight, I think it could have been a lot simpler if a lot of the materials had been cataloged as an archival collection.” Just as with the objects, the park used the cataloging worksheets from the Washington Office, and completed one worksheet for every piece of paper. She recalled that the park requested the assistance of Diane Vogt, an NPS specialist with archival training from the Washington Office, but Vogt was never able to come to the park to assist in determining best practices for cataloging the extensive collection.<sup>111</sup>

Another challenge, Hellmich-Bryan remembered, was that the staff had been completing the cataloging by focusing on specific object types “room by room.” First, they cataloged all the furniture in all of the rooms, and then they went back through the house to catalog the books, and



**Figure 5.35** The collection at CARL ranged from a nineteenth century sewing machine to a more modern television. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

so on. She recalled “going back into a room where everything had supposedly been cataloged and finding lots of items that hadn’t.”<sup>112</sup> Ultimately it would not be until 1988 that the park would receive the funding it needed to begin a substantial drive to finish cataloging the collection.

Still Hellmich-Bryan’s position was not focused completely on cleaning, maintenance, and documentation of the collection. Similar to the other museum positions, she also led interpretive tours. She left after about a year and a half at Carl Sandburg Home NHS to accept a position at Cumberland Island National Seashore, at the encouragement of Regional Curator Dale Durham, to provide much needed curatorial assistance there. Hellmich-Bryan returned to CARL in 1987 and accepted a full-time curator position at the park—a position created as part of the ongoing effort to implement the recommendations in the Collections Preservation Guide.<sup>113</sup>

## Developing a Computerized Collections Program

The National Park Service first began to consider computers for use in collections management as early as 1969, but the creation of the National Catalog in 1977 further sparked this development.<sup>114</sup> In 1982, NPS Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock created a National Catalog Steering Committee to “further refine the classification system” and to propose additional changes in

110 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

111 Hellmich-Bryan, interview. This may have been Diane Vogt-O’Connor, whom Dale Durham said was the “first blush” at an archivist with the National Park Service, but then she moved on to the National Archives. Dale Durham, interview, 2011.

112 Hellmich-Bryan, interview

113 Hellmich-Bryan, interview; Durham, interview.

114 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 310-1.

procedures for maintaining museum records.<sup>115</sup> Automated recordkeeping was about to begin, but the National Park Service needed a park to test the new system.

Dale Durham, regional curator and the head of the Museum Services Division at the Southeast Regional Office, also pushed for computerization, but he attributes the development and success of the first system to Sarah Zimny, who worked with him at SERO. Durham recalled that “in the mid-80s, ’83, ’84,” when the Park Service was beginning to get excited about moving to computers,” he said to Zimny, “What I would love to have is a computerized system so we can generate reports, do inventories, and all that.” Zimny responded by saying that she thought the new dBase program the Park Service was using could accomplish that. Durham told her, “‘Fine, if you want to take a crack at it, here’s the criteria.’ So she went back and forth with me giving encouragement and making suggestions along until we got a good program.” At that point, Durham said he “reprogrammed some money to buy two computers for CARL, and we took Sarah’s program and put it up at CARL as a demonstration project.”<sup>116</sup>

Durham remembered when he introduced the program to the Washington Office. He was doing training there, and he had the opportunity to talk with Chief Curator Anne Hitchcock and Joan Bacharach. Bacharach was “the cataloging guru, and they liked what they saw and they took it to some developers.” They “came up with a dBase Plus program that became ANCS,” the Automated National Catalog System.<sup>117</sup>

Park records proudly state that the Park Service chose Carl Sandburg Home NHS to serve as a pilot program for the Southeast Region. The 1982 Annual Report explained that the director of the Southeast Regional Office visited the park to discuss “a desire to place a computer here to aid in the curatorial program.”<sup>118</sup> The park received an IBM computer, model PC, and printer to begin the pilot automated catalog project in June 1983. It was the first computer at the park. Park Archive Technician Shirley Payne worked with Regional

Museum Curator Dale Durham and Sarah Zimny to “set up programs for our own use and for use elsewhere within the SE region.”<sup>119</sup> By December 1983, Superintendent Ben Davis wrote that the computer program for historic museum collections was almost complete. Payne was working with Durham and Zimny to iron out the remaining details before the program would be sent to other parks in the region.<sup>120</sup> Kathleen Triggs Byrne remembered Durham in Payne’s office discussing the pilot project.<sup>121</sup>

Judy Hellmich-Bryan believes that the Park Service selected CARL because of the size and diversity of its collection. “It’s a lot of household items, and farm items, and some natural history items, and so it was just an ideal test park, given the size of the collection and the combination of archival objects and three dimensional objects.”<sup>122</sup> Durham agreed, adding that CARL had “such a variety, all kinds of objects,” which made it ideal for testing.<sup>123</sup> Triggs Byrne believed the park was chosen “because we had a very active cataloging program and a staff member eager and willing to participate.” She remembered that both Davis and Weber “saw the potential for the program and felt participating in the test would be good for the park.”<sup>124</sup>

Museum Technician Shirley Payne played a significant role in the automation project in the park and service-wide. Payne was first mentioned as an archive technician spearheading the project at the park in the 1983 Annual Report. That year, she received a Special Achievement Award “for her work on the museum program.” By 1984, the park’s Annual Report said that Payne was serving on the National Catalog Steering Committee, chaired by Joan Bacharach, and that she was working closely with Sarah Zimny and Dale Durham in the regional office, and staff in the chief curator’s Office in

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115 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 210.

116 Durham, interview.

117 Durham, interview.

118 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982.

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119 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1983. There is a June 6, 1983 letter at Southeast Regional Office that the park had received the computer for collections management.

120 Benjamin H. Davis, Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, to Associate Director, Operations, memorandum, Computer Program for Museum Collections, December 14, 1983, CARL [CASS], SERO Archive; Durham, interview, 2011.

121 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

122 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

123 Durham, interview.

124 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

Washington, to implement the Automated National Catalog System.<sup>125</sup>

While Payne led the automated cataloging work at the park, she also processed the park collections into the new computerized database, which Hellmich-Bryan and Durham described as DP2 or Database Management 2. Payne set up the computer in her office in Margaret's Bedroom, and Hellmich-Bryan worked in Margaret's Study, adjacent to the bedroom.<sup>126</sup> To prepare staff in implementing the new program, the park sent three members of the curatorial staff to Clemson University in 1984 for computer training.<sup>127</sup> "This was all new," Hellmich-Bryan recalled. "Nobody had PCs back then!"<sup>128</sup>

Hellmich-Bryan remembered, "Shirley Payne was working really closely with the Washington Office on the development of the Automated National Catalog System. It was not going back to the old records, but automating the records that were being created at that time. We were integrally involved with the Washington Office on developing the program and doing some of the coding and a lot of the testing and training." By 1986, Payne was providing training to others in the Park Service.<sup>129</sup> Triggs Byrne, while not interested in the computerized system at the time, ended up transferring to the Washington Office, where she has "spent years developing and working on the current program that eventually evolved from that pilot."<sup>130</sup>

As Durham recalled years later, "CARL was instrumental in the formation of the Automated National Cataloging System for the Park Service."<sup>131</sup>

## Creating a Furnishings Plan

The National Park Service completed a Historic Furnishings Report for the park in 1984, following another recommendation from the Collections Preservation Guide. The idea of a historic furnishing plan as a document for park museums began to develop in 1940, when the Park Service issued a directive stating that "The furnishing of a historic structure should be undertaken only . . . on the basis of a carefully prepared and approved plan." Still, the development of furnishing plans service-wide proceeded slowly. The Museum Branch received its first request for a furnishings plan in 1955, and over the next two decades, the NPS museum services staff developed the concept of what a furnishings plan should be and what information should be included. Between 1957 and 1968, the National Park Service, under Ralph Lewis, chief of the NPS Museum Service Branch, established "formal guidelines for furnishing planning." The 1964 NPS reorganization created the Branch of Museum Operations, which would take the lead in creating these plans. In 1973, Dr. David Wallace, then chief of the Branch of Museum Operations, participated in a conference of regional curators who helped create guidelines for furnishings plans to meet the demands and needs of both historians and curators. The National Park Service issued these guidelines in 1976.<sup>132</sup>

Wallace was considered "one of the few staff members who possessed a broad curatorial understanding based on sound professional experience in museums outside as well as within the Service" and one of only two Park Service staff with the knowledge to prepare furnishings plans. When Wallace became director of the new Branch of Reference Services in 1974, he assumed responsibility for furnished historic structure museums. He assembled a small staff of furnishing planners to assist him, and Harpers Ferry Center took the lead in developing furnishing plans for Park Service sites.<sup>133</sup> The guidelines required "outlining the interpretive objectives first, and then describing who lived in or used the structure and how each of the rooms was used over a span of

125 Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1982-5. The 1982 report notes that a temporary archive technician was hired to convert the catalog cards to the new Chenhall Nomenclature, and it is possible Payne was in this position and stayed on to work in the museum program, since she would be familiar with the nomenclature.

126 Hellmich-Bryan, interview; Bess Gibbs, interview.

127 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1984.

128 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

129 Hellmich-Bryan, interview; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1986.

130 Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions.

131 Durham, interview.

132 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 235-45; David Wallace, interview with Ann McCleary, May 18, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

133 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 201, 245.



years.” Then the plan would include “information on the furnishings themselves.”<sup>134</sup>

The Park Service had two variants on the furnishings plan. The first type of plan was for the historic home that had been furnished by a park or other agency without benefit of a formal plan. In these cases, the Park Service would start “from scratch, as though the house were empty.” The second type of plan was for the home in which “the furniture of their historic occupants” remained “largely in place.” These houses “required the faithful preservation of authentic historic environments rather than the recreation of such environments.”<sup>135</sup> Carl Sandburg Home NHS fell into the second category. While the furnishings were there, the park still needed to decide how to furnish the house. The Sandburgs had lived in the home for twenty-four years, so questions arose about what should be on display and to what period the house would be interpreted.

In 1974, when the park opened, Superintendent Ron Thoman worked closely with Sandburg’s granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega and her mother Helga Sandburg to stage the house for interpretation using the furnishings that existed. Thoman recalled, “It was important we picked a period of time, and even a season and a time of the day at the point in time in which we were going to interpret the place, or at least the point in time that the rooms in the house would appear.” They selected the early years between 1946 and 1952, when the family first moved there and when Paula and Helga lived in the home. These were the most active and “productive” years for Sandburg, “when the most things were going on at the farm, when Mrs. Sandburg’s goat herd was the biggest.” Sandburg would typically work late into the night, sleep in until noon, and then have lunch with the family in the Dining Room. When they went back to work, he would stay in the Dining Room and read his mail. This was the period around which Thoman and Polega agreed to “organize the appearance of the house. Our story to the public was [that] you’re seeing the house as it would be about shortly after lunchtime. Carl had gotten up and gone for a walk, but his mail [was] still on

the table . . . and the table was still set with empty dishes that they had finished on.”<sup>136</sup>

Another question that arose at this time was whether to show the house with Sandburg’s piles of papers. The family told Thoman that he would work all around the house, and “wherever he worked there were huge stacks of notes and newspapers and books, and literally, it was kind of the mess of a genius at work. The whole house was taken up with his work, and it was pretty messy.” When Sandburg died, however, Mrs. Sandburg “rearranged furniture and tidied everything up and put everything away so that it would look nice and orderly. She probably felt that she would be ashamed of the appearance of the house the way Carl worked in it.” Polega and Helga Sandburg told Thoman, “If you’re going to present a true picture of how this place looked when Carl lived and worked there, we’re going to have to mess it up literally. And that’s exactly what we did,” using their family photo albums to see where the clutter was. Thoman recalled that they obtained the original materials “and strew it around the house as it appeared in those photos and as Paula and Helga remembered it.” The family hoped that the farm would be preserved accurately “in that sort of messy way a farm can be and a house could be.” Helga’s sister Margaret Sandburg “did not always agree with what Helga and Paula urged as being the most appropriate and most important way to present the site,” so the staff made some adjustments.<sup>137</sup>

Even still, questions continued to arise about the interpretation of the house and farm, and much of that would come back to the way that the house was furnished. As Warren Weber recalled, “We had a plan that Ron did, but we always wanted a furnishings plan because we were never quite sure just what was there.” Weber remembered some controversy between Paula Polega, Helga Sandburg, and Margaret Sandburg about how the house should be furnished and interpreted. “We didn’t have any good basis for what we were doing,” Weber recalled. “A furnishings plan was one of the documents that every park likes to have.” So the park requested the plan.<sup>138</sup>

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134 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*; Wallace, interview.

135 Lewis, *Museum Curatorship*, 246.

136 Thoman, interview, 2003; Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 25-6.

137 Thoman, interview, 2003.

138 Weber, personal communication.



**Figure 5.36** The Sandburg home had been full of stacks of papers, newspapers, notes, and books, making the house messy. Mrs. Sandburg cleaned up many of these stacks, but the Home Furnishings Report recommended including them. In this 1967 photograph, stacks of magazines still remain at the foot of the stairs on the main floor. 1967 (CARL Park Archive).

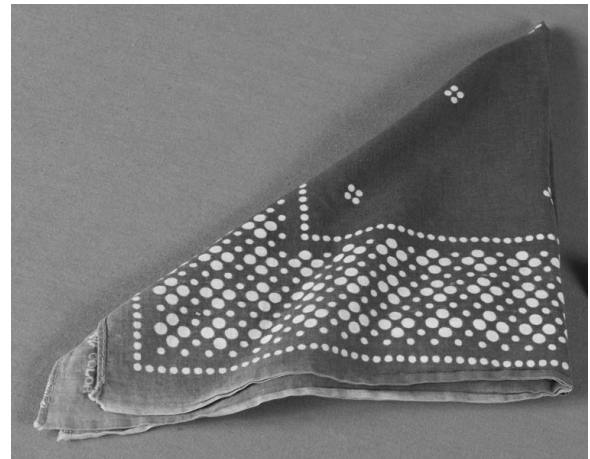
In 1982, Harpers Ferry Center informed the park that it was scheduled for a historic house furnishings plan to begin in the 1983 fiscal year.<sup>139</sup> Dale Durham, the regional curator at SERO, recommended that \$12,000 in “new funds” be used for this purpose.<sup>140</sup> In February 1983, HFC noted that it would distribute the task directive on May 1.<sup>141</sup> Fortunately for the park, the Harpers Ferry Center asked David Wallace to prepare the furnishings plan. Weber was pleased because he knew Wallace and the quality of his work since the two had worked together at Independence Hall.<sup>142</sup>

Wallace had taken early retirement from the NPS in 1980, but his replacement, Sarah Olsen, asked if he would be interested in preparing the furnishings plan as a contract project. “I was always interested in objects,” Wallace recalled, and “partly because it was a twentieth-century site at Carl Sandburg, I felt that not having a Winterthur degree did not

disqualify me. I remember the twentieth century! So I was glad of the opportunity to take on the job, not realizing how big a job it was.” He reflected that he “underestimated the cost.” Wallace spent several weeks that year living in Hendersonville to complete the research, and he asked Kathleen Triggs Byrne to assist him with some research at the park.<sup>143</sup>

Wallace began by reviewing park records and photographs. He explained that there were “hundreds of photographs” in the site files that show the Main House, and others were added

143 Wallace, interview; Triggs Byrne, personal communication. Most of the on-site research was completed by the end of 1983. Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1983. In 1984, Davis was looking for old photographs of the Park, probably to help with this process. See Carl Sandburg Home NHS 1974-File, WASO Files.



**Figures 5.37 (above) and 5.38 (below)** Many of the items at Connemara were quite ordinary but gained significance because of their association with Sandburg and his family, such as this bandana and alarm clock. (CARL Park Archive)



139 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982.

140 Regional Curator, Southeast Region, to Chief Branch of Historic Furnishings, HFC, memorandum, Development of Historic Furnishings Plan, April 6, 1982, CARL [CASS] File, SERO Archive.

141 Deputy Manager, Harpers Ferry Center, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Historic Furnishings Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, February 25, 1983, CARL [CASS], SERO Archive.

142 Weber, personal communication.

during the research process as Superintendent Davis put out a call for any additional images.<sup>144</sup> Wallace remembered reading *My Connemara* and he “loved it.” He toured the house with Weber and members of the family. Wallace also conducted oral histories and reviewed earlier interviews with family members and receipts and documents found at the house. Throughout the process, he drew upon the Interpretive Prospectus, stating, “They already had that then. They knew how they wanted to show the house.”<sup>145</sup>

The primary value of the furnishings, Wallace wrote in the Historic Furnishings Report (HFR), was to provide “visual aids to interpreting what sort of man Sandburg was and how he related to his physical surroundings.” Unlike other historic homes, where tours might read like a “museum catalog,” the furnishings in the Sandburg home were “so familiar and unexceptional that they draw little attention to themselves, leaving the interpreter free to talk about Carl Sandburg and his family and how the house and its contents reflect their distinctive personalities and shared way of life.” Perhaps the most powerful furnishings were the collection of books, which “dramatically and insistently speaks to the pervading presence, throughout the house, of Carl Sandburg, man of letters.”<sup>146</sup> Wallace argued that the absence of fine furnishings also revealed the Sandburg family’s values. Their “lack of concern about appearances,” “indifference to conventional notions of style,” and willingness to put up with Sandburg’s papers and clutter all around the home reflected a family which was supportive of Sandburg’s work and “saw furnishings as important only for the service they provided.”<sup>147</sup>

As Wallace recalled, the “only real question that came up was the period of interpretation. And that was developed in my mind over time.” Wallace’s ideas “did not completely jive with what the Sandburg family had done after [Sandburg’s] death, when they were preparing the house for exhibition.” After Sandburg’s death, Wallace heard that Mrs. Sandburg “felt that [the house] needed fancying up a little, like putting up curtains on the windows that never had curtains, because he liked windows that you could look out of.” Wallace

recommended that the park reverse the changes that Mrs. Sandburg made, from the scalloped window shades in the downstairs front rooms to the framed photographs of Carl Sandburg hung in many downstairs rooms.<sup>148</sup>

Other tensions also developed around the period of interpretation. Wallace recalled that granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega, in particular, was “very anxious to show it as nearly as possible as it had been when she was a little girl, the period of *My Connemara*, when he was in full bloom as a writer.” After Carl Sandburg’s death but before the Park Service acquired the property, Polega had “worked with her grandmother to set it up the way they wanted it.”<sup>149</sup> However, Wallace wrote that furnishing the house to interpret family life in the early years while Paula lived there, from 1946 to 1952, would require “reversing changes made in the 1960s” and “removing things that had been there during his lifetime. You would have to replace things that were missing that were there in the 1950s and 60s.”<sup>150</sup>

The Historic Furnishings Report recommended furnishing the house to the “setting of Sandburg’s last years” and removing “only those [artifacts] that were added later” by Mrs. Sandburg to “make things look a little better.” Wallace argued that there was greater photographic coverage of the 1960s, when Sandburg “was more inclined to work downstairs than upstairs.” Through this plan, interpreters could share with visitors how the Sandburgs used *Connemara* during the years the family lived here. In the end, Wallace believed that “the differences meant more to the family than they would to the visiting public, particularly in the first tour rooms.”<sup>151</sup>

Weber recalled that the “real conflict” occurred regarding the furnishing of the two rooms off the Dining Room (Rooms 104 and 108). Helga Sandburg used this suite of rooms for her and her children when the family first moved here, but she moved to Washington in 1952 when she remarried. After she moved out, Margaret used Helga’s former

144 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, v.

145 Wallace, interview.

146 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 1-2.

147 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 36-39.

148 Wallace, interview; Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 24.

149 Wallace, interview.

150 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 2; Wallace, interview.

151 Wallace, interview; Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 2-3.



bedroom as her Bedroom and Sitting Room (Room 104) and the adjacent room as her Study and Guest Room (Room 108). In 1984, both rooms were being used as the curator's work areas and were not open to the public. Polega wanted to set up those rooms as they had been when she and her mother lived there, but Margaret claimed that Helga and Paula were not at the house for many years and did not see the changes that occurred. Further, the park still had the furniture to stage the room as Margaret's Bedroom. Wallace recommended that these two rooms be "restored to their 1967-9 state" when Margaret used them.<sup>152</sup>

Wallace shared the preliminary drafts of the HFR with Park Service staff and with the family, including Margaret Sandburg, John Carl Steichen, Paula Steichen Polega, and Helga Sandburg, all of whom offered their comments. Wallace did his best to incorporate their suggestions into the final report. For example, in the Living Room, "I showed his corner with piles of books and things, because that's where he worked when he could no longer go upstairs to the study," for which Wallace had photographic evidence. The family preferred that the Living Room be interpreted as a family room, where they would sing and talk with friends. Wallace's final recommendation "sort of combined that. The guitar was still visible. The piano, of course, was there. But I was planning to show a work situation as did exist." The family was most concerned about the Living Room and the downstairs Office, more so than the second floor or the Basement. "There again," Wallace reflected, "The visual evidence was all from the later period, when Helga came back and photographed things."<sup>153</sup>

Warren Weber remembered the challenges of working with family members who had different opinions. He recalled Wallace reflecting after he finished the report that "You know, Warren, the next project I do, I'm going to make sure the people have been dead 2,000 years!" Weber recalled, "I know that some folks don't always agree with what he wrote. They want to change it." Paula Steichen Polega wanted to introduce "more of when her mother (Helga) was here," but Margaret disagreed,

responding, "They weren't here for years and years and I was here every day."<sup>154</sup>

Still, Wallace considered the opportunity to work with Sandburg family members "absolutely crucial. It was just how you used it that caused some slight difficulties." Polega did not approve as much of the plan, but Helga did, because "the time she was there with the children meant less to her." Margaret liked the period of interpretation, but she disagreed with his original proposal to interpret the first floor bedroom as Helga's room. "Margaret preferred that it be when she was there. And of course that's the way it is."<sup>155</sup>

A draft of the plan was available in January 1985.<sup>156</sup> Weber remembered taking it to Margaret Sandburg's house and sitting with her for hours while she reviewed it and added her comments, all of which provided useful insight for Wallace.<sup>157</sup> Wallace revised the plan, incorporating changes recommended by the reviewers and the "many comments made by Margaret Sandburg." This second draft went out for review in July 1986, by which time Wallace had been rehired by the National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center.<sup>158</sup> Copies circulated as far up as the office of the Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock and Chief Historian Edward Bearss, who praised Wallace for "a skillful blending of documentary sources, oral history and iconography." Hitchcock's only two comments were that the park should not use any dried or live plant material in the house and that Wallace incorporate recommendations for fire protection and security.<sup>159</sup>

The final report contained "all of the documentary and most of the photographic evidence," Wallace recalled, "which is why it's so incredibly bulky." It proved to be an example of a furnishings plan that

152 Weber, personal communication; Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 4, 109-110.

153 Wallace, interview.

154 Weber, interview.

155 Wallace, interview.

156 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1985; Associate Director, National Park Service, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Historic Furnishings Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, August 12, 1986, SERO Archive.

157 Weber, personal communication.

158 Acting Manager, Harpers Ferry Center, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Historic Furnishings Report, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, July 9, 1986, SERO Archive.

159 Associate Director, NPS, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum, Historic Furnishings Report, August 12, 1986.

others following him would use.<sup>160</sup> Superintendent Davis praised Wallace for his excellent work in the 1986 Superintendent's Annual Report, adding that "this document will be an important addition to the park library."<sup>161</sup>

While the directive for the furnishings plan included the Swedish House, Wallace did not offer many recommendations for this building. "There was so little you could do about it," he remembered, "And so little that the public could see about it anyway. I got very little information, and it had not been very much changed by the time I got there. It was still basically a storage area." Wallace recommended that the Swedish House be left "the way it is" and that visitors "just look in the window or look in the door."<sup>162</sup> He proposed that visitors only access the first floor, because of safety concerns regarding the "twisting stairs."<sup>163</sup>

Wallace still considers the Historic Furnishing Report at the Carl Sandburg Home National History Site one of his favorite projects. "It was partly the human relationships, I think, getting to know the family. And it was an extremely interesting house, and it's a period that I was completely comfortable with. And it was fun to look for furnishings that were needed that you could get in flea markets, and so on," including wastebaskets. He would go with other Harpers Ferry Center staff to "big antique shows and big flea markets, outdoor antique shows, with the lists of what we were looking for. And we would confer with each other on suitability. And since I was dealing with twentieth century objects, again, Winterthur background was not required."<sup>164</sup> Wallace remembers purchasing in Frederick, Maryland, a metal kitchen step stool and an "end-table radio that looked very much like the one that Sandburg had" in the 1960s photographs. He claimed that the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was "one of the easiest sites to interpret, because there is so much information from the family from the period."<sup>165</sup>

As a whole, there was not much that needed to be added to the house to implement the plan. In

January 1985, Wallace requested \$3,000 to buy some necessary items.<sup>166</sup> "They had pretty much left it, kept it pretty intact. So there was not a great deal of need to go out and buy things or look for donations," Wallace recalled. The family donated some items they had taken to their home in Asheville. Wallace remembered Margaret saying, "Oh, I have this. I took it when we moved and you can have it."<sup>167</sup> Wallace was still acquiring items for the house over the next few years; he donated a photo of Elizabeth Taylor for Janet's room and was still looking for a "chrome and vinyl stool" for the kitchen in early 1991.<sup>168</sup>

Curator Judy Hellmich-Bryan used the Historic Furnishings Report for "day-to-day work, maintenance work in the house. Just a reminder. This is where this goes, and this is the provenance of everything that's in the room." She considered the historical photographs to be the "the most valuable part of that document, because that's what we used in terms of staging everything."<sup>169</sup>

While the curatorial program evolved substantially during the Davis years, the cataloging process inched along slowly. As Dale Durham recalled, the National Park Service began to pay more attention to collections at its parks, but funding and staff would remain limited, especially in the budget-cutting years of the early 1980s. Park staff members were pulled off of curatorial tasks to do other things, and then "you don't seem to get anything done." It would not be until after March 1985, when the Office of the Inspector General issued a report citing major issues in collections management and accountability at national parks that more dedicated funding for collections came into the regional office, and then to the parks. According to Durham, this report had "a ripple effect throughout the Service and caused the infusion of funding for cataloging and collection management in the NPS that lasted for many years."<sup>170</sup> In the early 1980s, Durham might receive

166 Manager, Harpers Ferry Center [Ellsworth Swift] to Regional Director, Southeast Region, memorandum January 9, 1985, Carl Sandburg Home NHS 1974-File, WASO Files.

167 Wallace, interview.

168 David H. Wallace to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, memorandum, January 3, 1991, CARL—General File, SERO.

169 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

170 Dale Durham, email communication with Ann McCleary, September 3, 2012.

160 Wallace, interview.

161 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1986.

162 Wallace, interview.

163 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report*, 1984, 5.

164 Wallace, interview.

165 Wallace, interview.



**Figure 5.39** David Wallace, from the NPS Harpers Ferry Center, found this metal step stool, similar to the one that the Sandburg family had in the house, in Frederick, Maryland, and added it to the museum collection. (CARL Park Archive).

only \$60,000 to divide between the 61 parks under his jurisdiction. New funding at the regional level after 1985 led to significant results in cataloging and preservation of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site collection.<sup>171</sup>

In the meantime, the park had to devote a significant amount of staff time and resources to implementing the interpretive program now that the park was open.



**Figure 5.40** David Wallace enjoyed working on the Historic Furnishings Report because he knew and understood the types of ordinary, twentieth century objects that would be included. He located a photograph of Elizabeth Taylor for Janet's Room, shown here. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

171 Durham, interview.





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# CHAPTER 6

## Interpreting the Sandburg Story, 1974-1986

With the opening of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS), the creation of the interpretive program took on a more urgent role for the park's leadership team. During the years that the park waited for the anticipated developmental funds to prepare for the opening, the attention focused primarily on preserving the historic buildings and beginning work on documenting the collections. These activities were in keeping with early National Park Service (NPS) philosophy that preservation and physical development, through restoration and rehabilitation, precede interpretation of historic sites. As NPS Historian Barry Macintosh has written, the phases of "preservation and physical development are valuable in proportion to their contribution to" the interpretation phase of historic sites.<sup>1</sup> After several years of preservation and physical development, the park was ready to focus on interpreting Carl Sandburg. While the park had offered occasional tours and a few programs both on-site and off-site and had begun to develop the living history farm operations prior to the opening, developing the interpretive agenda would become a primary focus during Superintendent Benjamin Davis' tenure.

The staff had to hurry to prepare for the museum opening with little time and few resources. The park created a reception area in the Basement of the Main House, developed a house tour, and prepared signage and a park folder. The initial plans drew upon the Interpretive Prospectus prepared in 1970, though park staff and some National Park Service planners had raised questions and disagreed with some of the recommendations offered. A second interpretive planning process began a month before the park opened, as the Denver Service Center spearheaded

writing the Development Concept Plan (DCP). The Plan was approved in 1979 and provided guidance to the park into the twenty-first century. In the early 1980s, the park also created a plan for visitor services and interpretive operations that would build on the DCP, fine-tuning park operations integral to the desired visitor experience.

During this period, the park would refine its house tour and train staff and volunteers to conduct the tours. The living history farm would be more fully developed, but then cut back after 1978 to focus primarily on a small, representative goat herd featuring breeds that Mrs. Sandburg owned. Staff developed a new set of successful public programs, working closely with the Flat Rock Playhouse. The park became an agency of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, which helped provide funding to keep works by and about Carl Sandburg in print and available to the public and to develop interpretive programming. By 1979, the Park Service would provide funds to construct a new visitor contact facility and parking area, allowing the park to improve its visitor services component. Visitation would continue to grow over the period, as visitors near and far discovered the treasures that this park had to offer.

When Carl Sandburg Home NHS was established, several significant trends were influencing interpretation in national parks. The Mission 66 Initiative had recently concluded special projects aimed at upgrading the quality of national park facilities throughout the country, setting higher expectations to create more modern, safe, and accessible sites that visitors would appreciate and utilize. Environmentalists were successful in pushing a conservation agenda forward and U.S. legislators were passing new and creative laws designed to protect the environment as never before. This emphasis on conservation led NPS to

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1 Barry Macintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, 1989), 19.

develop special materials for school groups and “environmental study areas” in 63 parks by 1970.<sup>2</sup> And, “living history” was “fashionable” among NPS interpretive staff, with the number of NPS “living interpretation” activities growing from a reported 41 in 1968 to 114 in 1974.<sup>3</sup> Carl Sandburg Home NHS interpretive planning included elements of all of these emerging trends, featuring environmental and conservation emphases for visitors and schools groups, and the goat herd with accompanying barn interpretation as a popular living history idea.



**Figure 6.1** Leroy Levi works with the goats in the barnyard. The goats remain a popular part of the interpretive programming at the park. October 16, 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

## The Interpretive Prospectus

In 1969, during the Master Planning process for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the National Park Service also began the development of an Interpretive Prospectus. Creation of the documents proceeded together. Ideas from the Interpretive Prospectus were incorporated into the Master Plan so that the two documents presented a coherent agenda for this new national park.

The Interpretive Prospectus of 1970 stated the major theme for the park as “Carl Sandburg’s life at his home, Connemara, and his works as a poet, historian, public speaker, and folk singer.”<sup>4</sup> This

theme was further refined in the 1971 Master Plan as “Carl Sandburg, poet, historian, public speaker, folk singer, and above all an American, lived here.” The “way of life” at Connemara, with the daily walks, goat herd, love of nature, visits by “distinguished guests,” Sandburg’s erratic work schedule, the home environment, and his “simple” lifestyle would introduce this man to the public and provide an opportunity for the visitor to understand Sandburg and “to make his own decisions as to Sandburg’s greatness.” Both planning documents included a “minor theme” of Christopher Memminger and his relationship to the site, while the Master Plan added another secondary interpretive theme of the “Flat Rock community.”<sup>5</sup> The Interpretive Prospectus featured five objectives to “strengthen” the interpretive themes: “To communicate to the young as well as adults, to encourage people to read Sandburg’s works, to convey the feelings and philosophies that motivated him, to create a wider understanding of his works and their relevance to the common man today, and to give the visitor an opportunity to decide for himself as to Sandburg’s greatness.”<sup>6</sup>

The Interpretive Prospectus proposed that the visitor experience be “low-key, not rushed, uncrowded—much as was the Sandburg style. Encouraging but not forceful. Thought provoking but not in depth. It will be a sampling of Sandburg—his accomplishments and way of life,” an experience that would introduce Sandburg to visitors and allow them to determine how his contributions may have influenced American culture.<sup>7</sup> The home and its rich collection would allow visitors to surround themselves “with the man’s personality and character and absorb some of the feeling that helped motivate the thoughts expressed in his words.” After touring the house, visitors would have the opportunity to visit the other buildings on the farm and enjoy “quiet time” on the Memminger Trail, “just as Sandburg did so often.” Both documents proposed that the interpretive experience be extended into the outbuildings around the home, with the Family Garage at the house, formerly the kitchen, providing a “browsing place to display additional photos and artifacts” and the Swedish House hosting plays to present interpretive programs

2 Macintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 68-69.

3 Macintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 54-61.

4 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 5.

5 Master Plan, 1971, 31; Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 5.

6 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 5.

7 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 7.



for children. The Prospectus argued that the Sandburgs' farm life could not be understood without a "small goat herd" of the same bloodlines as those raised by the family.<sup>8</sup>

While both the Master Plan and the Interpretive Prospectus contained many of the same ideas about how the park might evolve, the Prospectus then presented, in greater depth, the key elements of the visitor experience. An interpretive facility at the proposed new parking area would provide a brief orientation and exhibit, with park folders available, while visitors waited for the shuttle to take them to the Main House. Visitors would enter the house through a basement reception and sales area, where they could hear Sandburg recordings before proceeding on a guided tour of the house. Upon leaving the house, the visitor would enjoy additional exhibits in the Family Garage and then experience "The Children's Carl Sandburg" in the remodeled Swedish House. From there, visitors would embark on a self-guided tour of the farm area that would "demonstrate the character and vitality of Connemara" and "portray the Sandburg family's interest in goats."<sup>9</sup> Visitors would experience a full goat farming operation at the Barn and see other animals the Sandburgs would have had as part of their livestock operation. The Prospectus emphasized the importance of preserving the cultural landscape, including the vegetable and flower gardens, while leaving the site slightly unkept as Sandburg knew it—the "ponds left undeveloped," the bushes "trimmed some."<sup>10</sup> The Memminger and Big Glassy Trails would provide opportunities for hiking and meditation.<sup>11</sup>

The Prospectus outlined the staffing needs, which included both uniformed rangers at the parking lot and in the visitor reception area. Further, it suggested interpreters dressed in "attire typical of farm life" for the tours, at the farm, and in the theatrical performances. The Prospectus authors recommended hiring Leroy Levi as the farmer-demonstrator and forming a partnership with the Flat Rock Playhouse to engage playhouse apprentices as seasonal interpreters. Other proposed interpretive materials included Carl Sandburg publications, a park folder, a goat



**Figure 6.2** Interpretation at the park includes many opportunities for visitors to enjoy the sights and sounds of a Songfest. American folk music was an important part of Carl Sandburg's personal and professional pursuits. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

brochure, and wayside exhibits at the park.

Off-site programs such as traveling exhibits and performances at the Flat Rock Playhouse were suggested as well.<sup>12</sup>

## Implementing the Interpretive Plan

During the years before the park opened, the staff began to conduct research needed to develop the interpretive program. Park Curator Gordon Gay and other National Park Service staff and volunteers documented the furnishings and conducted oral histories with Mrs. Sandburg and others to gather information for the guided house tours (See Chapter Two). Both Superintendents James Kretschmann and Ron Thoman took an interest in the interpretive program; Thoman had actually come from an interpretive background, as did Gay. They understood the importance of tying all park operations to the story of Carl Sandburg and his life at Connemara. When talking about preparation needed to open the park for the public, Thoman stated, "My whole background was in interpretation before I got into park management, so, the interpretive side of things was not a problem. I handled all that personally, and that was fun."<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Gay and Farm Caretaker Leroy Levi had begun to develop the goat herd. In 1972, the park acquired its first three goats and then continued to add to the herd over the next several years. By the time the park opened, there was a small herd available for interpretive purposes (See Chapter

8 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 5; Master Plan, 1971, 31-2.

9 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 7.

10 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 25.

11 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970, 23.

12 Interpretive Prospectus, 1970.

13 Thoman, interview, 2011.

Two). In addition, Paula Steichen Polega kept some of her horses at the farm, and there was an old pony still there from the Sandburg years. Levi kept his cattle on the property in the early years,



**Figure 6.3** The goat herd is an integral part of the living farm program at CARL. Taking care of the goats is a never ending labor of love. Park employees Zeb Lindsay (left) and Leroy Levi (right) inspect a baby goat. July 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

but National Park Service officials recommended against allowing him to keep the animals on-site without a special use permit, and even then, they did not think it was appropriate.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to its official opening, the park had also conducted some interpretive programs, primarily tours for interested groups who requested them. The staff also hosted programs at the site and even went off-site to talk about the park. The intent of this activity was to introduce Carl Sandburg and to market the new park to area residents and students, building potential audiences for one of America's newest national parks.<sup>15</sup>

Before the park opened, there had been no need for signage, folders, or interpretive staff. When the "call" came in the fall of 1973 that the park would open in May 1974, Ron Thoman and his staff had significant work to do. They created a park folder, developed the house tour, created a Visitor Center in the Basement of the Main House, and prepared for visitors (See Chapter Two).

Reaching the Main House for the tour was not an easy task. The house is located about one-third of a mile off Little River Road, up a rather steep incline that was challenging for some visitors.

The initial plan was for visitors to park in the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot and call on the

phone for the shuttle, which ran every 15 minutes. The shuttle driver provided an orientation to the property and dropped the visitors off at the reception area in the lower level of the house. However, Thoman remembered that visitation



**Figures 6.4 (above) and 6.5 (below)** Visitors arrive by shuttle at the Main House. When the park opened to the public, the needs of physically challenged visitors were taken into consideration. A shuttle bus provided transportation up the steep hill, stopping in the driveway on the west side of the Main House. May 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



was a "trickle at first," before people knew that the park was open, so the park did not "do regular trips down there." As visitation increased, the staff began to go down to the Playhouse parking lot "on a regular basis and we posted the times."<sup>16</sup>

After the ride up to the Main House, the orientation began in the Basement at the Visitor Center. The 1974 Superintendent's Annual Report mentions that park personnel prepared the exhibit so that visitors could listen to recordings of Sandburg reading and singing his own work, an idea suggested in the Interpretive Prospectus.<sup>17</sup> Visitors then walked up the Front Porch steps "to enter the house just as most of Sandburg's visitors did," Thoman said. The tour would begin in the Front Room, and then go through Sandburg's Study and into the Living Room. Officially, tours were limited to 15 to 20 visitors, due to the

14 Hooper, Land Management Survey, Carl Sandburg Memorial, April 5, 1970. (See Ch. 2, n. 39)

15 Gay, interview, 2011.

16 Thoman, interview, 2011.

17 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974.

crowded condition of the home and the need for security for the collections on exhibit, but the tours were often much larger.<sup>18</sup>

“The challenge we had was how to take something that the visitors experience and see and turning that into Carl Sandburg’s contributions to American culture,” Thoman recalled. “We weren’t there to lecture on literature.” With his interpretive background, Thoman said he wasn’t sure if they were ever successful. “But that was our point: trying to create the atmosphere, the scene as Sandburg would have experienced it, the activity that Sandburg would have been experiencing, and the atmosphere that he lived in.”<sup>19</sup>

After the house tour, visitors received a copy of the mini-folder produced by Harpers Ferry Center and they would proceed on a self-guided tour of the farm. The folder provided essential information for understanding the park’s history and resources. Visitors could go to the Barn to see the goats and tour the rest of the grounds, looking at the exterior of the other historic buildings, none of which were open except for the Swedish House. Also, the park put up some limited signage for the trails, mainly directional in nature, rather than interpretive.<sup>20</sup>

In preparation for visitors who might want to extend their visit through interpretive materials purchased during their time on-site, the park opened a new agency of the Eastern National Park & Monument Association (EN). The small bookstore sales activity was located in the Visitor Center. EN extended the interpretive experience by selling slides, postcards, books and other products about Sandburg, as well as phonograph recordings of the poet reading his works or singing folk songs. Curator Warren Weber became an agent for EN, acting as liaison between the park and the Association.

## Refining the Visitor Services Focus

The NPS Denver Service Center completed the Carl Sandburg Home NHS Development Concept Plan in 1979. Superintendents Ron Thoman and his successor Benjamin Davis, and Interpretive



**Figure 6.6** Volunteer Sarah Henry welcomes visitors to the Bookstore. May 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

Planner James Massey also assisted in outlining the new interpretive agenda. (See also Chapter Three)

The 1980 Development Concept Plan included two interpretive goals: the first to “assure visitor enjoyment by providing visitor circulation through a shuttle system, guided trails, and other visitor services” and the second to “foster public understanding and appreciation of Carl Sandburg’s contributions as a great poet, historian, and American, and of the significance of the home where he lived and worked the last 22 years of his life.”<sup>21</sup>

Superintendent Davis referenced two important interpretation issues and needs in the 1982 Resource Management Plan. First, in his opinion, the Interpretive Prospectus (IP) needed to be revised since it was “approved before the Historic Site was opened to the public.” Several changes affecting the park, including “park development, visitor use patterns, apparent needs relating to visitor services and approved changes in park operations,” made the request for revision necessary. Davis submitted a package requesting to “schedule a complete revision of the IP” in 1979.<sup>22</sup>

The second interpretive project proposed by Superintendent Davis concerned research for interpretive programs. He stated, “There is a lack of historical data assembled in usable format to provide the Interpreters with information adequate to their needs to best serve visitors and for other purposes.” His staff was not large enough to

18 Thoman, interview, 2011.

19 Thoman, interview, 2011.

20 Thoman, interview, 2011.

21 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 5.

22 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 26.



accomplish the needed research and all of the other tasks associated with operating the park.

Davis asked for personnel to “define areas of greatest need and to accomplish the research needed for interpretive and related purposes.” Again, he submitted paperwork for this project in 1979.<sup>23</sup>

By 1984, the park had expanded the interpretive themes to include four minor themes. The first two themes were Mrs. Sandburg’s dairy goat operations and their influence on family life at Connemara and the “simplicity, beauty, and creative atmosphere” of Sandburg’s home. The third theme referenced Christopher Memminger and Ellison Adger Smyth, each a former owner of the estate prior to the Sandburg era. The fourth theme was internationally known photographer Edward Steichen, Lilian Sandburg’s brother and Carl’s close friend, who visited the farm frequently. The latter theme connected with the collection of Steichen’s photographs preserved at the house, many of which were gifts to Lilian and her family. Interpretive program objectives correlated with the four minor interpretive themes and included maintaining the “small herd of dairy goats and farm animals” as a means of fostering “public understanding of the relationship of the farm to the Sandburg’s lifestyle.” Acknowledging the “presence and personal history of previous owners” Memminger and Smyth would allow visitors to better understand the history of the estate and its role in the Flat Rock community prior to the arrival of the Sandburg family. Making park visitors “aware of the relationship of Edward Steichen to the Sandburg family” and the impact of that relationship on Carl and his work also became an important objective with great potential for programming and exhibits.<sup>24</sup>

Research activities reported for the Carl Sandburg Home NHS for 1984 included five areas that would certainly inform the park’s interpretive program. Penelope Niven was conducting the Carl Sandburg Oral History Project, funded by EN and a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. David Wallace planned to complete the Historic

Furnishings Report by June. A permanent park employee, Kathleen Triggs Byrne, was completing a Master’s thesis about Mrs. Sandburg and her goat herd and a seasonal employee was surveying Mrs. Sandburg’s papers. Finally, Jay Shuler “completed a sound/filmstrip for use by schools” and planned to caption it for use by physically challenged individuals.<sup>25</sup>

## Developing Interpretive Programs

Superintendent Thoman put his background in interpretation to work as preparations got underway to open the park in 1974. He remembered, “We had to decide what the interpretive story would be, how we were going to lead people through the house.” The park staff recognized the importance of offering only guided tours of the house “because we knew of no good way to protect the house and the artifacts from theft and so on, without there being a guide present with everybody.” The tours of the grounds and barn area would be self-guided. Thoman worked extensively with the Sandburg family, most notably with granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega, to ensure accuracy and authenticity in the story and the tours (See Chapter Two). He worked with the Harpers Ferry Center to develop the park folder to provide information to visitors about the park and their visit. He also secured a contract for Polega to write the official handbook for Carl Sandburg Home NHS. The handbook formed the basis for training park guides and rangers about the poet’s time at Connemara.<sup>26</sup>

Warren Weber joined the park staff in 1974 as the park’s curator. During the first years after the park opened, Weber’s “responsibilities were strictly with the visitors and with the museum of the park.” He focused his attention on creating a system that could deliver a quality visitor experience.<sup>27</sup> Weber recalled that there were “virtually no permanent people here” when he arrived. Most of the staff members were temporary. “There were no guides for the Main House. I had to hire those.”<sup>28</sup> In the early years of developing the park’s interpretation

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23 Resource Management Plan, 1982, 28.

24 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, February 17, 1984, National Park Service, 23-24, CARL Park Archive.

25 Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, 1984, 7.

26 Thoman, interview, 2003.

27 Thoman, interview, 2003.

28 Weber, interview, 2011.

programs, potential staff who had acting, theatrical, or other performing talents were often more likely to be considered because they could offer a variety of activities as part of the tour and also for special ranger programs. With a small staff, being able to play many different roles was imperative.<sup>29</sup>

In 1978, Elena Diana Miller came to the Flat Rock Playhouse to apply for a summer job. She was an actress, musician, puppeteer, and English teacher. When no one answered the door at the Playhouse she almost left; however, she noticed a phone in the parking lot and picked it up thinking that someone in the Playhouse would answer. The person on the other end was actually Warren Weber. She explained to Weber why she was calling and he said, “Stay right where you are. I’ve been looking for you.” She thought that was a strange comment for someone to make when she had never been there before. Miller found out later that Weber’s daughter had seen her performance at the local library in Hendersonville and told her father about it. Weber was looking for a musician who could develop musical skits based on Sandburg’s American Songbag.<sup>30</sup>

Weber hired Miller as a seasonal employee in 1978, and she joined the staff full-time in 1981. Miller spent almost 30 years at the park, winning several awards for her interpretive skills. In 1983, Miller won the Freeman Tilden Award for Interpretive Excellence for the Southeast Region, was runner-up for the National Freeman Tilden Award, and won Best Interpretive Arts Program in National Parks Award. She was the Southeast Regional Freeman Tilden Award winner again in 1992.<sup>31</sup>

Miller was the first full-time ranger for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. The second was Janene Donovan who first joined the staff as a seasonal employee in 1983 and became a full-time ranger in 1985.<sup>32</sup> From the very beginning, the entire park staff was prepared to cover whatever needed to be done for visitors, especially giving tours.<sup>33</sup> Like the other staff members at the park, full-time rangers and other employees “did all the



**Figure 6.7** Diana Miller celebrates one of several prestigious NPS regional and national awards earned for her creative interpretation, including the Freeman Tilden Award for Interpretive Excellence for the Southeast Region in 1983 and 1992. She was co-winner of the National Tilden Award and winner of the Best Interpretive Arts Program in National Parks Award in 1983. December 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

jobs.” Miller remembers that everyone pitched in to do the necessary tasks that needed to be done routinely at the park. She recalls that “we were diversified in our duties.” Interpreters “shared the tours and threw down hay from the barn loft and fed the goats. We all catalogued the books” in the Main House, drove the shuttle, and staffed the bookstore as needed.<sup>34</sup>

In the Superintendent’s Annual Reports, the park consistently listed the house tour as one of its key interpretive programs. All tours were led by either park staff or seasonal employees. Weber was responsible for hiring and training the tour guides. When asked about the training, he stated, “Well, here we presented our folks with a body of information. I said, look you have to know certain basic things, but from there you can kind of develop your presentation as fits your style and your interest. I know that you go to some places and they give you a script, you memorize the script and that’s how you go through the property and that’s alright, but here we didn’t want to be that structured.” As guides became more familiar with the Sandburg story and Connemara, some people based their tours on the literature, some on the family’s lifestyle, and some on the music. Whatever the main focus, they tried to make Sandburg and

29 Elena Diana Miller, written response to interview questions by Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, September 6, 2012, CARL Park Archive.

30 Miller, written response to interview questions.

31 Miller, written response to interview questions.

32 Donovan, interview.

33 Thoman, interview, 2011.

34 Miller, written response to interview questions. Similar information found in Donovan, interview, and Gibbs, interview.





**Figure 6.8** Traditional mountain musicians perform at CARL. During the founding years, musicians were an important part of the park visit. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.9** Visitors join park employees and guests in an old-fashioned "hoedown" held at the park. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.10** CARL staff entertains visitors with stories about Sandburg and his contributions to American literature. June 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.11** Ranger-led programs provide important additions to the visitor experience during the busy summer months. June 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.12** A small "Sandburg Experience" bulletin board exhibit welcomes curious visitors awaiting the start of their tour. This exhibit, located under the Main House portico, was typical of the in-house exhibits developed by staff. Fall 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.13** Tours of the Main House remain the primary means of interpretation at CARL. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.14** Visitors wait in anticipation on the Main House Front Porch, the first stop on the tour. 1984 (CARL Park Archive).



his work relevant for the visitors, encouraging them to get to know the poet better.<sup>35</sup>

The Main House tour lasted 30 minutes on average. In the early years, the park was flexible about starting times and “whoever showed up for a tour was taken into the house.” Officially, the tours were supposed to be limited to 15 to 20 people; however, that was not always the case. Miller recalls, “The tours were overcrowded during the first years the park was opened in order to accommodate all the visitors who lined up in the front yard for a tour. There was no fee charged, and no specific time allotted for a tour to go out. We had as many as 38 people on a tour at one time. There was no means of observing persons in the back of the tour and of course they could not hear the guide very well.”<sup>36</sup>

Sometimes there might be as many as three tour groups in the house, one on the first floor, one on the second, and a third forming in the Basement.<sup>37</sup> By 1980, park leadership recommended that the tours should be limited to fifteen visitors, perhaps in response to the Collections Preservation Guidelines completed that year.

The tours usually started on the front porch and included locations on all floors in the Main House. The park’s Master Plan and Interpretive Prospectus proposed that visitors begin their tour by entering the Reception Room, or Carl Sandburg’s Downstairs Study (Room 101). They were to “look in” the Front Room (or Living Room 102), and then move on to the Farm Office (Room 113) and into the Dining Room (Room 112). From there, they walked toward the Kitchen (Room 117) for a “look in,” past the Utility Room (Room 118) for another “look in,” and through the Front Hall (Room 115) into Mrs. Sandburg’s Bedroom (Room 121). Superintendent Thoman described this route when he created the first tour in 1974. From there, the visitors climbed the stairs to the second floor and into the Central Upstairs Hallway (Room 200). Here, visitors looked into Sandburg’s Study (Room 201) and Bedroom (Room 202), the Crow’s Nest (Room 207) where he often wrote, and Janet’s Bedroom (Room 211). After visiting the second floor, tour groups followed the stairs down to the Basement area and the Laundry Room (Room

015), or the “kid kitchen” where Mrs. Sandburg kept her baby goats when they were separated from their mothers at a few days old. The tour exited through the outside door under the Carport.<sup>38</sup>

Warren Weber explained that tour routes changed over time, especially as the park added or removed offices from the Main House, conducted maintenance or renovations, or determined that some rooms worked better than others for visitor traffic. “Some ideas in the original planning documents were not practical,” he recalled, “and they were tried but not used for long.”<sup>38</sup> For example, at some point in the early years of the park, visitors began to enter the Main House through the Front Room, and then walk into the Reception Room, and from there, into the Farm Office and the Dining Room. Staff discovered that certain rooms, like Sandburg’s Bedroom and Study, were not spacious enough to accommodate visitors walking through them. Weber remembered that the use of the house for staff offices created some challenges for the house tours, as staff opening doors to exit out of Margaret’s Bedroom and Margaret’s Study on the main floor could injure visitors who were standing just outside.<sup>39</sup>

In the house tour, the interpreters utilized Sandburg’s words by reading from his published works and personal letters. Interpretive specialists from the Southeast Regional Office visiting the park in February 1978 considered the interpretation in the house “some of the best we have seen in any historic house,” adding that “it brings the place to life.” The tour focused on both his life and the renovation at Connemara. “One walks away with a feeling of having almost come to know the man through the background of his house.”<sup>40</sup>

School tours were also offered during this time. The school tours differed from the tours for “adult groups.” Weber remembers that teachers “usually showed up in the parking lot and we just did the best we could with them.” The students were put into groups for touring the house and grounds. Park staff gave the groups abbreviated versions

35 Weber, interview, 2011.

36 Miller, written response to interview questions.

37 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 9.

38 Weber, email communications, August 2, 2013, August 6, 2013.

39 Weber, interview, 2011.

40 Interpretive Specialist Kay and Supervisory Park Technician Eberly to Associate Regional Director, Park Operations, SER, memorandum, Interpretation at Carl Sandburg, April 28, 1978, SERO Archive.

of the tours to capture and retain their attention and interest in Sandburg's work and life in North Carolina.<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 6.15** Superintendent Davis, Ranger Diana Miller, and Curator Warren Weber pose with awards earned at the park. Rangers at CARL received recognition throughout the years as innovative and creative in the delivery of visitor services such as interpretive programs. December 1983 (CARL Park Archive).

In addition to the tours of the Main House and grounds, park staff also developed other interpretive programs, festivals, and special events. One of the original ideas proposed in both the Interpretive Prospectus and the Master Plan was



**Figure 6.16** A school group prepares to tour the barn area and to meet the goats at Connemara. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).

to partner with the Flat Rock Playhouse and use student actors to present plays about Sandburg. In 1975, the park debuted and presented fifty performances of *The World of Carl Sandburg* by “apprentice actors,” funded by Eastern National.<sup>42</sup> The play, billed as “an abbreviated version of Norman Corwin’s Broadway production,”

41 Weber, interview, 2011.

42 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1975, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 6.17** Almost from the time the park opened, music performances were popular with visiting school groups. Musician Andrew Charlton entertains students with folk songs. March 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

presented the life and times of the poet.<sup>43</sup> Weber described the play as “an attempt to cover the American experience as observed by Carl Sandburg through dramatic form.” Over 5,000 visitors enjoyed the play during its 10-week run at the park. The apprentice actors enjoyed presenting

43 Flat Rock Playhouse Playbill, Summer 1977, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 6.18** Flat Rock Playhouse Director Rob Roy Farquhar, Superintendent Benjamin Davis, and Curator Warren Weber (left to right), visit the site used by the park for live performances as they determine the best location for plays performed by apprentice actors. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.19** Superintendent Benjamin Davis, Flat Rock Playhouse Director Robroy Farquhar, and Curator Warren Weber (left to right) enjoy the atmosphere behind the Main House as they discuss the site requirements needed for the performances of *The World of Carl Sandburg*. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 6.20** Visitors enjoy one of the inaugural year performances of *The World of Carl Sandburg*. Apprentice actors studying at the Vagabond School of the Drama provide entertainment for visitors during the busy summer months. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.21** Betty Hurd (left), Superintendent Davis (second from left), Janet Sandburg (second from right), and Penelope Niven (right) enjoy an afternoon watching the *Rootabaga Stories* performed at the park. August 1985 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.22** Members of the Kappa Kappa Iota Sorority enjoy a special performance of *The World of Carl Sandburg* during their visit to the park in June 1977. (CARL Park Archive).

the play and “visitor response was enthusiastic and warm. . . . Many visitors came back two and three times or more.”<sup>44</sup>

44 Warren Weber, “The World of Carl Sandburg” report, 1976, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, CARL Park Archive.

In 1976, other plays were added to the park’s regular summer performance series.<sup>45</sup> The new plays included *Rootabaga Stories*, billed as “a delightful and zany production of Mr. Sandburg’s children’s stories” and marketed specifically to children, and *An Afternoon with Mr. Lincoln*, described as “a presentation taken from Mr. Sandburg’s Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Abraham Lincoln.”<sup>46</sup>



**Figure 6.23** Apprentice actors perform scenes from *The World of Carl Sandburg*. August 1977 (CARL Park Archive).

A 1977 news release from the Flat Rock Playhouse stated that after the *Rootabaga Stories* debuted during the previous summer, the production “went on tour to 60 North Carolina elementary schools, sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction.” The same release also enthusiastically announced that “The Vagabond Workshop Theatre Company at Flat Rock will have

45 “Theatrically Speaking,” *Times-News*, June 24, 1976, CARL Park Archive.

46 Flat Rock Playhouse Playbill, 1977.



**Figure 6.24** In this 1976 photo, employees present scenes from Sandburg’s *Rootabaga Stories*. If apprentice actors from the Vagabond School of the Drama, located at the Flat Rock Playhouse, were not available for performances, park employees filled in to ensure that the plays would go on. July 1976 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 6.25 (above) and 6.26 (below)** Park rangers take on lead roles in the popular *Rootabaga Stories*. The characters show Sandburg's less serious side through this work written primarily for children. July 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.27** Apprentice actors bring *An Afternoon with Mr. Lincoln* to life for summer visitors. August 1979 (CARL Park Archive)

new boards to tread when it performs under the trees at Connemara this summer,” praising the park for having built a new Amphitheater with “a bigger stage and more seating.”<sup>47</sup>

From the start, the park also featured musicians and performers to share both folk music and poetry. In 1974, for example, the park sponsored three “semi-professional folk singers” who performed selections from Sandburg’s *American*



**Figure 6.28** The *Rootabaga Stories* performances make visits to the park unforgettable for children and adults. May 1980 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.29** During Children’s Day activities, staff members encourage students to become part of the cast for the *Rootabaga Stories*. Other activities included goat barn programs and storytelling. April 1979 (CARL Park Archive).

*Songbag*.<sup>48</sup> By 1975, interpretive staff members were presenting daily ranger programs featuring music from the *American Songbag* and readings from Sandburg’s work.<sup>49</sup>

During the summer of 1979, the park sponsored a special folk music program to attract visitors. Ranger Elena Diana Miller, who planned the program and performed in the “old time string

47 Flat Rock Playhouse, “News Bureau,” news release, June 9, 1977, CARL Park Archive.

48 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1974.

49 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1975.



**Figure 6.30** Folk musicians Sue Kardos (left), Andy Kardos (center), and Ann Ragan (right), entertain CARL visitors. August 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

band,” recalled that 350 attended and that the band played for 45 minutes. “The Amphitheater was packed, with people hanging in trees. There was a line of a hundred people and we had a ranger at the front, one in the middle, one at the back. And we kind of walked them through, all through the house, without a real tour, but at least they got a



**Figure 6.31** Park employees and guests enjoy music during a Songfest. Such live entertainment has always been an important part of interpretation at CARL. October 1974 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.32** Musician Clark Jones performs at the park in June 1975, carrying on the folk music traditions so important to the Sandburgs. June 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

half tour. They got to see the inside of the house. That was a special time. That was a good day.”<sup>50</sup>



**Figure 6.33** Children from the Hendersonville area enjoy a Saturday Poetry Workshop with CARL employees Dian Waldrop and Cindy Muerdter. March 1976 (CARL Park Archive).

In 1978, the park celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Carl Sandburg. Activities planned to further the Sandburg story included an art exhibit, slide kits for schools, poetry contest, a one-day folk festival event, an author’s day featuring Helga Sandburg, dramatic programs, a release of postcards depicting pictures of Sandburg at Connemara, and a production of *The World of Carl Sandburg* at Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C. in September.<sup>51</sup> The poetry contest generated several hundred entries from 43 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. The park received 93 entries from North Carolina and 69 from Illinois.<sup>52</sup> Weber recalled that a woman from Chicago won the contest. Her husband, a successful businessman, flew her to North Carolina in his private plane so that she could accept her prize.<sup>53</sup>

In 1980, the park held the first Carl Sandburg Festival for schools. The festival taught children about Carl Sandburg and introduced communities to the resources at their national park. The objectives were to “stimulate creativity and artistic abilities, to increase interest in the literary and historic aspects of the local area with special emphasis on Carl Sandburg.” Children came to the park to “present original sketches, playlets, song fests, slide programs, costume displays, poster

50 Miller, interview.

51 Superintendent CASS [Davis] to All Employees, CASS, December 30, 1977, CARL Park Archive.

52 “The Carl Sandburg Centennial 1878-1978,” report, Carl Sandburg Home Historic Site, 1978, CARL Park Archive.

53 Weber, interview, 2011.





**Figure 6.34** Helga Sandburg signs copies of her book for visitors. She came to the park to talk about life at Connemara and to sing song selections popular with the Sandburgs. June 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

displays, and other special displays” pertaining to the poet and his work. The children learned about Sandburg’s work through creatively interacting with it. The park gave participating students certificates and the schools “a Sandburg literary work for the library.”<sup>54</sup> The park developed the festival when fuel prices and transportation costs were high, and it was difficult for many school districts to visit the site.

The park developed two new spaces for interpretive activities by 1984, as identified in the interpretive plan that year. The park renovated the Family Garage to serve as a meeting space or auditorium for up to 75 seated visitors, plus another 55 standing visitors. It was unheated, and thus not available in the winter months, but

<sup>54</sup> “The Carl Sandburg Festival,” report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 1982, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 6.35** Students perform their own renditions of Sandburg’s works during the Sandburg Festival for school children. 1980 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.36** CARL staff welcomes school representatives and students to the park festivities. May 1980 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.37** Students pictured here represent their school as they perform a musical selection at the park. The Sandburg Festival attracted several new school groups in its second year. April 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.38** Children perform their original work at the 1981 Sandburg Festival. May 1981 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.39** This patriotic musical number highlights the annual Sandburg Festival held on-site at the park. The children developed their performance under the direction of their teacher at a local elementary school. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



there were fewer visitors during that time of year. The Family Garage provided sheltered space for park performances and ranger programs in case of inclement weather during summer shows. The second interpretive area was the Amphitheater built in 1977 to accommodate the Flat Rock Playhouse productions each summer, as well as other performances and festivals.

The park participated in community outreach when opportunities presented. One such example included appearing at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. Through fortuitous staff connections, arrangements were made for the



**Figure 6.40** Students dance in the Family Garage as part of their performances while participating in the Sandburg Festival. May 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

staff to perform during the July 30th celebration of Carl Sandburg Day at the North Carolina Pavilion. Six members of the interpretive staff provided music programs, poetry readings, and dramatic



**Figure 6.41** The original Amphitheater, shown during a break in performances. 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

skits throughout that special day. North Carolina Governor Hunt gave the park a certificate of appreciation for its participation. During 1982, the park anticipated that visitation would be higher



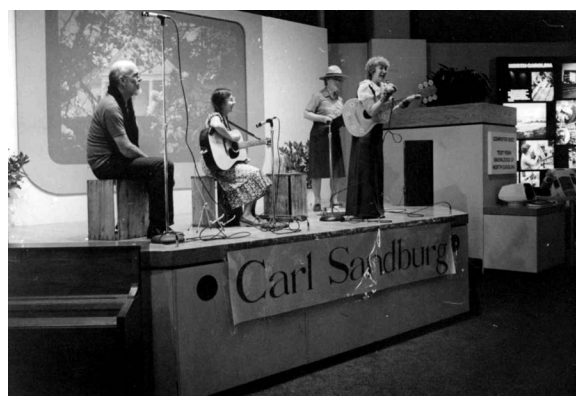
**Figure 6.42** Park employee Michael Grisby entertains children during a "Story Hour" at the Hendersonville Library. Park employees presented programs off-site in an effort to connect with the community and serve constituents. December 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

due to travelers going to Knoxville, and it was, with an estimated 50,000 visitors that year.<sup>55</sup>

## The Living History Farm

The living farm program, featuring Lilian Sandburg's Chikaming herd, formed an important and popular part of the interpretive program. Visitors eagerly headed to the barns to interact with the goats, especially in the spring when the "kids" were born. Since the 1930s, the NPS

<sup>55</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.



**Figure 6.43** Park employees, from left to right, Jay Shuler, Cindy Carpenter, Mimi Rabb, and Diana Miller introduce the World's Fair audience to CARL and invite them to visit. Visitation numbers at CARL for the summer of 1982 were the highest since the park's opening. People attending the World's Fair in Tennessee chose to visit the park while in the area, pushing the visitation for July to 50,000. July 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.44** Park employees Diana Miller, Jay Schuler, Norma Flax, Mimi Rabb, and Cindy Neal Carpenter pose for a publicity picture announcing their performance at the World's Fair held in neighboring Knoxville, Tennessee. July 1982 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.45** CARL employees perform at the World's Fair, held in Knoxville, Tennessee. Pictured are Diana Miller (right) and Cindy Neal Carpenter (left). July 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

had experimented with “live exhibits” such as interpreters in costume performing native dances and demonstrations that portrayed activities and crafts specific to certain time periods and places. In the 1950s, parks were including “living history” activities such as grinding grain and crafts demonstrations. By the 1960s, national battlefield programs offered firearm demonstrations and staff dressed in military uniforms. As “living history” became more and more popular with parks and visitors, the NPS proposed a “national system of 25 to 50 operating historical farms under federal sponsorship.” Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall “endorsed the concept” as did NPS Director George Hartzog.<sup>56</sup> The National Park Service encouraged “visitors to participate in everything to the maximum extent possible” so that they could better understand how people lived during

other time periods.<sup>57</sup> Historian Barry Macintosh writes that this “living farm concept accelerated other living history activity” throughout the NPS sites. The NPS developed guidelines for living history and “all parks were asked to report on their progress with ‘living interpretation,’ the newly favored term.” In 1973, the Park Service reported that its living interpretation programs “have greatly enhanced visitor appreciation and substantially improved the quality of NPS interpretation.”<sup>58</sup> When Carl Sandburg Home NHS opened in 1974, complete with its living farm operation, such activities were very much a part of NPS parks.

The living farm at Carl Sandburg Home NHS had as its “central aspect” the “recreation of Mrs. Sandburg’s world-famous Chikaming herd of registered dairy goats.” The farm operation was to include “selective breeding, kidding, feeding, pasturing, housing, milking, and disposition of milk and surplus animals.”<sup>59</sup> Superintendent James Kretschmann started preparations for the living farm when he was assigned to the new national park in 1970. His efforts included re-establishing the goat herd. Like Mrs. Sandburg’s dairy, the herd featured three goat breeds: Nubian, Saanen, and Toggenburg. The park kept does in the goat barn and pastures and male goats in the buck houses and other pastures.<sup>60</sup>

57 *Macintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 59.

58 *Macintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 61.

59 Historic Resources Management Plan for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, March 1977, National Park Service, 32, CARL Park Archive.

60 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 9.



**Figure 6.46** Cindy Muerdter, Diane Waldrop, and Warren Weber talk to a 1976 visiting school group about the role of the goats in the lives of the Sandburg family. March 1976 (CARL Park Archive).

56 *Macintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 54-57.

The farm featured other animals, some of which had lived there since the Sandburg years. Thoman remembered that a “big old white mule” and Paula’s horses, which she kept at the farm, were there when he arrived. There were also ducks in the pond.<sup>61</sup> By 1977, the farm included 24 dairy goats, 11 cattle, 2 horses, 2 hogs, 15 ducks, and 56 chickens. The Historic Resources Management Plan for that year stated that the “animal population of the Living Farm will be maintained at a level for interpretive purposes that will adequately portray the atmosphere of the sounds, smells, and other stimuli typical of a ‘live’ farm.”<sup>62</sup> There were plans to increase the goat herd to “25 milking does” and a few “mature bucks” for breeding purposes. Realizing that the numbers of the cattle and pigs might vary depending on the number of young born each year, the park planned to keep the other animals at the current levels, stating, “These browsers, grazers, scratchers and rooters assist in the maintenance of this historic scene.”<sup>63</sup>

Although living history endeavors at national parks were popular among visitors, interpreters and historians often had reservations about whether the activities hindered or enhanced the purposes of participating parks. Limited resources were stretched even more to support the living history activities, calling into question the efficacy of continuing some programs.<sup>64</sup> The key seemed to be striking a balance between traditional interpretation and living history endeavors. The living farm program at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS struggled with the same questions concerning how such activities fit into the Sandburg story—with some staff members asking if the barn program should be part of the park at all.

Superintendent Thoman considered the living farm to be a “distraction” from the main story of the park. “That was a very ‘in’ thing at the Park Service at that time, living farms,” but he worried about whether the farm would “distract from what the place was really about,” that is,

commemorating Sandburg and his work and “what he contributed to American culture.” Thoman saw the farm as simply a “backdrop.” Visitors wanted to go “immediately” to the goat barn and play with the kids, or they would want to end the tour quickly to go “see the animals.” “They had started recreating the goat herd and gathering a lot of information about what that would be if it were done, but again, because it took money, and it took time.” He wondered if the park should even be undertaking the farm because it raised so many questions about what the park would do with the milk and how much money should be spent on the animals and vet bills. Even mowing the fields was a challenge with the government. “But because it already started, I didn’t change anything because I wasn’t sure in my own mind the way we ought to be going.”<sup>65</sup>

Superintendent Davis and Curator Weber also worried about the large expenditure required for the full living history farm and questioned its merits. Weber remembered that the barn operation was a “major activity in the early years.” It functioned separately from the traditional visitor services program. “And they were trying to, at least to begin with, establish a goat herd of the quality of Mrs. Sandburg’s, with her registered name. And the animals were on official milk tests, which means they had to be milked twice a day on a pretty much exact schedule and so on. And they were developing a fair size herd of, I don’t know how many they envisioned having, maybe 25 or 30 or a few more animals than that.”<sup>66</sup>

The goat herd demanded much in the way of attention and resources to keep it operating as the park planning documents envisioned. Superintendent Davis explained, “Most places you can handle farm animals, but one of the hardest things to do is handle a farm operation under the federal government’s regulations. You can only work 40 hours and Sunday is overtime.” Operations involving dairy animals cannot follow such strict regulation of hours; farmers and their herdsman “don’t work like that.” Davis thought that the resulting costs for maintaining the large goat herd made it “a little too expensive to operate,” especially at a time when the park was faced with continuing major resource allocations

61 Thoman, interview, 2011.

62 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 33. The Superintendent’s Annual Reports for 1975 and 1976 also note the kinds of animals that were part of the living history program.

63 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 33.

64 Macintosh, *Macintosh, Interpretation in the National Park Service* 64-66.

65 Thoman, interview, 2011.

66 Weber, interview, 2003.



for restoring and maintaining historic structures and landscapes at Connemara.<sup>67</sup>

The challenges of developing a small dairy operation were formidable. Not only did the park have to determine how to re-create the herd but staff also had to schedule the daily milking, feeding, and caring for the needs of the goats. Additionally, maintenance staff would have to rebuild the pasture fences and repair the barn complex. Decisions had to be made about how and whether to sell goat milk products to the public. The State Health Department prohibited selling unpasteurized products to the public and the park was not equipped on its own to pasteurize milk.

Even Mrs. Sandburg sent her goats' milk out to be pasteurized. The costs of re-creating the goat herd and maintaining it were considerable. Weber explained, "Mr. Davis found as budgets were tight, and they were always tight during his years, that that effort was requiring a lot of manpower and resources in terms of money and he felt that that was not the park's story and he felt that he had to be more attentive to telling the story of Carl Sandburg."<sup>68</sup>

Superintendent Davis sought NPS input before taking any action concerning the living history operation. At his request, Interpretive Specialist William Kay and Supervisory Park Technician Anna Eberly from the Southeast Regional Office visited the park February 6-8, 1978, to discuss "interpretive matters." In their memo about the trip, they reported that the "objectives" of the agricultural program became their first concern. Comparing the Sandburg farm to other living history farms, they noted that Carl Sandburg's interest in the farm was "at best peripheral." The focus of the story to be told at the park should be interpreting the "writer and his works in the setting in which he worked and lived in the later years of his life." They argued that the farming operation had "little influence" on his career. The interpretive specialists considered the visit to the barnyard to be "anticlimactic." While they described the goats as "charming," the regional office specialists claimed that the goats "didn't seem to carry much message about the man and his work." Further they added

that the goats should have been kept in the pasture, not the barnyard, to be historically accurate.<sup>69</sup>

The specialists made five recommendations. First, they proposed that the goat herd be "reduced to the token herd called for in the Interpretive Prospectus," and that that herd be pastured. Second, they recommended abandoning the breeding program, which requires extensive funds and generates "little interpretive purpose." Third, since the hog operation only lasted a short period of time during the Sandburg years, this should be abandoned. Fourth, the cattle operation "should be reviewed," as "there seem to be too many animals" and "they are not pastured in the historically correct fields." Last, the money generated through savings in these farm programs could be used to restore the flower beds that Sandburg enjoyed near the house.<sup>70</sup>

After the SERO team concurred that changes should be made, Davis set about to redefine the living history farm. As Weber recalled, "He cut back the size of the goat herd. He also took the animals off official [milk] tests." These changes required fewer staff to operate the barn activities, resulting in cost savings. The changes also freed up staff time since there would no longer be a need for morning and evening milking schedules for the goats. Although some of the staff disagreed with the decisions to cut back the size of the goat herd, change the barn operations, and eliminate other farm animals, they worked through the issues."<sup>71</sup>

As the park entered the 1980s, the farm activity did not disappear from the interpretation efforts, but it was less formal and easier to maintain. Weber indicated that "the herd name was given back to the Sandburg family and we no longer made any pretense about saying this was the Chikaming herd, which was her registered trade name. So they were just going to keep a few animals to show the public when they came and not maintain a full-fledged dairy like they were trying to before."<sup>72</sup> As a cost saving measure, the park let the goat registration

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67 Charlie Hamm and Benjamin Davis, interview by Penelope Niven McJunkin, August 16, 1984, transcript, CARL Park Archive.

68 Weber, interview, 2003.

69 Kay and Eberly to Associate Regional Director, Park Operations, SER, memorandum, April 28, 1978.

70 Kay and Eberly to Associate Regional Director, Park Operations, SER, memorandum, April 28, 1978.

71 According to Weber, interview, 2003. One aspect of this "turmoil" is that Superintendent Davis and Farm Manager Leroy Levi clashed over the decision, and Levi ended up leaving park employment.

72 Weber, interview, 2011.

process lapse. Breeding the goats was more controlled in order to keep the numbers down and the other animals that were part of the living farm operation were either sold or not replaced once they died. In addition to the smaller goat herd, eventually the only other animals at the park were a few ducks at the lakes and cats living in the barn area. The Superintendent's Annual Reports in the early 1980s began to refer to the barn operation as the "small" or "token" goat herd and less as the "living history farm."

In addition to the living farm's "central aspect" of the dairy goat herd, "a secondary aspect" involved the "restoration, maintenance, and specifically in regard to pastures, harvesting of pastures and farm lots" at Connemara.<sup>73</sup> These other activities, "agricultural uses" such as haymaking and gardening, served to "complete the depiction of the Sandburg lifestyle at Connemara." The Sandburgs maintained several gardens on the grounds, including "flower border gardens" around the Main House, a lily garden, spring and summer gardens, and a "front lawn garden." The Sandburgs had a vegetable garden near the barn area. After Mrs. Sandburg and her daughters moved from Connemara, "the gardens were left to themselves, except for the vegetable garden," with all of the sites overgrown and some nearly eradicated.<sup>74</sup>

The "park began a documentation and minimal care program" for the gardens during 1974 and hired Sandburg granddaughter, Paula Steichen Polega, to assist in the endeavors. She "wrote brief histories of the gardens, developed drawings of their contents and arrangement, worked on and supervised others working on restoring the gardens." Members of local garden clubs and park volunteers worked to restore the gardens, with the result that the gardens would be "living once again and they will be maintained as the Sandburgs kept them."<sup>75</sup>

Haymaking was an important effort for the farm operation. The staff took care of the pastures by planting, fertilizing, reseeding, and treating with lime on a set schedule. They harvested hay "twice or three times a year, depending on weather conditions." The harvested hay helped to feed the

animals and brought in income when surplus was sold. The park also planted corn in the pastures from time to time, "again to feed farm animals."<sup>76</sup>

In 1983, when Janene Donovan came to work at the park as a seasonal park ranger, a large part of her work focused on the farm operation. She held a degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida and had worked as a state park ranger after college. That first year at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Donovan worked until October and stayed on as a volunteer through the winter to assist with the cataloging efforts for the collection. She accepted other NPS assignments over the next few years, but continued to return to the park as seasonal positions were funded. She worked with the goats, gave house tours, and assisted with cataloging. Between seasonal NPS assignments, Donovan returned to college to study education. Then, in 1985, she was hired by the park as a full-time employee focusing on the farm.<sup>77</sup>

With her experience in several aspects of the park operations, as well as formal training in the areas of wildlife management and education, Donovan would bring important expertise to the interpretation program at the park. As only the second full-time ranger hired at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Donovan recalled, "I was mainly at the Barn, but I still, of course, had to cover the house, especially in the winter when we would lay off all the seasonals [until] the summer." The goats still had to be cared for each day and the house covered in case visitors wanted to tour. She also "was doing interpretive training and traveling around doing that" and she would be called out to fight fires as needed. Her schedule was "pretty stressful." She remembers, "Finally we decided we needed more volunteers. So, I started recruiting." With the extra help at the Barn to accomplish the physical work, she had more time for managing the barn operation and interpretive program.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the living farm interpretation at the barn complex, staff also gave talks about Margaret Sandburg's love of birds and the bluebird boxes she kept in the barn area, conducted bird walks around the grounds and by the lakes, and offered a cheese-making program in the early 1980s.

73 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 32.

74 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 28.

75 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 28-29.

76 Historic Resources Management Plan, 1977, 32.

77 Donovan, interview.

78 Donovan, interview.

There was always something to do and see at the Barn and it changed with each season. Returning visitors often came straight to the Barn to visit the goats.<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 6.47** Part of the park experience is interacting with nature, an activity important to the Sandburg family. Here, Superintendent Davis (left) participates in ceremonies marking the dedication of the Big Glassy National Trail. June 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

Although the living history farm at Carl Sandburg Home NHS changed significantly in purpose and size during this time, it remains an important part of the Sandburg story. Donovan states that the farm operation demonstrates to visitors the ways in which the “family worked together” and

79 Donovan, interview.



**Figure 6.48** Karen Bayne demonstrates techniques used by Mrs. Sandburg in making goat cheese. Cheese-making demonstrations remain immensely popular with visitors. July 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.49** North Carolina Quilter Georgia Bonesteel explains a quilt, titled “Baby Goats,” created by volunteer quilters for the Amphitheater. April 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

everyone “had something to do with the farm life and there was so much to do.” Everyone had a role to play. From Margaret and her bluebird boxes to Janet feeding the baby goats, each person in the Sandburg family contributed to and benefited from life on the farm.<sup>80</sup>

The living history farm stands as a testament to the life that Lilian Sandburg carved out for her family. She started a dairy goat business that served the needs of her family, the Flat Rock area, and the national dairy goat community. She supported Carl Sandburg throughout his career, even mailing his work to potential publishers when he had almost given up on making his living as a writer. Daughter Helga Sandburg recalled that she found Lilian burning her personal papers when they were preparing to leave Connemara after Carl’s death. Helga begged her mother to stop destroying the record of what she had accomplished, citing the many ways in which Lilian had ensured that the world had enjoyed the works of her husband. Helga convinced her to leave the papers for future generations when she told her mother, “Without you, there possibly would be no Carl Sandburg.”<sup>81</sup> The interpretive programs at the farm brought to life more of Mrs. Sandburg’s contributions to the family.

## Visitor Contact Station

The proposed Visitor Contact Station also formed an important part of the interpretive experience. However, plans for its creation were delayed until 1979 due to funding, and then additional delays

80 Donovan, interview.

81 Miller, written response to interview questions.



occurred with the contracts and the construction process. The facility finally opened to the public in 1982, marking the first time the park “had our own parking area for visitors and an initial visitor contact point.”<sup>82</sup> The parking lot featured space for both cars and buses for tour groups.

The Development Concept Plan described the Visitor Contact Station, already underway by the time the plan was completed, as an “open-air facility with restrooms, fee collecting and information desk, and orientation material to acquaint the visitor with the area and how best to use it.” The desk could be staffed or not, and in the slow months, it would have a telephone, like the Flat Rock Playhouse parking lot, so visitors could call and request a shuttle.<sup>83</sup> The suggested “open air facility” may have been a result of the change in NPS philosophy concerning the need for all parks to have formal visitor centers. The realization that personal services best met the needs of visitors at many sites, such as historic homes, was made clear by the 1975 NPS statement describing the change, “Today we are shifting emphasis away from building more centers that may, in fact, impinge on a visitor’s limited time in a park to on-site, outdoor facilities and services that more directly relate to park resources.”<sup>84</sup>

The Denver Service Center designed the Visitor Contact Station so that the facility blended in with the park environment without impacting the historic views.<sup>85</sup> There was a perfect view of the Main House as visitors walked into the park through the official, new entrance way. The design made excellent use of the setting and the view. Benches were placed along the path near the facility, as was a picnic area with tables for visitor use.

The Visitor Contact Station provided a place for visitor orientation. Harpers Ferry Center developed the exhibit plan, which was finished in 1979.<sup>86</sup> The exhibit provided a quick overview about who Sandburg was and his contributions to American culture. It also featured several large

photographs of Sandburg. Finally, Sandburg’s own words, taken from his poetry and other writings, danced across the exhibit panels.<sup>87</sup> Visitors spent as long as they wanted at the contact station, getting to know the man whose home they were about to tour.

The Visitor Contact Station was staffed daily during the park’s busiest months, as staff allowed. Ranger Miller recalled, “A ranger stayed half a day and then there was a shift change. The morning ranger did tours in the afternoon and the one who was there in the afternoon did tours in the morning... It was a good thing because they changed jobs and didn’t have to ... stay in one job all day long.”<sup>88</sup> The duty ranger welcomed visitors and answered questions about Sandburg, the park, tours, and getting up to the Main House. In 1983, the official park folder was revised and made available for visitors entering the park through the Visitor Contact Station.



**Figure 6.50** In 1982, Eastern National’s additional bookstore operation at the new Visitor Contact Station provides opportunity for visitors to buy mementos when they start their tour of the park or as they are leaving. November 1982 (CARL Park Archive).

After their stop at the contact station, park visitors could either walk up to the Main House or call for the shuttle to drive them up the hill. Long-time park ranger and volunteer, Bess Gibbs, recalled that it was much easier to provide the shuttle service after the Visitor Contact Station opened. She explained, “We still went down the hill and parked on the other side of the bridge and picked people up and took them back up the hill, but you did not have to go outside the park.” Driving the shuttle was much safer inside the park than maneuvering back and forth across Little River Road with a van filled with visitors.<sup>89</sup>

82 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1995.

83 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 8.

84 Macintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 50-51.

85 Weber, interview, 2011.

86 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1979; Visitor Contact Station File, HFC Archive.

87 Miller, interview.

88 Miller, interview.

89 Gibbs, interview.

## Eastern National Parks and Monument Association Agency

From the time the park opened, the Eastern National Parks and Monument Association (EN) was an important part of the interpretive program. The cooperating agency opened a bookstore in the Welcome Center of the Main House and, in support of the park's mission, kept materials related to Sandburg's work available to the public. Warren Weber became an agent for EN as part of



**Figure 6.51** Eastern National, the park's cooperating association, offers Sandburg's works through the bookstore located in the Ground Floor area of the Main House. October 1975 (CARL Park Archive).

his administrative responsibilities. He considered the bookstore opening to have been one of the early successes for the park. Weber recalls shipping Sandburg material "various places" as people often contacted the park to inquire about trying to acquire recordings of Sandburg reading his works and other related materials. Sometimes the material was available and sometimes other versions might meet their needs. Weber stated that "our sales room up there is more closely tied to this park than I've seen other sales areas at other parks."<sup>90</sup> The 1984 Statement for Interpretation noted that there were two Eastern National sites at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. The report noted that the Visitor Center in the Main House was the primary outlet, but the Visitor Contact Station had a small sales area as well, and it was open when the facility was staffed in the busy months. EN kept a stock of 100 titles related to Sandburg's work and his home at Connemara. The park staff described the agency outlet as a vital part of the interpretive effort.<sup>91</sup> Part of the sales revenue came back to the park to provide invaluable financial support for special programs and events.

<sup>90</sup> Weber, interview, 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, 1984, 17.



**Figure 6.52** The Eastern National bookstore became an important part of interpretation at the park. Without the efforts of Eastern National to keep Sandburg's works in print, many of his titles might not be available to visitors. CARL rangers and volunteers welcomed visitors into the Ground Floor Bookstore in preparation for their tour of the Main House. Visitors could enjoy recorded introductions to Carl Sandburg and his work, pick up a book for further enjoyment, and find out what to do and see at Connemara. July 1976 (CARL Park Archive).

As early as 1975, EN helped fund the summer plays performed on-site at the park by the Flat Rock Playhouse.<sup>92</sup> EN also helped fund publications that were often unavailable from other publishers.

In 1979, it reprinted *My Connemara*, by Paula Steichen, in paperback and supported *From Rock Hill to Connemara*, by Louise Howe Bailey, for publication. The 1979 Annual Report also noted that EN had invested \$30,000 in interpretive materials, mainly in publications and recordings as potential bookstore purchases by visitors.<sup>93</sup>

In 1981, Eastern National reported its best year to date, with over \$32,000 in sales. The Association also had enough funding to pay a salesperson "during the busy season."<sup>94</sup> Sales rose to over \$35,000 by 1982.<sup>95</sup> EN began selling the Official Handbook for the park when it was finished in 1983. That same year, EN reprinted *My Connemara* by Paula Steichen and offered Carl Sandburg's *Ever the Winds of Chance*, with Margaret Sandburg's introduction.<sup>96</sup> Also in the early 1980s, EN supported research for the park, and helped fund the oral history project Penelope Niven was conducting with the National Endowment for the Humanities when it donated \$5,000 in support

<sup>92</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975.

<sup>93</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981.

<sup>94</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981.

<sup>95</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

<sup>96</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1983.

of the project (See Chapter Five).<sup>97</sup> By 1986, EN recorded park sales of materials for and about Sandburg at over \$65,000, averaging more than \$1.00 in sales per park visitor.

## Park Visitation

Visitors to Connemara came for many different reasons. Some wanted to get to know the poet and activist better. Some wanted to learn about Mrs. Sandburg and her goat herd. Most wanted to enjoy time on the quiet, beautiful grounds of the estate. Whatever the reason, they returned, many of them several times a week, and walked around the

97 Pardue et al., Collections Preservation Guide, grant application, 1980, 10-12.



**Figure 6.53** As the nation celebrates its Bicentennial, visitors to CARL enjoy ranger performances of American folk music like the songs Sandburg often performed. June 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.54** Park employee Buddy Davis entertains visitors. Such musical performances continue Sandburg's legacy of sharing American folk songs. July 1976 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 6.55** CARL employees Karen Bayne, Tonya McMunn, and David McCormick perform scenes from *The World of Carl Sandburg*. Summer 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

grounds or interacted with the animals at the barn complex.

Over time, the people and their reasons for visiting changed. Weber explained, "During the early years, it was interesting that our visitors, quite a few had been acquainted with Sandburg. They'd actually seen him in platform performances. He had traveled around the country a great deal doing presentations. They had known him one way or another and actually seen him. Sometimes met him and sometimes were friends with him. As time went along, that began to change. I thought that was interesting that the people who had known him when he was alive, they too started to pass away and that type of thing. So the audience kind of changed."<sup>98</sup>

**Table 6-1. Visitation for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.**

Year	Recreational Visitors
1974	19,400
1975	30,200
1976	38,000
1977	38,200
1978	39,126
1979	34,062
1980	37,160
1981	44,059
1982	50,216
1983	46,673
1984	48,756
1985	53,689
1986	61,346

Source: National Park Service Website.

98 Weber, interview, 2011.



During this time, the numbers of visitors to the park varied from under 20,000 when the park opened in 1974, to over 60,000 in 1986. (See Table 6-1) By 1975, the park reported visitation at over 30,000.<sup>99</sup> At this time, the only method used by the park to record visitation was counting the tickets distributed for the still free-of-charge tours of the Main House. The NPS formulas the park utilized in determining overall visitation numbers did

99 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975.



Figure 6.56 Helga Sandburg performs during the Father's Day Centennial Celebration. June 1978 (CARL Park Archive).



Figure 6.57 Apprentice actors appear in Lincoln performances. July 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

not include those visitors who came only to walk the trails, visit the goats, or enjoy plays, musical performances, and dramatic readings.

Visitation numbers increased steadily until 1979 when the nation experienced gasoline shortages and high fuel prices, impacting family vacation plans across the nation. The park experienced a 20% decrease between 1978 and 1979.<sup>100</sup> By 1981, however, "Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site had its heaviest visitation ever—a total of 44,000 visits." The park reported, "Our staff was adequate to provide normal services except during October 1981 when a personnel ceiling forced us to terminate some interpreters."<sup>101</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS experienced its first year with over 50,000 visitors in 1982. The World's Fair was held in nearby Knoxville, Tennessee, and visitors to the fair looked for additional opportunities in the area. Interpretive staff performed at the Carl Sandburg Day at the fair



Figure 6.58 Cindy Neal Carpenter (left) and Diana Miller (right), park employees, entertain a Head Start audience visiting in December 1984. (CARL Park Archive).

and promoted the park to their audiences as well. The park accommodated the significant increase in visitor traffic because it had "programmed funds and personnel in anticipation of extra visitors." That same year, the park opened its "new Visitor Contact Station and parking area off Little River Road." Just in time for the increase in visitors, the new facility marked the first time since its opening that Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site had its "own parking area for visitors and an initial visitor contact point."<sup>102</sup> Eastern National was on-

100 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979.

101 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1981.

102 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1982.

site at the Visitor Contact Station, so that visitors could purchase Sandburg materials either before or after their tour of the Main House and grounds.

While park visitation dipped slightly after the World's Fair was over, the numbers continued to exceed the 1981 level. By 1985, the park again had over 50,000 visitors—even without a special event in the area this time.<sup>103</sup> In 1986, visitation increased to 61,346. The Superintendent's Annual Report stated, "This park is approaching the point where we physically cannot squeeze additional visitors into the Home without adversely affecting the quality of the experience. A limit of 20 visitors per tour has been set to enable tour leaders to provide quality interpretive services while protecting the resources in the Home."<sup>104</sup>

In just 12 years, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS transformed from a park struggling to open and define its interpretive story to a national park destination—ready to welcome visitors and introduce them to America's Poet.

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103 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1985.

104 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1986.





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# CHAPTER 7

## “A Better Managed and Preserved Park,” 1986-1993

When Kenneth Hulick arrived at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) on October 12, 1986, to begin his first superintendent position, he experienced a park that had changed dramatically from its opening in 1974. His predecessor, Benjamin Davis, had focused on preserving the cultural resources—particularly the 31 historic buildings—while developing the interpretive programs and managing the day-to-day



**Figure 7.1** Superintendent Ken Hulick (left) stands with Granville Liles, Lucille Ray, and Mead Parce at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of CARL on October 17, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.2** The Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway when CARL was created, Granville Liles was also superintendent of CARL until 1974, when Benjamin Davis took over the lead at the park. In this program in the park Amphitheater on the 20th Anniversary celebration of CARL, Liles recalls stories about the early years of the park. Superintendent Ken Hulick sits to the left and Lucille Ray and Mead Parce are on the right. October 17, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).

operations. Now, with essential stabilization and preservation done on the majority of the historic buildings and some of the cultural resources and the groundwork laid for visitor services and programs, Hulick would bring a change in direction to this young park.

Hulick came from the Southeast Regional Office (SERO), where he had been serving as the chief of the Branch of Resource Management within the Resource Management Division. He began his career as a seasonal in Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park and obtained his first permanent park ranger position at Death Valley National Monument (now Death Valley National Park) in 1964. He moved on to serve as district ranger at Grand Canyon National Park and then at Everglades National Park. In 1978, he moved to SERO as a resource management specialist, specializing in fire management. Hulick then became chief of interpretation and resource management at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in 1979 before returning to SERO as branch chief in 1985. When he accepted the position at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Hulick continued to run the fire management program for the regional office for several years, due to staff shortages and his experience in that area. He held a degree in wildlife management, explaining that “I had every ‘ology’ that there is—biology, mammalogy, you name it, I had it.”<sup>1</sup>

Hulick was eager to accept the superintendency at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. “It was well known as the plum assignment,

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1 Kenneth Hulick, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, August 16, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive; Kenneth Hulick, email communication with Ann McCleary, July 20, 2013.

particularly for a beginning superintendent," he recalled. "It's manageable. It looked to me like I could be successful. I'd always wanted to be a superintendent and you always start small in that game, so it was a good place for me to start." He described the park as the "finest of all possible national historic sites."<sup>2</sup>

Superintendent Hulick's first impressions of the park were very favorable; he remembers that "the people were so wonderful" and "the community was so accepting." Hulick knew that he needed public involvement to accomplish the goals of the park, and he seldom had any "pushback" on what he wanted to do. "I used to say that if I had the time to convince the public of it, I could bulldoze a historic structure and they'd say, oh, Ken thinks it needs to be done, we'll do it and that's okay with us." Although he never met former Superintendent Davis, he appreciated his hard work in important projects in the pipeline. "He really had set us up to get a lot of good money and do some really good projects."<sup>3</sup>

Even with the project money coming in, Hulick still faced the challenge of declining operating funds for the park. The economic recession that began in the United States in 1981 continued through early 1992, bringing "serious underfunding and erosion of employee moral" to the National Park Service at the same time that visitation was expanding.<sup>4</sup> In his first Superintendent's Annual Report, Hulick described the philosophy that would characterize his tenure at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS: "The year 1987 was one of developing new strategies for coping with old problems." Bemoaning the "budget situation," he wrote that "modest" pay increases for employees and "constantly increasing costs of everything" were eroding the park's base funding.<sup>5</sup>

Hulick sought creative ways to face the budget crunch and to move the park forward. He undertook important initiatives at the park during his tenure, including maintaining the cultural resources and supporting the interpretive programs while strengthening the focus on natural

resources and ensuring that the extensive museum collections would finally be cataloged.

## "Intensive Preservation Inside— Extensive Cooperation Outside"

From the beginning of his superintendency, Hulick articulated his goals as "total resource preservation and total public involvement."<sup>6</sup> His strategies would be developed further in his Superintendent's Annual Reports from 1990 through 1992. "We've adopted a policy of 'Intensive Preservation Inside—Extensive Cooperation Outside' the park. This involved increasing our inventorying and monitoring of natural resources, speeding up the process of cataloging of artifacts, and working with any group of organization outside the park with whom we have a mutual interest."<sup>7</sup>

The first strategy looked inward to improving the park, while the other looked outward to engaging the community with the park. But, both goals would intersect in important ways: Hulick saw the community as a source of support and advocacy for achieving the goals of the park. In his 1987 Annual Report, Hulick stated that he hoped to lessen the budget crisis by cultivating volunteers and seeking donations to augment the reduced NPS funding. He hoped partnering with community and regional groups would help the park achieve its goal of resource preservation. His strategy proved successful. He wrote in his 1990 Annual Report that the park had enjoyed another successful year with a "better preserved and managed park and a public that we believe is well-served."<sup>8</sup> In his annual reports, Hulick always recorded the dollar value of the time spent by volunteers and the total amount the park gained through grants and other cooperative agencies. To Hulick, it was important that the public saw the park as "their" park and that they felt invested in what was going on there. The two strategies were mutually supportive. As Hulick asked, "How can they help us and we help them?"<sup>9</sup>

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2 Hulick, interview.

3 Hulick, interview.

4 Larry Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1994), Chapter 8.

5 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.

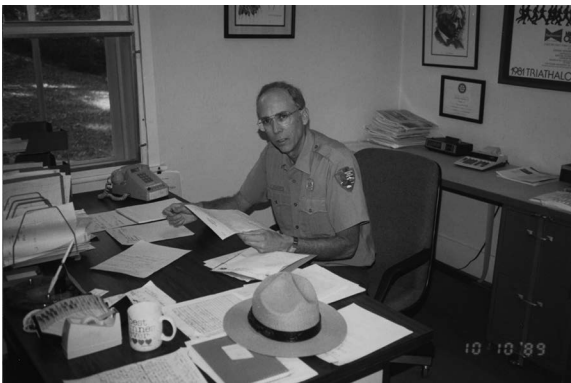
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6 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.

7 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

8 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

9 Hulick, interview.



**Figure 7.3** Superintendent Ken Hulick works at his desk in the Farm Manager's House. October 10, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

## A New Administrative Style

Superintendent Hulick brought a different management style to the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (CARL). His predecessor, Benjamin Davis, had a more reserved, but still "hands-on" style. He was "very involved" with all phases of the park operations and he walked the park daily to interact with staff so he could be aware of what they were doing. Hulick was more "hands-off" in terms of operations. "He had a real idea of managed management," recalled Ann Staley Vaughan, administrative officer. "He had a



**Figure 7.4** Administrative Officer Ann Staley Vaughan visits the goats at the Barn with her mother and friends. Spring 1986 (CARL Park Archive).

dynamic personality. We always jokingly said that Ken could manage anything, whether it was fire or the Sandburg home."<sup>10</sup> Dale Durham, chief of Museum Services at the Southeast Regional Office, described Hulick's leadership style as "proactive." He was more open to advocating for the needs of the park. When Durham "made a

good presentation of a need," Hulick "would get on board and help support it."<sup>11</sup>

Hulick challenged the park staff to become more productive at their jobs. He wrote in his Annual Report that he tried "to create a feeling and a reality that each employee can reach whatever their potential may be, regardless of demographics or factors that would limit their career progression."<sup>12</sup> Without exception, Hulick considered them "a great staff." "Our goals are set just above what I think we can accomplish," he wrote in 1990. "This encourages creativity and forces us all to work a little harder to carry out these goals." The Annual Report for that year included a section on "Creativity" which explained how staff had sought to overcome obstacles in their work.<sup>13</sup> Hulick believed that creativity was especially important in a region with 59 parks where "you don't get a whole lot of supervision. So you have to depend on your own creativity and the creativity of your staff for what you should be doing. And I relied on them a lot to provide that kind of input and I think we benefited from it."<sup>14</sup> Hulick appreciated when staff would "just take off on their own and try things." He explained, "I tried to have the philosophy that I wanted people to try and do things, try and make things work, and if they don't work, no criticism. You tried it, it didn't work. So you can't criticize people for trying to do things. I did criticize people when they didn't do very much."<sup>15</sup>

Hulick sought to improve staff productivity by emphasizing teamwork. He required the staff to gather for weekly squad meetings and monthly staff meetings. He believed that it was important for staff to talk about "determining what factors are limiting our maximum productivity and the development of the maximum growth of our employees." Hulick also asked staff to help out at other parks to gain a regional and national perspective on the Park Service.<sup>16</sup> In 1989, he proudly wrote that each staff member had worked "an average of more than two details or training assignments outside the park."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ann Staley Vaughan, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, 2012, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

<sup>11</sup> Dale Durham, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

<sup>13</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Hulick, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Hulick, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Hulick, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.





**Figure 7.5** The park's administrative staff in 1989 includes Lisa Ward (left) and Ann Staley Vaughn (right). November 14, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

Superintendent Hulick believed that this "cross-training" helped staff "understand a broader picture."<sup>18</sup> In 1990, for example, the Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright helped with rehab work at Vicksburg Historic Site after Hurricane Hugo and Museum Curator Judy Hellmich-Bryan assisted other parks with training for the Automated National Cataloging System.<sup>19</sup> Hulick sent CARL staff to help with a fire at the Great Smoky Mountain National Park "so they got some knowledge of fire management on a much larger scale than the way they did it at Sandburg." Many of the staff had worked at the park for a "long time" and some had not worked anywhere else. "So it tended to be a bit insular," Hulick recalled. "We haven't done it that way. Okay, guess what? It's going to be the way we're going to do it." The park staff was not only "receptive" but "kind of excited" about this approach. Hulick believed that this attitude attracted the attention of the Southeast Regional Office, which began to ask the park to assist with different projects, such as cataloging, adding, "We were emulated in other parks."<sup>20</sup>

As he developed the potential of his staff, Hulick paid attention to the growing concern for

affirmative action in the National Park Service. In 1990, for example, he noted that the park had "completed the recommendations of the Technical Assistance Visit and Equal Opportunity Review" and that it was "on track of multi-year Affirmative Action Goals."<sup>21</sup> Hulick recalled that the Park Service was "a little white, male-dominated." He tried to initiate change by starting a recruitment program at Voorhees College, a historically black Episcopal school nearby in Denmark, South Carolina. The park developed a close relationship with former

Voorhees President Dr. John F. Potts and his wife Muriel who moved back to his home in east Flat Rock after he retired in 1974. The Potts were strong supporters of the park: Muriel was a member of the steering committee that helped to organize the Friends of Connemara, and both had volunteered at the park. The Potts also provided a place for David Wallace to stay when he was researching the Furnishing Report and for Kathleen Triggs Byrne while she was working at the park and still maintained a home in Black Mountain. Mrs. Potts had been helping with the curatorial processing and was working as a park technician by 1980. It was through John and Muriel Potts that "I got my foot in the door to recruit at Voorhees," Hulick remembered.<sup>22</sup> Hulick started a "Cooperative Education program" at Voorhees in 1989. The park hired a black female student into a position that summer. In 1990, the park was recruiting for several seasonal positions and hired another cooperative education student from Voorhees. Annual reports mention this relationship through 1993, when a male student completed all the requirements of the program.<sup>23</sup>

Hulick also brought several African American NPS staff members serving on "detail" into the park to see how the parks operated. This opportunity "gave them a bit of experience" and Hulick recalled, "Both ended up going higher up in management." One of those detailers was Judy Forte who became superintendent at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site; the other detailer, K.G. Jones, later served as the chief of interpretation and visitor services at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.<sup>24</sup> Hulick's efforts

18 Hulick, interview.

19 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

20 Hulick, interview.

21 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

22 Hulick, interview.

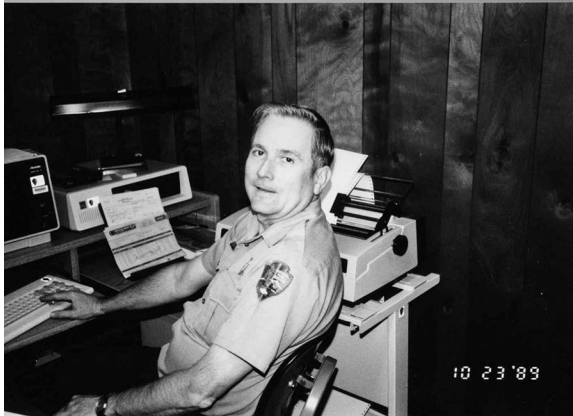
23 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989-1992.

24 Hulick, interview.

to recruit from the four African American colleges in Atlanta proved less successful. He also tried to work with Cherokee High School in Cherokee, North Carolina, to attract Native American students to work in the park. "So we tried those kinds of approaches to at least interest people who were not traditional employees in the Park Service," Hulick said.<sup>25</sup>

Hulick made staffing adjustments to fit the needs of the park and his goals and priorities. In 1988, he adjusted the grades for several positions to "strengthen the organization."<sup>26</sup> One of the staff members impacted that year was Judy Hellmich-Bryan. She was rehired at the park into a GS-7 position, rather than the GS-5 museum technician she had left, because the higher grade and position description better matched her work responsibilities.

In 1992, Hulick completed a staff reorganization to create four management units. The new plan emphasized managing the historical and natural landscape, which Curator Warren Weber recalled as a priority in the National Park Service at the time. Whereas Ben Davis was a historian with



**Figure 7.6** Curator Warren Weber handles all of the museum activities from his office in the Main House. In 1992, he became the Chief of Resource Management, so he could focus more on these duties. October 23, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

"historic park background," Hulick had experience in "land management and recreation."<sup>27</sup> Hulick created the new positions of chief of resource management and chief of visitor services.<sup>28</sup> Previously, Weber served in a museum curator position and was responsible for both of these

areas.<sup>29</sup> He now became the chief of resource management, responsible for a "broader range of resource management," and Hulick hired Martha Bogle, who had a natural science background, as the chief of visitor services.<sup>30</sup> "I was resource management, not maintenance, but resource management and the museum," Weber recalls.<sup>31</sup> "So, there was a real change there. And a good many of the buildings had been worked on to the point they were in fairly decent shape and we didn't have to spend as much time with that." The grounds were "totally given over to the maintenance activity."<sup>32</sup>

Continued NPS budget erosion in the late 1980s created stress at the park. Weber remembered that budgets were "very, very tight during this period."<sup>33</sup> The park's 1989 Statement for Interpretation noted that these cuts were taking a toll, especially on the front-line staff. "As funds decrease, less personnel are available for personal services," Weber wrote. And since only paid park staff could do much of the essential visitor services work, including driving the van and taking fees, staff needed to work during their lunch hour just to be sure that the park could accommodate visitors. In peak months, the visitor services staff reached its maximum potential. Even the volunteer program would not be able to ease this burden, as volunteers were not allowed to take on these tasks. Further, although the park had begun collecting fees for the house tour in 1987, the money went directly into the NPS coffers rather than the park budget and could not be used to pay for additional interpretive staff. This situation changed after Hulick left when NPS reclassified the house tour admission funds from access fees to program fees, which allowed the park to keep the income and use it to hire program staff.

25 Hulick, interview.

26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.

27 Weber, interview, 2011.

28 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.

29 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, A Strategic Plan for Visitor Services, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, 1989, 12, CARL Park Archive. The 1989 Statement for Interpretation listed Weber's position in the 1015 series, with areas of expertise in Interpretation and History.

30 Statement for Interpretation, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, January 1993, 27, CARL Park Archive. The Visitor Services Position was a GS-9.

31 Weber, interview, 2011.

32 Weber, interview, 2003.

33 Weber, interview, 2003.

The park staff still had most of their offices and workspaces in the historic buildings when Hulick came, but that also began changing during these years. When Hulick arrived, the maintenance staff had just moved their workshops from the Barn Garage to a new facility off the back road, freeing the historic building for exhibits. The administrative staff worked in the Farm Manager's House near the Barn, and curatorial staff utilized the Tenant House and two rooms in the Main House, off the Dining Room. Reports during this



**Figure 7.7** Lisa Ward, administrative clerk, works at park headquarters located in the Farm Manager's House. 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

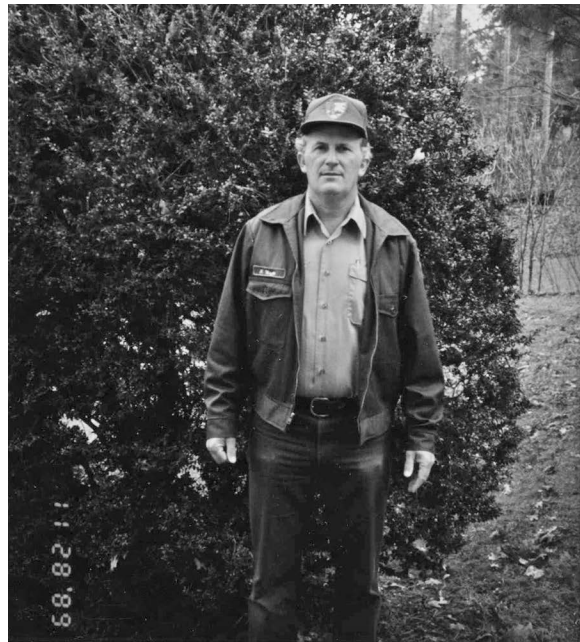
time emphasized the need to fund a headquarters building to move these services outside the historic area. The Development Concept Plan advocated the creation of a management and administrative services area separate from the historic core of the park. While this initiative began under Hulick's tenure, the work would not be completed until after he left. The on-site housing built earlier for Leroy Levi was now in poor condition, and the 1993 Operations Plan noted that the park needed funding "to solve the housing issue." However, it was not in the historic area and thus not visible to visitors.<sup>34</sup>

During the Hulick years, computers became integral to the park's operation, transforming the way the administrative office worked. Ann Staley Vaughan, who arrived at the park as an administrative technician in 1982, explained that, with computers, "things had to come through administration. The thrust was to centralize all of the functions so that documents only had to be inputted one time into the system." She believes that it was the computer that "caused everything



**Figure 7.8** Administrative Clerk Lisa Ward works on one of the park's first computers. 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

to start snowballing." The park designated its first computer for use in cataloging the museum collections in 1983, but soon Hulick, Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright, and Administrative Officer Ann Staley Vaughan also had computers, so activities became "more centralized into administration."



**Figure 7.9** Johnnie Wright, CARL Chief of Maintenance. Wright joined the staff after Charlie Hamm retired and helped coordinate not only restoration projects but also new construction, including the Museum Preservation Center. November 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

The park continued to work closely with the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta. In 1991, Hulick reported that CARL was using the "Southeast Management System to manage, direct, and control the park's operations." Through this system, the park was able to evaluate issues "in an international, national, regional and local

34 Statement for Management and Basic Operations, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, March 1993, CARL Park Archive.



context." The park also collaborated with SERO on its museum program, including cataloging and computer data entry. However, Weber wrote in 1993 that the park staff worried that many of the administrative functions were being moved from the regional office to the parks. He explained, "For small parks, this is at times overwhelming."<sup>35</sup>

## Planning and Development

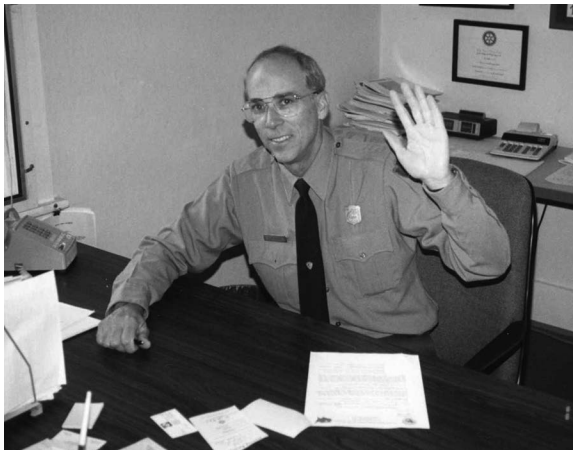
The Carl Sandburg Home NHS met NPS demands for planning, which were especially important considering its young age. While key plans had been completed early on, including the Master Plan (1971), Interpretive Prospectus (1970), and Development Concept Plan (1980), the park staff considered these documents to be increasingly outdated. A variety of plans were prepared during the Hulick years, including a Signage Plan (1988), Statements for Interpretation (1989 and 1993), Outline of Planning (1990), Statement for Management (1990), Resource Management Plan (1991), Superintendent's Orders (1992), Recycling Plan (1991), Dogwood Anthracnose Plan (1991), Cultural Landscape Report (1992), and Statement for Management and Basic Operations (1993). An array of collections documents were also produced, including a Collections Management Plan (1988), a revised Scope of Collection Statement (1991), Collection Condition Survey (1992), Collections Management Plan update (1992), as well as other smaller reports and plans. The 1993 Statement for Management strongly recommended the development of a General

Management Plan, but that process would not occur until the next superintendent, Connie Hudson Backlund, arrived.<sup>36</sup> Hulick recalls, "I had one shelf that was just solid plans."<sup>37</sup>

While Hulick helped to ensure that the park complied with completing the requested plans, he did not consider all of these plans helpful. "I disagreed with having that whole level of planning," he said later. Nor did he "put much value" into many of these plans. He explained that some, like the Resource Management Plan, were "a mechanism to get funding for different things, but it never really worked." The same held true with the Statement for Management, completed in 1991. "Somebody in the regional office thought we needed a quick and dirty thumbnail sketch of what the park was all about, so they invented that Statement for Management and later interpreters got into the game and said, 'Oh, we need a Statement for Interpretation.' They were just going crazy over different kinds of plans that didn't really aid management. They were just a chore that you had to keep updating."<sup>38</sup> The only plan that Hulick wrote himself was the Resource Management Plan, which was "really just a funding thing. I didn't feel very excited about it but I knew I had to do it, so I did." He had completed one at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area so he knew what to include.<sup>39</sup> As Curator Judy Hellmich-Bryan later recalled, "I think a lot of those plans, this is just my opinion, were done because the park had a list of things they should have on their shelf."<sup>40</sup>

The level of planning Hulick appreciated was the "action planning level," where "you get right down to looking at things and saying here's what we're going to do this year related to that situation or object." He felt that he could truly accomplish something at this level. "I think I had 34 different management plans, all ready at different times, many of them out of sequence. So you had to say, which one are we going to choose to operate under?"<sup>41</sup>

35 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991, 1993.



**Figure 7.10** Ken Hulick, park superintendent during the pivotal years of the park between 1986 through 1993. November 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

36 Statement for Management and Basic Operations, 1993.

37 Hulick, interview.

38 Hulick, interview.

39 Hulick, interview.

40 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

41 Hulick, interview.



**Figure 7.11** Superintendent Ken Hulick (right) chats with Congressman Jamie Clark and other visitors at a park event in the Visitor Center. October 9, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

The plan that Hulick particularly liked, and the only plan that the 1993 Operations Report judged “excellent,” was the 1992 *Cultural Landscape Report* by Susan Hart from the University of Georgia. Hulick had been continually frustrated by not having answers to key questions about the cultural resources at the park. The *Cultural Landscape Report* provided many of the answers he needed, and he recalls using it at least several times a month. Hulick also incorporated the recommendations from this report into his annual work plan and tried to fund them and “carry them out.” Many did not require funding; “they just took a little thinking.”<sup>42</sup>

Superintendent Hulick continued to maintain a “big notebook” full of “projects, project statements, things that needed funding,” following a tradition established by Superintendent Davis. The notebook contained written statements of projects “that needed doing” but for which the park did not have “operating money.” Vaughan recalled that “as projects got done, they were pulled from that notebook and put into another one,” and new projects were added. “And those were sent to the regional office in Atlanta, then went on through and ended up with Congress for funding.”<sup>43</sup>

## Resource Management: Historic Structures

As part of the plan for “total resource preservation,” the park staff worked toward completion of the preservation program begun by Superintendent Davis. Hulick praised the work undertaken by his predecessor, explaining, “Because of the awareness of Davis during his ten years there, it is one of the best and most complete historic sites.”<sup>44</sup> The majority of the historic buildings had experienced some level of stabilization and preservation work during the Davis years, so the focus began to shift from rehabilitation to maintenance.



**Figure 7.12** A crew member stands on the bridge viewing the repair work on the Front Lake Dam. October 23, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

One of the park’s first accomplishments in 1987 was to create an updated list of classified structures. One structure on the original list had “totally disappeared due to rotting of the wooden portions” and another had “all above ground components removed.”<sup>45</sup> In 1988, NPS prepared a Historic Structure Preservation Guide for the Main House. Hulick noted that the guidelines did not include all of the buildings, but they would “significantly aid management.”<sup>46</sup>

In the meantime, the park continued work on essential maintenance activities. In 1987, the

<sup>42</sup> Hulick, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Vaughan, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Park Cultural Resource Management Overview, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, May 23, 1991, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, CARL 4025/1, Box 1, Folder 09, CARL Park Archive.

<sup>45</sup> Project Statement Index, Green Notebook, CARL [CASS], SERO Archive. A 1990 note states that the List of Classified Structures includes only 49 structures, but the park counts 50, because the Milk Goat Barn and the Milk House are included as different structures.

<sup>46</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1987, 1988.





**Figure 7.13** Repair work progresses on the Front Lake Dam. October 23, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

staff conducted termite treatment for all of the structures and repaired some of the rock walls. Some remaining stabilization work occurred on the Corn Crib, water system, Buck House, Main House, and the Farm Manager's House.<sup>47</sup> Funding for these projects came from the NPS cyclic maintenance fund.

Much of this work was done by the park's maintenance staff, which Hulick considered very proficient at doing the careful preservation work required by the NPS. When the crew repaired the



**Figure 7.14** In 1989, the park maintenance crew includes, Don Ward, Glenn Barnwell, Austin Ducker (left to right back row), and Sabrina Freeman (front row). November 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

sagging roof on the Tenant House, they "rebuilt the roof and put the sag back into the roof.... They had an amazing sensitivity to historic preservation. They really tried to preserve what was there, not make it better." Hulick observed that some of the earlier work done to the Main House had been "non-historic, painting things with different colors

and so they were prettying it up. They weren't making it historically accurate."<sup>48</sup>

The biggest job that Hulick remembered was painting the exterior of the Main House, a project begun in 1988. Davis had secured a "big chunk of money" for this work. The park arranged for the



**Figure 7.15** One of the first major maintenance projects at the park after Superintendent Hulick came was repainting the Main House. Here, a contractor is scraping the Front Porch. October 1988 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.16** A contracting firm repaints the Main House. Circa 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

repainting of the Main House with a contractor, but the task turned out to be far more complicated and required more time than expected. The contracting company began by using a chemical paint remover but abandoned this plan and utilized heat guns to remove the 150 years of paint.<sup>49</sup> The work continued into 1989, but "with quite a few months of work awaiting the warmer weather." By 1990, the contractor defaulted and the park turned to the maintenance crew to complete the project. The park's maintenance staff also repainted four other structures that year and five more the next

47 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.

48 Hulick, interview.

49 Hulick, interview.





**Figure 7.17** A freshly painted barn complex welcomes visitors. The park staff repainted many of the buildings during the Hulick years. To help with providing interpretation during the lean budget years, two wayside signs were created and installed in front of the barnyard to interpret the farm operations. February 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

year as part of the multi-year program to repaint the major structures. In addition, they worked on re-roofing nine structures in 1991. As Hulick noted, all of this work occurred in spite of “medical problems with our maintenance personnel” in both 1990 and 1991. He concluded in his 1991 Annual Report, “We are making considerable progress toward getting the exteriors of our structures in good shape.”<sup>50</sup> In 1993, the Annual Report again mentions painting. Now the park staff was repainting two buildings in the barn complex and replacing rotten boards, work which continued into 1994. Besides painting, the park maintenance staff added roofing, repaired drainage around the house, preserved the Milking Parlor, and repointed some of the masonry foundations.<sup>51</sup>

As a specialist in fire management, Hulick pursued a plan to install a fire prevention system in the Main House. “That was a big project,” he recalled, one accomplished by the park maintenance staff. “We had to do some creative things to get pipes in there,” he recalled. Hulick remembered that the talented crew used the laundry chute from the third floor to install a three-inch pipe up to the top floor and install the sprinklers there, so as not to destroy any historic fabric in the house.<sup>52</sup> The system was “strictly water” and the sprinkler heads were activated by heat.<sup>53</sup> The park participated

50 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1988-1991.

51 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1993.

52 Hulick, interview.

53 Hulick, interview.

actively in the Southeast Regional Office resource management agenda in the early 1990s.



**Figure 7.18** Park maintenance requires that staff stay on top of emerging issues impacting both the buildings and landscape. While much of the preservation work had been completed on the park’s historic buildings by the time that Hulick came to the park, maintenance proved to be an ongoing activity. Here, Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright and park maintenance staff Austin Ducker and Don Ward work on the reconstruction of the chimney at the Farm Manager’s House. Circa 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

To ensure a “strong team of experienced and well trained field personnel,” the SERO Cultural Resource Planning Division offered three workshops entitled “Orientation to the Management of NPS Resources” in 1991. One of these workshops was held at the Carl Sandburg Home. Targeted for non-resource management personnel, the goal of the workshop was to “relate the management of cultural and natural resources to the NPS mission and the performance of all jobs in the parks.” SERO strongly advocated completion of Resource Management Plans for all parks in the



**Figure 7.19** Repair work on the Front lake Dam proves extensive. October 24, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

region that year, and CARL complied by updating its plan.<sup>54</sup>

One of the popular planning documents for national parks by the late 1980s was the Cultural Landscape Report to assist in identifying, assessing, and managing the park's cultural resources.<sup>55</sup>



**Figure 7.20** Once the staff had stabilized the buildings, the work focus expands to the park's cultural landscape, including the gardens. This was an important transition during Hulick's superintendency. July 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS began a Cultural Landscape Plan in 1988 as a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia. Financial assistance came from the National Park Service's cyclic funding source, Operation of the National Park Service (ONPS), and Eastern National, with an additional \$5,000 through in-kind support from the University of Georgia. Susan Hart, a graduate student in the School of Environmental Design, completed the report as the thesis project for her Master's degree, supervised by Dr. Darrel Morrison. She submitted the first draft to SERO for review in 1990, and Hulick noted in the Annual Report that year that they were already implementing some of her ideas. SERO approved the final draft in 1992.<sup>56</sup> Eastern

National published the *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report* in December 1993.

The *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report* established a new



**Figure 7.21** The cultural landscape at CARL remains integral to the park's identity. Cultural landscape resources gained more attention during the Hulick years when the *Cultural Landscape Report* was developed to provide a blueprint for managing the landscape. The park also focused on developing the gardens, including the gardens near the Main House shown in this photograph. July 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

agenda for work at the park. The report was a landscape restoration and management study that focused on the "preservation and restoration needs of the historic landscape," with an emphasis on those parts of the park used most often by visitors. Hart utilized oral histories, photographs, and other historical and landscape research, much of which she collected, to create management policies for the park. The final report described the historic landscape with a focus on the Sandburg years, assessed the historical integrity of the site, offered a restoration program, and provided management plans for accomplishing the program goals and restoring "the feeling associated with the historic landscape." Hart concluded that the Sandburgs managed their farm, but there was "never enough time to manage it completely." Consequently, "expressions of wildness" contributed to an evolving landscape that was not nearly as manicured as the park had maintained it.<sup>57</sup>

Park staff was very pleased with this report, including Hulick. "That document is very useful because it gave us the way of looking at things, where they may be a natural resource but they're

54 Cultural Resource Wrap-Up, 1991 Annual Report, Office of Cultural Resources, 1991, National Park Service, Southeast Region, 24-5; The Statement for Management and Basic Operations for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, March 1993, references a 1991 Resource Management Plan. This is probably the Cultural Resource Management Overview revision submitted to SERO on May 23, 1991. See 4025/1, Box 1, Folder 09, CARL Park Archive

55 Cultural Resource Wrap-Up, 1991 Annual Report, 1991, 22.

56 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*, 1993, 7; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990, 1992. The published plan was revised slightly from the original thesis.

57 Hart, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*, 1993, 7, 19, 65.





**Figure 7.22** Windstorms damage the park in irreparable ways. This large elm tree in front of the Barn came down in a spring storm. April 1986 (CARL Park Archive).

in a cultural milieu, and to look at it historically, to see how it evolved over time," Hulick explained. "We could emulate what [Sandburg] did and arrive at a product that he would have approved of and that is in keeping with the natural objectives of the park."<sup>58</sup> As an example, Hulick remembers

58 Hulick, interview.



**Figure 7.23** Winds produce damage very quickly in a park like CARL. After one such windstorm, this American Elm tree was cut down to a stump. 1989 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.24** The park celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the National Park Service by planting a new elm tree where a historic tree had come down only two years earlier. Here, Hulick speaks to the crowd that gathered for the event. April 26, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.25** Superintendent Ken Hulick helps to plant a new elm tree to replace a tree that came down in 1989. Hulick uses this replanting as an example of replacing a historic resource with the "closest genetic material," guided by the new *Cultural Landscape Report*. April 26, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

that the park replaced a dying elm tree outside the Barn, which had been chewed by the goats, with an American elm that was resistant to the Dutch elm disease. The tree was a "historic resource that was a long time there and it died, so we replaced it with the closest genetic material we could and used our knowledge of natural resource management to do it." Hulick appreciated that the cultural landscape represented "layers of culture on top of nature" and that the park had to "accept all of them, except that you have to emphasize the historic period that you're really trying to convey an impression of to the public."<sup>59</sup>

Park reports expressed constant concern about the "specimen trees" that were older and dying from age or storm damage. One area of particular concern were the two rows of trees that lined the front drive leading to the Main House, but the park also worried about the English and American

59 Hulick, interview.



**Figure 7.26** The park's lakes and dams require regular maintenance. This photograph shows repair work on the Front Lake Dam in 1989. October 23, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).



Boxwoods. The 1991 Resource Management Plan stated that the park was replacing these trees with others of the same species, as it did with the elm tree near the Barn.<sup>60</sup>

By 1992, the park was already implementing year two of the recommendations from the Cultural Landscape Plan "to achieve a more historic appearance." Hulick incorporated elements of this document into the annual work plan. In 1993, the park replanted trees and repaired some of the pasture fences utilizing the recommendations in the plan.<sup>61</sup>



**Figure 7.27** The park focuses on restoration of the many gardens at Connemara, including Margaret's Garden. 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

The historic gardens gained attention during the Hulick years. The 1988 Annual Report notes that the park was reestablishing two historic gardens. By 1989, the Friends of Connemara had adopted Margaret's Garden and would spend many volunteer hours over the next several years helping to restore it (See Chapter Eight).<sup>62</sup>

The park also devoted time to reworking the trails, since they were experiencing an increasing amount of traffic from local residents as well as out-of-town visitors. In 1981, the 1.5 mile long Big Glassy Trail was designated as a National Heritage Trail, one of only a few in the region, and this recognition now attracted more hikers to the park.<sup>63</sup> The Friends of Connemara and F.R.E.S.H. (Flat



**Figure 7.28** Maintenance crew member Sabrina Freeman works on the trail to Big Glassy Mountain. Trail maintenance was an on-going process. May 1990 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.29** The park staff performs maintenance work on trails. The Maintenance staff offered instruction on chain saw use in this work. December 1991 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.30** This marker lets visitors know where the Ice House stood at Connemara. The Ice House was one of the buildings that could not be restored because it had deteriorated so badly. The park placed the sign to identify the Ice House location and interpret its use. Circa 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

60 Park Cultural Resource Management Overview, 1991.  
61 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992-3.

62 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, (Flat Rock, NC: April 1989), CARL Park Archive.

63 National Recreation Trails Program, "Big Glassy," <http://www.americantrails.org/NRTDatabase/trailDetail.php?recordID=2271> (accessed November 20, 2012).

Rock's Exceptional Sandburg Helpers) Program participants helped the park maintain these trails (See Chapter Eight).

One of the park's long-standing concerns was the stretch of the historic Memminger Trail that was not within the park boundaries. The park sought to obtain easements from the private landowners through whose property the trail extended. By early 1993, all three landowners verbally agreed to donate trail easements, and the park completed a survey of the property it hoped to acquire. But the park staff needed to coordinate its efforts with the Southeast Regional Office and the landowners, and by the end of that year, only one landowner had formally agreed to the easement.<sup>64</sup> Hulick recalled that when he left, "the park was still trying to negotiate the easements which wandered through the backyards of a couple of houses . . . We were asking those folks if they wouldn't donate a trail easement," but landowners had not committed and this work remained incomplete when he left.<sup>65</sup>

Another concern expressed throughout the cultural management documents for these years was the lack of a systematic, comprehensive archaeological survey. In 1993, Superintendent Hulick reported that the park still needed information on unsurveyed lands and testing on the Family Garage, originally the Memminger's Summer Kitchen, as well as assistance in locating the older Willington House site, which he described as "required."<sup>66</sup>

## Resource Management: The Museum Collections

Perhaps the greatest change during the Hulick years was to put a stronger focus on the museum program. Although the park staff had been working on cataloging the collection from the time that the park was created, work progressed slowly. The park staff had one curator, Warren Weber, when it opened in 1974, but he was also chief of visitor services and thus pulled in many directions. Even an increase in volunteers and seasonal staff did not speed up the cataloging efforts. "I thought it was

going to take 100 years!" Weber later recalled.<sup>67</sup> But as the park completed the major preservation on the historic buildings, the resource management staff began to focus on ensuring that the museum collection was cataloged, placed in proper storage, and preserved.

Besides the pressing need to catalog this large collection, another reason for the increased attention to collections management in the National Park Service at this time was a report written by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on the museum collections debacle at Nez Perce National Historic Park. The Nez Perce Park's curator had not adequately cataloged the park's collection, some artifacts were missing, and questions arose about whether he "possessed proper credentials to be a park museum curator." In 1985, the OIG conducted a management audit and found problems in the "internal control system for museum property." The curator resigned that year, but the aftermath of the problem led to increased funding for national parks to process their collections.<sup>68</sup> Regional Curator Dale Durham recalled, "That's what sped up and helped get the backlog cataloging and the other things funded." The controversy blew up over "the backlog and the lack of sound accountability. It had to do over . . . the fact that they didn't have a good handle on some extremely valuable Nez Perce material . . . The Inspector General pretty well just identified a lot of the things in that overall report as justification for a lot of funding and it worked."<sup>69</sup>

After this report, special congressional funding initiatives for backlog cataloging came to the National Park Service to provide better accountability for its museum collections.<sup>70</sup> Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock advocated for this funding and distributed it through the regional offices to help the parks. Hitchcock demanded that parks be held responsible for the use of these additional

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64 Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993, 12.

65 Hulick, interview.

66 Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993, 10.

67 Weber, interview, 2011.

68 Theodor Catton, *Nez Perce Administrative History*, Historical Research Associates, 1996, Chapter 6, "Cultural Resources," [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/nepe/adhi/chap6.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/nepe/adhi/chap6.htm), [accessed November 5, 2012]. See also U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General Audit Report's Review of Museum Management at the Nez Perce National Historical Park, National Park Service, March 1985.

69 Durham, interview.

70 Durham, interview; Cultural Resources Wrap-Up, 1991 Annual Report, 17.



funds, as she sought to demonstrate that the NPS could provide better care of its collection. Durham recalled that parks began coming to him for some of this funding acquired through "congressional add-on monies," including parks that had not taken as much interest in museum collections work in the past. "Park interest came up once we started getting earmarked money through Congress," and individual parks wanted "a piece of the pie." He remarked, "I was the wall flower in the dating circuit for years until I had money, and then I became a very popular date."<sup>71</sup>



**Figure 7.31** The museum curatorial team during the backlog cataloging project includes Bess Gibbs (left), Donna McKnight (center) and Judy Hellmich-Bryan (right). November 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

Between 1988 and 1992, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS reaped the benefit of these backlog cataloging funds, which allowed the park to complete processing most of its remaining museum collection. Durham recognized the significant challenge that CARL faced in managing its collection, particularly after a visit to the park. While Durham does not remember when he first visited the park, he did recall that he "was impressed with the collection because of the volume. As far as rarity, scarcity, one-of-a-kind significance on an item-by-item basis," he claimed, "What would be mundane stuff elsewhere becomes very important. They didn't have a Rembrandt, but they had [an] assemblage that, as a whole, raised the importance" of the collection.<sup>72</sup>

Judy Hellmich-Bryan spearheaded the new museum initiatives at the park. She arrived at CARL as a museum technician in 1985. Her first

tasks were to document the collection and to work on storage problems. As she recalled, there was "no climate control, no documentation, no anything,"



**Figure 7.32** Judy Hellmich-Bryan (left) returns to CARL in 1988 to focus primarily on collections work. She remained at the park through 1991. Curatorial work became a top priority with backlog cataloging money, and Hellmich-Bryan depended on many volunteers, including the volunteer here, to assist with that work. October 1988 (CARL Park Archive).

so her priority was "just getting those things more secured." She covered the objects with plastic and documented "what was there." She helped with cleaning and maintaining the collection, but she also assisted with leading tours of the Main House as needed. Hellmich-Bryan estimated that about 60 percent of the collection had been cataloged before she came, and what remained was primarily archival material and "boxes and boxes of newspaper clippings." There were also objects in other buildings, particularly the dairy barns, which still housed the milk separator. Hellmich-Bryan transferred to Cumberland Island National Seashore after a year and a half, to help that park get started on their cataloging at Dale Durham's recommendation.<sup>73</sup>

Superintendent Hulick recruited Hellmich-Bryan to come back to Carl Sandburg Home NHS in 1988 and she stayed through April 1991.<sup>74</sup> Warren Weber, who held overall responsibility for the museum program as chief of resource management, delegated many of the curatorial duties to Hellmich-Bryan, whose position was adjusted to a GS-7 museum technician. Whereas during her first term of work at CARL, Hellmich-Bryan was required to help with other park duties, now she devoted all of her time to collections, spending half of her time on cataloging and recordkeeping, one-quarter on preparing reports,

71 Durham, interview.

72 Durham, interview.

73 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

74 Hellmich-Bryan, interview; Gibbs, interview.



and one-quarter on object conservation and storage. A GS-5 museum technician helped her by focusing solely on cataloging.<sup>75</sup> Shirley Payne served in this position until she left the park in the summer of 1988, and Bess Gibbs replaced her that fall. Gibbs worked as a seasonal at the park, beginning in 1980. She helped with tours but also with processing the collection, as time allowed. When Gibbs accepted the full-time museum technician position, she spent most of her time cataloging but also helped with the annual inventory and other collections projects as needed.<sup>76</sup>

By 1988, when Hellmich-Bryan returned to CARL, the cataloging process had changed to automated records. "Shirley Payne was working really closely with the Washington office on the development of the Automated National Catalog System," recalled Hellmich-Bryan. "When I went back in '87, that was really the focus—automating the records." Payne had spent two weeks in the National Park Service office in Washington DC helping to develop the computer program.<sup>77</sup> The park staff was still typing up catalog cards, but "we were doing it into the system as opposed to typing the cards with lots of typos." The staff was now creating automated records.<sup>78</sup>

Ken Hulick was very supportive of the cataloging project, recalled Hellmich-Bryan.<sup>79</sup> Gibbs explained, "Hulick wanted the place catalogued. There had been some criticism, I think, of the Park Service, because people said, 'They don't know what they have.' So he wanted it cataloged. I mean it was a real drive to get everything cataloged."<sup>80</sup> The park had been using cyclic funding from the regional office to undertake the cataloging work over the previous years, but now Hulick hoped to acquire some of the backlog catalog funding allocated by Congress to move the project forward. This money would allow him to hire more staff to work on the collections. To acquire funding, the park had to produce an annual work plan stating

what the staff planned to accomplish with the additional money.

According to Hulick, Associate Regional Director of Operations Robert Deskins "promised" \$15,000 of this funding for FY 1988 to Carl Sandburg Home NHS, since it was "one of, if not the highest regional priority, for cataloging backlog reduction." Not seeing these funds in his budget, Hulick wrote to Paul Hartwig, the deputy associate regional director of the Cultural Resources Division, in April 1988 to ask why the park had not received this money in its preliminary budget.<sup>81</sup> Regional Curator Dale Durham wrote to Hartwig that he thought the park did not "have a commitment to cataloging unless outside funding is received." Durham stated that CARL had received cyclic funding for backlog cataloging since 1980 and the park had "relied entirely" on this funding to hire seasonals "to fulfill their obligation to catalog," rather than using existing staff to assist with this work. Durham added that the previous year, in 1987, the park had "lapsed their museum technician position and diverted that salary to other uses."<sup>82</sup> While SERO received a total allocation of \$50,000 for the coming year, Durham had not allocated any of this funding to CARL because the park already had a curator and museum technician on staff.<sup>83</sup>

Hulick responded on July 10, 1988, to Durham, Deskins, Hartwig, and Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock that the park had been able to "pick up the pace using volunteers, seasonals, and permanents to make a significant reduction in the backlog of museum work," but that "the recent additional funds made available by Ann Hitchcock and SERO have greatly aided us in achieving this."<sup>84</sup> In the end, the park did receive the \$15,000 and the FY 1988 Collections Management Plan stated that

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75 Ceilia M. Stratton, Collections Management Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, December 1988, 41, CARL Park Archive.

76 Gibbs, interview; Weber, interview, 2011.

77 Gibbs, interview.

78 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

79 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

80 Gibbs, interview.

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81 Deputy Associate Regional Director, Cultural Resources, Paul B. Hartwig, to Regional Curator, Southeast Region, Dale Durham, memorandum, April 4, 1988, CARL [General Museum] File, SERO Archive.

82 This museum technician position that was lapsed may have been held by Judy Hellmich-Bryan, since she left CARL in 1987 to work at Cumberland Island National Seashore.

83 Regional Curator, Southeast Region, to Deputy Associate Regional Director, Cultural Resources, Southeast Region, memorandum, April 5, 1988, CARL [General Museum] File, SERO Archive.

84 Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, memorandum, July 18, 1988, CARL [General Museum] File. SERO Archive

the park expected to receive that same amount for cataloging each of the next five years.<sup>85</sup>

In October 1988, Regional Curator Dale Durham and Ceilia M. Stratton visited the park to develop a Collections Management Plan, which would make recommendations to "improve the care and management of the museum resources." The plan, completed in December 1988, included a revised Scope of Collection Statement that recommended inclusion of the natural history collection. The report also expressed concern about the physical condition of the collections, especially the more fragile paper documents. The light levels in the Main House were particularly high, once again illustrating the often competing goals of interpreting the house while also preserving the collection. In addition, the report included a variety of recommendations, from reducing the size of the tour to providing more security for the collection and creating better storage.<sup>86</sup>

Durham must have been impressed with the work that the park was doing, and apparently the tension over funding from earlier that year had subsided. The park actually received more than it had expected in the following years: \$34,300 for FY 1989; \$33,400 in regional cyclic funds in 1990; and \$26,000 in regional cyclic money in 1991.<sup>87</sup> "We had good support from the Southeast Region," observed Warren Weber.<sup>88</sup> Each year, the park met and usually exceeded its annual cataloging goals. In 1989, the park hoped to catalog 22,000 objects, but completed over 30,000. The next year, the park cataloged 42,000 objects. With the additional funds, Hulick noted in a Museum Accomplishment Report for 1990 that the park was "speeding up the process of cataloging our artifacts. Unfortunately, there may be close to 200,000 objects in the collection." He added, "Continued funding at current levels will allow us to come within sight of the end of this project during FY 91 or FY 92."<sup>89</sup> In calendar year 1991, park staff and volunteers cataloged over 50,000 objects.<sup>90</sup>

The cataloging team included Hellmich-Bryan and the museum technician, first Payne and then Gibbs, but also seasonal workers, interns, and volunteers. The park used the additional funding to hire seasonals to work primarily in the summer.<sup>91</sup>



**Figure 7.33** Volunteer Muriel Potts helps with refreshments at the Sandburg Symposium. She also assisted with cataloging the collection as a museum technician. October 22, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).

"That took a lot of time, directing the volunteers, teaching them how to catalog," recalled Gibbs.<sup>92</sup> In June of 1989, the park hired three additional staff members and utilized the services of three volunteers.<sup>93</sup> In June of 1990, the park had enough money to add two more employees to the "five presently assigned, and with the two faithful volunteers, will occupy all available desks and put large dents in the remaining piles of work to be done."<sup>94</sup> Hulick reported in 1990 that the work was being accomplished by Museum Curator Hellmich-Bryan, Museum Technician Gibbs (GS-5), a museum aid (GS-3), two GS-4 park rangers, a GS-4 archives technician, and a GS-3 park ranger.<sup>94</sup>

Hellmich-Bryan recalled that some of the catalogers had been seasonal interpreters who returned to the park to do cataloging. Others were retired people, such as Muriel Potts, wife of Voorhees president John F. Potts and a resident of east Flat Rock. Interns assisted as well. Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) and members of the Friends of Connemara also helped, and the park reported the value of their volunteer hours. The Friends newsletter constantly recruited volunteers, often enticing them by describing the exciting discoveries that the catalogers were making.

85 Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988, 44.

86 Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988.

87 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989-91.

88 Weber, interview, 2011.

89 Museum Accomplishment Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, FY 1990, October 25, 1990, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, SERO Archive.

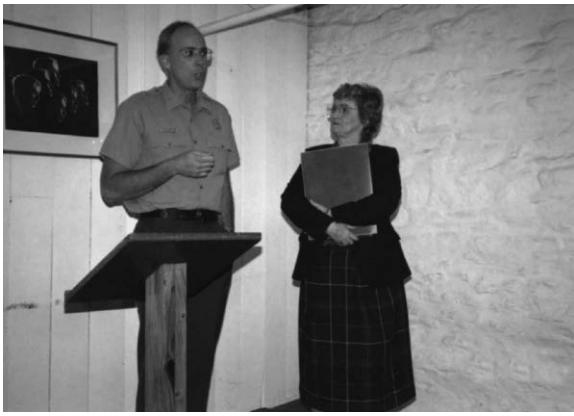
90 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989-91.

91 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

92 Gibbs, interview; Weber, interview, 2011.

93 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, June 1989.

94 Museum Accomplishment Report, 1990.



**Figure 7.34** Superintendent Kenneth Hulick describes the work that Shirley Payne undertook in assisting with the Automated National Catalog System. October 15, 1987 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.36** Museum Aid Donna McKnight assists with a variety of curatorial activities. Her office was in the room next to Margaret's Bedroom. October 26, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.35** Shirley Payne accepts an award from the National Park Service for her work on the Automated National Catalog System. October 15, 1987 (CARL Park Archive).

CARL had been a pilot site for the new Automated National Catalog System (ANCS), a dBase III program that Dale Durham stated was pioneered by Sarah Zimny at the Southeast Regional Office. As Hellmich-Bryan recalled, "We were very integrally involved with the Washington office on developing that program and doing some of the coding and a lot of the testing and training."<sup>95</sup> Shirley Payne helped Durham with some of the collections training at Harpers Ferry.<sup>96</sup> Hellmich-Bryan traveled to five or six parks a year in other regions to provide training on the new automated system.<sup>97</sup> She talked to Durham "fairly often, just because it was probably the largest and fastest growing curatorial program in the southeast at the time. It was like the model for other parks to come in and learn how to do cataloging."<sup>98</sup>

95 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.  
96 Durham, interview.  
97 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.  
98 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

Hulick recalled that the park staff got energized about the backlog cataloging project, "having some goals, how many we're going to do this year, and then saying that this is important, and here's why." The work was tedious, requiring the cataloger to enter "eighty data fields" on each of the accession forms, even for something as simple as a "blank white envelope." But the work had to be done. "Once we all got pushing in the same direction, it went well," Hulick remembered. "And we were able to then provide an example of how it can be done if you put your mind to it."<sup>99</sup>



**Figure 7.37** Judy Hellmich-Bryan oversaw the cataloging of the museum collection between 1988 and 1991. Here, she is seen working in Margaret's Bedroom, which was used as the curatorial office space before the construction of the Museum Preservation Center. The park's first computer and printer can be seen in the photograph. October 26, 1989.

Cataloging during the summer months was "a totally concentrated effort," recalled Gibbs. "We cleaned out the Basement. A lot of things in the Swedish House. Everything was cataloged." Gibbs described "taking things out of drawers in the

99 Hulick, interview.



house, cleaning out all the drawers because the visitors never saw it. So that was just a huge, huge project."<sup>100</sup>

The cataloging process began by using the printed worksheets sent from the Washington NPS office. "We would go into a room and pull the items that need to be cataloged," recalled Hellmich-Bryan, and the cataloguers would complete the form. Then the data would be entered into the ANCS. "So it was a two-stage process where we actually did hand-written copies of the catalog information, then entered it into the database."<sup>101</sup>

The cataloging took place primarily in Margaret's Bedroom, which had the office with the computer, and the adjacent room, which Margaret had used as a study. Shirley Payne had her office in Margaret's Bedroom, where she did the data entry, but when she left, Hellmich-Bryan took over that workspace. Cataloguers crowded together in Margaret's Study during the summer months when the house tours were busiest. In 1988, Gibbs recalled that at least four seasonals catalogued in Margaret's Study, plus a student who would catalog when she finished the housekeeping duties as well as a volunteer or two. The conditions were hot and crowded, without air conditioning. The only window unit was located in the other room, in Margaret's Bedroom, which housed the computer.<sup>102</sup>

The park had only one computer for this project. Hellmich-Bryan and Payne entered the data into the computer, and then Gibbs took on this task after Payne left. The use of only permanent staff to input data was not for security reasons, but because only one person could enter data at a time. The park staff utilized the CARL Automated Catalog System, Cataloger and Data Entry Handbook, revised in July 1987.<sup>103</sup> The catalog sheets to be entered into the database were stored in filing cabinets in a basement room next to the furnace room. Gibbs recalled that she would sit down with a "big, thick" stack of about 100 catalog sheets, because "they were in folders of 100," and then enter the data into the computer. Afterwards, the

staff would print out the cards, "even though all the information was in the database," remembered Hellmich-Bryan.<sup>104</sup> The park kept one hard copy and sent a hard copy to the Harpers Ferry Center. Gibbs remembered when the printer would run all day, with the daisy wheel spinning, to print all the cards.<sup>105</sup>

Hulick stopped by daily to see how the work was progressing. He wanted to know "what we were doing," recalled Gibbs. "He was great. He always wanted to know what was going on in the museum."<sup>106</sup> Hulick described the surprises that the catalogers found, including an "original" handwritten version of "Fog," one of Sandburg's most famous poems. It read, "The fog comes in on little cat's paws," but Hulick recalled, "Paws was scratched out and feet was written in, and that's the way the poem was published." One of the volunteers found that scrap of paper in a box of plain white envelopes. "There were hundreds of white envelopes, nothing written on them. Just a box of envelopes. But she went through them very carefully and looked and there was that poem . . . That was an exciting day," Hulick remembered.<sup>107</sup>

The park's 1989 cataloging plan expressed one of the most obvious challenges the park faced: "We

104 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

105 Gibbs, interview.

106 Gibbs, interview.

107 Hulick, interview.



**Figure 7.38** A volunteer helps to catalog the archival collection at the park. November 28, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

100 Gibbs, interview.

101 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

102 Hellmich-Bryan, interview; Gibbs, interview.

103 CARL Automated Catalog System, Cataloger and Data Entry Handbook, revised July 1987, CARL [Automated Cataloging System File] SERO Archive.

may come across many unforeseeable problems."<sup>108</sup> This would prove to be very accurate. Hellmich-Bryan described one of her greatest frustrations as "going back into a room where everything had supposedly been cataloged and finding tons of items that hadn't." The park staff had apparently cataloged a certain type of item, such as furniture, in all the rooms and then went through the Main House again to catalog another type of object, such as the books. Just when the staff thought everything in a room had been catalogued, they would find objects that still needed processing. By 1989, much of the work was "down to the dirty stuff in the Basement and all the stuff that was in the Swedish House and the Tenant House and all the stuff that was kind of stored everywhere." Trying to describe what it was like back then, Hellmich-Bryan explained, "We would find stuff just tucked into a corner" or "in the rafters." One could find almost everything, including mouse nests "and that kind of stuff you find in old buildings."<sup>109</sup>

Processing the archival documents also proved challenging. Hulick noted in 1989, "Most of the remaining work is with archival cataloging."<sup>110</sup> The park's 1989 plan listed the priorities as the Sandburg papers in document boxes in the Tenant House, papers from the Upstairs Study, Mrs. Sandburg's goat breeding records, papers in the Upstairs Hallway bookcases, materials in file drawers from the Farm Office, and phonograph records from Sandburg's Bedroom, as well as the extensive collections in the Basement and Swedish House.<sup>111</sup> The procedure the park used was to produce one catalog record for each piece of paper, "item by item."<sup>112</sup> Dale Durham recalled, "We were treating most of the documents at CARL as just museum objects and cataloged them as such. They weren't archivally processed."<sup>113</sup> In March 1989, Durham requested that the park consult with a "professional [Park] Service archivist such as Mimi Bowling" who could "review your archival

cataloging procedures and make recommendations to you to ensure that you are properly processing the collection."<sup>114</sup>

While Hellmich-Bryan recalled efforts to ask an archivist to help, she does not remember an archivist coming to the park while she was there. She remembered a discussion about inviting NPS Chief Archivist Diane Vogt-O'Connor from Washington to come to the park, but Vogt-O'Connor was unable to do so. "I think it could have been a lot simpler if a lot of the materials had been cataloged as an archival collection as opposed to individual items," Hellmich-Bryan explained. "In hindsight, a box of individual pieces and scraps of papers could have been done as one item, and just a list, which we started doing towards the end of the time I was there."<sup>115</sup>

Also challenging was the fact that the items that needed cataloging were all over the farm, from the Main House to the Wash House attic, the Woodshed, the Barn loft, and the Chicken House.<sup>116</sup> The Basement was full of material.

114 Deputy Associate Regional Director, Cultural Resources, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home, NHS, memorandum, Backlog Cataloging and Park Assistance to BLRI, March 10, 1989, CARL [General Museum] File, SERO Archive. The memo noted that the park had agreed to consult with a NPS archivist as part of its "agreement points" for receiving the backlog cataloging funding that year.

115 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

116 Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988, 32; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Collections Cataloging Plan, FY 1989.



**Figure 7.39** A seasonal park staff member sorts through magazines found in the collection. September 3, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

108 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Collections Cataloging Plan, FY 1989, Green Notebook, CARL [CASS] SERO Archive.

109 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

110 Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS [Ken Hulick], to Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Cultural Resources, Southeast Regional, memorandum, Cataloging Money, August 30, 1989, CARL [Backlog Cataloging] File. SERO Archive.

111 Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Collections Cataloging Plan, FY 1989.

112 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

113 Durham, interview.

"You just can't imagine all the boxes," recalled Bess Gibbs. There were grocery store boxes filled with "everything—pamphlets, booklets, just everything." In the midst of these boxes, the staff found treasures, including a collection of historic Civil War maps.<sup>117</sup>

The Swedish House was also jam-packed with boxes. The two rooms to the left, upon entering the door, had magazines, including *Time*, *Fortune*, and "every magazine you can think of," as well as Sandburg's old phonograph. The main room contained "all kinds of books in cases with Plexiglas cover over them." "More piles and piles and piles of magazines" covered the floors of the upstairs, plus "enormous" boxes that were filled with newspaper and magazine clippings on all kinds of topics, especially political clippings. Sandburg had clipped some, but his friends had sent him others.<sup>118</sup>

The park staff began to use more "lot cataloging" by the time they were working in the Swedish House, recalled Gibbs, rather than processing individual items. "When we came to those big boxes upstairs, we decided that the cataloging would go on for years" if the staff tried to process the archival collection the way they had been doing it, "so we gave each box one catalog number" and then counted the number of items in each box, Gibbs explained. "And there would be up to 1800 or more pieces of paper in those boxes." She remembers that "nothing was thrown away. We'd catalog cardboard. I mean a piece of paper torn in half . . . just part of a piece of paper. It's just amazing what's been cataloged here." Sandburg put clippings in everything, including envelopes. He even saved empty envelopes. Some boxes were "filled with envelopes that were filled with clippings." The staff would catalog the envelope and then write the number of items in the envelope on the catalog sheet and then on the object itself. If the staff had not changed the method of processing these items, Gibbs reflected, "I believe we'd still be cataloging if we had done every scrap that was in those big boxes!"<sup>119</sup> She was proud of the work the staff accomplished. "I think really good records were kept," Gibbs stated. "You could just find about anything you wanted."

Gibbs remembered doing much of this processing work in the Swedish House during the winter months. The first winter she worked, the staff would "burn a fire in the fireplace," and did so for several winters until the work was completed. "It really gave you a good feeling to open the door to the Swedish House and here's the fire burning in the fireplace."<sup>120</sup>

There were collections to catalog in other buildings all over the park, although no other buildings had the sheer volume of collections as the Swedish House. Gibbs recalled cataloging archival boxes in the Tenant House in the winter months. These boxes contained Sandburg materials that Penelope Niven had sorted and left at the park. Gibbs processed what remained in the Woodshed close to the house and the barn loft, which contained milk cartons and a big drip and "a collection of stuff that you'd find in a barnyard." The objects were so dirty that the staff had to clean them before they were moved into the new Bally building to be cataloged.<sup>121</sup>

Another challenge Hellmich-Bryan recalled was how to describe some of the items they were finding. "We were developing our own nomenclature in some respects, because a lot of the stuff that we came across was not really covered by the nomenclature that the Park Service was using at the time."<sup>122</sup>

Every year, the number of items in the collection grew, and every year Hulick reported that the staff was almost done. Finally, in 1991, Hulick proudly stated in his Annual Report, underlined for emphasis, "The collection is now catalogued, after 17 years of work!" He boasted that "our cataloging effort continues to set records" by processing over 50,000 objects during the 1991 calendar year. The collection now totaled over 217,000 objects. While Hulick's comment was premature—the collection would ultimately total 333,048 and is still growing—it reflected the pride that the staff felt in their "all-hands-on-deck" effort to complete the work.<sup>123</sup>

117 Gibbs, interview.

118 Gibbs, interview.

119 Gibbs, interview.

120 Gibbs, interview.

121 Gibbs, interview.

122 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

123 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991. The current total number in the museum collections was received from Miriam Farris, email communication with Ann McCleary, November 26, 2012.



In April 1991, the staff revised the Scope of Collection Statement (SOCS), now that they were more familiar with the collection. The completed statement responded to the recommendations offered in the 1988 Collections Management Plan. The acting director of the Southeast Regional Office praised the quality of the document and stated, "We intend to distribute it with the call as an example of a well-written SOCS." The Washington office also planned to use it as a "model for others to follow."<sup>124</sup>

Judy Hellmich-Bryan transferred from the park to the Northeast Regional Office in April 1991 as the cataloging project began to wind down. By this time, she had developed a national reputation in collections management in the NPS, reflected in and bolstered by her inclusion as faculty in the NPS Curatorial Methods classes.<sup>125</sup> Dale Durham considered her "a bright star" and a "self-starter."<sup>126</sup> After Hellmich-Bryan left the park, Museum Technician Bess Gibbs assumed many of her responsibilities.<sup>127</sup>



**Figure 7.40** Housekeeping chores demand continuous attention from CARL staff. Curatorial staff cleaned the Main House on a regular basis, using the Housekeeping Manual. Here, Museum Aid Donna McKnight (in uniform) and a volunteer are cleaning Sandburg's Office. September/October 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

A letter the regional director of the Southeast Regional Office wrote to Hulick, not sent but saved in the SERO Archive, recommended that the park now look for a different type of curator. Praising the "expertise and personal tenacity"

that Hellmich-Bryan demonstrated, he urged the park to hire a curator with knowledge in the preservation and conservation of the collections, the next goals for the park's museum program.<sup>128</sup> By the fall of 1992, the park hired Lynn White Savage as curator. Savage had worked as a seasonal employee to help with cataloging in 1990, so she was familiar with the museum program at the park.<sup>129</sup>

In spite of the optimism about completing the cataloging work, questions soon arose about whether the project was indeed complete. When Southeast Regional Office Curator Kathy Lang and Museum Technician Mary Mueller visited CARL on August 3-4, 1992, Lang reported that she believed only about 80 percent of the collection had actually been cataloged and that 1,800 records needed to be entered into the ANCS.<sup>130</sup> Hulick responded that only about 1,000 objects still needed cataloging and that it was about 99.5 percent complete. He acknowledged that staff was still entering older records into the computer database.<sup>131</sup> Park staff and volunteers processed another 2,000 objects by December 1992, and another 1,000 by March 1993, when Hulick stated that the collection was "almost entirely cataloged."<sup>132</sup> Still, Bess Gibbs was entering old records into the computer database in 1993.<sup>133</sup> As Dale Durham reflected, "They kept finding stuff. It was understandable."<sup>134</sup>

Besides finishing the cataloging, the park was striving to improve storage of the collection. Judy Hellmich-Bryan began pressing for better storage from the time she first arrived at the park in 1985.

124 Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home, NHS, memorandum, Approval of Scope of Collection Statement, April 1997, CARL [Scope of Collections 1991] File, SERO Archive.

125 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

126 Durham, interview.

127 Gibbs, interview.

128 Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, memorandum, Curatorial Position, April 11, 1991, marked "not sent," SERO Archive.

129 Gibbs, interview.

130 Kathryn Lang, Staff Curator, to Chief, Museum Services, Dale Durham, memorandum, Trip Report Carl Sandburg Home NHS, August 3-4, 1992, August 13, 1992, CARL [CMP Correspondence] File, SERO Archive.

131 Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, to Chief, Museum Services Division, Southeast Region, memorandum, SERO Staff Curator Lang's Trip Report, August 21, 1992, CARL [Trip Reports] File, SERO Archive; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, February 1993.

132 Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993.

133 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, February 1993.

134 Durham, interview.

"Storage was a HUGE issue," she recalled. "We had stuff stored everywhere. I mean piles of stuff everywhere," including the bathroom of the Tenant House. Most of the areas were "not effectively climate controlled or rodent proofed. So it was a huge, huge challenge." Better storage of museum collections was a concern not just at CARL but also across the National Park Service at that time.<sup>135</sup>



**Figure 7.41** The Tenant House served as the offices for the curatorial staff before the construction of the Museum Preservation Center. July 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

In 1988, two years after Hulick arrived, the staff reported utilizing a variety of storage areas all over the park.<sup>136</sup> The most valuable artifacts outside of those in the house were stored in the Tenant House, but it was not fully climate controlled. The park had fireproof cabinets and map cases to store the Sandburg papers as well as paintings and some of the original Abraham Lincoln documents. That was where the park kept the more "rare documents that Sandburg had collected," and the space had heat and a dehumidifier.<sup>137</sup>

Hellmich-Bryan kept the areas organized and as "clean as possible," covering the collections with plastic whenever she could. She used dehumidifiers in some areas, "but there was no way to control it in that environment. Those old buildings were not well-insulated." Although the Tenant House was not climate-controlled, at least it had heat. Without air-conditioning, the Main House became hot and humid in the summer. In the Main House, the park staff used hydrothermographs to measure the temperature and humidity, and the staff opened and closed windows and ran fans "to keep the air



**Figure 7.42** Museum Aid Donna McKnight dusts the television in the Dining Room. She was responsible for a regular housekeeping schedule in the Main House. Circa 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

moving as much as possible" and put dehumidifiers "everywhere."<sup>138</sup>

The 1988 Collections Management Plan recommended that, barring the construction of an adequate storage area for all objects, the park needed at least one new structure, such as a Bally building, in "a secluded area of the property."<sup>139</sup> The park requested money for storage in FY 1989, but the request was removed from the budget and restored the following year. With these funds, the park constructed a small Bally storage building for \$1,200 in the maintenance area, and staff began moving some collections into that building.<sup>140</sup> Bally buildings were prefabricated, well-insulated modular structures that provided an air-tight, micro-environment that was very effective for storing museum collections. Manufactured by the Bally Engineered Structures Company, these buildings were popular in the National Park Service during these years as a means to improve museum storage.<sup>141</sup> Hellmich-Bryan attributed Dale Durham's visit to the park as one of the reasons why CARL obtained funding for the building, because "he actually saw the abysmal storage and smelled them and felt them as opposed to just hearing about them."<sup>142</sup> In 1990, Hulick reported that the staff completed moving artifacts into the new building, which would "increase the

<sup>135</sup> Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

<sup>136</sup> Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988.

<sup>137</sup> Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

<sup>138</sup> Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

<sup>139</sup> Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988.

<sup>140</sup> This cost was found in Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, June 1990.

<sup>141</sup> Donald R. Cumberland, Jr., "Collections Storage: Making a Case for Micro-Environments," CRM Supplement Vol. 15, No. 4, 19, <http://crm.cr.nps.gov/archive/15-4/15-4sall.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2012).

<sup>142</sup> Hellmich-Bryan, interview.



security level on the objects, improve the quality of their storage, lighten the physical loading (and fire loading) in the Main House, and make interpretation and cleaning of the house more effective."<sup>143</sup>

While very helpful, this small Bally building was not large enough to accommodate the collection at the park. A report from August 1992 noted that the park was still storing parts of its collection in other buildings, including the Tenant House, the Main House, the Barn, and the Swedish House.<sup>144</sup> Durham wrote to the associate regional director on August 20, 1992, that Carl Sandburg Home NHS would need \$150,000 for collections storage, which he hoped could come from cyclic funding, and then an additional \$6,000 from curatorial money to purchase equipment, storage cabinets, and shelving for the interior."<sup>145</sup>

Security of the objects had also been an issue, not just in the buildings but also in the Main House. Hellmich-Bryan worried that items were easily touched because they were within reach of visitors. One of her worries at the time was the increasing number of visitors on the Main House tours because one ranger "just could not monitor what everyone was doing." Tours were supposed to be limited to twelve, "but they would push it to fifteen" in "those tiny rooms," and sometimes more in the busy season. Some items disappeared, such

143 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

144 Lang to Durham, memorandum, Trip Report Carl Sandburg Home NHS, August 3-4, 1992, August 13, 1992.

145 Chief, Museum Services Division [Dale Durham], to Associate Regional Director, Southeast Regional Office, memorandum, August 20, 1992, SERO Archive.



**Figure 7.43** The support system for the new Museum Preservation Center is under construction. August 1993 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figures 7.44, 7.45, and 7.46** Park maintenance staff put the panels of the Bally building in place. This would become the new Museum Preservation Center. Bally construction was common for use in collections storage facilities in the national parks at this time. September 1993 (CARL Park Archive).



as small pamphlets, but "nothing of value in terms of monetary value was ever taken."<sup>146</sup> By 1992, the park reported that there was a "greater focus on preservation and security" in the house tours.<sup>147</sup>

In 1992, the park received funding to construct a larger, 4,000-square-foot collection storage Bally building as a museum curatorial and preservation center at the park. The total cost was \$200,000. Warren Weber attributes Regional Curator Durham with helping push for funding for the preservation center.<sup>148</sup> Ann Staley Vaughan recalls that Durham was "instrumental" in getting the preservation center.<sup>149</sup> "Yes, I did help put it in," Durham recalled. "It was part of our survey and we helped build it."<sup>150</sup>

The park maintenance staff began construction of the new Museum Preservation Center next to the Maintenance Facility in 1993, with a scheduled completion for 1994.<sup>151</sup> Maintenance staff completed the exterior by the end of 1993 and planned to use the winter months to finish the inside.<sup>152</sup> Washington Museum Specialist Donald Cumberland visited the park to see the building in June 1994 and to provide a layout for the storage equipment, and he commended the curatorial and maintenance staff for their "excellent work" on the building. He added, "It is one of the finest examples in the NPS of a collection storage facility utilizing a Bally structure designed for outside



**Figure 7.48** Park maintenance staff installs the roof of the new Museum Preservation Center. October 1993 (CARL Park Archive)

use."<sup>153</sup> Weber hailed the establishment of the Museum Preservation Center as "a major step forward in our preservation and storage efforts."<sup>154</sup>

As the cataloging wound down, the park turned its attention towards preservation and conservation of museum collections, which was also gaining more attention in the National Park Service by the early 1990s. The 1993 Operations Plan noted that the staff had been "reorganized" to accomplish the work in conservation that the park was planning.<sup>155</sup> The new Museum Services Division of the Southeast Regional Office prepared a Preventative Conservation Guide in 1991 to provide guidance in areas including housekeeping, pest management, environmental monitoring, as well as storage.<sup>156</sup>

146 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

147 Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 2.

148 Weber, personal communication.

149 Vaughan, interview.

150 Durham, interview.

151 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.

152 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, October 1993.

153 Donald Cumberland, Collection Storage Assistant Project Report, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site, June 6-9, 1994, CARL [Trip reports] File, SERO Archive.

154 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.

155 Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993.

156 Cultural Resources Wrap-Up, 1991 Annual Report, 16-17.



**Figure 7.47** Park staff put up the ceiling panels for the new Bally Building to be used as the Museum Preservation Center. September 1993 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.49** The park staff began to turn its attention to conservation of the collection by 1992 when they held a workshop on metal preservation. Artifacts such as this table and chair showed clear signs of rust. (CARL Park Archive).

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS had not ignored the care of the collections in the past; a historic housekeeper cleaned the Main House, with the benefit of a housekeeping guide, and in 1986 the Harpers Ferry Office prepared a Collection Preservation Guide for the park.

Now, several new reports were prepared with preservation in mind. In 1991, Kathleen Triggs Byrne, a former historic housekeeper at CARL who was now working in the Curatorial Services Division at Harpers Ferry Center, produced the Furnishings Maintenance and Protection Guidelines for the Main House and Swedish House. Three additional reports were prepared for the park in 1992: A Checklist for Preservation, Protection, and Documentation of Museum Property; a Preventative Conservation Guide and Museum Security; and an updated Collection Preservation Guide (CPG). In August 1992, Southeast Regional Staff Curator Kathryn Lang revised the Collections Management Plan (CMP), prepared two years earlier. SERO Museum Technician Mary Mueller and Staff Curator Kathryn Lang visited the park in August 1992 to verify the documentation the park provided from the draft CMP in 1988. They noted that the park had made many improvements since the original site visit, but they reported on-going



**Figure 7.50** The park documents deterioration of the metal work in the Main House Kitchen, leading to a metal conservation workshop at the park in 1992. June 27, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

concerns regarding recordkeeping, preservation, conservation, and security. Further, they noted that curatorial needs were “underrepresented in planning documents.”<sup>157</sup>

157 Lang to Durham, memorandum, Trip Report to Carl Sandburg Home NHS, August 3-4, 1992, August 13, 1992.

The Collection Condition Survey prepared for CARL in June 1992 evaluated the work that had been done at the park, assessing from “room to room and building to building.” The authors noted that the park was still not following some of the suggestions from the 1979 Collections Preservation Guide, including the recommendations for recording temperature and humidity and replacing archival material on display with copies.<sup>158</sup> Dale Durham wrote to Superintendent Hulick in July 1992 encouraging the park to develop a plan to meet the identified needs and to prioritize objects for conservation based on significance.<sup>159</sup>



**Figure 7.51** Curator Lynn Savage works on preserving objects in the Main House. February 4, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

By 1992, preservation of the collection had become the highest priority for the museum program. Correspondence between SERO and the park focused primarily on issues related to preservation and conservation. The park once again drew on a cadre of both staff and volunteers to help them undertake this work. In 1992, the park reported that it had “begun the treatment (either conservation or preservation) of historic objects,” treating 1,720 objects during that calendar year and improving the storage of many others.<sup>160</sup>

The first goal was metal preservation. The park scheduled a course on this topic, to be taught by a

158 Mary Frederickson, Collection Condition Survey for the Carl Sandburg Home, June 18, 1992, CARL [Conservation Condition Survey] File, SERO Archive.

159 Chief, Museum Services Division [Dale Durham], to Superintendent, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, memorandum, Conservation Treatment Program, July 30, 1990, CARL [Conservation Condition Survey] File, SERO Archive

160 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1992.



**Figure 7.52** Curator Lynn Savage and Museum Technician Bess Gibbs preserve the metal objects at the park after participating in a workshop on this topic. February 5, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.53** Curator Lynn Savage puts her new knowledge on metal conservation to work at the park. February 4, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

staff member from Harpers Ferry, but Hurricane Andrew came in 1992 and the extensive damage at the park changed his plans and he was unable to come for the workshop. Instead, staff from the Biltmore Estate in Asheville and from other parks taught the class. Bess Gibbs recalled that the course “opened the door up, and Lynn [White Savage] and I started working on everything in the house. We took the washer apart. We took the dryer apart. We took the stove apart. We worked on the refrigerator. We worked on the AGA stove. We worked on all of the kitchen cabinets,” cleaning them and applying Renaissance Wax. “If they

were rusty inside, we treated them like they told us to treat rust to stop. Stuff in the kitchen, we cleaned it up, waxed it. We went all over the house. That’s all we did for a while.” They worked on the chandeliers, lamps, and fireplace grates. “We thought we were just real trained preservationists.”

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The park staff also requested help from the Biltmore for cleaning the rugs. The park had produced a replica of the Dining Room rug, so staff rolled up the old original rug, took it to the Biltmore, and spent the day washing the rug with the textile curator and others who worked in that division. Other items, including Sandburg’s



**Figure 7.54** In 1992, the park began to focus more on conservation of objects in the collection. After a workshop on metal preservation, Bess Gibbs recalls that the curatorial staff and volunteers cleaned many metal objects in the house. February 5, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

office chair and the cushion on it, went to Harpers Ferry Center for preservation, as did valuable prints, maps, and a military commission signed by Lincoln, all of which were found in the collection.<sup>162</sup>

161 Gibbs, interview.

162 Gibbs, interview.



The staff requested assistance from its volunteers with these preservation activities. In 1992, the Annual Report noted that volunteers contributed time valued at \$2,000 for cataloging artifacts and \$3,200 for conserving artifacts.<sup>163</sup> The next year, the Friends of Connemara organized the Connemara Conservation Corps, which it called the CCC in reference to the New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps that did "such great work in parks back in the 1930s." This new group of volunteers promised to help perform conservation work on the objects, doing "service to the public good, volunteering for a good cause, and learning new skills under the supervision of skilled specialists."<sup>164</sup> In July 1993, the CCC members helped the park staff preserve metal objects.<sup>165</sup> They continued to work on cleaning and waxing all the metal objects in the kitchen, including the cabinets.<sup>166</sup>

With a better organized collection, the park began to receive more research requests. Judy Hellmich-Bryan recalled that the park only had two or three requests a year while she was there, and responding

163 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.

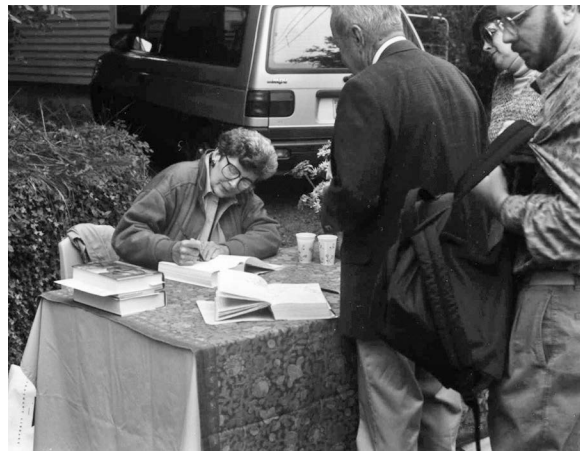
164 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, February 1993.

165 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, July 1993.

166 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, October 1993.



**Figure 7.55** Ann Ulinski and Melanie Blaha's biological survey produced specimens to help develop the museum's Herbarium collection. (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.56** Penelope Niven signs copies of her new book *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, reflecting her years of research. She participated in three events at the park in recognition of the book's publication. October 1992 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.57** Penelope Niven stands with Superintendent Ken Hulick at the park Amphitheater in celebration of the publication of her book. October 1992 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.58** Penelope Niven published her biography on Carl Sandburg in 1991 and came to the park to talk about her work. Niven was an important ambassador for the park and often returned to lecture about the Sandburgs and their time at Connemara. 1991 (CARL Park Archive)

to those was difficult because the park staff was in the process of cataloging and the collections were not very accessible.<sup>167</sup> By 1992, the number of

167 Hellmich-Bryan, interview.

research requests increased to 30 and to 38 by the following year.<sup>168</sup>

The park staff also engaged in research during these years. Museum Technician Kathleen Triggs Byrne completed her MA thesis, through the University of Oklahoma, on Mrs. Sandburg's goat herd. Triggs Byrne had an interest and experience in goat farming when she came to volunteer at the park, so the excellent collection of Mrs. Sandburg's records provided an ideal research opportunity for her.<sup>169</sup>

Regional Curator Durham recalled that the park's collections issues were “multi-faceted,” which is probably why it received more attention from the regional office during the late 1980s and early 1990s. “Where the other [parks] you could pretty well focus on one thing or the other,” Durham remembered that CARL “did seem to raise its head in so many different areas at once so that it came up higher in priority on several areas, be it backlog cataloging, be it storage, be it preservation.” It was a “one of a kind” collection that acquired its significance from its association with Sandburg. Durham added that “the last five or six years I was there, we had got a substantial amount of money, of which we put quite a bit into CARL.” The SERO office had, at one time, \$1.6 million dollars to spread among the parks. Durham reflected, “You need to tell a story, and I think Warren [Weber] was a big supporter, and I was supporting them because he seemed to know what direction they wanted to go, so we worked well together.”<sup>170</sup>

## Resource Management: Natural Resources

Natural resource management commanded more attention at the park during Hulick's tenure as superintendent. He brought a stronger interest and background in natural resources to CARL than his predecessors. Weber described Hulick's background as “land management and recreation,” adding, “He wanted to put a little more emphasis

on the landscape here. That became important to the Park Service too.”<sup>171</sup>

The Carl Sandburg Home NHS had been established as a cultural resource, but the original Master Plan had suggested designating part of the park as “an environmental study area.”<sup>172</sup> The legislative approvals for the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS came at a time when the American public was beginning to think seriously about the impacts of pollution on the natural environment. Rachel Carson “launched the so-called environmental decade with her powerful expose *Silent Spring*, published in 1962.”<sup>173</sup> Her book challenged Americans to consider the pollutants they might be exposed to on a daily basis and, as they did so, the public began to recognize the “startling implications also for the national parks.”<sup>174</sup> The environmental movement and the resulting legislation strengthened the argument for scientific management of national parks and their natural resources, though this was not a new concept. Historians have called the 1960s the “ecological revolution” for the parks.<sup>175</sup>

In 1963, the National Park Service's policy toward the natural environment reached a turning point. During that year, the Leopold Report and the Robbins Report drew attention back to the fact that the Park Service was responsible for the conservation and preservation of their natural environment and noted that they had neglected to fulfill that responsibility. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall endorsed the Leopold Report which “defined basic management philosophy for the national parks” in relation to managing the preservation of natural resources. The Leopold Report called for professional staff in all parks to ensure that “management priorities” were carried out. The Robbins Report agreed with the findings put forth in the Leopold Report concerning natural resources in the national parks and called for scientific research to be conducted in the parks so that managers would know what resources they

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168 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992-1993.

169 Kathleen Triggs Byrne, written response to interview questions by Ann McCleary, October 15, 2012, CARL Park Archive.

170 Durham, interview.

171 Weber, interview, 2011.

172 Master Plan, 1971, 21.

173 Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010), 164.

174 Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 165.

175 Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 233; Dilsaver, *America's National Park System*.

had and how to protect them. Together, the "two reports resulted directly in the revival of both extensive scientific research in the parks as well as new management for 'ecosystem preservation.'" <sup>176</sup>

The 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) helps guide the management of national parks in that it created "the basic national charter for environmental protection. It ordered federal agencies to carry out their duties in such a way as to avoid or minimize environmental degradation." <sup>177</sup> The laws, policies, procedures, and mandates aimed at cleaning up the environment and protecting natural resources for future generations set specific standards for how resources would be managed in national parks. While the National Park System enjoyed growth and increasing use of "biocentric management" methodologies from 1963 through 1980, the twelve years between 1980 and 1992 brought "expanded visitation and heightened external threats." By 1992, research studies indicated that the expectation that the collection and use of scientific data in managing the parks was not being met. <sup>178</sup>

In 1987, the year after Superintendent Hulick arrived at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the park began using the NPS Draft Inventorying and Monitoring Guides to develop "baseline data related to natural resources." This work continued into 1988 with monitoring of "biotic and other natural resources." That year, the park mentioned that it was continuing to remove an "unnatural buildup of parrot-feather," an aquatic plant growing in the lake, perhaps caused by nutrients from the septic system. When the weather became cold, the park staff drained the lake, and the temperatures killed the exposed vegetation and the roots. This parrot feather continued to plague the ponds for several years. <sup>179</sup> By 1989, the park increased the natural resource parameters the staff monitored to include rain. Park reports noted that the acid rain had a 4.2 ph in the region and "is being buffered by calcium silicates in the basement rock" or gneiss. This situation created nearly

neutral surface waters, but the park was unsure how long the buffering would continue. <sup>180</sup>

Hulick reported that the park "strengthened" the Inventorying and Monitoring program for natural resources in 1991, as park staff learned more about the program and developed "better skills" in this area. The National Park Service selected CARL as one of three pilot areas from the Southeast Region to participate in Clemson University's Cooperative Park Study Unit (CPSU) study of GIS-CAD applications. The program organized data related to natural resources into an Auto CADD system. <sup>181</sup>

The park began to explore uses of non-chemical solutions to solve problems with the natural environment, including both the parrot feather and the dogwood anthracnose. This was one of the areas in which Hulick noted that the park was using "creative approaches to solve old problems." Dogwood anthracnose had been confirmed in the region by 1987, and freezes and wet weather in May 1989 facilitated the growth of this fungus. In 1992, the park completed a Dogwood Management Plan. Developed by Park Ranger Carey Jones in association with Agricultural Extension Agent Glen Davis, the plan recommended primarily cultural treatment, but included some chemical treatments to supplement the cultural controls. <sup>182</sup>

The 1993 Statement for Management established an inventory of the major natural resources at the park. The mountain systems, springs, and cliffs and gorges were counted as landforms. Ecological systems included needleleaf vegetation (hemlock), broadleaf vegetation (Appalachian oak); broadleaf and needleleaf vegetation (Northern Hardwoods and Oak—Hickory-Pine) and two freshwater ecosystems (lakes and ponds and underground ecosystems). The report noted that none of these natural resources were threatened and described the documentation as "fair." <sup>183</sup>

That same year, 1993, Ken Hulick and Warren Weber invited two volunteers—Melanie Blaha and Anne Ulinksi—to begin a "biological survey" of the park and to observe three areas: the trail to

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176 Dilsaver, *America's National Park System*, Chapter 5, document 2.

177 Dilsaver, *America's National Park System*, Chapter 6, documents 1-5.

178 Dilsaver, *America's National Park System*, Chapter 8, documents 1-2.

179 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987, 1988.

180 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

181 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991-2.

182 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990, 1992; Dogwood Management Plan, Carl Sandburg Home NHS, October 20, 1989, CARL Park Archive.

183 Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993.



Big Glassy, the rock outcrops, and the lake trail. Blaha and Ulinski began an inventory of plants in February of that year. While the year was drier than usual, with a severe summer drought, the volunteers were still surprised with the variety of plants that they found.<sup>184</sup> In subsequent years, under Superintendent Connie Backlund, the inventory and monitoring program would grow along with an increasing emphasis on natural resources at the park.

## Park Visitation

After a ten percent drop in visitation in 1987, due to inclement weather and "a general reduction in travel in the area," park visitation climbed during the Hulick years. This increase required more of the creativity Hulick encouraged in park programs while ensuring appropriate management of the park's resources, all on a tight budget.

The park measured visitation by the number of people participating in the Main House tours, since this was the only way the park had to document visitors. By that measure, the park had over 57,000 visitors in 1988. The 1989 Annual Report noted



**Figure 7.59** In 1990, the updated entrance sign to the visitor parking lot features a profile of Carl Sandburg. July 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

that visitation at the house had "remained relatively stable for several years." That year, the park began to try to enforce the limit of fifteen people per tour, which brought a slight drop in guests at the house, and thus total visitation numbers, during peak visitation times.<sup>185</sup>

184 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993; *Connemara Comments*, March 1994, CARL 4015/12, Box 2, Folder 318, CARL Park Archive.

185 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987-89.

While visitation to the Main House was not increasing significantly, nor could it given the reduction in tour size, the number of visitors to the park continued to grow. In 1990, the park reported that "a larger percentage of the visitors were using the grounds but not going on the house tours,"



**Figure 7.60** During the Hulick years, the park increasingly uses the Family Garage by the Main House as an interpretive and programming space. October 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

which meant they were not being counted in the total visitation numbers. The increase in local visitors occurred because of the "urbanization" of the area and the growing number of retirees moving to the region. Many local residents walked the trails and visited with the goats regularly. Hulick noted in 1992, "The increase in trail use has far outstripped use of the Main House, and our present index system does not adequately account for this recent change." He continued to press for a new method of counting visitors to "more accurately count park usage."<sup>186</sup>

The heaviest visitation (45 to 48 percent) occurred between mid-June and the end of July, with July being the busiest month of the year. About a quarter of the park's visitation came in the fall. The park offered up to 32 tours each day, and during the summer and some October days, tours of the home could reach capacity. Hulick worried about creating other ways to provide access to the Main House at times of peak visitation without putting the artifacts or house at risk.<sup>187</sup>

186 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989-1993; Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 12.

187 1989 Statement for Interpretation Updates, 1996; Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993.

Park visitation studies in 1989 and 1992 recorded an increase in organized tours and a decrease in family groups. About 20 percent of the visitors were local residents, around 15-17 percent were regional residents, and slightly over half (56 percent and 52 percent) were national visitors.



**Figure 7.61** The rebuilt Amphitheater provides an ideal location for park programs. 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

International visitation ranged from six to eight percent.<sup>188</sup>

## Interpretive Programs

Carl Sandburg Home NHS continued to expand its interpretive programming during the Hulick years. The park prepared new statements for interpretation in 1989 and 1992/3, the latter under the direction of new Chief of Visitor Services Martha Bogle. The 1989 Statement for Interpretation revised the interpretive themes, and these remained the same in 1992/3. The 1989 document rephrased the main interpretive theme to add "writer" and "folk music historian" to the list of Carl Sandburg's accomplishments. The minor themes expanded to include Mrs. Sandburg's goat activities and their influence on the family lifestyle; the "simplicity, beauty and creative atmosphere" of the home; former residents Christopher Memminger and Captain Ellison Adger Smyth; and the story of Edward Steichen, his visits to Connemara, and "his importance as a confidant and influence on the poet." The tour objectives in the 1989 Statement for Interpretation also included "Sandburg's environmental consciousness addressed through his writings,"



**Figure 7.62** Janene Donovan helps coordinate interpretive programs at the Barn, but she also assisted with giving tours of the Main House. November 28, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

clearly a nod towards highlighting the theme of biological diversity in the new interpretive goals.<sup>189</sup>

The park offered a variety of programs and activities. Visitors to the park could participate in guided tours of the Main House; visit the Barn to see the goats; hike on the park trails; watch the Amphitheater programs, including summer drama productions and ranger programs; and enjoy the park's "pastoral scene and quiet atmosphere." Of these, only the house tour charged a fee. The park also offered an assortment of ranger programs during the busy months, from cheese making to walks through the historic buildings as well as special annual events and programs.<sup>190</sup>

Most visitors began their park experience at the Visitor Contact Station. Its purpose was "to greet visitors and give them a brochure and explain how to get up to the park and what was up there on top of the hill," recalled Interpretive Ranger Diana Miller, including "when the next tour was. It was a welcoming concept."<sup>191</sup> The Visitor Contact Station was open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. During the busier summer months, the park tried to staff the facility with a ranger, Eastern National employee, or volunteer to greet visitors and explain how to visit the site. Bess Gibbs recalled that "as people came in, they met a ranger, and you could tell them what was going on. I think people really appreciated having that, being greeted by someone

<sup>188</sup> 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 1; Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 11-12.

<sup>189</sup> 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 2; Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 1.

<sup>190</sup> 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 6.

<sup>191</sup> Elena Diana Miller, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, September 6, 2012, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

down there."<sup>192</sup> The Visitor Contact Station offered restrooms, exhibits, brochures, a message board with park information, and a water fountain, and picnic tables were located nearby.<sup>193</sup> The station also had a telephone so visitors could call the Main House and request a van to pick them up, and the driver provided additional orientation along the way. Warren Weber recalls that the park showed an eight-minute video of the Edward R. Murrow interview with Carl Sandburg at the station, but it was considered too long for most visitors to watch while they were standing and they wanted to come into the park "and visit and move around." Weber added, "There was also a reflection of the lake on the screen, so it was eventually all pulled up to the Main House." When the station was staffed, visitors could purchase books there either as they entered or more likely as they left the park, when they decided that they "would like to have something." Staff locked up the facility at the end of the day.<sup>194</sup> As a 1989 report noted, the Visitor Contact Station required "a lot of attention since 98% of the visitors" came through the facility.<sup>195</sup>

The orientation to the park continued in the Visitor Center located in the Basement (or Ground Floor) of the Main House. Here, visitors could obtain free literature and brochures about the park, see exhibits, and watch an eight-minute video entitled the "Sandburg Perspective."<sup>196</sup> Eastern National Park and Monument Association operated a sales outlet offering books and other material for sale. Eastern National reprinted out of print books on Sandburg, including *My Commemara* in 1988, and several new ones, including a book based on Kathleen Triggs Byrne's MA thesis entitled, *Mrs. Sandburg and Her Dairy Goat Herd* in 1993.<sup>197</sup> Here, visitors obtained tickets for the house tour. In the spring of 1987, the park began to charge a \$1 fee for the house tours for visitors, ages 17 to 61, and the Visitor Center added a second cash register to collect the tour fees.<sup>198</sup>

The park sought to improve the orientation experience by developing programs utilizing the new video laserdisc technology to show in the orientation room. Hulick recalled that the previous programs were outdated and the color faded. The Southeast Regional Office and Harpers Ferry Center helped the park staff prepare four programs. CARL employees wrote and narrated a five-minute program, "What to do and see at Carl Sandburg," and SERO staff filmed and edited the production. "We got the whole staff involved in writing the storyboard," recalled Hulick, and park ranger Diana Miller "took the lead." Hulick explained that the park tried to show the diversity of employees at the park, so that viewers "could understand that this was a park that fostered diversity." The park distributed this program to the five North Carolina Welcome Centers, offered it for sale, and paired it with interpretive objects for school and other off-site programs.<sup>199</sup>

In addition, the park worked to transfer the Edward R. Murrow interview of Sandburg and the NPS film interview of Mrs. Sandburg to this new format, adding captions for the hearing impaired. Last, to continue to make the park more accessible for all visitors, the staff produced a fifteen-minute video tour of the Main House. Blue Ridge Community College edited the tour program and a park volunteer narrated it.<sup>200</sup> Hulick repeatedly noted that the park needed to better serve its handicapped visitors.<sup>201</sup> Signed into law in July 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act required the park to be prepared to serve all guests. These new programs helped the park meet these needs.

The park scheduled house tours every 15 minutes during the busy season, especially the summer, and the tours lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. Tours proceeded on the half hour at other times, and sometimes they might continue beyond thirty minutes if the house was not crowded. The park stated that it officially reduced the size of the tours in November 1988 to 15 for regular tours and 20 for school groups, which addressed the concerns that curatorial staff had for preserving the collections while providing a quality visitor

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192 Gibbs, interview.

193 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 7.

194 Weber, interview, 2011; 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 17.

195 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5.

196 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 7.

197 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988-1992.

198 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 21; Miller, interview. Miller said that she set up and was responsible for the fee collection system at the park.

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199 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989, 1990; Hulick, interview.

200 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989, 1990.

201 See, for example, 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, as well as the Statement for Management and Basic Operations Statement, 1993.



experience.<sup>202</sup> Diana Miller, Janene Donovan, and Bess Gibbs remembered leading tour groups of up to 30 or 38 visitors during which visitors could not hear the interpreter or see the home.<sup>203</sup>

While these changes in the tour size pleased the staff, they created frustration among some visitors. Gibbs considered these changes to be positive. Before that, "you'd walk out into the Visitor Center and you'd say, 'I'm starting a tour, and I will take 20 people.' Well, you'd get 21 people, and it's hard to turn somebody away." One day, a visitor ran up to the Front Porch to join a tour that was already full, saying that he had missed the last tour. Gibbs told him she was sorry but she could only take 20 guests. The visitor became angry, and Gibbs had to call the law enforcement ranger to calm the visitor. Selling tickets helped to alleviate some of these problems, but other issues emerged. Local residents who "had been through the house ten times before this" but that now wanted to go through with their guests were upset. They enjoyed "pointing out things as you are giving your tour, if that particular tour guide doesn't mention something they heard before." Now, rather than pay the tour fee, they "would wait downstairs for their friends to go through the house," but they were disappointed not to go on the tour with their friends.<sup>204</sup>

House tours focused on Sandburg's "contributions to American society as poet, historian, lecturer, and performing artist" and incorporated audience participation. Tours included poetry and music from Sandburg's work, and guides were encouraged to showcase objects such as his visor, typewriter, and orange crates to interpret Sandburg's "personality and character." The park requested that interpreters talk about Sandburg's works "as they relate to the times and to the problems and issues facing our society today."<sup>205</sup> Each interpreter had the opportunity to develop his or her tour using the books and materials provided by the park. Chief of Resource Management Weber required the tour guides to "know certain basic things, but from there," Diana Miller recalled, the guides developed presentations that fit their "style and interest." Weber focused his

presentation on what Sandburg wrote, while others might focus more on the family or on Sandburg's poetry.<sup>206</sup> Miller, the park's first full-time ranger, believes that this originality was one of the greatest strengths of the park's interpretive programs.<sup>207</sup>

Creating one's tour resembled writing a research paper, Miller explained. "It was your own personal tour and it would be written with a thesis statement and topics throughout. It was original and fresh from each perspective. For instance, my tour was with a guitar in the room where Sandburg would have played his guitar," and she used poems as the group toured throughout the house. There was considerable flexibility in these years, as the park encouraged interpreters to "put their own personality or interject their artistic media into the scripts." However, all tours had to be accurate and approved by Weber, as "he wanted to see the tour and be sure that it was appropriate for visitors."<sup>208</sup> Miller helped to train guides for the house tours.<sup>209</sup>

The tour guide, whether park ranger, seasonal employee, or volunteer, gathered his or her group in the Visitor Center and walked the visitors up to the Front Porch to begin the house tour. Occasionally, they might take the visitors upstairs through the basement room full of shelves and boxes if the weather was bad, particularly in cases of heavy rain or snow.<sup>210</sup>

The only change to the house tour during this period was the addition of Margaret's Bedroom.<sup>211</sup> The bedroom, which had been used as a staff office, had been refurnished to appear as it would have been while Margaret was living here. Showing this room to visitors was challenging because of the traffic flow. Visitors viewed this space when they were in the foyer adjacent to the Dining Room, but it was difficult for all of the tour participants to see into the room. The adjacent bedroom, which Margaret used as her study, remained closed and was still used by the staff. After viewing the main floor, the group proceeded to see the family bedrooms and Sandburg's Study on the second story. At the end of the house tour, the interpreter

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202 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 15; Stratton, Collections Management Plan, 1988, 20.

203 Miller, interview.

204 Gibbs, interview.

205 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 20-1.

206 Weber, interview, 2011.

207 Miller, written response to interview questions.

208 Miller, interview.

209 Miller, interview. See also, for example, Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, April 1989.

210 Gibbs, interview.

211 Donovan, interview.

led the visitors down the stairs into the basement kitchen and then outside through the basement door.<sup>212</sup>

During the lean budget years of the late 1980s, the park had to make some changes to the house tours. In 1988, the park began to utilize more volunteers for tours. In 1989, even with volunteers, the park offered the tours on the half hour in the summer and on the hour at other times due to "lack of personnel."<sup>213</sup> That year, as the budget crisis deepened, Hulick reported that the park was "shifting more of our delivery of interpretive services from the on-site, paid employee delivered mode" to a "varied range of options" including volunteers for programs and living history farm interpretation and additional interpretive signage.<sup>214</sup> The increased use of volunteers brought both opportunities and challenges. Hulick thought that volunteers and seasonals were "fresh and vital in their presentations, and their participation added to the quality of the program."<sup>215</sup> However, training volunteers required time and effort from park staff, explained Miller.

While volunteers proved essential during these years, they were unable to perform some of the activities related to tours and visitor services. NPS regulations required that only rangers could collect fees and drive the vans, so volunteers could not assist in several essential tasks. The park lamented that the staff could not provide "adequate" coverage for the van and it ran constantly, often with staff missing lunch breaks in order to operate the van. According to a 1989 report, "This caused exhaustion for the rangers who carried the brunt of the work load" and "caused a breakdown in the flow of work." The park expressed a desire to hire more rangers or to at least make the volunteers "fully functional," so that they could help with the range of visitor services and tour programs.<sup>216</sup>

Besides the house tour, the park encouraged visitors to explore the other historic buildings, cultural resources, and trails using the site map

in their park folder. During busy months, visitors could follow an occasional guided tour that began at the Main House and provided historical and architectural information about the structures on the farm.<sup>217</sup> The park staff created exhibits in some of these historic buildings, including books and artifacts in the Swedish House and farm equipment and signage in the Barn Garage. The staff also



**Figure 7.63** Eastern National employee Karen Gibbs manages the new visitor orientation videos being shown in the Visitor Center. The park produced four new video disc programs by 1990. Circa 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

incorporated historic farm equipment into an exhibit in the Milk House, behind the Barn. These three buildings were open daily for visitors.<sup>218</sup>

The park added more interpretive signage in the barnyard area during these years. Declining budgets led to a decrease in the number of seasonals at the Barn, so the park wanted to provide a self-guided experience for times when staff was unavailable.<sup>219</sup> By 1989, the park installed

217 Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 32.

218 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 3.

219 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 3.



**Figure 7.64** In this photo, Ranger Janene Donovan uses an interpretive sign in a Barn program for children. By 1989, the park had added additional interpretive signage at the barnyard area, including the sign that illustrates a goat's milk producing system.

212 Gibbs, interview.

213 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996.

214 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988, 1989.

215 Hulick, interview.

216 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 10-11, 15. The SFI noted that the park had to cut back on the van, which created a problem, since many of the visitors are senior citizens and "will be turned away."

two wayside signs about Mrs. Sandburg's dairy operations at the barn gate, a third wayside on goats in front of the Barn, "homemade posters" about bluebirds and barn swallows, and a "homemade graphic of a goat's milk producing system" to further interpretation in this area.<sup>220</sup> In 1993, the park produced a Sign Plan for the buildings and grounds to further expand this signage.

The park continued to offer interpretive programs in the barn area. It was a "fixed station" staffed by rangers and volunteers, but closed in the winter months. This area provided an opportunity to interpret Mrs. Sandburg's goat herd and the family's farming operation. While the park now had a smaller herd of about fifteen goats, these popular animals still attracted much attention,



**Figure 7.65** Ranger Janene Donovan describes the farm's goat operations in an interpretive program for children. Ca. 1991-2 (CARL Park Archive).

and visitors might stay up to two hours at the Barn. These interpretive programs focused on Mrs. Sandburg's story and "what she did as a goat breeder." The goat herd enriched the park's interpretive story, according to Janene Donovan, the ranger who managed the barn operations. Park staff fed and milked the goats and performed other tasks such as trimming hooves, breeding, and kidding. "It shows that the family worked together. They all had something to do with the farm life and there was so much to do. It was a family endeavor," Donovan reflected. The family did not need the money nor did they need to work that hard, but "they enjoyed the lifestyle. It was a simple, clean life for them. She'd [Mrs. Sandburg] always wanted to be a farmer." Local visitors would sometimes come every day to the Barn and some would sit in the pasture watching the goats and "enjoying the

peace and quiet." Donovan also noted that goats are "very personable, so that kind of helps."<sup>221</sup>

In the mid-1980s, Donovan revived the cheesemaking programs in the summer months. These programs began in 1978 but had been discontinued.<sup>222</sup> "We tried so many different things, and the cheese making is always the most popular one," Donovan recalled. She noted that "anything hands on" was very popular. "We would show them the steps of cheese making" and "we'd give them a taste of it" on a Popsicle stick. The park could not serve visitors the cheese they made because the goat milk was unpasteurized, so the staff purchased cheese from Split Tree Farm to serve visitors and then sold it in the bookstore.<sup>223</sup> Donovan observed that interpretive programs at the Barn also helped with crowd control in the park.<sup>224</sup>

The park offered other interpretive programs and tours that engaged the barnyard and the grounds. Some of these programs focused on topics related to "biological diversity," which the 1989 Statement for Interpretation promised to undertake as a special new initiative.<sup>225</sup> Park rangers continued to offer nature walks along the short loop trail to the top of Little Glassy Mountain, identifying wild plants, trees, rock formations, and wildlife and incorporating Appalachian culture.<sup>226</sup> Janene Donovan conducted bird walks, which began at the Barn where Margaret had her bluebird boxes. The bird walks went down towards the lake, which was a good place to look for water birds. Donovan recalled that most people could not normally go into the pasture, so they enjoyed this experience. The walks were usually in the summer when the park had more staff, even though the summer was not the best time of the year to go bird watching. The park also offered "barn talks."<sup>227</sup> Other programs listed in a 1992 report included a walking

221 Donovan, interview; 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 18.

222 Donovan is listed as a Park Ranger in Interpretation and Resource Management (GS-025/5) in the 1989 Statement for Interpretation. See 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, A Strategic Plan for Visitor Services, 1996.

223 Donovan, interview.

224 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 25-26.

225 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 7.

226 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 22; Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 32.

227 Donovan, interview.

220 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 4.



tour about Mrs. Sandburg that toured the barns and used quotes and music.<sup>228</sup>



**Figure 7.66** Ranger Diana Miller presents interpretive programs about Sandburg's interest in folk music. Here, she stands with her guitar on the front porch of the Farm Manager's House. Circa 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

Programs focusing on folk music, poetry, and Sandburg's biography continued to be offered during the summer months in the Family Garage or at the Amphitheater.<sup>229</sup> These twenty to twenty-five minute programs explored a variety of topics, such as the love letters between the Sandburgs, Sandburg's poetry and children's stories, folk music, and Abraham Lincoln. A 1992 list of programs illustrates the range of potential programs and included Folk Music; Sandburg Biography; Poetry Reading; Sandburg Reading, focusing on all of his work; Old Troubadour, exploring his musical, literary, and artistic connections; Themes in Verse; and America of Sandburg, which focused on Sandburg's connection to American traditions.<sup>230</sup> Donovan remembered developing a program on folk music and one on poetry. During the summers when the park was well-staffed, "We were just constantly doing ranger programs, because there were so many of us. [Weber] just thought, well, we have all these people, we will just do all kinds" of programs, in addition to the *Rootabaga Stories* and other Flat Rock Playhouse Productions. These ranger programs were presented at times between the house tours or occasionally at the same time as the tours. Back then, Donovan recalled, the park had more people come into the Main House.<sup>231</sup>

The park began several new programs during the Hulick years. One of the most popular was

228 Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 31.

229 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 17.

230 Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 30-34.

231 Donovan, interview.



**Figure 7.67** To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the National Park Service, local historian Louise Bailey makes a presentation about her book *From Rock Hill to Connemara*. August/September 1991 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.6689** At the 75th Anniversary of the National Park Service, the Flat Rock postmaster canceled Carl Sandburg stamps with the date. August/September 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

Christmas at Connemara, which began in 1988. Held on Saturday nights before Christmas, this program brought 800 visitors the first year and became a core program at the park.<sup>232</sup> (See Chapter Eight)

The Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival, began in 1987 by ranger Diana Miller, was held annually on the Monday of Memorial Day weekend. "I set up the Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival to highlight Sandburg's contribution to American folk music," Miller explained. Sandburg collected songs

232 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988; 1989

Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 36.

and published *The American Songbag*, "which helped to popularize folk music in this country." Miller herself had been performing as a member of an old-time string band for several years. She envisioned this program as a "festival with many tents in the pasture to highlight different music instruments" that would perpetuate folk music as Sandburg had advocated for it. The festival idea evolved to feature music presented on the main stage of the Amphitheater, and it was an all-day event, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Well-known folk music performers participated in this Festival, often with minimum honorarium, because "they wanted to play at the Carl Sandburg Home."<sup>233</sup>

The park also participated in the Take Pride in America program in the late 1980s. First organized in 1986, Take Pride in America was a national partnership "to seek, support, and recognize volunteers who work to improve our public parks, forests, wildlife refuges, cultural and historic sites, and recreation areas." The program encouraged Americans to share responsibility and volunteer for public lands with the motto "It's Your Land, Lend a Hand." With more than 100 partners, Take Pride in America engaged federal, state, and local governments; conservation and recreation organizers; young people; and top national corporations and organizations.<sup>234</sup> The national program encouraged parks to work with partners "to rehabilitate ecosystems, improve hiking trails where erosion and overuse are taking a toll, or identify and remove exotic plants that might

233 Miller, written response to interview questions.

234 US Army Corp of Engineers, "Take Pride in America," updated March 2007, <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/volunteer/pride.cfm> (accessed November 20, 2012); 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 7.



**Figure 7.69** The park, and the goats, celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the National Park Service. May 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

encroach on native species."<sup>235</sup> The Volunteer Recognition Act of 1989, 16 USC, formally established the program. CARL incorporated "issues and topics" from the Take Pride in America proposal as part of its new initiatives in 1989.

The park hosted an array of other special events during Superintendent Hulick's tenure, some new but some continued from previous years. Two new programs focused on National Park Service initiatives, including an event for National Public Lands Day and a second for Trail Day on April 15, 1989.<sup>236</sup> In addition, the park continued the popular annual Sandburg Festival, held in April and May, where school children presented original work they had written, a program that attracted many parents and visitors. The Flat Rock Playhouse continued to perform *The World of Carl Sandburg* and *Rootabaga Stories* in the Amphitheater from June through August, and added *Mr. Sandburg's Lincoln* in 1992.<sup>237</sup>

New publications about Carl Sandburg and Mrs. Sandburg expanded the opportunity to tell the Sandburg story and created occasions for book signing programs. In 1987, over 100 people attended Margaret Sandburg's book signing for the edited collection of her parents' love letters, titled *The Poet and the Dream Girl*.<sup>238</sup> In 1991, the park organized three programs to celebrate the publication of Penelope Niven's *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, based on her 14 years of research.<sup>239</sup> In 1993, as part of the park's 25th anniversary celebration, Kathleen Triggs Byrne returned to the park to introduce her book *Paula Sandburg's Chikaming Goat Herd*, published by Eastern National.<sup>240</sup>

Other special programs focused on the Sandburg story. The park participated in planning the Sandburg Symposium on October 21-22, 1988, at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, featuring Penelope Niven and supported by the

235 American Park Network, Mammoth Cave National Park, Oh Ranger.com, 2008, <http://www.or.cohrangem/mammoth-cave/preserving-park> [accessed January 13, 2013].

236 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 7.

237 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 29-30; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992; Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 34.

238 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.

239 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

240 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993; Byrne, written response to interview questions.





**Figure 7.70** The park sells copies of Niven's new book, *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, during her special appearance to discuss the publication. August 10, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.71** Penelope Niven signs copies of her new book *Carl Sandburg: A Biography* at the park. August 10, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

North Carolina Humanities Council.<sup>241</sup> (See Chapter Eight) Niven returned to the park on October 9, 1993, to talk about Sandburg and the American Dream.<sup>242</sup> Helga Sandburg performed a musical remembrance of her father in 1990, which

241 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, October 1988.

242 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, October 1993.



**Figure 7.72** Former Museum Aid Kathleen Triggs Byrne's MA thesis focused on Lilian Sandburg's papers relating to her dairy goat herd. Byrne turned the thesis into a book titled *Paula Sandburg's Chikaming Goat Herd*. In 1992, for the park's 25th Anniversary, she returned to the park to talk about her research. October 10, 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

attracted a large crowd and "a fair amount of publicity surrounded her visit." The park offered a program on Mary Todd Lincoln in 1992, to connect with Sandburg's Lincoln biography. Folk music programs remained popular, such as Rufus Norris's Sandburg Program at a local high school in 1991 and a concert by Phil and Gay Johnson at the park in 1993.<sup>243</sup>

The park also conducted on-site and outreach programs for schools, churches, and other community organizations year round. CARL participated in the Parks as Classroom program. In the early 1990s, the staff planned to increase partnerships with the schools to better orient both teachers and students to the site and to revise the pre-visit teacher's packet. The park staff worked to develop smoother handling for the large groups of school children who visited the site. Recognizing

243 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998-1993.



**Figure 7.73** Mead Parce (right), editor of the Hendersonville *Times-News*, chats with another participant at the Sandburg Symposium, held at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the park. The Symposium was held on the University of North Carolina at Asheville campus, but participants came to the park for an event. October 22, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).

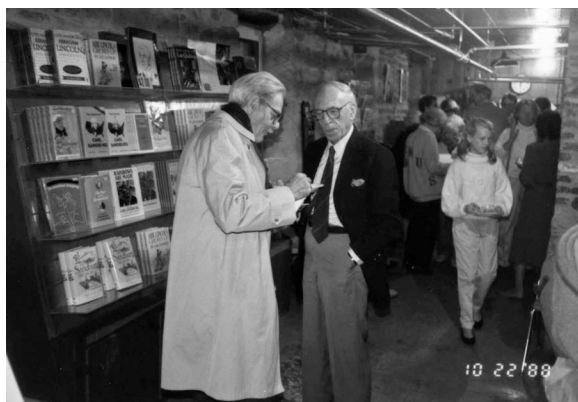


**Figure 7.74** Granville Liles shares his memories of the early years at CARL during a program for the 20th Anniversary of the creation of the park. October 17, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).





**Figure 7.75** Helga Sandburg came to enjoy the festivities and events associated with the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the park. Here, she chats with a participant at an event held at the park in association with the Sandburg Symposium sponsored by the University of North Carolina at Asheville. October 22, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.76** Award-winning writer and screenwriter Norman Corwin and Maurice Greenbaum, literary agent and lawyer for the Sandburg Estate, chat at the Sandburg Symposium, held during the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the park. They are reviewing some of the publications about Sandburg in the Visitor Center of the Main House. October 22, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.77** The Sandburg family gathers at the Sandburg Symposium, celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the creation of the park. Posing here in the Visitor Center of the Main House are, from left to right, Margaret Sandburg, Helga Sandburg, Sky Polega, Paula Steichen Polega, and Birch Polega. October 22, 1988 (CARL Park Archive).

the need for more help to expand the educational programs, the park listed as its third priority to add an interpreter to focus on both outreach and on-site programs for school groups.<sup>244</sup>



**Figure 7.78** This interpretive program in the Amphitheater focuses on Helga Sandburg. May 5, 1990 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 7.79** Helga Sandburg makes a special appearance at the park to celebrate the publication of her book *Where Love Begins*. Afterwards, she signed copies for visitors. September 15, 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

## Maintenance and Park Protection

As the extensive efforts to stabilize the historic buildings eased by 1986, the primary focus for the park's maintenance staff shifted to maintaining these structures, which still involved a considerable amount of time and expertise. In addition, the staff assisted with new construction, including the first Bally building for museum storage. Increased use

244 Statement for Interpretation, 1993, 10.

of the trails required more attention to monitor fallen trees and minimize tripping hazards, and volunteers assisted the park staff in these tasks.<sup>245</sup> The maintenance staff helped to implement the Cultural Resource Management Plan and assisted with projects related to the natural resources as needed.

The park staff completed the new Maintenance Facility in 1985, just before Superintendent Hulick arrived. Then they began work on consolidating



**Figure 7.80** The park refills the Front Lake Dam. October/November 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

the tools, supplies, and work areas for these activities into the new facility. Once this task was completed, the maintenance staff removed the three "non-historic structures" built for the park in 1989.<sup>246</sup> The 1988 Annual Report stated that the



**Figure 7.81** A volunteer helps with trail maintenance on the Big Glassy Trail. May 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

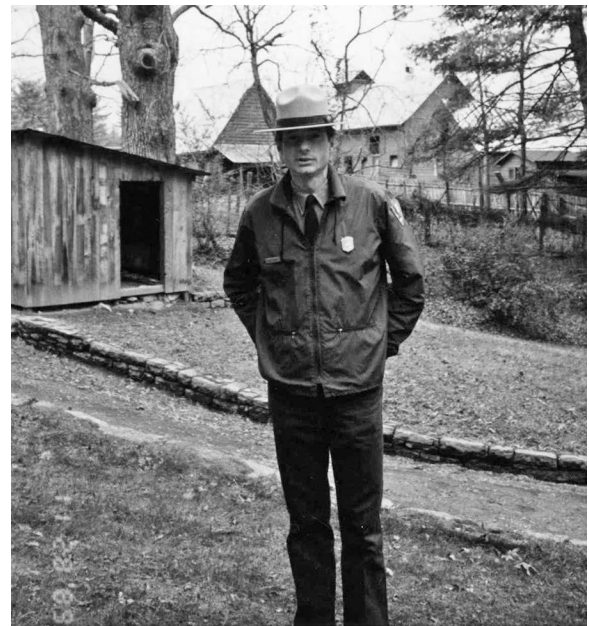
staff was creating a flammable storage area and fire equipment storage area in the Maintenance Facility.<sup>247</sup>

The park's maintenance staff completed a wide variety of tasks. The staff prepared a Recycling Plan in 1991, reflecting a growing concern about the environment in the parks. The next year, they completed four disabled access projects and repairs to the trailer residence. In 1993, the maintenance staff rebuilt the benches in the Amphitheater, "replaced a portion of our public restrooms," and rehabilitated the picnic area. Proud of the maintenance staff, Hulick commented, "They are indeed a very busy crew."<sup>248</sup>

In 1987, for the first time in its history, the park hired a ranger with a specialization in public protection. Superintendent Hulick noted that his hiring "has significantly increased our level of care for the visitor and protection of resources. We are reaching out to the community and other agencies and are adopting a regional approach to appreciation of use and protection of the Sandburg estate."<sup>249</sup> The law enforcement ranger had a commission, since the Park Service had determined that "those rangers who were going to be in law enforcement had to have extensive training." Before that time, Warren Weber recalled, the philosophy was that the rangers could handle "anything that came up." The law enforcement ranger served at the park for several years before transferring to the Blue Ridge Parkway. After

248 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991-3.

249 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.



**Figure 7.82** Carey Jones, a law enforcement park ranger, stands in front of the Barn. November 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

245 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5-15.

246 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5.

247 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.



that, the park returned to working with local law enforcement services offered by the county sheriff.<sup>250</sup> Annual Reports from these years do not mention any serious problems, except for a few small incidents of vandalism.<sup>251</sup>

With his interest in fire management, Hulick sought to improve the fire and intrusive protection systems for the park. In 1986, the park completed a plan for a new Fire Alarm and Intrusion System. Hulick's 1988 Annual Report mentioned that the fire and alarm systems were stronger than in previous years. By 1989, the park had installed a sprinkler system not only in the Main House but also in the Family Garage, Swedish House, and Tenant House.<sup>252</sup>

Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright acquired a computer to use for the new Maintenance Management System, which Hulick recalled "dovetailed with what we were doing in terms of natural and cultural resource management." Wright "had a good long list of things that he thought needed to be worked on, and where they popped

up in both plans it was clear they were a priority job."<sup>253</sup>

Hulick was proud of the accomplishments at the park during his tenure. He reflected back on his assignment at CARL as "the only one that I felt like we could be on top of what was going on in that park. Every other park I worked at was too big, too complex. You were such a small cog in a big machine that you never felt like you changed much. At Sandburg, you could change things. At Sandburg you could make progress on things. And you had the resources to work with, so it was a great experience."<sup>254</sup>

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250 Weber, interview, 2011; 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5.

251 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990. The Annual Report note that vandalism had increased slightly in the park.

252 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988; 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5.

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253 Hulick, interview; 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, June 1996, 5. The 1989 Statement for Interpretation noted that the park planned to develop and implement this system. 1989 Statement for Interpretation Update, 1996, 5.

254 Hulick, interview.



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# CHAPTER 8

## “Trying to Put the Park on the Map,” 1986-1993

One of the main legacies of Superintendent Kenneth Hulick’s years at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) was his attention to building relationships with partners outside of the park. His belief that the park “boundary was a permeable membrane through which everything flows” led him to devote a significant amount of time and effort to “extensive cooperation” with volunteers, civic organizations, and educational partners within the community. “That boundary, it looks like a hard line on a map, but it really isn’t,” Hulick explained. “So we have to erase that boundary and say, how do we manage this park in a way that’s compatible with what’s done around us. How do they manage to change what they’re doing outside the park to make their actions more compatible with what we’re doing here? How can they help us and we can help them?”<sup>1</sup>

This emphasis on community outreach was in keeping with policies set forth in the National Park Service (NPS) under President Ronald Reagan’s administration. Reagan’s philosophy of “fiscal conservatism and government restraint” was reflected in management expectations for NPS units.<sup>2</sup> Park Service guidelines called for superintendents “to more aggressively seek outside financial support, to increase activity by volunteers and cooperating associations, to contract out more services, and to allow cooperating associations to play a larger role in the parks.”<sup>3</sup> While his predecessor, Superintendent Benjamin Davis, concentrated his efforts inside the park to develop the facilities as much as possible in those early years, Hulick embraced this new outreach philosophy. He explained that his actions

focused on developing “as many tentacles into the community” as he and his staff could foster.<sup>4</sup>

Hulick believed that increased partnerships could assist the park in reaching its potential. He encouraged the creation of a Friends organization and helped to grow the volunteer program to provide much needed advocacy, fundraising, and labor. Under Hulick’s superintendency and with support from the Friends and volunteers, the park expanded its programming outside the park, assisted by a variety of community and regional partners. He reached out to work more with statewide organizations and leaders to accomplish his goals. The park continued its close cooperation with staff at the various NPS offices and centers as well as the Eastern National Parks and Monument Association. So successful were Hulick’s efforts that, when he left the park in 1993, interim Superintendent Warren Weber noted in the Annual Report for the year that “a lot of the park’s involvement with outside community organizations and activities were diminished with his transfer.”<sup>5</sup>

### The Friends of Connemara

In 1986, the park attracted more than 60,000 visitors, pushing services toward maximum capacity.<sup>6</sup> Stagnant NPS funding could not keep pace with the rising costs of operating the park, employee pay raises, and benefits. This situation meant no new funding for positions to meet these growing demands, forcing administrators to consider increased volunteer labor as an option for meeting the needs of the facility.<sup>7</sup> Passage of the Volunteers in the Parks (VIP) Act in 1969 allowed

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1 Hulick, interview.

2 Runte, *National Parks*, 227.

3 The Conservation Foundation, *National Parks for a New Generation*, 199.

4 Hulick, interview; Weber, interview, 2011. Warren Weber added that Superintendent Davis’ focus was “right here on site.”

5 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1993.

6 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1986.

7 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1987.

national parks to use volunteers in many aspects of interpretation and visitor services.<sup>8</sup> Like other units within the National Park Service, Carl Sandburg Home NHS took advantage of the VIP Act and created its own Volunteers in the Parks program. In its early years, the park developed a small but loyal base of volunteers who assisted with tours, cataloging, and trail maintenance.

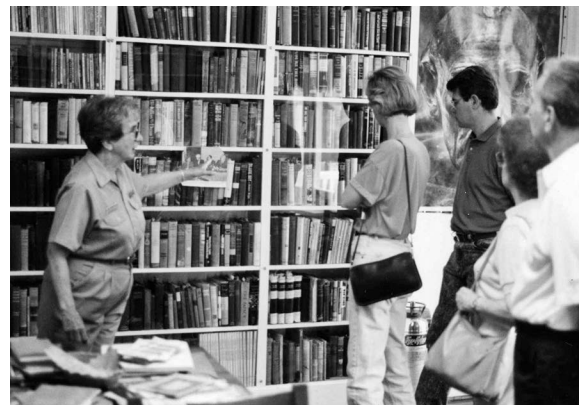
Shortly after assuming responsibilities at the park, Superintendent Hulick attended a workshop about how to set up a Friends group to support the National Park Service mission. Inspired by the ideas he heard, Hulick issued an invitation to local leaders to attend an organizational committee meeting for a new kind of volunteer group, the Friends of Connemara, in 1987. He organized a steering committee, "advertised the heck out of it, and got a small group of people who were interested in working at the park."<sup>9</sup> Hulick envisioned a group that would provide more than labor for much needed projects. Members would partner with the park, raising awareness of the park within the community and beyond and heightening appreciation of park resources available to visitors. A Friends group could also help raise funds to contribute to park programs as NPS sources of funding declined.

Fortunately, retirees comprised about 40 percent of the population of the Hendersonville area, and the park was a popular attraction.<sup>10</sup> The older adults liked spending time there walking, interacting with the staff and volunteers, and sharing the site with visiting friends. Many of the retirees were well-educated, financially comfortable if not affluent, and possessed professional skill levels important to launching the kind of Friends supporters and volunteerism needed by the park.<sup>11</sup> While Carl Sandburg Home NHS needed and welcomed those volunteers willing to do physical work, the staff now sought volunteers who could get involved with such activities as public relations and fundraising. The Hendersonville community

especially was home to many retirees who could fill those needs and contribute special skills.

In early 1988, the Friends of Connemara held its first public meeting, elected officers, and approved by-laws.<sup>12</sup> Officially, the Friends group was ready to begin supporting the park and looking out for its needs and interests. Specifically, they were "dedicated to restoring and preserving the historic integrity and natural and scenic qualities of Connemara; fostering broad community appreciation and understanding through public education, tours and other programs; promoting and organizing volunteers in the park, and raising financial support for unfunded park programs."<sup>13</sup> Another important expectation was that the Friends would act on behalf of the park within the community to make sure that the needs of the park were recognized, taken into consideration when community decisions were made, and met whenever possible.

The Friends volunteer support of park programs and special events proved invaluable during the first year, contributing over 2,000 volunteer



**Figure 8.1** VIPs became skilled tour guides for the Main House. Under the tutelage of CARL staff, the volunteers developed their own tours, often focusing on some aspect of the Sandburgs' lives at Connemara of particular interest to them personally—such as music or poetry. Ca. 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

hours in support of the park.<sup>14</sup> Members of the Friends of Connemara helped with "providing docents who carry out interpretive tours of the Home; sponsoring trail work projects; sponsoring programs on the historical, literary

8 National Park Service, "Volunteers in Parks," <http://www.nps.gov/index.htm> (Accessed: September 3, 2011).

9 Hulick, interview.

10 Hulick, interview.

11 Daniel Lyons, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, July 27, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

12 Kenneth Hulick, press release, no date, Friends of Connemara Notebook, Vol. 1 1988-1999, CARL Park Archive.

13 Friends of Connemara, brochure, (Flat Rock, NC: Friends of Connemara, no date), CARL Park Archive.

14 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.

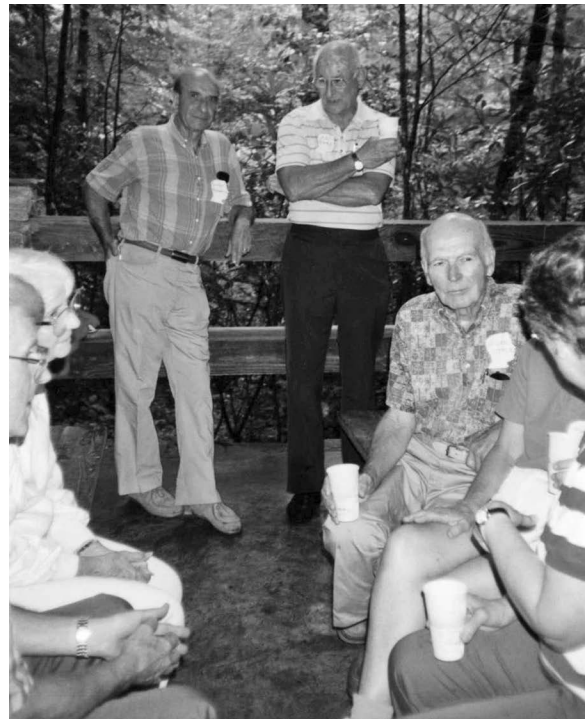
and natural resources of the Sandburg Home; sponsoring social events at and about Connemara, the Sandburg Estate; assisting in maintaining the historical gardens; [and] contributing and encouraging voluntarism at Connemara." Hulick wrote to the Friends of Connemara in October 1988 to thank them for their role at the park. The group was created "to aid the park in its interpretive, educational and resource preservation projects, and also to assist in the political and economic spheres when necessary," and Hulick observed that they had already made significant progress toward their goals.<sup>15</sup>

While the park superintendent and staff provided close guidance and supervision, right from the start the Friends of Connemara operated as a professional organization. Not only did they partner with the park in many areas of operation, but they also created an official structure for their own organization that would ensure its continued survival and ability to support the park. In 1990, at the suggestion of Superintendent Hulick, the Friends incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in North Carolina and received its 501(c)(3) organization status under Federal law in November of that year.<sup>16</sup> They were officially sanctioned by the United States Government as a tax-exempt group and could engage in fundraising for Carl Sandburg Home NHS.

The Friends of Connemara had a small board of three to four members during these early years. As an organization, the Friends would function separately from the park; however, all of their activities would be in support of and planned in collaboration with the park. The Friends' board members maintained close communication with park staff to ensure that enough of their members were available to perform tasks in support of everyday operations and special events. Most importantly, all activities would be approved and supervised closely by park staff.

The Friends group garnered media attention and interest. The community wanted to know about this new group and what they might be doing

with the Carl Sandburg Home NHS.<sup>17</sup> The park saw almost immediate benefits from the group as they raised public awareness about the resources available there and promoted volunteerism.<sup>18</sup> In acknowledging the contributions of the Friends group, Superintendent Hulick stated that they were "an essential part of the activities at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site," arguing



**Figure 8.2** CARL staff and volunteers enjoy a picnic together in recognition of another successful summer season at the park. Summer 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

that the park could not operate at its "present level" without the assistance of the group.<sup>19</sup>

Dan Lyons, one of the early presidents of the Friends of Connemara, recalls how he became involved in the Friends. He had retired from the American Can Company around 1987, and he and his wife retired to Flat Rock. "So I got started just going up to the historic site there, and by that time, the Friends of Connemara" was just "starting out with a group to support the activities at the site, and I joined in and decided to help them out. And then gradually I just got more involved getting into different areas of the Friends." He played an active part on the board during the Hulick years and held

15 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1988.

16 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 1991; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991; Lyons, interview.

17 "Sandburg Home Boasts New 'Friend'," *Times-News*, February 15, 1988.

18 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

19 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1988.



a variety of posts. Lyons also enjoyed leading house tours as a volunteer.<sup>20</sup>

Membership in the Friends was diverse. Members paid annual dues of \$5, which helped to cover the costs for the newsletter. Many of the first Friends were already volunteers at the park or community members supportive of what the park did. Lyons recalled promoting the Friends through the volunteers first, and many joined. The board of the Friends of Connemara worked hard to get the word out to the community about this new organization. Lyons helped prepare a pamphlet about the organization and members shared it with their friends. They utilized mailing lists from the Flat Rock Playhouse because "the people who went to the Playhouse across the street, they were familiar probably with Connemara, with the park." Some Friends contributed special skill sets needed for the organization. "We've been fortunate to have accountants that belonged and help us out," Lyons observed.

The Friends of Connemara grew quickly. From its beginning with six members in 1988, the organization's newsletter, titled *Footnotes*, reported 157 members by December 1989, with "80 or more being active volunteers. That indicates a good number are having fun, getting satisfaction, or both."<sup>21</sup> During the Hulick years, the Friends of Connemara reported fairly constant membership, hovering around 150, and acknowledged that "Every member counts."<sup>22</sup> Hulick estimated that there were about 130 individuals who were both members of the Friends of Connemara and also participants in the VIP program when he left in 1993, so most of its members by that time were also participants in the VIP program.<sup>23</sup>

The Friends might or might not actually perform physical labor at the park; they might be supporters interested primarily in Sandburg and his work. They would meet regularly, once a month, often with a speaker "to come and talk about Sandburg." One of their most important tasks was raising funds for the park. The group "did not have much money" in the early years, recalled Lyons,

so they would solicit funding in the community. Fundraising often required a considerable amount of time to make contact with potential funders and complete the foundation proposals or grants. "It wasn't an easy thing to do," remembered Lyons, "but the park helped out." When they started to fundraise for theater productions of *Rootabaga Stories*, a park ranger helped put together a folder they could take to a bank or a corporation. "They were more accustomed to doing that than people like myself," Lyons explained.<sup>24</sup> Ann Staley Vaughan, administrative officer for the park, remembers that Lyons "did an excellent job" at the grant writing, and he was "pretty much the one who would write grants."<sup>25</sup>

## Expanding the Volunteer Program

The Friends of Connemara worked closely with CARL staff to expand the volunteer base at the park during these years. Many of the Friends who had not been involved with the park before now became active volunteers, contributing time and expertise to the important tasks at hand. But not all VIPs joined the Friends organization. Anyone could be a volunteer at the park whether or not they were members of the Friends group. Together, the Friends of Connemara and the growing VIP group at CARL worked on many activities and projects at the park. As Hulick noted, besides the fact that the Friends paid a membership fee, "there was very little to no differentiation between the two of them [Friends and VIPs]. I think of them as pretty much synonymous."<sup>26</sup>

Recruiting volunteers gained more attention at the park during these years. Warren Weber, who was chief of resource management at the time, wrote that the Friends, "as always," were "continually recruiting volunteers for us."<sup>27</sup> Hulick actively promoted the volunteer program using every community outlet he could. "I recruited at my Rotary Club, I recruited everywhere I went to different meetings, and I think most of the staff were always recruiting, because once they recognized that they could get more work done, the park would be a better product because of the volunteers' work, and they welcomed them in." He

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20 Lyons, interview.

21 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1., No. 6, December 1989.

22 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 5, December 1993.

23 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

24 Lyons, interview.

25 Vaughan, interview.

26 Hulick, interview.

27 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.

and the staff also recruited at training events and programs throughout the region. The more visible they were, the more community members would learn about the park and hopefully be inspired to join the volunteer program.<sup>28</sup>

Working with these volunteers was not like recruiting inexperienced employees. Many retirees came from successful careers. "A lot of them had advanced degrees and had a real personal interest in Sandburg," Hulick explained. "They did their own orientation in terms of reading and studying, and looking at objects, and then following along our other volunteers and paid staff to learn how tours and different activities were conducted. Everybody just kind of slipped into a mold that they were comfortable with. Some people liked to do tours at the house, some people liked to work with the goats, some people liked to work



**Figure 8.3** Volunteers ensure that visitors to the park have an enjoyable experience, whether touring the Main House, Barn, or the estate grounds. Volunteers encourage visitors to spend time reading waysides such as this one as they tour. This sign explains the importance of nature to Sandburg, inviting hikers to develop their own creative nature experience while at the park. Visitors can plan their hiking along the CARL trails via this map. June 1981 (CARL Park Archive).

on the gardens and they kind of gravitated to that and were taught by the others already doing that work."<sup>29</sup>

It was important that the volunteers felt like they were welcomed by the park staff and valued for their contributions. Hulick remembers that he spent "probably between a quarter and a third of my time . . . going around and talking to all these volunteers and telling them how they were part of a trend in terms of worldwide developmental parks and national parks and interpretation and

management of those parks, how they were a part of something vital and new that started in Yellowstone and expanded throughout the world." He felt that the volunteers wanted to continue doing something meaningful with their time. Assisting staff with park operations provided opportunities for the volunteers to contribute to the quality of each visitor's experience.<sup>30</sup>

The park offered special opportunities to its volunteers to thank them for their efforts "whenever we could," recalled Hulick. "I always took a van full of them down to the lecture that former NPS Director George Hartzog did at Clemson each year." Hartzog talked about the state of the national parks, "and that was a real good experience for all of them, because it made them feel a part of a bigger thing than just Carl Sandburg." Park staff took the volunteers to trips to other historic sites and NPS activities and events. The park also hosted an annual banquet or party to honor the volunteers and the Friends.<sup>31</sup>

Both volunteer groups felt a part of the park effort and advocated on its behalf. "Whether you're a Friend or just a VIP, they let the park be more accessible to the public," explained Dan Lyons. "We were there, whether in the goats or in the house tour or trailblazing the trails or counting the artifacts, it was a team effort and we wanted to show off the park. We wanted to keep the Sandburg legend alive. And the only way we could do that was to participate in the activities up at the park and help them out to do all these things." Both groups were dedicated to bringing Carl Sandburg's story to the public.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the volunteers wore several hats in their service to the park. Sometimes they contributed the labor necessary to complete tasks and sometimes they contributed the creativity needed to develop programs.<sup>33</sup> There was plenty of work to accomplish. Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff had volunteers actively involved in such activities as Trail Work Day, interpretive programs and presentations promoting Sandburg and the park, social events for recruiting and retaining volunteers, and planning for the 1991

28 Hulick, interview.

29 Hulick, interview.

30 Hulick, interview.

31 Hulick, interview.

32 Dan Lyons, interview.

33 Dan Lyons, interview; Hulick, interview.



**Figure 8.4** The Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival, always popular with visitors and the community, helps to sustain the family's legacy, as well as visitor interest in the American Songbag. The festival features folk musicians and instruments such as those pictured here. Summer 1999 (CARL Park Archive).

Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival.<sup>34</sup> As the park settled into the practice of using volunteers in almost every area of its operations, more and more volunteers were needed.

In 1991, as many as 32 people per week gave tours in the Main House, conducted interpretive programs, helped with activities and maintenance for the living farm, restored and cared for historic gardens on the grounds, performed cataloging and clerical duties, and sponsored and staffed special events and educational programs.<sup>35</sup> The park tracked the number of hours donated by volunteers each year, recording over 8,000 hours worked by 140 volunteers in 1992 and 1993.<sup>36</sup>

## Expanding Programs with Volunteers

The successful work of the Friends group and VIP program allowed the Carl Sandburg Home NHS to expand its interpretive services significantly.<sup>37</sup> As the staff continued its strategic effort to embed volunteers in the fabric of park operations, Friends members were "used to fill in the gaps in the Interpretation and Resource Management Division."<sup>38</sup> As the staff soon learned, the energy and creativity of the Friends and volunteers

contributed significantly to the development of park programs and services.

Superintendent Hulick theorized that activities "like interpretive guided walks, where you're



**Figure 8.5** The Sandburgs had several gardens on the grounds. This one, located near the front pasture and maintained by volunteers, provides a glimpse of the variety of vegetation grown by the family. October 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

always doing the same sort of program, and running entrance stations, where you have the same sort of things over and over again, those things are better done by people who are either volunteers or seasonals because they can stay sharp and fresh and vital in their presentations." Since they spent less time doing the same programs day after day, the volunteers often brought added energy to their interpretive tasks, helping to keep the park programs feeling new and fresh for first time and returning visitors.<sup>39</sup>

The visitor services staff had used "a few volunteers" for the guided tour program and the outreach program, "but the real crunch" came when budgets were "really, really very tight."<sup>40</sup> One year, while Hulick was superintendent, Weber recalled, "There was a push by the region for volunteers and not hiring permanent people. There was one winter season, where we were keeping records and sending that into Region [SERO] on one of their management initiatives, in which not one guided tour of the Main House was provided by a paid person." Elena Diana Miller, a paid ranger, managed and oversaw the tours and scheduled and trained the volunteer guides. While Weber acknowledged the advantages, especially given the quality of volunteers that the park enjoyed, he recalled, "You also had to loosen

34 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

35 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1988; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 1988.

36 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.

37 Hulick, interview.

38 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.

39 Hulick, interview.

40 Weber, interview, 2003.



up a little bit on the quality of presentations." He joked, "We got a lot of interesting instant history that I used to enjoy a great deal." To ensure that visitors received the correct information, the park staff provided interpretive training, observed tours given by volunteers, and encouraged volunteers to use the Official Park Handbook in developing their tours. In addition to giving tours during the peak summer months, volunteers also played a crucial role in offering programs during the winter months when visitation was slow.<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 8.6** Margaret's Garden provides a colorful and welcoming glimpse of Connemara during the Sandburg's time. When the staff decided that restoring Margaret Sandburg's garden would be an excellent idea but not something they had time to do, the Friends organization stepped in to complete the task. Sandburg's granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega worked with the Friends of Connemara, providing invaluable guidance about her aunt's original design for the garden and the kinds of plants that bloomed there. Circa 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

The Friends and VIPs took on projects that required several weeks of planning, coordinating, and partnering with community groups—time that the park staff could not spare from operations. For example, when the park planned to restore a historic garden for visitor enjoyment and educational purposes, the staff asked the Friends to adopt the project. The Friends agreed and worked with staff to gain an understanding of expectations and responsibilities in restoring a historic garden at the park. Located near the Main House, the garden measured 30 feet by 50 feet. In 1989, when the project began, the garden was rather overgrown and unrecognizable. The Friends consulted with park staff and Sandburg's granddaughter, Paula Steichen Polega, to develop a plan for the garden based on the original design. Polega provided a plat of the garden, complete with "lists of the flowers and shrubs" as they were when she grew up at

Connemara. Volunteers were able to harvest some of the original plants from the garden, but most had to be replaced. There were five sections to the original garden and almost 40 different kinds of flowers were planted there.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 8.7** Margaret's Garden was overgrown and hard to recognize when the NPS took over Connemara. Volunteers restored the garden and visitors can now enjoy it as it was when the Sandburgs planted and cut the flowers for use in the Main House. October 1992 (CARL Park Archive).

As they restored the garden, volunteers worked with the park maintenance crew and with local nurseries to secure and care for the plants. In June 1990, the Friends' Garden Committee reported that "Margaret's Garden is in full bloom" and that they caught one of the horses from the living farm "dining in the garden" on Shasta Daisies. The horse leaned over the fence and helped himself until park maintenance repaired the weak fence. Friends volunteers held a Wednesday morning work bee each week to "water and weed" the garden.<sup>43</sup> Their work came to fruition when they hosted Margaret Sandburg as guest of honor at the September 1990 Friends meeting. During the program, volunteers talked about the process of restoring the garden and toured the area with Margaret and other guests.<sup>44</sup>

Volunteers provided valuable assistance in the barnyard as well. The farm became increasingly popular with visitors, attracting all ages, especially during the springtime when the baby goats arrived.

Janene Donovan, the park ranger who managed the barn area, recalled that she began recruiting

42 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1989.

43 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 2, No. 3, June 1990.

44 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 1991.

41 Weber, interview, 2011.

volunteers because her job had so many responsibilities and had become more stressful. She found that VIPs were eager to work in the Barn. Volunteers began to feed the animals and clean up the barn areas, while providing interpretation for visitors stopping by for information about the goat herd.<sup>45</sup> "There's a lot of folks who enjoy working with the animals, and that has worked out real well, especially when you are not maintaining a dairy as such," Weber recalled.<sup>46</sup>

With a growing number of volunteers, the park shifted the delivery of interpretive services from a model using on-site paid employees to a multi-model delivery system as early as 1989. The new plan would rely on increased use of volunteers as tour guides at the Main House and in interpretation for the living farm, increased interpretive signage throughout the park, and development of new technologies for visitors unable to tour the house due to distance or physical challenges.<sup>47</sup>

With demonstrated support from the Friends group and VIPs, the park was better able to meet visitor needs during these tight budget years. An example of the many ways in which the Friends group supported the Carl Sandburg Home NHS involved a special purchase that the park staff wanted but could not make due to lack of funds. In 1989, the Friends purchased a set of books that Carl Sandburg autographed. The books were first editions and contained "a personal message" from the poet to the recipient, Henry Justin Smith. Smith was the editor of the *Chicago Daily News*. The Friends discovered that the park wanted to purchase the books but could not afford to do so. The group raised the \$1350 necessary to secure the books and brought them to Connemara as a gift to the park.<sup>48</sup> The Friends continued this kind of service to the park and, by 1990, they had donated goods and services valued at \$8,000 in support of park programs and special activities.<sup>49</sup>

Development of the Friends of Connemara and the VIP corps was important work for the park, bringing the public on board as a partner in caring

for the resources and ensuring park survival in tough economic times. Hulick recalled that "almost every employee had some interaction with volunteers."<sup>50</sup> He developed his own support group within the volunteer program. "We had a couple of old guys, they were about my age now, and I called them my "Brain Rust," because they were kind of my idea guys," he remembered fondly. "They were very bright fellows who gave me ideas on how to do things in the community and how to make the park a treasured resource in the community."<sup>51</sup> By developing community partners, the park could accomplish even more.

## Developing Partnerships in the Community and Region

Superintendent Hulick and the park staff worked tirelessly "trying to put the park on the map" and helping the public better understand what an important resource Carl Sandburg Home NHS was for local, regional, national, and international audiences.<sup>52</sup> During this time, the park focused its public relations efforts on moving public opinion away from the park being merely a local attraction and more toward an appreciation of the park's regional importance and impact.<sup>53</sup> Hulick chose two management strategies around which most of the park's initiatives and plans revolved: "total resource preservation and total public involvement."<sup>54</sup> Total public involvement included working on the local level to keep the contributions and needs of the park in the minds of civic leaders.<sup>55</sup> Creating a strong, well-connected volunteer group helped accomplish this goal. Fostering an expectation of public involvement and outreach among park leadership and staff did as well.

Superintendent Hulick led his staff by example in reaching out to community groups. During his tenure, he was active in 16 community organizations and held leadership positions in nine of these groups.<sup>56</sup> Hulick served as director of community service with the Rotary Board of

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45 Donovan, interview.

46 Weber, interview, 2011.

47 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

48 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 6, December 1989.

49 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

50 Hulick, interview.

51 Hulick, interview.

52 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

53 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.

54 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.

55 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

56 Hulick, interview.

Directors and was appointed to the Travel and Tourism Committee by the county. During 1990, he worked regularly with the chair of the County Commission and the Hendersonville mayor as they engaged in cooperative planning. This was an important connection as the park was instrumental in helping local governments in "fighting off" a group with plans to build an energy recovery/waste incinerator in the area. This successful partnering to keep environmental threats out of the area "resulted in enhanced prestige for the park as a resource preservation entity."<sup>57</sup> Hulick continued his work with local governments, serving as Planning Sub-Committee chair of the Henderson County Educational Foundation Johnson Farm Committee and as a trustee for Historic Flat Rock, Inc., in 1991. These positions allowed him to work with homeowners associations, prepare planning recommendations and research about historic properties, and address issues of preservation, tourism, zoning, and signage as related to historic sites.<sup>58</sup>

Hulick also spoke to groups outside the park on a regular basis to inform them about CARL activities and to interest them in their national parks. He reported presenting 23 programs on conservation topics in 1992 alone, reaching over 1,200 people.<sup>59</sup> Hulick was always willing to share the park's story and mission with the public and often made presentations to local civic organizations. He remembered one time "in the Rotary Club, a certain speaker didn't show up, so the club president was looking around. He didn't have any program to present. So I raised my hand and said, 'Hey, would you like me to do a program on Carl Sandburg?' And he said, 'Thank you.' So I went up there and did an off-the-cuff program on what we were doing at Carl Sandburg. So that's one of the ways that we kind of spread the word about what was going on."<sup>60</sup>

The park thrived in its outreach efforts and its philosophy of working with any outside organizations that held mutual interests and might enhance the National Park Service mission.<sup>61</sup> One of the park's first partnerships had been with the Flat Rock Playhouse and it continued to evolve

during these years with support from the Friends. Through its Vagabond School of the Drama, the Playhouse served as a training ground for aspiring



**Figure 8.8** Helga Sandburg remains an important supporter of the park. She worked with the staff and volunteers to plan and present several programs about life on the farm. In this photograph, she enjoys a quiet moment in Margaret's Garden. July 2003 (CARL Park Archive).

actors, especially in the summer when they presented plays at the park Amphitheater based on Sandburg's life and work. On most days during the summer, scheduled performances captivated audiences as they learned more about the man who lived at Connemara.

Plays offered on a regular basis were *The World of Carl Sandburg* and *Rootabaga Stories*.<sup>62</sup> In 1992, the Flat Rock Playhouse produced and performed a new play titled *Mr. Sandburg's Lincoln* for the first time. It was a success and was added as a regular offering by the Vagabond Players.<sup>63</sup> When budget cuts to the Park Service threatened to eliminate funding for the \$5,000 that CARL paid annually to the Playhouse for their actors, the Friends of Connemara raised the necessary funding to keep

57 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

58 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

59 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.

60 Hulick, interview.

61 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

62 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1993.

63 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.



the program going. "And we were able to do that," Dan Lyons proudly recalled.<sup>64</sup>

The park reached out to plan programs with other regional organizations that shared its interests. The outreach programs, most often educational in nature, were among the most popular and the most effective in keeping the community-park connections alive. Staff presented special programs on many National Park Service and Carl Sandburg Home NHS-related topics in the Hendersonville area. The programs were both formal and informal, depending on the needs and interests of the host organizations and their members.

In October 1988, the park participated with several regional partners in "Poetry and Politics: the Carl Sandburg Symposium." Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven developed the event and acted as co-director. The University of North Carolina, Asheville (UNCA) and the North Carolina Humanities Council sponsored the event, which was held in several venues in the area. The symposium attracted national and international scholars, including featured author and producer Norman Corwin as the keynote speaker. His New York-based play, *The World of Carl Sandburg* was popular for many years and was the basis for the Flat Rock Playhouse production at the park. A Chinese scholar talked about "Sandburg's popularity there," Helga Sandburg spoke about her father's work, and CBS *60 Minutes* producer Joseph Wershba presented as well. On the second day, the symposium moved to the Flat Rock Playhouse where scholars from UNCA and Cornell University spoke to the audience. The symposium concluded with a performance of *The World of Carl Sandburg* at the Playhouse across the road from the poet's North Carolina home. Sandburg enthusiasts from throughout the region attended.<sup>65</sup>

The popular Christmas programs at the park evolved out of a regional collaboration begun in 1988. Hulick was on the Travel and Tourism Board in Hendersonville, and the board suggested that Connemara would be an excellent addition to the community's holiday plans. The park agreed to open the home on four Saturday nights as part of a celebration titled, "Christmas at Connemara."



**Figure 8.9** Holiday luminaires light the driveway to the Main House. Volunteers and staff worked many, many hours preparing the homemade luminaires for placement all along the front drive of the Main House. After each open house, the luminaires were removed and stored until the next week's festivities. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

The event "focused on activities, rather than fancy decorations," featuring storytelling and singing. The park presented the Main House through self-guided tours, and the "path from the parking lot to the house was lighted by luminaires."<sup>66</sup> The celebrations showcased the kinds of activities and welcome that the Sandburgs might have included in their holiday observances.<sup>67</sup>



**Figure 8.10** Staff and volunteers prepare cookies and refreshments for the guests, making the kitchen warm and welcoming for visitors. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

At the request of park staff, Friends volunteers baked and served cookies to the visitors, ran the parking lot, staffed the rooms in the Main House to ensure security of the collection and to answer visitor questions, and lit the hundreds of luminaires. The staff, Friends, and the community deemed the event a success, with 200 to 300

<sup>64</sup> Lyons, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1988.

<sup>66</sup> Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1988; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 1988.

<sup>67</sup> Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, "Christmas at Connemara" flier, Friends of Connemara Notebook, Vol. 1, 1988-1999, CARL Park Archive.

visitors attending each of the four Saturdays.<sup>68</sup> Volunteers contributed 400 hours labor and park staff secured \$1,500 in donated funds from the Henderson County Travel and Tourism Committee to make the event possible.<sup>69</sup> The park created an instant tradition with Christmas at Connemara, and the Friends group was instrumental to the success of that program. In 1989, the event grew to include five nights during the holiday season. Eight hundred visitors attended. The park again partnered with the Henderson County Travel and



**Figure 8.11** A songfest entertains visitors during Christmas at Connemara. The Sandburgs often held many similar sessions during the holidays. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 8.12** An area choir delivers a holiday program in the Garage, adding to the festive atmosphere as visitors strolled the grounds and toured the Main House. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

Tourism for funding Christmas at Connemara, and the Friends contributed significant hours of labor behind the scenes and during the event to ensure the success of what became one of the park's annual public relations endeavors.

Like so many visitors during this holiday event, Superintendent Hulick has special memories of what visiting Connemara was like on those evenings between Thanksgiving and Christmas. He

68 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 1988.

69 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1988.



**Figure 8.13** Lisa Ward entertains during a Saturday night between Thanksgiving and Christmas as part of the Christmas at Connemara program. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

remembers, "People would come in the evening during Christmastime, walk up that trail, lighted by the luminaires, walk into the house, smell the smell of hot cider in the kitchen...." The park staff had laid out cookies for display in the kitchen. Visitors would listen to Christmas music. "We had music programs out in the Garage, a variety of different things, different groups would come, including a



**Figure 8.14** Main House decorations delight visitors arriving for Christmas at Connemara activities. The home was decorated as it might have been during the Sandburgs' time at Connemara. December 16, 1989 (CARL Park Archive).

madrigal group. It was a community chorus that I sang in, and they came and performed several times in the Garage during Christmastime. That was kind of fun, just a Christmas program. And this tied in with the county-wide program of getting people to come back in the wintertime, come home for the holidays, and get a little travel and tourism going in that time of year."<sup>70</sup>

Between 1991 and 1993, the park partnered with the Blue Ridge Community College to present a

70 Hulick, interview.



series of weeklong Elderhostels focusing on the life and work of Carl Sandburg.<sup>71</sup> Founded in 1975, the Elderhostel program was designed to provide low-cost educational and cultural programs for older Americans. The park co-sponsored four programs that first year, each lasting a week, three in 1992, and six in 1993.<sup>72</sup> Hulick believed that the Elderhostel programs "resulted in considerable goodwill being directed towards the NPS."<sup>73</sup>

Blue Ridge Community College became a partner in other endeavors as well. The College co-sponsored the "Carl Sandburg Folk Festival" and "An Unforgettable Evening of Carl Sandburg" events in 1993. An audience of over 1,000 from 25 states attended these Memorial Day events to hear professional actors and musicians entertain the crowd. Blue Ridge collaborated with the Friends and other regional associations to help produce several new videodisc programs for the park in 1990. The park secured a donation of \$1,500 from Hendersonville Travel and Tourism and the Friends of Connemara contributed another \$300 towards videotapes that would be used for orientation and marketing. The College donated labor to edit the "House Tour" program.<sup>74</sup> The Southeast Regional Office and Harpers Ferry Center assisted with the other productions. After they were completed, the park sent these videodiscs to all of the North Carolina Welcome Centers and used them in schools and a variety of off-site programs to tell the park's story.<sup>75</sup> In addition to the collaboration with Blue Ridge Community College, the park also began a partnership with Voorhees College, a traditionally African American institution. Through his relationship with John and Muriel Potts, Hulick created a recruitment program at the college where Mr. Potts had served as president. (See Chapter Seven)

The park partnered with area libraries as well, which were natural bridges to Sandburg's work. In 1991, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS community celebrated completion of another important publication supporting interpretation, Penelope Niven's book titled *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*.

71 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990;  
Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

72 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991-3.

73 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

74 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989;  
Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

75 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.



**Figures 8.15** Sandburg biographer, Penelope Niven (center), maintained a close relationship with the park and the Friends organization. She launched her book, titled *Carl Sandburg: A Biography*, at a special book signing event sponsored by the Friends to benefit the park. August 10, 1991 (CARL Park Archive).

The Friends of Henderson County Library joined with the park, the Friends of Connemara, and Macmillan Publishing to sponsor a presentation by the author August 10-11. This event was a special opportunity to learn about the book before its release date on August 19. Niven's work encouraged a feeling of personally knowing Sandburg as she based the text on research conducted with "more than 50,000 Sandburg letters and papers, interviews with 150 people who knew Sandburg, complete access to family letters and journals, explorations of library and archival collections around the country, as well as Sandburg's FBI files."<sup>76</sup> Signed copies of the book were made available to local school libraries as well as the park. Niven's visits to the park in support of special programs were always popular and well attended.

Through the park's school programs, area children learned about Sandburg's work, visited the living farm, and better understood their National Park Service by the end of the program. The park welcomed students to come to the park as volunteers, and many did. In 1987, a community group working with economically disadvantaged youth partnered with the park to provide assistance in rehabilitating trails for visitor use. The students contributed invaluable assistance to the park while learning about environmental challenges within a public park.<sup>77</sup> In 1992, student volunteers from three local high schools assisted the Friends of Connemara with the annual lighting

76 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 3, No. 4, July 1991.

77 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1987.



of the luminaires for the Christmas at Connemara activities.<sup>78</sup> During the summer of 1993, 40 members of the Henderson County 4-H group worked with the Friends, assisting with many projects associated with student interests and skills.<sup>79</sup>

Students proved valuable in their dedication to the park and their willingness to help maintain



**Figure 8.16** Parents and children gather together in the Amphitheater to learn more about the Flat Rock's Exceptional Sandburg Helpers (F.R.E.S.H.) Program for children. Sponsored by the Friends organization, the program provided opportunity for the children to work in the Barn with the goats and on the grounds with staff and volunteers. September 1993 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 8.17** An early group of F.R.E.S.H. kids awaits assignments for the upcoming weeks. The children competed for openings in the program and often continued to participate for several years, learning about sustaining life on a farm. September 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

the facility. As a result, the Friends joined the park in sponsoring a special program for youth. The park staff and Friends developed Flat Rock's Exceptional Sandburg Helpers, or F.R.E.S.H., in 1992, to bring in young people between the ages of nine and 14. Supervised by experienced volunteers and park rangers, the youths assisted in maintaining trails and fences, helping visitors to the

78 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1993.

79 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.

park, and working with the living farm operation. Twenty-five students participated in the first year of F.R.E.S.H. activities.<sup>80</sup> Hulick recalled that F.R.E.S.H. "was a fine program" and that the young volunteers helped out with various projects around the park, especially in working with the goats.<sup>81</sup> The F.R.E.S.H. students were joined by other youths who found the park an interesting learning and social outlet. One group of these young volunteers was called the Trailblazers, remembered Dan Lyons. They cleared the trails and did "some housekeeping around the park." The Friends gave them t-shirts donated by the local Lion's Club.<sup>82</sup>

The park continued to sponsor the Children's Folk Festival, which drew community members to the site. In this collaboration, the park partnered with area schools to encourage students to read Sandburg's work and appreciate poetry. The Festival was held in April and May and featured young students reading and performing their own work. The students came from elementary schools in the Hendersonville area to the park and performed for their families and the community.<sup>83</sup> This event proved to be an excellent opportunity to connect the schools and community with the park's mission.

In 1990, the park participated in its first "March for Parks" event. Hulick helped to create a regional

- 80 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1993.
- 81 Hulick, interview.
- 82 Lyons, interview.
- 83 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1993.



**Figure 8.18** Superintendent Ken Hulick visits with a volunteer in preparation for the March for Parks event held to show support for local, state, and national parks. The march was held for the first time in 1990. Even the animals participated. March 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

event that provided an opportunity for the staff and Friends of Connemara to join with others interested in supporting public parks. In addition to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the event was sponsored by the National Parks and Conservation Association, City Recreation and Parks, Henderson County Parks and Recreation, and the State Educational Forest. Hulick reported that "the three separate 'marches' both symbolically and in reality tied all of our park units together," including city, county, state, and national park networks. The park continued its participation in this program the following year.<sup>84</sup>



**Figure 8.19** This 1990 photo shows staff, volunteers, and local participants as they march in support of parks and the important role such facilities play in the communities they serve. March 1990 (CARL Park Archive).

For the 1991 Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival, park staff, the Friends of Connemara, and park retirees worked with arts, media, and business representatives in the region to plan the activities. The special planning activities were done in part because the Music Festival was being held in connection with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Park Service and the Henderson County Jubilee Arts Festival. All of the partnering organizations worked together to develop and promote the events at a regional level.<sup>85</sup> The Flat Rock postmaster created a special Sandburg/National Park Service postmark for the occasion and set up a mobile postal station at the park. Throughout the afternoon, the park offered ranger programs as well as performances at the Amphitheater, including Louise Bailey talking about "Flat Rock History and Tales," Laura Boosinger performing folk music, and

Superintendent Hulick sharing the history of the Park Service.<sup>86</sup>

Hulick recalled one program that energized his park volunteers to take their skills to other parks in the region. "I had a class in chainsaw that I used to teach for a variety of purposes in our park, and we used it as a way to get more volunteers working on our trail crew," he remembered. The class taught "how to do trail maintenance, how to work with our maintenance crews." Participants then used their knowledge and skills to work on the Appalachian Trail and other parks in the region. "So again, it was a cooperative thing using volunteers that worked both inside the park and outside."<sup>87</sup>

Visitors of all ages often first heard about the park and developed an interest in what it had to offer through one of the outreach programs, from historic preservation workshops, to festivals recognizing regional music traditions, educational activities, and special tours for international guests.<sup>88</sup> Another important benefit of the outreach was an increase in the kinds of support the park received. At a time when budgets were stretched and funding was limited, organizations such as Henderson County Travel and Tourism, North Carolina Arts Council, National Parks and Conservation Association, and institutions of higher education donated funds and services in support of park activities. With the donated hours from the Friends and volunteers and the grants and in-kind donations, the park enjoyed support even in challenging times. In 1990, Hulick valued the savings to the park through donations, volunteer hours, and in-kind contributions at \$55,900.<sup>89</sup>

## Collaborating with State and National Partners

The park engaged in cooperative planning with statewide institutions to deliver special programs in the region. Carl Sandburg Home NHS partnered with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation

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84 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

85 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

86 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, *Connemara Comments*, July 1991, 4015/20, Box 1, Folder 318, CARL Park Archive.

87 Hulick, interview.

88 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989.

89 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

Office in planning activities for the 1990 Historic Preservation Week. This collaboration included a program titled "Get a Taste for History" involving local restaurants and bed and breakfast facilities.<sup>90</sup> The relationships with state institutions continued to grow over the following years. In 1992, Hulick reported that he met "several times with the Western Office of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History (SHPO office) on a variety of topics."<sup>91</sup>

In 1993, the North Carolina Division of Archives and History collaborated with the National Park Service, Friends of Connemara, the Johnson Farm Committee, and Biltmore Estate to plan and implement a seminar on preservation. The one-day event for regional professionals and interested participants focused on how to preserve objects, heirlooms, photographs, and documents. The seminar reflected a new direction for the park staff and volunteers. After 17 years of work, they had recently completed almost all of the cataloging for the park's over 217,000 objects.<sup>92</sup> The May preservation seminar launched a new initiative to encourage Friends, volunteers, and community members to join "CARL's new CCC:" the "Connemara Conservation Corps." The members of the CCC would learn "new skills under the supervision of skilled specialists" that were charged with conserving one of the largest intact collections received directly from a donor family.<sup>93</sup> The seminar provided training for 90 participants, including several park staff and volunteers.<sup>94</sup>

By co-sponsoring the seminar, Carl Sandburg Home NHS raised regional and community awareness of park needs and programs and once again demonstrated that park staff members were knowledgeable professionals. The partnership with the Biltmore was new and important in building relationships in the region. As Hulick reflected, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was "kind of small potatoes compared to them [the Biltmore] but we did have some capabilities that we could trade them and establish a cooperative relationship with trying to get to know the professionals in our field."

The park had "things to offer them and they had things to offer us."<sup>95</sup>

Hulick recognized the importance of keeping government leaders informed about what was going on at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS. He met often with James McClure Clarke, U.S. congressman for the Hendersonville area, to bring him up-to-date about issues affecting the park. In 1990, the Friends of Connemara hosted a reception for Clarke at the Main House, inviting volunteers, former Congressman Roy Taylor, and leaders from the community. United States senators were included in the briefings as well. Hulick traveled to Raleigh to meet with the staffs of U.S. Senators Jesse Helms and Terry Sanford in an effort to share information about the importance and impact of the park. He loaned each office a print of the Edward Steichen photograph of Carl and Lilian Sandburg for public display and told them "come on out when you get a chance." Hulick commented, "We always invited them to different events that we had, and I think they used to come!"<sup>96</sup>

Hulick recalled that the park even extended its reach to national organizations. "We were involved in the ranger association, and that we did nationwide." The park also had relationships with the National Association for Search and Rescue and natural resource management associations. Hulick himself helped with training for the National Wildfire Coordinating Crew and served on the team that certified training classes for the federal government. "I brought some of that work back to the park. That was how I approached it."<sup>97</sup>

## National Park Service and Eastern National

Carl Sandburg Home NHS expanded its collaborations with National Park Service units as well. During the Davis years, the park was so busy trying to get the park established that most staff members focused on their work at the park. Warren Weber recalls Superintendent Davis' focus was "more right here on the site."<sup>98</sup> Hulick believed

90 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

91 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.

92 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1991.

93 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1993; Thoman, interview, 2011.

94 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 1993.

95 Hulick, interview.

96 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

97 Hulick, interview.

98 Weber, interview, 2011.



that it was important to introduce CARL staff to other parks, and now his staff could also return the favor to help others in the Park Service. (See Chapter Seven)

CARL was as generous as it could be in sharing staff and expertise on details with other parks. In addition to working with natural resources and administration, park staff assisted other NPS units through offering training and technical assistance in areas such as historic preservation, cataloging objects, and electrical rehabilitation. Due to their knowledge and skills in cataloging one of the Southeast Region's largest collections, Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff members were in demand by other parks and NPS offices. Curator Judy Hellmich-Bryant developed a national reputation for her expertise in the use of the Automated National Catalog System and often worked with other parks to upgrade employee skills and curatorial programs. Superintendent Hulick acted as interim Superintendent at the Virgin Islands National Park for a four-month period, developed and taught a course on fire management for NPS managers, and twice coordinated fire management courses for the Southeast Region.<sup>99</sup> The Southeast Regional Office continually called on the park to assist in diverse ways appropriate to staff expertise and skill levels.

The Eastern National Parks and Monument Association was another important part of the interpretive outreach efforts for the park. The "cooperating association" worked with the park to provide publications about Sandburg that visitors would find informative and was instrumental in keeping Sandburg publications in print at times when other publishers might not have a market for his work. In 1992, Eastern National added several new educational materials to the bookstore, including the new videodiscs produced in association with Harpers Ferry Center and the Southeast Regional Office, Kathleen Triggs Byrne's book titled *Paula Sandburg's Chikaming Goat Herd*, and new postcards. Visitors to the park responded to these materials and others available through Eastern National bookstore, spending \$105,000 during the year. This was an average of almost \$2.00 per visitor, representing "considerable educational impact" on visitors. The park received

the Charles Marshall Award for organizational cooperation, given in recognition of "excellent growth, close management, development of new sales items, and involvement in special events" during the collaboration.<sup>100</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its establishment on October 17, 1993. There was much celebration as the community joined in recognition of the success of the park and the role it played in the National Park Service and in the Hendersonville area. The event revealed the many ways in which the park had built bridges with the community and broader region. The celebration included a postal station set up to sell and cancel a "special commemorative postal cache of Sandburg stamps."<sup>101</sup> Attendees could also meet Chuck Hamston, an Asheville artist who designed a new poster featuring Sandburg. The posters could be purchased on-site at the Eastern National bookstore and autographed by the artist. A highlight of the day was the presentation by Kathleen Triggs Byrne about her research and book. Triggs Byrne had come to the park as a VIP in 1983 to work with Mrs. Sandburg's goat records and turned that research into an MA thesis at the University of Oklahoma. Now, she worked at the Harpers Ferry Center of the National Park Service. A light reception followed her presentation. Cooperating partner Eastern National published the book and it was available for purchase by interested visitors who could then have it autographed.<sup>102</sup>

Hulick described his decision to work with volunteers in the following way: "Well, I think it was almost overwhelming in terms of the quality of the programs we gave was so much improved because of the volunteers. And, also, it didn't cost as much, so we could do more interpretation with less money. Now, there is the old argument that volunteers are taking away paid jobs. Well, we didn't feel that was the case, because we did as much as we could with our paid staff and if we wanted to do more we had to do it with volunteers. There was no other option. We weren't going to get big increases in the budget and we knew that. . .

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99 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1989;  
Superintendent's Annual Report, 1990.

100 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1992.

101 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 1993.

102 Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 1993.



**Figures 8.20** Kathleen Triggs Byrne spent several years working at CARL. During her time at the park, she completed a Master's degree focused on Lilian Sandburg's papers pertaining to the goat herd at Connemara. In these 1993 photos, she signs copies of her book and talks to visitors about her research. October 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

Why did I do it that way? I guess just to get more done."<sup>103</sup>

In August of 1993, Superintendent Hulick was promoted to the National Park Service Office of International Affairs and was transferred to his new assignment.<sup>104</sup> His superintendency at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site came during a transitional point in the park's development as it moved from the founding years toward the challenge of establishing an identity within the National Park Service and the communities it serves. Hulick's legacy of "total public involvement" with the park was a testament to the many ways in which national parks interact with their communities. Collaborations with volunteers, civic leaders, and community organizations provided opportunities for expanded interpretive services, increased public presentations, more visibility for the park, and a myriad of ways to donate money, time, and services to securing the park's future.

<sup>103</sup> Hulick, interview.

<sup>104</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.





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# CHAPTER 9

## Leading with Change in Mind, 1994-2008

Superintendent Connie Hudson Backlund entered service at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS) in March 1994.<sup>1</sup> Backlund assumed this superintendency during a time of change within the National Park Service (NPS), and she ushered the park into a new phase of development. She was the longest serving superintendent at the Carl Sandburg Home NHS in its forty-plus year history, serving for 18 years until she retired from the NPS in October 2012.

Superintendent Backlund continued stewardship of the park's resources, with a greater emphasis on natural resources than the park had experienced in previous years. Under her tenure, the park would complete the original Master Plan, develop and begin to implement a new *General Management Plan* to help guide its future, and shepherd a movement to remove modern intrusions from the park's core historic area. The new vision would expand the park boundaries and develop more interpretive opportunities. The development of new curriculum-based education programs which Backlund promoted led to a visit by First Lady Laura Bush in her role as honorary chairperson of the National Park Foundation.

To help implement this new vision of the park, Backlund increased the focus on partnerships with the community and region as well as within the National Park Service. Backlund spent significant time and effort on service-wide projects for the National Park System and she encouraged her staff to share their expertise with colleagues at other parks. This attitude and accessibility combined to make Carl Sandburg Home NHS a valued resource within the Southeast Region and beyond. In reflecting upon the park's interactions with its diverse stakeholders in the community and beyond, Backlund posited that these partnerships "form

foundations for ensuring that the park remains a vital part of the Hendersonville community, the region, and the state."<sup>2</sup>

### A New Park Superintendent and New Challenges

Backlund began her career as a middle school science teacher, with a background in biology. She started working with the Park Service in 1974 in seasonal positions as an interpreter and environmental educational specialist at Shenandoah and Mt. Rainer National Parks, and then worked during the winters at Everglades National Park. She accepted her first full-time ranger position at Mammoth Cave National Park in 1979, where her job included resources management and law enforcement. Backlund moved on to work in interpretation at Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Wright Brothers National Memorial, and it was here that she "began to experience more in-depth cultural resources." In 1988, she accepted a coordinator position at the Mather Training Center in Harpers Ferry in West Virginia. The position, which included training and instructional responsibilities, allowed Backlund to put her education background "to good use." While working at the Mather Center, Backlund served as interim superintendent for several months and found that she liked the "new thought processes." When the position for a superintendent at Carl Sandburg Home NHS came open, she decided that it was a next logical step for her career and applied. Backlund had visited the park years earlier and found the site to be "a wonderful park."<sup>3</sup>

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2 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

3 Connie Hudson Backlund, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, March 29, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.

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1 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.



**Figure 9.1** To date, Connie Backlund is the park's longest-serving superintendent. Superintendent Backlund entered duty at CARL in March 1994 and retired in 2012. (CARL Park Archive).

When Superintendent Backlund assumed the reigns at the park, the site had been open for twenty years. During that time, previous superintendents had laid the foundation for the park and shepherded it along. There were planning documents in place, successful programs underway, and positive relationships with the community and area organizations. At the same time, there was much work to be done. Hendersonville and Flat Rock were continuing to evolve from rural towns to communities for affluent retirees, and the park was feeling the impact of those changes. The incoming superintendent would prepare the park for new opportunities and NPS mandates, setting the agenda for the twenty-first century.

Backlund assumed leadership at a time when the park faced both internal and external challenges. Internally, park resources were in constant need of funds for maintenance, restoration, and upgrades. Longtime staff members were beginning to consider retirement. The park lacked an adequate Headquarters Building and was just beginning to develop sufficient storage space for

its large museum collection. While the budget grew most years, the ever-increasing demands on that budget meant that the park had to depend more and more on community partnerships to carry out its mission. In 1996, the park endured six weeks of closure due to a four-week long federal government shutdown caused by a budget stalemate and an ice storm that required two weeks of clean up.<sup>4</sup>

Externally, the park faced NPS mandates for more scientific management practices driven by data collection about park resources, visitor experiences, and community involvement. The changing community began focusing on planning, zoning, and ordinances developed to guide area growth. The park had to maneuver through the local issues while fulfilling the NPS mandates in order to do its own planning and expansion to accommodate visitors and preserve resources.

Backlund called on her management team and staff to help meet these challenges and set a new agenda for the park. In addition to spearheading major projects at the park, leaders were asked to assist in determining new directions for many important functions. The park underwent reorganization of personnel functions and expanded its efforts in the areas of natural resources, educational programming, and volunteer fundraising. During the 1990s, the park “entered the computer age” when park operations were converted to electronic formats, computers were networked, and division heads received email accounts.<sup>5</sup> Developing new directions for the park involved internal coordination and planning with staff as well as extensive public relations efforts and working with a myriad of elected officials and community leaders.

Superintendent Backlund's management philosophy was to operate the park within a local, regional, and national context. She believed in close adherence to NPS procedures, scrutiny of all areas of operation, and in leading by example. Described by her administrative officer, Ann Staley Vaughan, as “meticulous and a planner” in her management of the park, Backlund developed a team approach to addressing challenges and

<sup>4</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Vaughan, interview; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998, 1996.

moving the park forward so that future generations would know Sandburg's work and enjoy visiting the park named for him.<sup>6</sup> One long-time volunteer described her as a "super superintendent" who was "influential in the community" through her outreach efforts—a leader "overseeing everything that takes place" at the park.<sup>7</sup>

Overseeing everything at Carl Sandburg Home NHS might have been a daunting task for someone with less experience than Superintendent Backlund, but she knew from the start that her first park was a "jewel." She believed that "the park has such exceptional integrity . . . It came right from the family with him [Sandburg] passing away in 1967 and then becoming a national park in 1968. That is unprecedented, just phenomenal in the world of the National Park System, that quick." Often there are "in-between owners" who make changes to the site and the integrity suffers. "So, I think the area's exceptional integrity is something that certainly captured me right away." Upon arrival, Backlund felt a strong sense of responsibility in maintaining the integrity and caring for the park. Carl Sandburg Home NHS "has everything for a small park. It has a wonderful historic home. It has an engaging barnyard. It has trails. It has a pastoral setting. You feel you can kind of step back in time, and yet it's not too big." She believes that the site provides an enjoyable national park experience in a beautiful setting. "It is something most visitors can enjoy in a day."<sup>8</sup>

## Park Planning and Management

Being a successful and effective superintendent involves developing creative management approaches and planning skills. Park planning documents are used as living, dynamic documents in guiding decisions and actions in the management of the site. At the time when Superintendent Backlund began work at the park, the NPS leadership guidelines were beginning to emphasize a more scientific, data-driven approach to park management, raising responsibilities to a new level and making formal planning an integral part of all aspects of park decision-making. Park leadership was charged with knowing all about the resources on-site and within the community and

with understanding their park in the context of local, state, and national environs.

Backlund embraced planning as an important activity for the staff when she came to the park. Vaughan recalls that when Backlund arrived, "Things just really seemed to move in implementing plans, the different plans for the park."<sup>9</sup> Planning for Backlund's first year, 1994-95, focused on operations, park interpretation, museum security, fire protection, and resource management.<sup>10</sup> Backlund organized several internal audit teams to evaluate the management systems at the park. She gave employees the opportunity to work with staff from across the park and to get to know better the areas "other than their assigned divisions."<sup>11</sup> This was an important activity designed to give the staff experience in thinking about the park operations as a whole, rather than just discrete units functioning in one specific area. For example, the Library Committee worked to "bring the park's collection into conformance with the NPS standard."<sup>12</sup> Another team, composed of staff and volunteers, considered special events and their impact on the park core historic areas, making suggestions to improve the events and to lessen the intrusions into the park.<sup>13</sup>

The Master Plan (1971) and Development Concept Plan (1980) for Carl Sandburg Home NHS guided the overall growth of the park and its infrastructure for more than three decades. These two planning documents paid special attention to ridding the park of temporary structures and locating administrative and park operations activity outside the historic core area of the park. Backlund explained that the traffic within the historic core area was worrisome. "I began to notice how we would always be driving in through our visitors as we drove into our little headquarters building in the Farm Manager's House. You know, we would drive past visitors at the barnyard and we would park up by the little Farm Manager's House and I was just sensitive to how we moved through our visiting public with kind of a modern day injection of automobiles as we attended to the business of the park."<sup>14</sup> Backlund and her staff soon took

6 Vaughan, interview.

7 Lyons, interview.

8 Backlund, interview.

9 Vaughan, interview.

10 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.

11 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.

12 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.

13 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

14 Backlund, interview.



action to better secure the historic areas of the park.

The NPS usually sent a regional “operations evaluation team” to a park whenever there was a change in superintendents. Superintendent Backlund saw this visit from the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) team in 1994 as “one of the most important things that happened” early in her new position. The team, comprised of senior-level SERO staff and a park superintendent, spent about three days at Carl Sandburg Home NHS evaluating all aspects of park operations and suggesting ways to improve procedures. The SERO team gave the park a multi-year vision for the site with an “overarching goal” of maintaining the integrity of its core historic area.<sup>15</sup>

The evaluation team “set a clear direction for several park projects which would take approximately three years to complete.” The incentive for the projects was “the need to remove the trailer serving as the park residence, yet maintain a residence for the on-site presence.” The projects included creating a new headquarters for the park through major rehabilitation of an existing maintenance shed, renovating the Farm Manager’s House that served as park headquarters so that it could become the park residence facility, and removing the old house trailer residence. The plan allowed the park “to remove a significant amount of employee and business traffic from the one-way service road traveling into the core historic area.”<sup>16</sup>

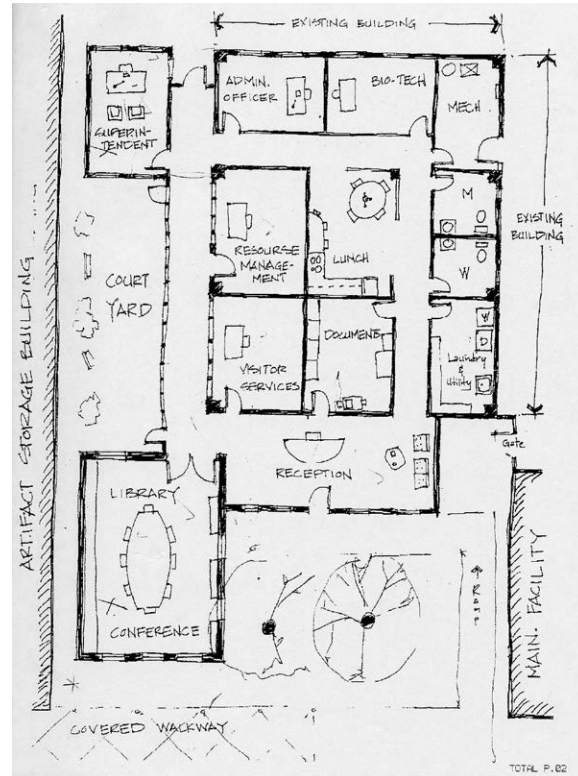
Backlund welcomed the plan set forth by the visiting NPS team. She looked forward to reclaiming and better maintaining the park’s core historic area.<sup>17</sup>

## Completing the Park Infrastructure

The recommendations by the Operations Evaluation Team supported those contained in the Master Plan and Development Concept Plan (DCP). The DCP suggested removing management services, including residential, administrative, and maintenance functions, from the historic core of

the park and clustering the facilities, together with a staff parking lot, in a wooded area at the back park entrance off Little River Road. Further, the DCP proposed that the park connect with the public sewage treatment plant, adding that this option should be available in about ten years.<sup>18</sup> Several of these goals would be reached by 1997, in the first few years of Backlund’s tenure.<sup>19</sup>

During the Operations Evaluation, Southeast Regional Deputy Director Jack Ogle told Backlund, “I think I can get you the funding to build a



**Figure 9.2** The park staff completed most of the work on the Headquarters, and staff moved into the building in 1996. This is one of the early floorplans for the building. (CARL Park Archive).

headquarters building,” and he did. The NPS provided \$200,000 over a two-year period, FY 1994 and FY 1995, to create the new Headquarters Building, resulting “in completion of all the rehabilitation work, parking lot, landscaping, and purchasing some interior furnishings.”<sup>20</sup> The park’s maintenance staff completed most of the work to transform a “small existing structure” into a 3,000-square-foot headquarters office.<sup>21</sup> The building was designed by the SERO Historic

15 Backlund, interview.

16 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95.

17 Backlund, interview.

18 Development Concept Plan, 1980, 12-18.

19 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

20 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

21 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95.

Architecture Division and the bulk of the work was done by CARL's maintenance staff, except for a few small contracts such as the stone work, sidewalk pavers, roofing, finishing the dry wall, installing carpet, and cabinet work. Backlund described the building as "a beautiful, functional, and inviting facility which is designed to reflect contemporary architecture in Flat Rock. The granite rock work is the tie to historic Flat Rock." The staff moved into the building in January 1996.<sup>22</sup>

The park hosted a drop-in open house to introduce the community to the new Headquarters Building in April 1996, as part of National Park Week activities. The weeklong event attracted over 100 visitors. Locating the building away from the historic core of the park decreased "the number of cars driving into the core historic district," in view of "visitors and school children in the barn area."<sup>23</sup> Now, Backlund explained, "Volunteers could park somewhat close but not into the core. Business and business activities and meetings and employees here would only come into the park just a short distance. So it was such an important way to be more respectful of the park and not to impact the park as much with what we are doing."<sup>24</sup>

Administrative Officer Ann Staley Vaughan recalled both benefits and challenges of the new facility. On the one hand, the park had "more centralization" and that was "more conducive to the administrative process. It was just more professional." The new Headquarters Building had a reception area that had been lacking in the Farm Manager's House, so visitors would not interrupt the staff as they came in. On the other hand, Vaughan reflected, "It separated management from the working part of the park, so that it made it difficult for rangers to get to administrative functions." Park staff spent more time walking back and forth between the "core area" and the offices. Still, she stated, "It was a beautiful headquarters office and we were so pleased to get it."<sup>25</sup>

Once the new Headquarters Building was complete, the maintenance staff could turn its attention to the renovation of the Farm Manager's House, which had previously housed the administrative offices. In 1996, the park revised

the Master Plan to convert the Farm Manager's House to a park residence for on-site staff and Vaughan worked with Backlund to prepare the park's Housing Management Plan to renovate the Farm Manager's House for that purpose.<sup>26</sup> Now, visiting, temporary, and permanent employees transitioning to the park would have a place to stay as needed. In 1997, the park completed the minor repairs necessary to update the Farm Manager's House and make it more comfortable for residents. Staff also removed the non-historic walkway and old headquarters parking lot.<sup>27</sup> After renovations of the Farm Manager's House, the park sold and removed the house trailer that had served as the old park residence. Special funding was provided so that the park could have the trailer's fuel oil tank removed to protect the environment.<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 9.3** NPS personnel often take advantage of park residences as they transition from one assignment to the next. This photo shows the CARL house trailer residence used by rangers and guests until the late 1990s. Ca. 1996 (CARL Park Archive).

The park had just added a museum collections facility to the new administrative cluster immediately prior to building the headquarters. The maintenance staff assembled the 4,000-square-foot Museum Preservation Center and installed heating and air conditioning, plumbing, electrical amenities, wet fire suppression and alarm systems in 1994-95.<sup>29</sup> (See Chapter Eleven) The Headquarters Building was nestled between the Maintenance Facility and the newly built Museum Preservation Center. This location kept modern development and administrative services clustered together, the goal of the DCP.<sup>30</sup> After the collections were moved out of the Tenant House,

22 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

23 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

24 Backlund, interview.

25 Vaughan, interview.

26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

27 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

28 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

29 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.

30 Weber, interview, 2011.

the park converted that building into the Park Rangers' Office in 1996.<sup>31</sup>

The connection to the county sewer line was one of the last projects to be completed from the Master Plan, and it required considerably more time since this process had to be negotiated with the community. In 1996, the park began collaborating with the Village of Flat Rock and Henderson County to develop a sewer line to serve the community. While the sewer proposal was important to the park and supported by NPS, the county proposed a plan that would take the sewer line right through the Front Lake area of the park. Since NPS policy prohibits granting a right-of-way for such utilities across national park lands if another viable option can be found, the park entered into negotiations with the community to find alternatives.<sup>32</sup>

By 1997, the Village of Flat Rock determined that it would partner with Hendersonville, rather than the county, in trying to build its sewer system. The park's main objectives for the sewer project included rerouting the line outside the park property, planning for sewer service to the park, ensuring that the park was able to connect to the sewer, and maintaining cooperative ties with the Village and Hendersonville during the project planning and implementation. An agreement was reached to locate the sewer lines outside the park boundary and to use a "pump lift station outside the park." The identification of the Bunched Arrowhead, an endangered plant that lived along Memminger Creek, further complicated the project. This discovery brought the sewer project to a "temporary hold" and the park had to return the "cyclic funds for the planning phase of the sewer."<sup>33</sup> The Village designed a new route for the proposed sewer line—away from Memminger Creek.<sup>34</sup>

In 1999, after three years of negotiations with the Village of Flat Rock and Hendersonville, it appeared that the park was well on its way to connecting to the new sewer service. All parties agreed that the only lines that would be in the park would be those needed to serve the park and that the costs would be reasonable for the

NPS. The project was challenging throughout "due to the Village's constantly changing plans, low cost estimates for the lines and a pump lift station inside the park, and lack of straightforward communication." Backlund wrote that the negotiations and contracting moved forward throughout these challenges because "the Sandburg Home and the Village had a good working relationship already in place from other projects which helped to ensure the sewer project would be successfully resolved. However, it required a tremendous amount of oversight with careful, detailed reviews as well as a three-year administrative record of the project."<sup>35</sup>

The park kept the Southeast Regional Office and Congressman Charles Taylor's office informed about the sewer project so that each would be up-to-date in the event that the Village and Hendersonville decided to "move their concerns to a higher level," but Backlund observed that "fortunately, this did not happen." However, fiscal year 2000 became "the most challenging of all" in the sewer project. Although the park, the Village of Flat Rock, and Hendersonville entered into a written contract, disagreement arose concerning environmental compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In her 2000 Annual Report, Backlund stated that the park would not release "any federal funds to aid in the construction of the line outside the park" unless adequate compliance was established. She reported that the line was already in the process of being constructed when the National Park Service requested a key meeting be held with local officials and the State Historic Preservation Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corp of Engineers, and the Southeast Regional Office of the Solicitor. While the NPS "utility contract was lacking in some respects," she wrote, "the environmental and compliance planning, as well as necessary Army Corp of Engineer Permits, were definitely needed and a plan of action was agreed to by all agencies and governments."<sup>36</sup>

Backlund recorded that although there were plenty of challenges, 2000 was a year that "served the park well in continuing to shape the 1996 Village sewer proposal into a better fit for the park. Many Village

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31 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

32 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

33 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

34 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

35 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

36 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.



residents commented on their appreciation of the park's insistence that applicable laws be followed.

The Village acknowledged in their quarterly newsletter to all residents that some proper compliance/planning and permits had not been conducted or obtained but they were now being addressed.<sup>37</sup>

The Environmental Assessment was completed in fall 2000 and the Regional Office approved a Finding of No Significant Impact.<sup>38</sup> Patience on the part of the park paid off in that the county relocated the "environmentally questionable pump lift station" further from the park to a location that better served the community. In addition, the number of manholes in the line through the park was reduced from thirteen to a number that would not adversely impact the park's cultural landscape.<sup>39</sup>

In 2001, as the pump lift station was under construction, another delay to obtain a hook up by the natural gas provider occurred. However, the station was completed and accepted in December 2001 and turned over to the City of Hendersonville as part of its wastewater system.<sup>40</sup> The sewer project was completed in 2002, with the final NPS payment made to the Village in March. Backlund reported that the "park celebrated this accomplishment in May with a noon-time potluck hosted in the maintenance area. It was a festive occasion with a sewer song and selected Sandburg sewer-related poems to compliment the wonderful food."<sup>41</sup>

## General Management Plan and Boundary Expansion

By 1997, the park had accomplished the majority of the goals included in the Master Plan and the Development Concept Plan and it was time for the planning process to begin again. The park submitted a request and proposal to develop a *General Management Plan* (GMP) designed to guide the park into the coming decades.<sup>42</sup> NPS



**Figure 9.4** When the park completed the work mandated by the original Master Plan in the late 1990s, staff sought authorization to develop a new *General Management Plan*. Members of the planning team gathered at the Visitor Contact Station for a photo as they prepared to start the process of crafting the document that would guide the park's development over the coming decades. Pictured above are (front, left to right) Patty Lockamey, Connie Backlund, Sue Jennings, Jami Hammond, (rear, left to right) Lucy Lawliss, Warren Weber, David Libman, Carol McBryant, and Tim Bemisderfer. Spring 2000 (CARL Park Archive).

determined that the park ranked second in the Southeast Region in the need for a new plan.<sup>43</sup>

In 1999, the Park Service authorized the park to begin the complex process of developing a new GMP for the park.<sup>44</sup> The NPS determined that the plan was necessary due to developing "local trends" influencing the park, which included changing demographics and the ever-increasing population of the Hendersonville and Flat Rock areas, changing land use around the park and the impact of residential growth, increasing recreational use of the park grounds impacting trails and historic areas, and a shortage of parking, which often discouraged visitors.<sup>45</sup>

Backlund skillfully led Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site through what would become two of its most high profile projects of her tenure: the *General Management Plan* and the park boundary expansion. Whereas the original Master Plan and Development Concept Plan focused more on the park infrastructure and reclaiming the historic core of the park, the new GMP would "focus on describing the desired visitor experience and resource condition of various zones of the

37 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

38 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

39 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

40 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

41 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

42 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

43 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

44 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

45 National Park Service, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 2003), 3.

park as a way to guide future park management.”<sup>46</sup> The five “Prescriptive Management Zones” (PMZs) included: the Historic Discovery Zone, or an area designated as “predominately free of non-period of significance intrusions;” Historic Interaction Zone, an area that has “a high degree of historic integrity” and provides “provisions for visitor education and resource interpretation;” Visitor Services Zone, “areas reserved for visitor service infrastructure;” Park Services Zone, “areas reserved for park administration and maintenance activities;” and Amphitheater Relocation Zone, “three preferred areas where the existing Amphitheater could be relocated.”<sup>47</sup> The five PMZs were “overlaid on the park in varying arrangements and locations to best represent the particular intent or focus of each management alternative.”<sup>48</sup>

At the beginning of the planning process, the park identified several key issues as having to reach “appropriate resolution” in order for the GMP to “be successful.” These included “increasing recreational use of the park and specifically increase in walkers and dog walkers, the lack of parking especially during the summer and fall, the need to site several facilities which long ago went in as temporary and have remained such as the trailer restroom and the Amphitheater, one primary



**Figure 9.5** The park finally removed the old trailer restrooms and replaced them with a modern restroom facility in 2008. Here the park’s maintenance crew, who completed the work, stands with other staff to celebrate the completion of the project. June 10, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

visitor entrance/access point versus multiple visitor access points, and adjoining boundary and viewshed issues.”<sup>49</sup>

Public input and support for the GMP were critical to the success of the overall planning process. The Park Service expected that the plan would be developed with extensive input from the community at every step. The park began with public scoping meetings in 1999. Backlund explained that during the scoping process “we just kind of go out broadly and say we are beginning. We don’t have any preconceived ideas, but do you have any thoughts?” The park took the comments from the community and “we kind of bundled them together” to determine which related to the GMP and which fit more with other planning documents. Several topics came up immediately, including the “lack of adequate parking” and then the fact that the park had “such wonderful opportunities to share the Sandburg story in many ways, especially with objects because we have this wonderful collection, but we don’t have any appropriate exhibit space and we certainly could use a visitor’s center.” Another topic that arose was the need to protect the scenic views.<sup>50</sup>

The park also held public “drop-in” meetings as well as partnership meetings with a variety of governmental officials and partner organizations. CARL staff and volunteers welcomed all opportunities to share their visions of the park’s future and hear what the community thought. Approximately six partnership meetings were conducted with average attendance around eight per meeting. The planning team also participated in a “GMP Week on the Road,” in which they shared the proposed ideas with the “Southeast Regional Office, partners, state and federal officials in Raleigh and Asheville, and the Sandburg biographer in Winston-Salem.”<sup>51</sup> Backlund believes that the process of crafting the GMP with extensive community involvement made the final product a true “community vision” for the park.<sup>52</sup>

Community public meetings continued throughout the four-year process. The planning team paid close attention to advertising the meetings and keeping neighbors, the community, and politicians informed about the GMP. This was particularly important due to the fact that the scenarios for future park directions involved expanding the park boundaries.<sup>53</sup> Backlund noted that, during the

46 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

47 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 4.

48 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 3.

49 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

50 Backlund, interview.

51 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

52 Backlund, interview.

53 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

months of “public meetings, only one of the many comments expressed concern about our proposed boundary expansion.”<sup>54</sup>

In 2001, the planning team worked on selecting the preferred alternative scenario for the park. They used “the ‘Choosing by Advantage’ method to select the preferred alternative.”<sup>55</sup> Four possible management alternatives emerged: the Sandburg Center, Paths of Discovery, Connemara Lifestyle, and No Action Alternatives.<sup>56</sup> The NPS chose the Sandburg Center Alternative, in which the park “serves as a national and worldwide focal point for learning about Carl Sandburg.” In this option, the park would provide “more in-depth information” about Sandburg’s life and work through an “extensive internet database and other high technology mass media formats.” Visitors would discover “extraordinary opportunities to participate in interpretive programs.” Additionally, this option included a “high-quality museum space where visitors can gain additional access to information and objects currently housed in the museum preservation facility.” Some historic buildings would be renovated into interpretive space and the park would create a 5,000-square-foot Visitor Center. Site improvements would include additional parking as well as a boundary expansion.<sup>57</sup>

The staff reviewed the first draft of the GMP and the planning team prepared to share it with the Regional Office, congressional offices, and the public.<sup>58</sup> In 2002, the team completed the final draft of the GMP and it was announced in the Federal Register. The planning team, staff, and Friends spent time “presenting programs to area organizations and initiating meetings with park neighbors, individuals, and businesses to ensure that the draft GMP, released in the fall of 2002, was understood and supported by a broad range of diverse community perspectives.”<sup>59</sup>

In 2003, the park concluded its GMP process when it received a Record of Decision signed by the regional director. Superintendent

Backlund reflected that the planning process was “an amazing journey that served the park exceedingly well. It was an inclusive, welcoming process that generated great community interest, participation, and support. At the same time the process enhanced awareness of how the site is managed, in particular our dedication to historic preservation laws and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Discussions such as why additional parking could not be built in the pasture provided the perfect forum for elaborating on the site’s mission and how we, the NPS and all our constituents, accomplish it. Everyone is much wiser as a result and a clear vision has been set for the future.”<sup>60</sup>

Expanding the park boundary and determining how much space was needed for parking and a new Visitor Center proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the GMP process. Since the GMP involved potentially expanding the park boundaries by more than 100 acres, the process of getting community support was not without opposition. However, the superintendent’s careful handling of sensitive issues and involvement of many park supporters brought about compromises that led to the park receiving full support from the community, professional agencies, and organizations necessary to move forward with approval of the GMP and requests for the boundary expansion.

Early in the GMP process, it became apparent to all involved that the park would need in excess of an additional 100 acres to ensure that the preferred alternative, the Sandburg Center, could become a reality. Two initial issues arising immediately centered on whether or not the park would be allowed to expand its boundaries and in which direction. In early 2001, the urgency of the boundary expansion situation began to pick up speed when a 22-acre parcel adjoining the park was listed for sale. The initial asking price was \$600,000; however, the parcel was very important to the park because it served “as the scenic backdrop to the side pasture” when viewed from Little River Road and it seemed imperative that the park find a way to acquire the parcel.<sup>61</sup> While the proposed addition would provide an important scenic backdrop, this acreage also included the globally significant (G-2

54 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

55 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

56 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 4.

57 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 5.

58 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

59 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

60 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

61 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.



classification) plant community known as the low elevation Appalachian granitic dome. Not only were the park and community interested in the acreage for its aesthetic appeal but also for the land conservation opportunity it represented.<sup>62</sup>

The park contacted the Trust for Public Land, the Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy in an attempt to find a group to purchase the land and “hold it short term.” Backlund recalled that park leaders thought this interim step would allow enough time to “complete our GMP, secure Congressional authorization for a new proposed boundary, and obtain funding.” While the plan seemed feasible, none of the conservation organizations would purchase the land primarily because it was not yet in an authorized park boundary approved by Congress.<sup>63</sup> Although everyone thought that the necessary tasks to acquire the land could be accomplished in a matter of months, it actually took seven years from the time the 22 acres came on the market until Congress passed the needed legislation.



**Figure 9.6** Park staff welcome representatives from North Carolina organizations visiting the park. To protect the park's historic viewsheds, Superintendent Backlund led a campaign to secure the purchase of a 22-acre parcel adjacent to the park. In December 2004, the deed for the parcel was transferred from the Conservation Trust for North Carolina to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. December 14, 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

After an October 2001 site visit, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) determined that it wanted to preserve the 22 acres to help facilitate the park expansion and purchased the parcel for \$380,000. They agreed to hold it for two years while the park worked through its plan for the boundary expansion.<sup>64</sup> Later that year, the park held a press conference at the Christmas at Connemara activities to announce the purchase. Representatives from CTNC attended, as did

officials from the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, Historic Flat Rock, Inc., and the National Park Service.<sup>65</sup>



**Figure 9.7** CARL's historic viewsheds remain intact thanks to the efforts of the park, Conservation Trust for North Carolina, and the North Carolina Cultural Resources in securing deed to a neighboring 22-acres. Representatives from the park and organizations tour the area to enjoy the views. December 14, 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

With the CTNC holding the parcel, obtaining congressional approval for the boundary expansion became critical. Superintendent Backlund was providing regular briefings to Congressman Charles Taylor's Asheville office throughout the negotiations with CTNC so that he would know what was happening with the parcel. The park and its partners hoped to secure the Congressman's support for the boundary expansion.<sup>66</sup>



**Figure 9.8** Congressman Charles Taylor (left) receives a tour of the Main House from Jill Hamilton-Anderson in August 2006. Connie Backlund is in the foreground. While supportive of the park, Taylor chose not to seek a boundary expansion. Taylor lost the 2006 election to Heath Shuler. August 8, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

As the negotiations were underway with the CTNC, community meetings and other work progressed on the GMP. In the public meetings, the park explained its Sandburg Center concept for “site preservation” and an expanded “educational program to better interpret the Sandburg legacy.” Attendees expressed interest in “the proposed up

62 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

63 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

64 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001-2002.

65 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

66 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

to 20 acres for added visitor parking and a Visitor Center and the up to 150 acres to protect scenic views, boundaries, and provide added hiking trails.” During the meetings held in late 2001, only one individual expressed reluctance about the expansion.<sup>67</sup>

In December 2001 and into January 2002, Superintendent Backlund contacted the landowners holding the parcels identified as those that the park would like to include in the boundary expansion to protect scenic views. The landowners gave permission for the park to include 110 acres in its proposal, including the 22 acres owned by the CTNC. The park still wanted to retain flexibility to secure up to 20 acres for a new Visitor Center and parking area, and therefore no meetings were held with landowners since no parcels were identified. The park retained its intention to manage one entrance to the park and “prevent pulling traffic further down Little River Road.”<sup>68</sup>

Given the supportive feedback received in public meetings, it appeared that the boundary expansion was a positive direction for the park. In February 2002, Superintendent Backlund made a presentation about the proposed boundary expansion to the Flat Rock Village Council and felt that there were no serious reservations among the Council members. She spoke to each of them individually by phone after the meeting. However, when she talked with the mayor in March, he indicated that he “expected at their meeting the next week a vote NOT to support” the park expansion. When members of the community learned about the Council’s likely decision through a “quickly developed network,” a “large number of residents rallied” in support of the park’s planned expansion. Further, many people assisted the park by talking with the mayor and Council members. Already, it was clear that the meeting would be crowded and the regular Village meeting room would not accommodate everyone who might attend. The Council decided to reschedule the Sandburg discussion for a later date.<sup>69</sup> Backlund believes that the response by area residents “marked a turning point in getting the community involved” in the issue of expanding the park’s boundaries and moving toward a “Sandburg

Center” that would serve visitors in new and exciting ways.<sup>70</sup>

In an unprecedented move, the Village Council held two public meetings to discuss the expansion.<sup>71</sup> For the first meeting in April, they mailed notices to all Village residents. Over 100 people came to the meeting to learn more about the park expansion. The Council held a question and answer session with Superintendent Backlund and allowed time for public comment. Backlund reported that “twenty individuals spoke during the public comment section and all were exceedingly supportive, and many shared wonderful stories of their personal connection to the site.” The Council did not act on the request for support at the meeting and it was primarily due to their concern about the 20 acres proposed for the new Visitor Center and parking lot. The Superintendent indicated that the park would consider 10 acres for the Visitor Center and added parking, rather than the 20 acres as originally proposed.<sup>72</sup>

The Council held the second public meeting in June 2002. The 50 residents attending had positive comments about the expansion. However, the Council would not support the 10-acre expansion for the planned Visitor Center and parking lot. This time, the superintendent stated that she was sure that the park and Council could reach an agreement on the size of the visitor areas in question. Backlund later learned that one of the council members had had property condemned by another national park years before and “in all due respect, he would never support us having more land. So you have to accept people where they are, and we did get a positive Resolution of Support.” Later that summer, the mayor asked Backlund to meet with him and two Council members. The group agreed on a Visitor Center and parking area “consisting of three to five acres located west of Highway 25 [Greenville Highway] and south of Little River Road.” The Council wanted to contain the park’s expansion within a specific quadrant and the park needed the Council’s support if there was any hope for congressional approval of the boundary expansion. “The proposal for up to 110 acres to protect scenic views and boundaries

67 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

68 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

69 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

70 Backlund, interview.

71 Backlund, interview.

72 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

remained unaltered and had not been questioned by the Council,” Backlund noted.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the challenges, Backlund reflected that 2002 was “a very good year. It got so many people involved. You can always find the good in something challenging.” Through the process, “people still know a lot about our long range plan.” The newspaper was “tremendous,” she added, printing many positive editorials. “It turned out to be so significant and so fortuitous that the Council questioned us. It got a lot of people very engaged.” Working with the Council in 2002 helped the park “fine-tune where we moved our acreage for the Visitor Center.” The park agreed to expand “only within our quadrant of the Village,” and the park had not “limited ourselves that way before.” Backlund had hoped for “a little more flexibility, but we said we’d stay in our corner, and we would agree to three to five acres for added parking and a Visitor Center. We gave, we flexed, and we were happy to do so. We wanted very much their support. It was so important.”<sup>74</sup>

Demonstrated support for the expansion was imperative since Congressman Charles Taylor, “was perceived as not being a strong supporter for adding more land to public ownership.” Consequently, the park secured resolutions of support from local governments and community organizations, including the Henderson County Board of Commissioners (unanimously passed), Henderson County Travel and Tourism, the Greater Hendersonville Chamber of Commerce, and the North Carolina National Parks, Parkways and Forests Development Council.<sup>75</sup> While Representative Taylor seemed to be “very supportive” of assisting the park in acquiring additional land for parking and a new Visitor Center, his support for protecting the view was not strong enough for him to introduce the legislation needed to expand the park boundaries.<sup>76</sup>

The lack of congressional approval for the expansion put the park in an awkward situation. The CTNC had agreed to hold the 22-acre parcel for two years in order for the park to do what it needed to do on the NPS end of the agreement.

The community and NPS joined together to support the park’s expansion. The mayor of Flat Rock wrote to Representative Taylor about the parcel, indicating community support of “over 96 percent of all residents” for the approval and purchase. Additionally, Superintendent Backlund, a CTNC representative, members of the Friends of Connemara, and community leaders kept North Carolina U.S. Senators Elizabeth Dole and John Edwards’ staff members informed about the GMP and expansion progress. They made trips within North Carolina and to Washington. Backlund visited with the local staff offices of Senators Dole and Edwards. She traveled to Washington, DC, in March 2003 to brief the congressional delegation staffs and staff members from the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, the Committee on Appropriations, and the North Carolina Governor’s representative in Washington. She recalled, “Certainly every effort possible had been made and all key support was in order to obtain Congressman Taylor’s support for our proposed boundary authorization and the purchase of the 22-acre CTNC parcel.” Congressman Taylor still did not introduce the needed legislation, although he remained interested in the Visitor Center and parking lot additions.<sup>77</sup>

Late in 2003, when it became evident that the park would not be able to purchase the 22-acre parcel “anytime in the near-range future,” mainly due to lack of congressional authorization, Superintendent Backlund started working with CTNC to consider other options. Current and former CNTC leaders came up with the idea that perhaps the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources might be able to purchase the parcel if they applied for funding through the State Natural Heritage Trust Fund. This fund is supported through purchase of vanity license plates and helps the state “buy areas that have significant natural heritage value.” Superintendent Backlund proposed the idea to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and they agreed to apply for the funding. The Natural Heritage Trust Fund Board approved the request and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources purchased the 22-acre parcel from the CTNC in

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73 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002; Backlund, interview.

74 Backlund, interview.

75 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

76 Backlund, interview.

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77 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.





**Figure 9.9** In 2006, North Carolina Secretary of Cultural Resources Libba Evans (right) visits the park to enjoy the views preserved by her organization. CARL staff members Education Specialist Jill Hamilton-Anderson, Chief of Visitor Services Sarah Perschall, and Superintendent Backlund (second from right) introduce her to the historic views enjoyed by the Sandburgs. August 2006 (CARL Park Archive).t

2004. While the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources will hold the land in perpetuity, Backlund states that the park hopes “to enter into a written agreement to steward the land since it adjoins the park.”<sup>78</sup>

The park could now feel confident that the land would be preserved for future generations. “Preserving this 22-acre adjoining parcel which serves as a portion of the scenic backdrop to the park’s pastureland was the first step in implementing the new GMP and a step that occurred due to the tremendous support of the community and park partners such as CTNC and the N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources,” reported Backlund.<sup>79</sup> In December 2004, the park held a Preservation Celebration to recognize all of the partners who worked so hard to ensure the land purchase. “Approximately 80 invited guests, including local government officials, attended the brunch celebrating the land’s long-term preservation.”<sup>80</sup>

In February 2007, Superintendent Backlund and Henderson County Commissioner Chuck McGrady met with Senator Dole’s staff member, Margaret Klutz, for a briefing meeting to talk about the long-range plan and the 22 acres that had just been preserved. As they began the meeting, Klutz brought in the legislation that Dole had “dropped that very day.” The legislation provided the opportunity for the park to make the vision

78 Backlund, interview; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.

79 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.

80 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005.



**Figure 9.10** Senator Elizabeth Dole (center) and former Senator Robert Dole (left) join Ranger Diana Miller for a tour of the Main House. Elizabeth Dole introduced the park’s boundary expansion legislation in the Senate. August 14, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

developed through its new *General Management Plan* a reality and “to expand the park . . . three to five acres for added Visitor Center parking and up to 110 acres for protecting the scenic view.” McGrady commented to Backlund that he had “never had a meeting where someone just gave me the piece of legislation that I was there to support.” Backlund credits Senator Elizabeth Dole with getting the process started, and Senator Richard Burr “joined in with her.”<sup>81</sup> The bill was co-sponsored by Senator Burr and announced on the



**Figure 9.11** Superintendent Backlund (left) welcomed North Carolina U.S. Senator Richard Burr to CARL during a 2007 visit. Burr joined Senator Elizabeth Dole and Congressman Heath Shuler in advocating for a park boundary expansion bill. August 22, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

front page of the Hendersonville newspaper.

Soon afterwards, Representative Heath Shuler, who had defeated incumbent Charles Taylor in the

81 Backlund, interview.

2006 congressional elections, also got involved with the boundary expansion. Shuler supported the park boundary expansion as proposed in the GMP. Superintendent Backlund met with Schuler shortly



**Figure 9.12** North Carolina U.S. Congressman Heath Shuler, who introduced the boundary expansion bill as his first piece of legislation in the House of Representatives, visited the park in 2007. Senators Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr added their support for the expansion with similar legislation in the Senate. Shown in the bookstore are Superintendent Backlund (left), Shuler, and Jill Hamilton-Anderson (right) on the Ground Floor of the Main House. August 29, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

after the election to provide information about the park, the GMP, and the proposed boundary authorization. The Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara also met with Shuler's staff and were very effective in "getting their message across about the expansion and its importance to the community." Representative Schuler introduced a boundary authorization bill in the House as his first piece of legislation.<sup>82</sup> He stated, "The entire North Carolina delegation was in support and formed a great partnership to get the bill passed." Shuler recognized that there was "very strong local support for the expansion." He decided to sponsor the legislation because "Carl Sandburg was a great historical figure who had an enormous impact on the Western Carolina region."<sup>83</sup> The boundary expansion legislation passed the House in 2007 and the Senate in 2008.<sup>84</sup>

President George W. Bush signed the Consolidated Natural Resources Act (Public Law 110-229) into law on May 8, 2008. The bill included a new authorized boundary for the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site of up to 115 additional

acres, including 110 acres for scenic view protection and three to five acres for a Visitor Center and additional visitor parking.<sup>85</sup> The *General Management Plan* process began in 1999 with envisioning what the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site might become in the best of all possible scenarios. Now that the park had an authorized boundary expansion, the leadership and Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara could turn their attention to making the Sandburg Center a reality.

"When we finished our GMP in 2003, that became the vision," Backlund explained. "And it became a community vision and an American public vision of how this park moves forward. It is why this is so beautiful. It is a collective, accepted vision for this part of America's heritage to move forward." The approved boundary expansion five years later was "a wonderful story of how our processes work. We take time," explained Backlund. She believes that having had the "opportunity to work harder . . . served us so well."<sup>86</sup>

## Investing in the Park Staff

When Superintendent Backlund arrived at the park, she found a "really solid foundation to build on," with an experienced management team in place. Administrative Officer Ann Staley Vaughan recalls that Backlund involved the management staff in making decisions, making managing the park more of a "team effort" than under previous superintendents. When Backlund arrived, the management team consisted of the chief of maintenance, a chief of resources management, a chief of visitor services, the administrative officer, and the superintendent.<sup>87</sup> Together, they would set the direction for Carl Sandburg Home NHS over several years.

Backlund sought to ensure opportunities for park staff. In 1994-95, the park began implementing the Servicewide Ranger Careers program. As a result, several staff positions were reclassified, including the positions for chief of visitor services and chief of resource management from GS-9 to GS-11; two ranger positions reclassified to a GS-9 level; and one ranger position promoted to GS-7. The

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82 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006.

83 Heath Shuler, written response to interview questions by Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, September 11, 2012, CARL Park Archive.

84 Connie Hudson Backlund, personal communication with authors, May 1, 2013.

85 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

86 Backlund, interview.

87 Backlund, interview.

park also implemented the NPS Administrative Careers program, resulting in the administrative officer being upgraded to the GS-9 level. In 1997, Superintendent Backlund was promoted from GS-12 to GS-13.<sup>88</sup> In 2001, SERO conducted an official “desk audit” of all positions at the park.

The assessment became the basis of future personnel planning.<sup>89</sup>

Backlund stressed employee training in areas such as diversity and safety. As much as the budget allowed, she encouraged staff members to attend training seminars in their fields and on topics important to the park. She asked divisions to practice creative hiring through various NPS programs for minorities, women, and veterans.<sup>90</sup>

It was a time of challenges, however, with the budget remaining “essentially flat.” As staff received upgrades, it cost more to maintain their salaries and benefits packages. Ann Staley Vaughan explained that when “Congress would pass a pay raise, it wouldn’t authorize additional funds to cover it.” Another challenge occurred when the government moved to a new retirement system and “the benefits packages for the employees just skyrocketed as far as what came out of the park budget. And the park had to absorb that.”<sup>91</sup> One way that the park confronted the budget issues was by not filling some staff positions when someone left. The “slow loss of personnel from retirements, resignations, and less temporary hirings” meant fewer staff to manage park operations. To offset the impact, Backlund reported in 1996 that the staff was “developing partnerships that contribute to protection and interpretation of park resources.” This would remain a primary focus during Backlund’s tenure.<sup>92</sup>

In July of 1997, the personnel function for CARL was moved briefly from the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) to the Blue Ridge Parkway (BLRI). In conjunction with that move, BLRI human resource personnel met with park staff to answer questions about how the parks would coordinate personnel responsibilities for Carl Sandburg Home

NHS.<sup>93</sup> The next year, the NPS Office of Personnel Management (OMP) conducted an audit of the Parkway and, as a result, transferred personnel functions for Carl Sandburg Home NHS back to SERO. The park records do not explain the reasons for these changes.<sup>94</sup>

In 2005, Backlund reported that the park was entering a “transition time with a greater internal park operations focus from the Superintendent’s Office due to the retirement of several long-time members of the park’s management team,” including Chief of Resources Management Warren Weber, Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright, and Administrative Officer Ann Staley Vaughan. Many of the employees who retired between 2004 and 2007 had been at the park for years, and Weber had been on staff from the time the park opened. When three long-time maintenance employees retired in 2006, it was determined that “together their length of service at Carl Sandburg Home totaled more than 75 years.”<sup>95</sup>

The vacated resources management functions were handled by the superintendent, who supervised natural resources, and the chief of visitor services, who supervised cultural resources, as they prepared to reorganize the staff in the time following the retirements of Weber and Wright. Backlund decided to merge the resources management and maintenance positions to create a new chief of maintenance and resources management. Combining these areas into one position made sense given that “most maintenance activities are performed on park resources such as the cultural landscape or historic structures.” The new management team was now composed of the superintendent, chief of visitor services, chief of maintenance and resources management, and administrative officer. The change also resulted in “operational cost savings.” Backlund reported that these savings were very important for the park at a time when the “greatest internal challenge is the lack of adequate operational funding to keep pace with the growing costs of doing business.”<sup>96</sup> In 2008, SERO assisted the park management team in revising the organizational chart to reflect the changes.<sup>97</sup>

88 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

89 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

90 Jill Hamilton-Anderson and Carol McBryant, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, July 21, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

91 Vaughan, interview.

92 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

93 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

94 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

95 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

96 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005.

97 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2008.



During her tenure, Superintendent Backlund added two new staff positions essential to the new directions that the park was pursuing. In 2000, she hired the park's first education program coordinator to assist in developing a more comprehensive education program (See Chapter 12).<sup>98</sup> In 2001, Backlund created a seasonal forestry technician position; the park later established a term position to continue that work. The term position was upgraded to a permanent biological science technician in 2008, the first of its kind in the park and a recognition of the growing emphasis on natural resource management and its role in preserving the cultural landscape (See Chapter 10).

<sup>99</sup>

## Confronting Fiscal Concerns

Superintendent Backlund carefully guided the park through an era of budget challenges. Early in her tenure at the park, in 1996, she described the funding situation as a “constant worry” and predicted that the park would be “insolvent at the end of FY-98.” Budget erosion occurred due to increases in staff salaries, benefits, and cost of living adjustments, as well as the expenses related to increased prices of utilities, supplies, and just about everything else needed to operate a successful national park. Backlund requested a \$125,000 increase in the budget to prevent the insolvency.<sup>100</sup>

During 1997-1999, Superintendent Backlund continued to request increased funding for the park. Several positions remained unfilled and the park still had trouble meeting costs. In 1997, the park “projected a budget for five years.” Backlund knew that some parks within the Appalachian Cluster were in danger of insolvency. Further, she was keenly aware that the “growth” in the park's budget was “one of the smallest in the NPS.” The park's projected budgets indicated that “without increased base funding,” the park might be unable to meet fixed costs as early as FY 1999.<sup>101</sup>

In 1998, SERO conducted a Management Analysis for CARL, and the “review confirmed” park concerns about its fiscal situation. SERO began to consider ways to assist the park.<sup>102</sup> In 1999, Backlund requested a base increase of \$250,000. Ranking at the top of SERO's list of funding requests, the park was approved for an increase of \$125,000, which “placed the Sandburg Home on much firmer financial footing” than it had experienced in several years.<sup>103</sup> In 2001, the park received another base increase of \$125,000.<sup>104</sup> In an era of budget challenges, the park experienced consistent growth in the amount of funding received from NPS sources. (See Table 9-1)

**Table 9-1. CARL NPS Operating Budget, FY 1996-2008.**<sup>105</sup>

Fiscal Year	Total ONPS Budget
1996	\$563,000.00
1997	\$579,000.00
1998	\$607,000.00
1999	\$747,000.00
2000	\$769,000.00
2001	\$914,000.00
2002	\$932,000.00
2003	\$934,000.00
2004	\$929,000.00
2005	\$956,000.00
2006	\$978,000.00
2007	\$1,001,000.00
2008	\$1,037,000.00

Requesting increases to the base funding was done though a computerized request system, recalled Ann Staley Vaughan. “We had to write requests for specific increases. You couldn't just say, ‘We need more money because the park doesn't have enough to operate.’ What we had to do was ask for a park ranger position to run the new Visitor Center, or something like that, where there was a specific need. So those requests were done every year.”<sup>106</sup> Still, Backlund observed that “the cost of doing business” outpaced the increases added to the budget.

<sup>98</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000; Backlund, interview; Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

<sup>99</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008; Backlund, interview.

<sup>100</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

<sup>101</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

<sup>102</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

<sup>103</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

<sup>105</sup> Bethany Serafine, email communication with Ann McCleary, September 12, 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Vaughan, interview.

While fiscal matters were challenging and base budget increases not easily won, Superintendent Backlund also points out that the park received much support in the form of special project funding.<sup>107</sup> Funding requests for projects were now submitted via the Project Management Information System (PMIS) and reviewed by the NPS for funding consideration. Special funding during Backlund's tenure covered costs for such projects as connecting to the Village of Flat Rock sewer system, providing preservation maintenance on historic structures, managing exotic plants, removing hazardous waste materials, and offering special programming for teachers and others.<sup>108</sup>

The growing use of the computer changed the ways in which the park's staff developed requests for special project funding. Rather than the notebooks that Superintendents Davis and Hulick maintained, all requests were now entered into the PMIS program. Each division head at CARL would "review what needed to be done in their area and then develop a project management statement for it," recalled Vaughan. "It was very intense when the call came that we needed to do the PMIS system. We always had a potato chip game when we were actually in the grind of it." She and Warren Weber would "sit together and go through these things, and he would help me input and read them over and that sort of thing because he was more in tune with the system than I was at first. He would go out and buy potato chips and we'd crunch the numbers, and letters, and we'd crunch potato chips."<sup>109</sup>

One way that the park used to generate new income was through a reclassification of the entrance fees into program fees. When Backlund arrived, the park was collecting the "entrance fee" at the Main House, but "it was not truly an entrance fee because we weren't collecting it at the entrance." Still, that was the only place where the park could collect it because that was where "we had staff, but technically it was an entrance fee and it was only from those people really going on the tour." Backlund worked with the regional office to move the fee collecting under a different authority, which allowed the park to keep the money at the park. These program fees could now help fund hiring seasonal interpretive rangers to assist with

house tours. "It's the same authority which allows us to keep the money when we sell the goats in the fall and that money goes right back into helping the farm operation just like the money from the house tour goes back into helping with the house tour operations."<sup>110</sup>

Vaughan reflected on the challenges of obtaining funding during these years. There were "so many different facets to how a park gets its funding, because of the different sources of money that parks are having to rely on now, through foundations and grants and everything. So they have a pocketbook with a lot of compartments in it."<sup>111</sup>

## A Member of the Community

Part of the fiscal health of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS included working in partnership with the community. The *General Management Plan* recommended that the park "continue as an active, responsible, and contributing member of the local community."<sup>112</sup> The GMP encouraged park leadership to consider strategic partnerships as a means to enhance the fiscal situation of the park. The park staff had operated in partnership with local, state, and regional organizations for several years, but those partnerships grew in depth and breadth during the Backlund years. Not only did the park rely on partners for monetary and in-kind donations for special events and projects but also for political support and public relations opportunities. By aligning itself with leaders within its constituent base and the communities it served,

110 Backlund, interview.

111 Vaughan, interview.

112 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 5.



**Figure 9.13** Superintendent Backlund shares memories of working with the Friends organization with retired curator Warren Weber (center) and a park visitor. October 17, 2008. (CARL Park Archive)

107 Backlund, interview.

108 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

109 Vaughan, interview.



**Figure 9.14** Friends members, staff, and park volunteers participate in learning opportunities and social gatherings at various times throughout the year. May 24, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

the park has enjoyed the many fiscal benefits of being a member of the community.

When Backlund arrived at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, she quickly realized the importance of working with the surrounding communities. She called the park “a vital part of the community as indicated by our involvement with a variety of area organizations.” Park staff served on the boards of Historic Flat Rock, Inc., the Village of Flat Rock Planning Board, Henderson County Travel and Tourism, the Environmental and Conservation Organization of Henderson County, the Four Seasons Arts Council, the Audubon Society, the Apple Country Greenways Commission, the Village of Flat Rock Greenways Committee, the Mountain Area Cultural Resources and Emergency Network, and several other groups important to the community.

Backlund explained that park staff members “were dedicated to being an active part of the community both on a local and regional level.” Service on boards led to fundraising opportunities for community historic preservation, conservation activities, and community preparedness in case of disasters.<sup>113</sup> Another important benefit of community service was the continuous visibility of park staff within the Flat Rock and Hendersonville areas. Community residents could interact with the park in many ways, and they learned about the site and its activities each time they worked with a staff member on issues important to the park and its neighbors.

113 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95-1996, 2000-2001.

In 1995, Superintendent Backlund was invited to be a part of “Leadership Henderson,” a six-month governmental training program offered through the University of North Carolina, Asheville. She served on the program advisory board by invitation as well. That same year, when the Flat Rock community voted for incorporation as a village and elected a mayor and six council members, Backlund met with the new mayor to strengthen the park and community relationship. A few months later, she “volunteered to coordinate the village activities associated with the Olympic Torch Relay through Flat Rock” in 1996.<sup>114</sup> In 2006, she was selected as a participant for “Leadership North Carolina.” She welcomed the selection as a means for expanding park “partnership opportunities to a statewide level.”<sup>115</sup>

Community relationships grow over years of contact—in good times and through challenging times. While the park has always enjoyed and nurtured strong community partnerships, budget erosion beginning in the late 1990s made partnerships even more important. The park actively engaged in partnerships that helped to grow, protect, and sustain park resources. Special events and interpretive programming were areas where partnering with community organizations made a substantial difference in the quality of visitors’ experiences at the park.<sup>116</sup> In 2000, the NPS Southeast Region nominated Carl Sandburg Home NHS for the National Partnership Award in Cultural Resources.<sup>117</sup> The park modeled a wide variety of partnerships, from volunteer programs to community, regional, and national collaborations.

## Expanding the Friends and Volunteer Programs

Perhaps few community partnerships have been as essential to Carl Sandburg Home NHS as the one it enjoys with its community volunteers. Volunteers serve the park through both the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program and the Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara, a non-profit organization established in 1988 to assist the park in carrying out its mission. Ann Staley Vaughan recalled that with the budget challenges the park faced, “we

114 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95-1996.

115 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

116 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996, 1998, 2004.

117 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.



relied more on volunteers instead of seasonal staff and permanent staff.”<sup>118</sup>



**Figures 9.15 (above) and 9.16 (below)** The Friends of Connemara and CARL staff celebrate the 30th anniversary of the park in conjunction with the Hendersonville, North Carolina Labor Day Parade. Shown here is Sandburg impersonator volunteer John Frost. Friends and staff participate in the community parade. September 1998 (CARL Park Archive).



During the Backlund years, the Friends group matured from providing extra hands to the park for special events to a true partner in fundraising, advocacy, and public relations. In 1997, the Friends established the Carl Sandburg Home Endowment through the Community Foundation of Henderson County to take fundraising to the next level in support of the park.<sup>119</sup> In 2002, the Friends voted to change the organization’s name from the Friends of Connemara to the Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara. They hoped that the name change would better associate the Friends with “our site and with Carl Sandburg.”<sup>120</sup> Further, the Friends’ Board of Directors grew from four members to fifteen as the organization took on more responsibility in supporting the park.<sup>121</sup>

The Friends name change was suggested as part of a strategic assessment of the organization commissioned by the Village of Flat Rock mayor. The results were delivered to the Village officials, Friends, and park management team in January 2000. The mayor felt that the activities of the Friends group were “very important” to the community. Recognizing that he had received “outstanding cooperation” from the Friends and park staff members, the consultant, Dennis Monaghan, stated that the “contributions of time and fund-raising, by the Friends, and other volunteers are seen as having a number of benefits.” Those included increased programs and services to park visitors, opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the community, and that “the public is seen as having a role, and thus an interest in the well-being and future of the Site.”<sup>122</sup>

Monaghan stated that the interest in the park purely due to the Sandburg presence may be hard to “sustain over time” as fewer people study his work and visit the site to know more about the poet. However, he explained, “The outlook for the park acreage is different. It provides recreational and nature education opportunities of great extent and high quality that will become more valuable over time. Most importantly, this Federal property is a large, strategically placed, asset that provides and will continue to provide a ‘green belt’ for Flat Rock and the area regardless of the pace and direction of the other developments.” Further, the consultant felt that “the visible and active participation of the public in the activities of the Site is very important to demonstrate the interest and support of the community.” The Friends’ fundraising and volunteering at the park “would become more important as more emphasis is put on joint NPS/public cooperation on the operation of the Site—‘a historic park in Flat Rock.’” Finally, he encouraged the community, park, and Friends to enhance public awareness about the importance of the park to the Village. He suggested that through adopting its own organizational strategies in collaboration with the park, the Friends might “add a stronger voice to deliberations on the

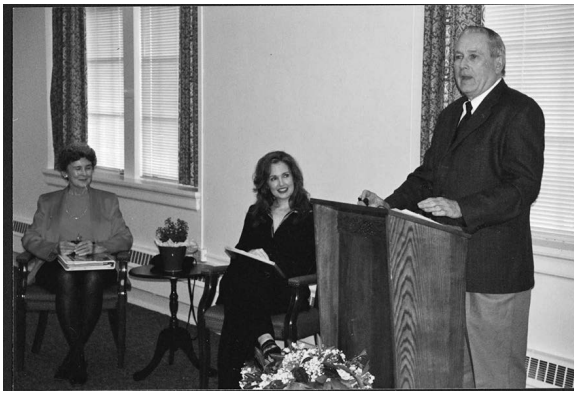
118 Vaughan, interview.

119 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996-1997.

120 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

121 Backlund, interview.

122 Dennis Monaghan, Strategic Assessment of “Friends of Connemara,” Report to Flat Rock Officials, Friends of Connemara, and Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Officials, January 2000, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 9.17** Warren Weber introduces the guests of honor at a special book signing event celebrating the 125th anniversary of Carl Sandburg's birth. The park and Friends organization joined together to sponsor the event featuring authors Penelope Niven and Jennifer Niven. Penelope Niven wrote biographies of Carl Sandburg and his brother-in-law Edward Steichen. May 4, 2003 (CARL Park Archive).

future directions by NPS of the Site with regards to matters in which the Friends are involved.”<sup>123</sup>

One of the ways in which the Friends built the Carl Sandburg Home Endowment was through special fundraising events. For example, in 1997, the group hosted an Evening with Penelope Niven

123 Monaghan, Strategic Assessment of “Friends of Connemara,” 2000.



**Figure 9.18** Dan Lyons, past president and one of the founding members of the Friends of Connemara, received the 1998 National Park Service Southeast Regional Volunteer of the Year Award for his contributions of time and talent to the park. In this photo, Mr. Lyons (center) receives his award from National Park Service Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley (left) and CARL Superintendent Connie Backlund (right). March 27, 1998 (CARL Park Archive).

to present her new biography of Edward Steichen to the Hendersonville community. Proceeds from the event were added to the endowment. In 1998, the Friends received the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award as the best volunteer group in Henderson and Buncombe Counties. The award money also went into the endowment fund. That same year, Daniel Lyons, an active leader in the Friends groups for many years, was chosen as the NPS Southeast Region Volunteer of the Year, due in part for his role in fundraising for the park.<sup>124</sup>

Lyons played a key role in the development of the Friends organization. He served as part of the dedicated core membership that founded and maintained the group, secured the Friends’ status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and held several positions on the Board of Directors, including president.<sup>125</sup> Lyons reflected, “We wanted to keep the Sandburg legend alive. And the only way we could do that was to participate in the activities up at the park and help them out to do all these things . . . So the ability for us to extend the Sandburg legacy, to keep Sandburg alive, that was probably the motivation.”<sup>126</sup>

The Friends sponsored summer theater performances with the Flat Rock Playhouse’s apprentices, the Vagabond School of the Drama.<sup>127</sup> Through community fundraising and the endowment, the Friends funded the annual Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival and the Poetry Festival in 1999.<sup>128</sup> In 2003, the Friends hosted the

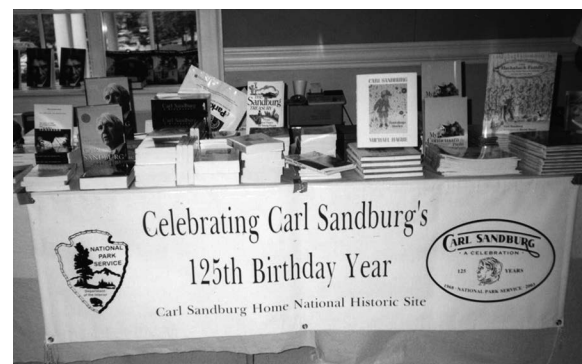
124 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

125 Lyons, interview.

126 Lyons, interview.

127 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

128 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.



**Figure 9.19** The park and Friends organization join together in celebrating the 125th anniversary of Carl Sandburg’s birth by sponsoring a special book signing featuring authors Penelope Niven and Jennifer Niven. May 4, 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



Sandburg Celebration of Books and Authors. Held in collaboration with Barnes & Noble, the book fair attracted 70 authors by 2004, but the proceeds were not enough to justify the volunteer time and effort. The Friends decided to discontinue the event after two years, choosing instead to consider other fundraising options.<sup>129</sup>

129 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003, 2005.



**Figure 9.20** The Hobo Ball provides a chance to develop costumes and contribute to the park. The event, a fundraiser for CARL sponsored by the Friends organization, recognizes Sandburg's time spent riding the rails as a "hobo." In 2006, the first Hobo Ball raised \$25,000 for the park and continues to be one of the most popular events held each year. September 13, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 9.21** When not part of the decorations for the Hobo Ball, this goat sculpture, titled "Miss Connie Mara," welcomes guests entering the CARL Headquarters building. September 13, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

The Friends reported "a grand year" in 2006. Their primary focus was preparing for their first-ever Hobo Ball, held at Kenmure in September. The "Hobo" theme was in recognition of Carl Sandburg's days as a hobo. The event included dinner and both live and silent auctions. The Hobo



**Figure 9.22** The Friends enjoy a special dinner for the Hobo Ball. September 13, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 9.23 (above) and 9.24 (below)** The Hobo Ball Silent Auction gives attendees opportunities to bid on artworks and other items donated in support of the park. September 13, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).





Ball was a sold out evening generously supported by the community and local businesses. The fundraising event netted approximately \$25,000 for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, demonstrating how the Friends group had grown “in their organization, board membership, and fundraising capacity.”<sup>130</sup>

Two other Friends’ activities further demonstrated their growth as an organization during this time. First, in 2004, they met with Paul Bonesteel to discuss his ideas for a Sandburg documentary that would feature the poet’s years at Connemara. The Friends entered into an agreement with Paul Bonesteel Productions to partner in the production of the documentary, released under the title *The Day Carl Sandburg Died*.<sup>131</sup> Secondly, in 2005, the Friends began meetings with Western Carolina University to seek their assistance in developing a proposal for the park’s Writer-in-Residence program. In 2008, after three years of collaborative efforts among park personnel, Friends, and other potential community partners, an Asheville-based poet, Glenis Redmond, contracted to develop a “written plan that would serve as the program guide” for the Writer-in-Residence Program. This collaboration was particularly important because it tied the park and its volunteers to a new arts program—a program that would bring a writer back to the park for more than a single event or brief presentation.<sup>132</sup>

While the Friends organization was established for the purposes of park advocacy and fundraising, the NPS Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program was created to help park staff carry out the day-to-day tasks. It is not easy to separate the activities of these two groups at the park since many of the members belonged to the Friends and also served as volunteers in the VIP program. Those with dual membership wore different hats depending on the tasks to be completed. For example, Friends met with community groups to talk about what was happening at the park and to gather support for special projects. As VIPs, they gave house tours or worked at the Barn with the goats. Friends’ members paid dues, as the Friends group was a membership supported non-profit organization, and might or might not volunteer for activities at

the park. VIP members did not pay dues, as the program was a National Park Service-managed volunteer activity. Instead, they contributed their labor in support of park programming or special projects.

The chief of visitor services managed the Carl Sandburg Home NHS volunteers. The park staff developed a special newsletter for members of the VIP program, to provide information and news pertaining to their work. The Friends of Connemara published *Footnotes*, a newsletter to keep members apprised of volunteer opportunities, events, and news. All volunteers were trained for assignments in the park. This special training covered a myriad of topics ranging from diversity to accessibility awareness to care of the collection. Sessions were formal or informal, depending on park and volunteer needs. The park held almost 100 such sessions to train park volunteers between 2002 and 2008. Park staff and volunteers also took trips to area dairy farms and museums to learn about how other organizations handle their resources and visitor services. The park provided special volunteer packets and training materials. In 2005, park volunteers began wearing a special uniform patch created by NPS. Each year, the



**Figure 9.25** Volunteer Betty Henry enjoys time spent caring for the animals in the barn complex. She works with the goats and interacts with visitors. November 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

130 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

131 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.

132 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005; 2008; Backlund, interview.

park staff held a special appreciation luncheon in a nice local venue to recognize the volunteer contributions to the park. The luncheons, considered by staff and volunteers as special gatherings, continue to draw good attendance.<sup>133</sup>

Volunteer contributions continued to be very important to the visitor experience at Carl Sandburg Home NHS during Backlund's tenure. Volunteers worked behind the scenes taking care of the natural resources, planting flower beds, caring for the goats at the Barn, providing



**Figure 9.26** Through a community effort, led by staff and the Friends of Connemara, the park's Amphitheater was rebuilt. From start to finish the project included donations of time, materials, and creative design. The Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival served as the inaugural event for the new structure. Circa 1998 (CARL Park Archive).

directions and special information, and taking care of the everyday tasks that make a park successful.

Under the supervision of park staff, volunteers also gave house tours, planned and implemented special events, worked with the collection, assisted with public relations, and represented the park to the community. From 1994 to 2008, volunteers contributed well over 130,000 hours in service to the park.

While the number of volunteers varied greatly from year to year, the park averaged over 100 volunteers each year.<sup>134</sup> During that time, the volunteer program received special recognition for its contributions to the park, including the North Carolina Governor's Award for Excellence in 1996.<sup>135</sup> The NPS Southeast Region presented the 2004 George B. Hartzog Outstanding Volunteer Program Award to the park and its volunteers for



**Figure 9.27** NPS Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley discusses activities of the Friends of Connemara during his visit to the park. He attended the annual meeting of the Friends in 1998. March 27, 1998. (CARL Park Archive).

the community partnerships formed in support of the 35th anniversary of the park.<sup>136</sup>

One other important source of volunteers was The F.R.E.S.H. (Flat Rock's Exceptional Sandburg Helpers) Program, which had been open to area youth interested in working at the park since Superintendent Hulick's years (See Chapter Eight). The Henderson County 4-H Clubs and Henderson County Cooperative Extension Service co-sponsored the group. Park staff and volunteers supervised the young people as they helped out "at the Barn or along the park trails."<sup>137</sup> Keeping alive the tradition of Lilian Sandburg's dairy goat herd, the youth volunteers met learning and community service goals while enjoying time spent within a natural and interesting environment. Initiated during the Backlund years to honor Mrs. Sandburg's legacy of showing her goats, the "barn program" offered opportunity for the youths to show the goats at the North Carolina Mountain State Fair each year. Young volunteers competed with each other for the honor of showing one of

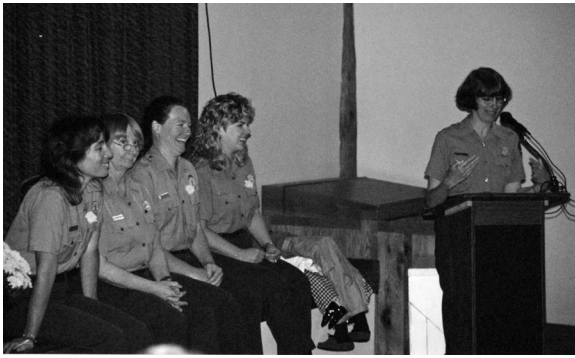
<sup>133</sup> Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1996-2008.

<sup>134</sup> Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1994-2008.

<sup>135</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

<sup>136</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2004.

<sup>137</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.



**Figure 9.28** Superintendent Backlund speaks to guests at the Volunteer Recognition lunch at the Highland Inn in 2000. Other staff members in the stage area thanked the volunteers for their help. Volunteers enjoy time to visit with others at the luncheon. 2000 (CARL Park Archive).

the goats they cared for on a regular basis. Several F.R.E.S.H. volunteers won ribbons at the Fair.<sup>138</sup>

While the volunteers were involved in almost every aspect of the park's delivery of services, during Backlund's tenure the leadership team developed new opportunities for volunteers interested in more challenging roles. For example, the park helped to establish a cadre of education volunteers to assist teachers and staff as part of the new school programs (See Chapter 12). The group included former educators with the special skills and training needed in the park education program.<sup>139</sup> The Sandburg Rovers, a new group of about 30 volunteers, formed in 2001. The volunteers walked the trails in two-hour shifts, assisting park visitors with information and reminding them, when necessary, about the importance of being good park stewards.<sup>140</sup> These new volunteer programs represented the continual expansion of visitor services and interpretation roles for volunteers at Carl Sandburg Home NHS and still provide support for the park today.

Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff members held the park volunteers in high regard, commending their contributions in interpretation and special events and their creative approaches to meeting needs that arose on a regular basis. Connie Backlund attests that "these are people who understand the park." They contributed expertise and time to the park. But additionally, they connected the park with the community. "They are communicators in the community about what's happening in the park and they are sharing things about the park and

what the park is experiencing and what they are doing. That becomes another very important level of helping the community to learn more about the park."<sup>141</sup>

## Engaging Community and Regional Partners

During Backlund's tenure, Carl Sandburg Home NHS expanded its outreach efforts to engage more community partners, building on the strong base of local support developed under Backlund's predecessor, Superintendent Kenneth Hulick.

The park's partnership and public relations efforts with the local media gained more importance. The media covered special events and stories about the park on a regular basis. In 1994 and 1995, local newspapers carried several stories detailing topics important to the park, such as a potential congressional park closure bill and a federal government shutdown.<sup>142</sup> Continuous media coverage helped to get the word out about the *General Management Plan* process from 1999 through 2003, assisting the public in understanding the purposes and management requirements for the national park in their backyard.<sup>143</sup> In 2006, the park gained "exceptional positive attention from all area media, and park press releases were regularly highlighted" by television and radio stations as well as newspapers. That same year, the University of North Carolina station, UNC-TV, spent three days filming the park for a feature on the North Carolina public television program, *Our State*, which first aired in the summer of 2006. Also in 2006, the park sought the assistance of local media "in informing the public of the reasons for removing a nearly 200 year-old tree, a significant landscape feature of the core historic area near the barnyard." The media coverage explained the management decisions and actions through trusted news sources in a way that was positive for the park.<sup>144</sup>

Henderson County Travel and Tourism has been a long-time key partner of Carl Sandburg Home NHS, a relationship first cultivated by Superintendent Hulick. The organization assisted the park in the planning, funding, and staging

138 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006, 2008.

139 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

140 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

141 Backlund, interview.

142 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95.

143 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002-2003.

144 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006.



of special events as well as producing marketing pieces for park events.<sup>145</sup> In 1996, the park “was selected as a ‘Cultural Treasure’ for the ‘Year of the Mountain,’” and the annual Sandburg Folk Music Festival was selected as one of the year’s featured events.”<sup>146</sup> These designations helped publicize the park’s programs and special events throughout the state and region. Backlund credited increased visitor numbers in 2006 to the “exceptional assistance received from Henderson County Travel and Tourism and the *Times-News*. Henderson County Travel and Tourism distributed rack cards with park and event information and the *Times-News* routinely printed press releases of special events and park activities, generating much interest in the site.”<sup>147</sup>

The Flat Rock Playhouse, the State Theatre of North Carolina, has served as an interpretive and facilities partner since the park opened. Each summer, the Flat Rock Playhouse apprentice actors, through contractual arrangement with the park, provided performances of plays such as *The World of Carl Sandburg*, *Rootabaga Stories*, and other Sandburg pieces that have been adapted for the theater. The performances, held at the park Amphitheater, were offered at no charge to visitors. Over the years, funding has been provided by the park’s partnerships with the Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara, Eastern National, local merchants and organizations, and the Playhouse.

An important agreement with the Flat Rock Playhouse gave park visitors access to the Playhouse parking lot when the spaces were not needed for performances, and the agreement is still in place, awaiting the future expansion of the park’s parking lot.<sup>148</sup> Without that consideration, once the park’s lot was full, visitors would have had virtually no place to leave their vehicles other than along Little River Road.

The relationships with Henderson County Sheriff’s Department and the Blue Ridge Parkway Law Enforcement proved very important to the protection of resources and visitor safety at the park. In 1994, the park reported, “Law enforcement activity is a minor function of the overall program . . . with few reportable

incidents occurring during the years.”<sup>149</sup> The park appreciated the “great cooperation with the Henderson County Sheriff and with the Blue Ridge Parkway,” when the park has experienced petty vandalism. Backlund reported, “Local sheriff deputies are very supportive of the park to the extent they are able to help.”<sup>150</sup> And, in 1996, local officers were particularly diligent with “patrols, and on-site presence when it appeared that a satanic cult painted the goats for possible sacrifice.” Fortunately, that did not happen.<sup>151</sup>

While the park is located within a relatively safe environment in a community with which it shares close ties, there were still incidents requiring law enforcement presence. For that reason, Carl Sandburg Home NHS entered into a “cooperative agreement with the Blue Ridge Parkway to provide on-site law enforcement presence. . . .”<sup>152</sup> Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue, located less than ten minutes away provided protection for fire emergencies, and paid and volunteer staff responded to needs arising at the park. Valley Hill Fire Department acted as backup when needed.<sup>153</sup> In 2001, the park “received funds under the rural fire assistance program” and was “able to provide fire-fighting supplies” for the fire departments that respond “to the alarms, do inspections, and provide advice.”<sup>154</sup>

In addition to partnerships that continue from year-to-year, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS benefited from business partners supporting the park in unexpected and much needed ways. For example, in 2002, the park “received over \$3,300 worth of Kodak equipment as part of the National Park Foundation Proud Partner program with Kodak. Hunter Chevrolet painted two Chevy pickup trucks at no cost to the park, and Friends of Mountain History contributed \$600 to special performances of *Mr. Sandburg’s Lincoln* in area high schools.”<sup>155</sup> In 2003, the Flat Rock Merchants Group and many other organizations were very generous to the park during the celebrations marking the 125th anniversary of Carl Sandburg’s birth and the 35th anniversary of the park, when

145 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95.

146 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

147 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

148 Thoman, interview, 2011.

149 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95.

150 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001-2002.

151 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

152 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

153 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

154 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

155 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

“over fifty area businesses provided underwriting costs for events, in-kind services, donations of items, and support for publicity which totaled approximately \$38,000.”<sup>156</sup> With budgets stretched as much as possible at the park, community partners often made all the difference in fulfilling the park’s mission.

The park also partners with Historic Flat Rock, Inc. and park staff members have served on its board. In 1996, the board sought funding grants so that they could afford the contracting costs associated with the updating process for Flat Rock Historic District, already on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>157</sup> In 1998, a consultant conducted an architectural survey in preparation for the re-nomination process for the Flat Rock Historic District. When the first nomination was submitted in the early 1970s, Flat Rock included only one historic district. For the re-nomination, Historic Flat Rock included two districts and several individual entries. Over the intervening years since the original nomination, the Flat Rock area experienced marked change, often due to the growth of subdivisions, so the difference in approach was determined by the consultant and planning committee to be a more effective strategy.<sup>158</sup>

The community partnership work continued across several years. In recognition of those years of collaboration among the “park, village, and Historic Flat Rock, Inc.,” Superintendent Backlund submitted an award nomination in 1999 to the Southeast Regional Office for the National Park Foundation Partnership Award. The nomination, titled “Partners in Planning,” cited the “work accomplished by Historic Flat Rock and the preservation language included in various village ordinances” as reason for the nomination for the “Park Partnership Award in Cultural Resources/ Historic Preservation.”<sup>159</sup> Historic Flat Rock, Inc. also worked with the park and Village on other issues during the Backlund years. The work included securing easements on historic properties and discussions surrounding the development of a community-wide waste management system. Historic Flat Rock, Inc.’s participation in the latter project provided opportunity for them to learn

about the National Historic Preservation Register Section 106 process and “how federally funded or permitted projects interface with properties on the National Register.”<sup>160</sup>

Both the park and community valued conservation of natural resources. At the same time, they appreciated the need to welcome visitors and ensure the quality of their experiences, whether at the park or in the Village. In 1997, the Henderson County government joined with four other area municipalities in requesting help from the NPS Southeast Regional Office’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) division.<sup>161</sup> The area formally established the “Apple Country Greenway Commission” in 2000.<sup>162</sup> In 2001, RTCA covered printing costs for “an informational brochure on greenways and the Commission’s goals.”<sup>163</sup>

As the group worked together on the idea of an area greenway, “the park participated with the Village of Flat Rock Greenway Committee in planning a pedestrian walkway through the village center which accesses the entrance of the park.” This walkway would provide access and cut down on the need for hikers to park vehicles in close proximity to the park. While the Village and the park were supportive of the idea, “the committee was advised to coordinate a plan review with the State Historic Preservation Office.”<sup>164</sup>

For nine years, 1997-2006, the RTCA worked with the park, the Village of Flat Rock Greenway Committee, and the Apple Country Greenway Commission providing consulting services, support, and assistance. In 2006, the Flat Rock Village Greenway was dedicated. Visitors could now walk to the park for their recreational activities. The Greenway represented a “helpful community partnership addressing” the overcrowded parking situation at Carl Sandburg Home NHS.<sup>165</sup>

Partnering with local governments, as in the case of the sewer project and the boundary expansion, proved critical to the park’s success during

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156 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

157 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

158 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

159 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

160 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

161 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

162 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

163 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

164 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

165 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

Backlund's superintendency. The park sought to help the community whenever possible. Backlund served on the first planning board for the newly incorporated Village of Flat Rock, giving the park visibility in providing leadership for the future of the area. As the board was developing zoning ordinances for the area, its local survey indicated "overwhelming support for preservation of Flat Rock's historic character."<sup>166</sup> Backlund was instrumental in helping the Village develop "their four-step visioning process" for use as the board began to work on the zoning ordinances. As she continued to work with the planning board, it was evident that the "preservation of the Village's cultural and natural heritage clearly is an important goal of the community."<sup>167</sup> That goal certainly was in keeping with the mission of the National Park Service and the park.

During the summer of 1998, the Village began adopting zoning ordinances, including sections for "setbacks for cellular towers from the park as well as from National Register sites, and key road corridors." Of particular importance to Carl Sandburg Home NHS was the fact that the Village defined and made public the park's consulting role related to any proposals for towers to be added within seven primary viewsheds. To define the areas important to the viewsheds, the park contracted with North Carolina State University (NCSU). Consultants from the university mapped the viewsheds one mile beyond the park's boundaries. The planning staff at the Blue Ridge Parkway assisted NCSU personnel in the endeavor and the completed maps clearly identified any areas in which the Village had to consult with NPS and allow time for a review and comment period before installing any cellular tower.<sup>168</sup>

The Village adopted the viewshed map as an important tool in cooperative planning and protection processes. Further, the park received assurance of a specified 30-day period during which it would consult with Village officials regarding any telecommunication towers or subdivisions proposed for construction within the seven identified viewsheds. The Village zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance included the consulting period for the NPS and the Flat

Rock Subdivision Ordinance contains language that protects all vegetation in a 35-foot setback off of the park boundary for all new village subdivisions.<sup>169</sup> In 2000, the planning board further developed ordinances by "drafting language to protect vegetation on ridge tops and along riparian and road corridors."<sup>170</sup> The next year, when the Village continued reconsideration of its zoning ordinances, Superintendent Backlund still served on the planning board. The viewshed language and consulting roles in the ordinances remained unchanged.<sup>171</sup>

## Expanding Partnerships within the National Park Service

Superintendent Backlund was very active in her contributions to the National Park Service system. She served on regional and national conference planning committees, participated in service-wide task groups addressing issues of importance such as the Government Performance and Results Act, and coached and mentored new superintendents as well as mid-level managers. She taught in NPS-sponsored programs, served on boards of inquiry, and held leadership positions within the Cumberland Piedmont Network and the Appalachian Cluster. Backlund also acted as an ambassador for the NPS on a daily basis.<sup>172</sup>

Backlund taught and or provided service at parks throughout the system, including Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Parks, DeSoto National Monument, Ocmulgee National Monument, Cape Lookout National Seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and Martin Luther King National Historic Park. In 2007, she served a three-month detail as acting park superintendent at Cape Lookout National Seashore from May through July. In March of that same year, she helped to plan and organize a field trip visit to Carl Sandburg Home NHS by all of the superintendents in the Southeast Region during the SERO Superintendents' Conference held in Asheville.

The visiting group included the Southeast Regional director and the National Park Service director.

166 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

167 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

168 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

169 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

170 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

171 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

172 Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1994-2008.





**Figure 9.29** In 2007, the Southeast Region Superintendents Conference was held in Asheville. During the conference, the superintendents made a field trip to CARL for a tour. Shown in the photo are Superintendent Backlund, CARL Ranger Pat Prywood, NPS Director Mary Bomar, CARL Education Specialist Jill Hamilton-Anderson, and SERO Director Patricia Hooks. March 14, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 9.30** The superintendents depart from a tour of the Main House at Connemara. March 14, 2007.

Backlund remarked that this “was the first time an NPS director had visited the site,” although Director George Hartzog had participated in the park’s Establishment Day in 1972, before it opened (See Chapter Two).<sup>173</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff members provided service to the Southeast Regional Office by performing special details to parks in the region and hosting colleagues on-site for training. In addition, the park participated with regional neighboring parks in the Cumberland Piedmont Network (See Chapter 10), which was established for management of natural resources, and the Appalachian Cluster.

In 1994, when Backlund arrived at the park, the NPS reorganized to become more streamlined in its functioning and more responsive to individual park issues and needs. Backlund served as one of the NPS trainers for this reorganization focused

on uniting “parks and partnership programs into ecosystem and cultural groups called clusters” with the members “expected to maximize support for each other in an inter-dependent fashion.”<sup>174</sup> Carl Sandburg Home NHS was assigned membership in the Appalachian Cluster, consisting of eighteen parks in seven southeastern states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.<sup>175</sup>

Within the Cluster, member parks acted as supportive neighbors in operations issues and provided valuable additional resources. For example, a group of professionals from Appalachian Cluster parks visited CARL in 1995 to assist in planning for visitor services.<sup>176</sup> In subsequent years, the Appalachian System Support Office proved important to several other park planning projects.<sup>177</sup> In particular, the Blue Ridge Parkway provided invaluable assistance in a variety of operational needs from personnel, to law enforcement, engineering, maintenance, and natural resources.<sup>178</sup>

As a member, Carl Sandburg Home NHS has contributed to the Appalachian Cluster by taking active leadership and participatory roles. Backlund served on the first council for the Cluster and chaired committees for natural and cultural resources. In 1996, the NPS asked Carl Sandburg Home NHS to be the Cluster’s lead park in the implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), designed to move parks “from an activity management system to a measurable results management system.”<sup>179</sup>

Backlund took the experience she gained through this leadership role in the Appalachian Cluster to the Southeast Region. In early 1997, she served on an NPS taskforce for the GPRA and helped to coordinate the training of all parks in the Southeast Region.<sup>180</sup> After implementing the GPRA system at Carl Sandburg Home NHS and training other parks on its use, she reported that it “continues

173 Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1994-2008.

174 Appalachian Cluster Management Prospectus, National Park Service, November 1994, 1, CARL Park Archive.

175 Appalachian Cluster Management Prospectus, National Park Service, 1994, 10.

176 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/95.

177 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

178 Backlund, interview.

179 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

180 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

with mixed reviews. As a planning tool to set park goals and annual performance plans (work plans), it falls in line with smart park management. The challenges remain [in] the complexity of the tracking and measurement aspects of GPRA with our budget system based on activities rather than goals.”<sup>181</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS also maintained supportive relationships with individual parks within the Southeast Region. For example, the park enjoyed a close working relationship with the Blue Ridge Parkway. The parks sometimes shared staff in an effort to meet shared goals and common needs, such as law enforcement, controlling exotic plants, and technology networking.

CARL staff members also contributed their expertise to SERO’s specific projects. They helped to develop collections management plans, taught interpretive modules at other parks and conferences, assisted offices in professional associations serving national parks, participated in job fairs, worked with engineers in building assessments, hosted museum training, mentored colleagues from new historic sites, served on Park Asset Management Plan teams, and provided assistance to museums and other sites in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Park staff provided professional assistance to regional sites including the Great Smoky Mountains

National Park, Fort Pulaski National Monument, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the University of Georgia, Cowpens National Battlefield, Ninety Six National Historic Site, and Mammoth Cave National Park.<sup>182</sup>

During her tenure, Superintendent Backlund completed the work mandated by the park’s original Master Plan, directed the development of the *General Management Plan* and began its implementation, secured expansion of the park boundaries, ensured increases in the base operating budget, and reorganized and supported the park staff to ensure efficient operations. She increased the importance of community outreach and involvement in the park and built an array of partnerships throughout the community and region as well as within the National Park Service to ensure the park’s success. Throughout her tenure at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Superintendent Backlund used the formal plans and data generated through special projects to guide park operations.<sup>183</sup> She observed, “We do like our plans. We don’t put them away and lay them aside. We use them . . . and reassess them all the time.”<sup>184</sup>

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181 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

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182 Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1994-2008.

183 Vaughan, interview.

184 Backlund, interview.





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# Chapter 10

## Cultural and Natural Resource Management, 1994-2008

When Connie Backlund began work as the superintendent at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS), the park had made substantial progress in preserving its cultural resources. In the 20 years since the park's opening, the historic structures had been largely preserved and rehabilitated, a *Cultural Landscape Report* had been produced to provide guidance for the management of these resources, and the park had begun to implement the plan. Since the primary focus of the park was historical, the natural resources had not been fully documented. This changed during Backlund's tenure as both cultural and natural resources gained the attention they required. Backlund reflected that it was important to "talk about all resources equally. That's like if you have children. They each are separate and distinct and special and you'd really better not favor one over the other."<sup>1</sup>

Now that the building years of the park were over, the staff focused on management of its natural and cultural resources. By doing so, the park sought to address the first need stated in the 2003 General Management Plan—"cultural and natural resource protection." These resources encompassed 50 classified historic structures, which included not only buildings but also dams and stonewalls, and those natural resources determined to be contributing to the cultural landscape. The park regularly updated its planning documents to manage these resources effectively and appropriately. Park staff continued to devote the time necessary to repair and maintain the historic structures, which became an ongoing activity. New historic structure reports would be produced for three key historic buildings, and a series of damaging storms caused the park to update the *Cultural Landscape Report*.

1 Backlund, interview.



**Figure 10.1** Members of the park's maintenance crew, Austin Ducker (left), Rene Minot (center), and Glen Barnwell (right), complete tasks in the workshop as they prepare materials for barn renovations. May 2, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 10.2** Rene Minor, or "Frenchie," was a long-time member of the park's maintenance staff. October 24, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

With the Natural Resource Challenge in the National Park Service (NPS) and a superintendent who had a strong science background, the park also developed a natural resources program to document its wide range of natural resources and created management plans for their care. The park contained 64 acres of "pastures, hay fields, crop land, trails, and gardens" maintained as part of the cultural landscape as well as over 200 acres of forests. Significant hemlocks, white pines, yellow poplar and oak specimen trees "lined the drives,

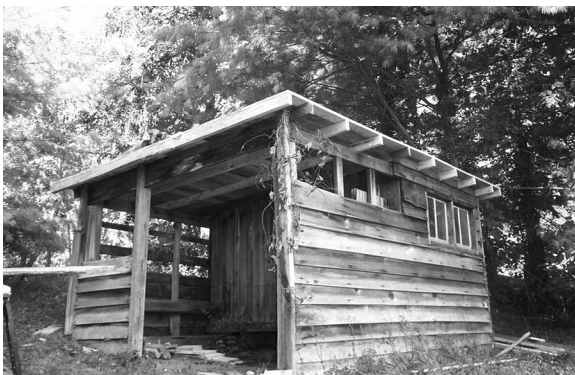


**Figure 10.3** The park's maintenance crew, including both permanent and seasonal staff, provide valuable work on the buildings and landscape. Pictured here are M. Issackson, Rene Minot, T. Fox, and J. Rizzo. August 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

streams, and ponds of the property.” The natural resources ranged from globally significant rock outcrops to a range of plant communities, fish, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds.<sup>2</sup>

The 2003 General Management Plan articulated the park's commitment to resources management. The plan described the mission of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site as to “preserve and interpret the farm, Connemara, where Sandburg and his family lived for the last 22 years of his life, from 1945-1967,” which included a responsibility to “preserve Carl Sandburg's last home, associated structures and landscape, original furnishings, personal belongings, and library.” The plan argued that the park is significant because the “home, associated buildings, farm scene, wooded hills, and gardens of Connemara embody the presence of Carl Sandburg more vividly than any other place he

2 Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2003, 17.



**Figure 10.4** Park staff repair the Donkey Shed, located near the Amphitheater. August 2002 (CARL Park Archive).

lived.”<sup>3</sup> This chapter examines the park's efforts to manage its historic structures, cultural landscape, and natural resources.

## Maintaining the Historic Structures

The park continued to preserve the 50 historic structures to the period of significance of Sandburg's most active years at Connemara,



**Figure 10.5** The park's maintenance staff has played a major role in repairing and maintaining the historic structures over the years. Here, Glenn Barnwell, Austin Ducker, and Chief of Maintenance Johnnie Wright pose on their last day prior to retirement. December 2005 (CARL Park Archive)

from 1955 through 1965. A 1998 Resources Management Plan noted that these structures “represent the largest volume of cultural resources at the park, but they are also the most significant physical remains that we interpret to the public. The enjoyment of the historic structures is a rich natural scene and the highlight of the experience for most visitors.”<sup>4</sup> Some structures had been preserved, some rehabilitated to serve other functions, and some “merely stabilized.” Besides the Main House, three historic buildings housed exhibits with artifacts. The Woodshed and Shaving Shed displayed farm equipment while the Barn Garage featured farm vehicles.<sup>5</sup>

The 1998 Resources Management Plan explained that the “primary emphasis is placed on protection of the exterior of the historic structures, particularly the roofs and exterior walls. Rehabilitation and assurance of the soundness of these surfaces will always be a priority.” Chief of

3 Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2003, 18.

4 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 9.

5 Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2003, 67.



Resource Management Warren Weber described the structures that year as being “generally in good to fair condition,” adding that “roofs and exteriors have structural and historical integrity,” but there was “some deterioration due to physical damage, fungi and insect damage.”<sup>6</sup>

Most of the work during Backlund’s tenure as superintendent focused on routine preventative maintenance of the structures. The Carl Sandburg



**Figure 10.6** The park staff makes repairs to the Barn. December 2005 (CARL Park Archive).

Home NHS usually received cyclic funding or other special project funding each year to support the necessary care of the historic buildings.<sup>7</sup> Weber explained that the park is in “a high maintenance area, when it comes to buildings. The weather makes it high maintenance. I used to tell people when they would go through the Main House, ‘The Main House is coming up to 200 years now. When you get to be 200 years old, you are going to need a lot of maintenance too!’”<sup>8</sup>

6 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 9, 13.

7 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/5, 1996.

8 Weber, interview, 2011.



**Figure 10.7** Park maintenance staff makes repairs to the Barn. The staff plays an essential role in maintaining and preserving the many historic structures at the park. May 2, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

Annual Reports record a regular maintenance program for the historic structures. In 1994/5, for example, the park’s maintenance staff painted the outside of the Barn, Horse Barn, Buck House, and



**Figure 10.8** In 2006, park maintenance staff repaired the Front Porch floor, joists, and railing. March 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

Farm Manager’s House as well as the Main House Dining Room.<sup>9</sup> The following year, they focused on the Main House. The front porch was “removed and replaced in kind,” the exterior painted, and the

9 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/5.



**Figures 10.9 (above) and 10.10 (below)** The park’s maintenance staff regularly repaints the historic structures, according to the maintenance plan. Here, they are scraping paint off the Family Garage. Ca. 1997 (CARL Park Archive).





windows and a porch column repaired.<sup>10</sup> In 1997, many of the historic buildings were reroofed.<sup>11</sup> Painting continued on the exterior of buildings and the interior of the Main House and Milk House into 1998, along with “routine repairs,” such as replacing deteriorated siding and repairing gutters and the restoration of the Duck Cage to “its historic appearance,” all made possible with funding from the cyclic program.<sup>12</sup> That year, Backlund reported, “We feel that our structures listed on the List of Classified Structures are generally in good condition.”<sup>13</sup>

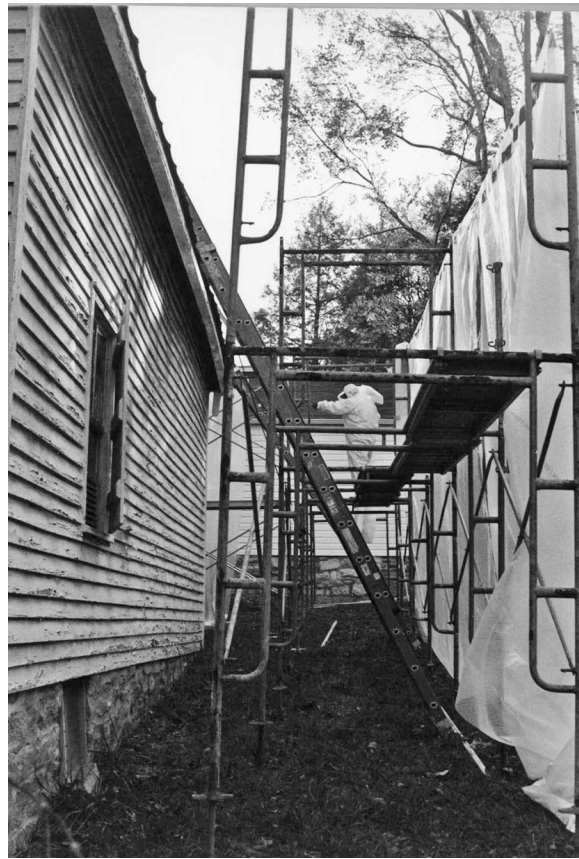
Painting occurred almost every year, along with repairing deteriorating wood, replacing rotten or



**Figure 10.11** Several of the farm buildings had lead paint that needed to be removed. In 2001, the park completes a lead paint abatement project on the Chicken House. 2001 (CARL Park Archive)

inappropriate siding, repairing or replacing gutters, washing the exterior of the buildings, and repairing or replacing roofs. Many of the park buildings had lead paint that had to be abated or encapsulated before applying the new paint, and that work was done under contract.<sup>14</sup> In 2000, the park repaired the conservatory on the Main House.<sup>15</sup>

Preserving the historic structures also included providing appropriate protection against fire and keeping the mechanical systems up-to-date. In 1999, Backlund reported that the park completed the installation of the fire suppression system begun “twenty years ago.” The park received \$200,000 for installing this system in the Barn



**Figures 10.12 (above) and 10.13 (below)** As part of a FY 2001 abatement project, the park hired contractors to remove the lead paint from the Swedish House. FY 2001 (CARL Park Archive).



and other historic structures, and the work was completed in 1998 and 1999.<sup>16</sup> Other mechanical repairs that were completed included replacing the heating ducts, upgrading the electrical systems, and rewiring the buildings, as needed.<sup>17</sup> The park upgraded the locks on the historic buildings in 1999 and 2000 and replaced the plumbing in the Barn and connected it to the city water supply the following year.<sup>18</sup> In 2002, the heating system in the Main House, Farm Manager’s House, and Tenant

10 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

11 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

12 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

13 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

14 Weber, interview, 2011; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.

15 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

16 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998-1999.

17 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999-2000.

18 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000-2001.

House was changed to connect to the new natural gas line installed at the park, which allowed the removal of two underground fuel oil tanks.<sup>19</sup>

The park continued to make some changes to the Main House to ensure accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 2002, the park purchased a new wheelchair lift for the house to provide access to the second floor. The following year, the park created a concrete slab and walk for the wheelchair lift. In 2004, the staff installed the new lift.<sup>20</sup>

CARL rehabilitated several of the historic buildings for new uses during these years, as administrative offices and curatorial activities moved into modern buildings. In 1996, after the park moved the collections stored in the Tenant House into



**Figure 10.14** With the completion of the new park headquarters, the inside of the Farm Manager's House was remodeled into the park residence. Fall 2000 (CARL Park Archive).

the new Museum Preservation Center, the staff painted and replaced the floor covering for the Tenant House to prepare it for use as an office for the interpretive staff. Also that year, the interior of the Farm Manager's House was rehabilitated from use as administrative offices to become the park residence.<sup>21</sup> In 1997, the park rehabilitated the Family Garage (formerly the Summer Kitchen) for use as an interpretive center, reporting minimal changes to the historic fabric.<sup>22</sup>

For many years, park superintendents had been requesting historic structure reports for the park's



**Figure 10.15** Park staff remodeled the Family Garage into an interpretive center in 1997. Fall 2000 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figures 10.16, 10.17, and 10.18** Maintenance staff members Glenn Barnwell and Austin Ducker repurpose the Family Garage into an interpretive center. This adaptive reuse allows the park to conduct interpretive and educational programs in an enclosed space near the Main House. June 3, 1997 (CARL Park Archive).

<sup>19</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003; Tommy Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report, Cultural Resources Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, September 2005, 89.

<sup>21</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

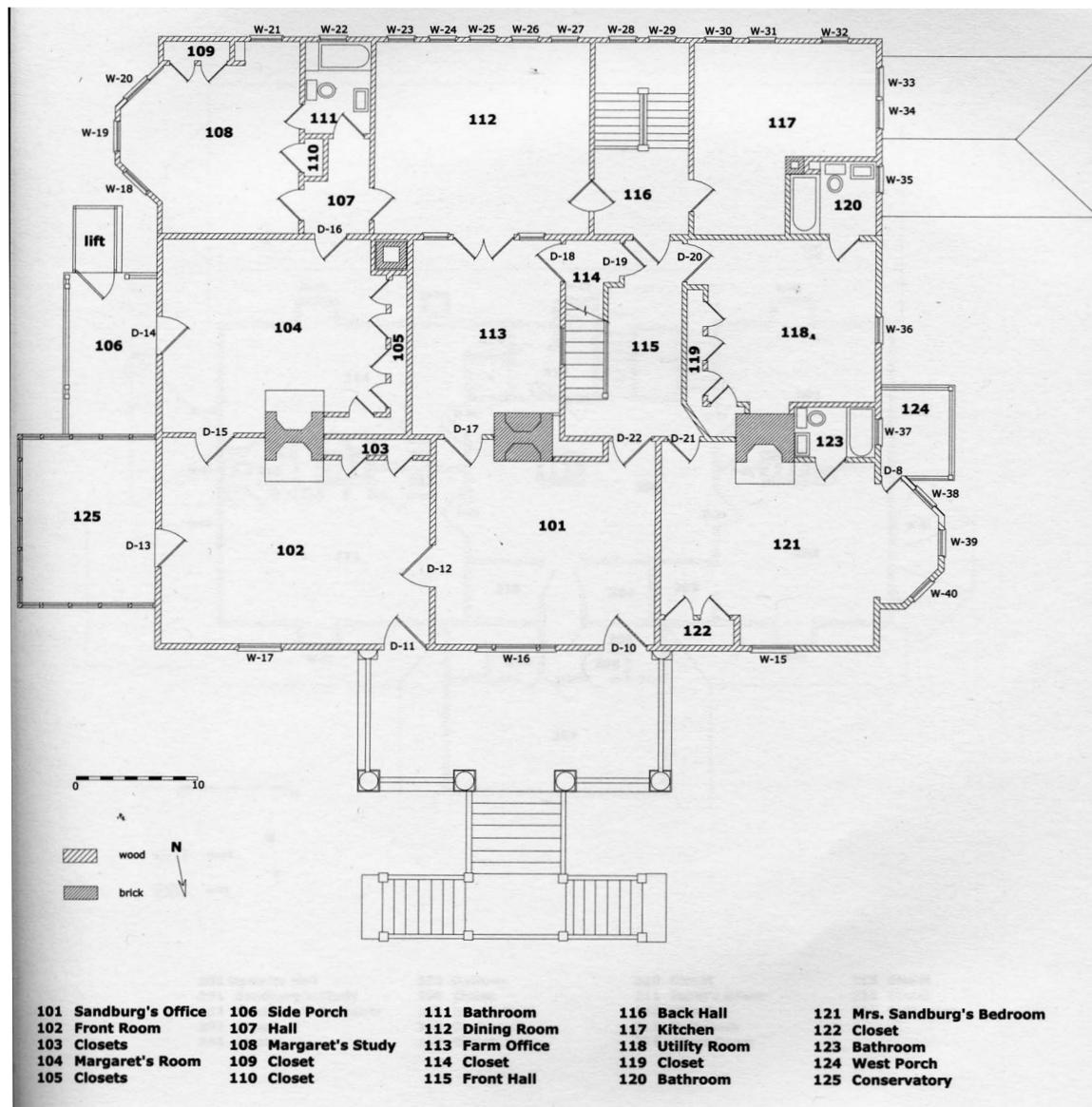
<sup>22</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.





**Figure 10.19** Austin Ducker repairs the plaster in Janet's Bedroom, Room 211 in the Main House. December 2005 (CARL Park Archive).

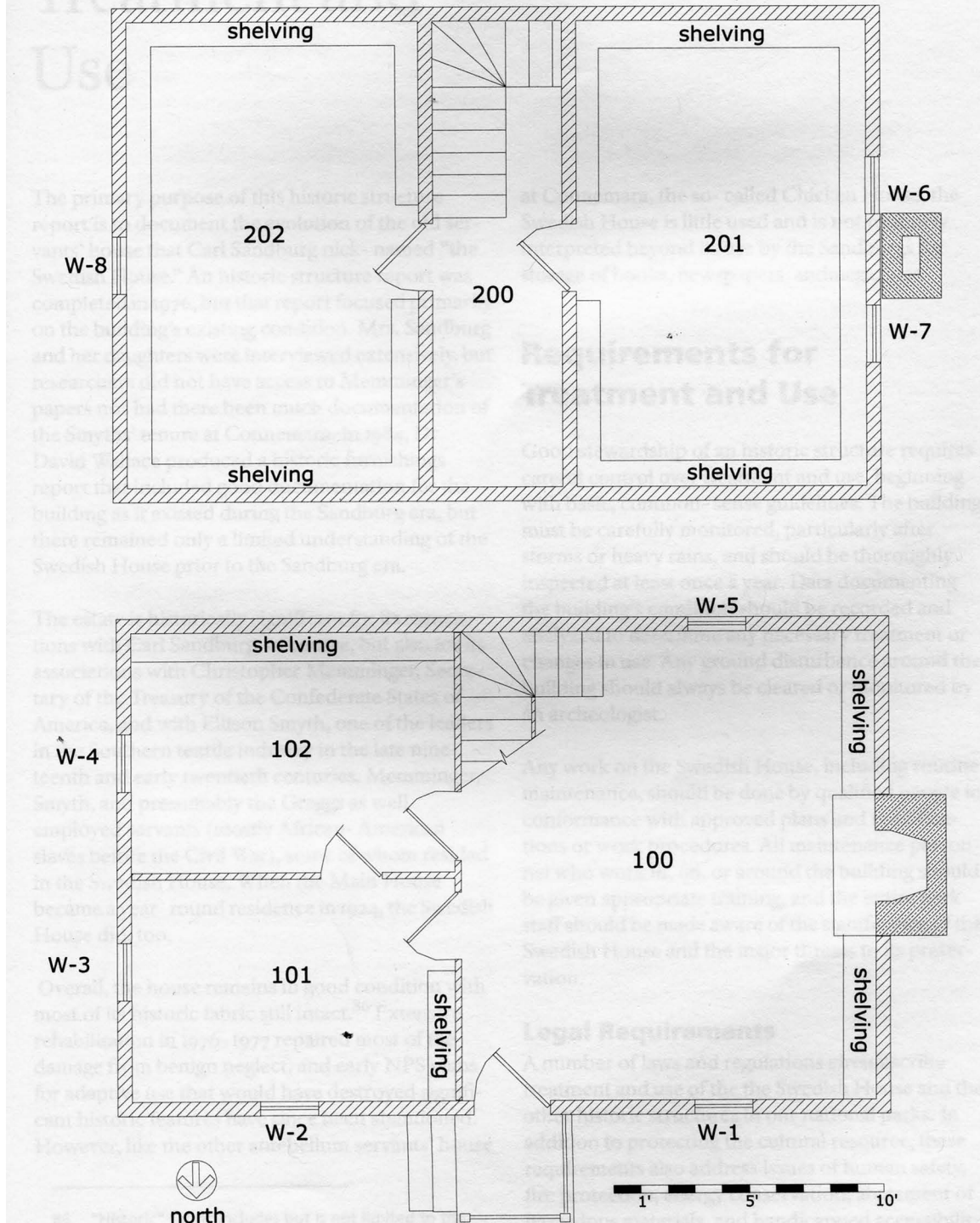
most important resources. The NPS had completed a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Main House in the 1970s (George Svejda wrote the history component in 1972 and Russell Jones the architecture section in 1976), but it was outdated and the park desperately needed a new study (See Chapter Four). The Cultural Resources Division at the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) completed a new HSR for the Main House in September 2005. As the Report notes, the early study “focused primarily on the building’s existing condition,” but researchers did not have access to the Memminger papers at that time. Although the Main House had an excellent Historic Furnishings Report (HFR), that study focused only on the Sandburg years. The



**Figure 10.20** The Historic Structure Report for the Main House provides extensive documentation on its development history and physical description, including floor plans such as this one. The Southeast Regional Office completed this valuable document in 2005, and now it aids in all aspects of planning for this significant structure. Historic Restructure Report, 2005.



## Floor Plan of Existing Building



**Figure 10.21** The Southeast Regional Office prepared a Historic Structure Report for the Swedish House, one of the oldest and most important buildings around the Main House. The park needs these documents for its planning purposes. Historic Structure Report, 2005.

new HSR corrected the “limited understanding of and, in fact, some significant misconceptions about the historic evolution of the house prior to the Sandburg era.” The report provided a detailed history of the property and a developmental study of the house, including some recommendations that Watson and Henry Associates, environmental consultants, made in 2002.<sup>23</sup>

In April 2005, the National Park Service undertook a paint study of the Main House to address some of the questions raised in the new Historic Structure Report. The goal of the study was to use paint samples from specific parts of the first story and façade to see what could be learned about the original appearance of the house. The NPS hoped to answer two questions: first, was the fenestration of the Main House original, especially the central window and the front entry doors; and second, what was the original configuration of the stair hall?<sup>24</sup> The paint analysis confirmed much of the building chronology outlined in the HSR, provided new information on the evolution of the Main House, and documented that the fenestration on the north elevation was original, among other findings. However, the study did not provide conclusive evidence about the stair hall.<sup>25</sup> Over the next few years, the park completed several of the projects recommended by the Historic Structure Report. In 2005, for example, the park used the HSR to guide the maintenance staff in repairing the plaster, painting the interior, and removing the asbestos in the house.<sup>26</sup>

The Southeast Regional Office funded two additional historic structure reports for the park in 2005 and 2007. The *General Management Plan* (2003) suggested that the park rehabilitate “one or two historic structures near the main house or barn for interpretive program areas.”<sup>27</sup> This recommendation led SERO to complete historic structure reports for two of the most

likely buildings for this purpose, the Swedish House and the Chicken House/Wash House. Both former antebellum slave quarters, these buildings had received exterior restoration work by the National Park Service in the late 1970s. Before the construction of the Museum Preservation Center, the park had allowed visitors to wander through the first floor of the Swedish House, but had covered the shelves with Plexiglas to protect the books and stacks of magazines.<sup>28</sup> By 2003, however, the two buildings were no longer open to the public and the park was storing some collections in both the Swedish House and Chicken House/Wash House.<sup>29</sup>

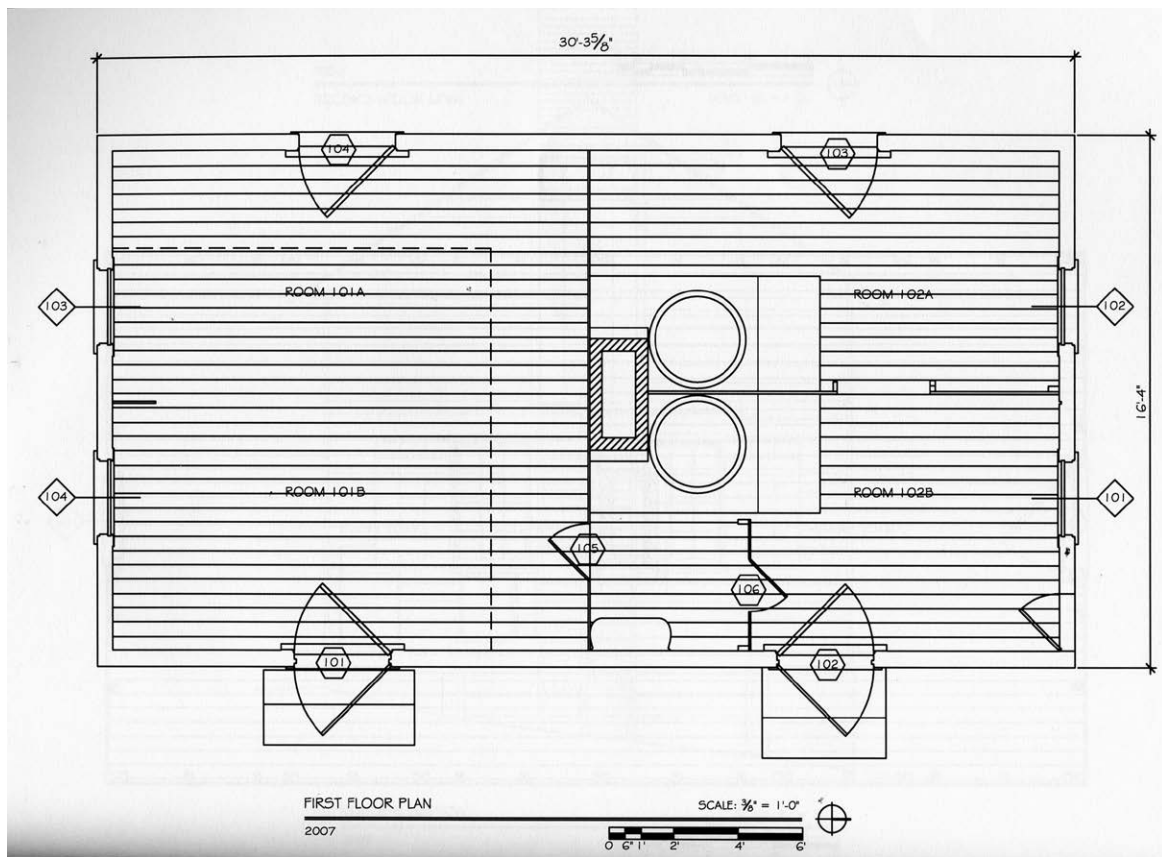
The Cultural Resources Division of the Southeast Regional Office completed the Historic Structure Report for the Swedish House in September 2005. Built in the 1850s, the Gothic Revival cottage became the place where Sandburg stored magazines, newspaper clippings, books, and other items. The report noted that the house was in good condition “with most of its historic fabric still intact.” The National Park Service rehabilitated the structure in 1976-7 to repair “damage done by benign neglect in the 1960s” and replaced the chimney the Sandburg family had torn down. The report did not identify any pressing preservation needs for the structure but recommended regular monitoring and careful maintenance. Suggestions for potential use of the building included housing

- 28 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, February 2003, 6, CARL Park Archive.  
29 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003.

- 23 Jones, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report, 2005, 179. More on the environmental study of the house is included in Chapter 11.  
24 Judith Q. Sullivan, Carl Sandburg Home Connemara Main House Historic Paint Study, Historic Architecture, Northeast Regional Office, National Park Service, July 2005, 4.  
25 Sullivan, Carl Sandburg Home Connemara Main House Historic Paint Study, 2005, 33.  
26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005.  
27 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 9.



**Figure 10.22** A Historic Structure Report for the Chicken House/Wash House, prepared in 2007, documented that much of the building dated to the Memminger occupancy of the farm. 2011 (Photograph by Ann McCleary).



**Figure 10.23** The park contracted with Joseph Opperman to produce a Historic Structure Report for the Chicken House. Opperman prepared this floorplan of the historic structure. Historic Structure Report, 2007.



**Figure 10.24** As part of the maintenance program, the staff ensures that damage to any of the historic buildings is documented. Here, the park records the condition of the Chicken House. Summer 2000 (CARL Park Archive).

interpretive programs and exhibits without any fragile objects, but the report urged the park to evaluate any impact to the historic fabric first. The HSR noted that the building would need to be made accessible and might need electrical work if it were to be used more actively.<sup>30</sup>

30 Historic Architecture, Cultural Resources Division, The Swedish House Historic Structure Report, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, September 2005 2, 62.

Consultant Joseph Oppermann prepared the Historic Structure Report for the Chicken House/Wash House in September 2007. The report described the building as being in good condition and retaining much of its original building fabric from the Memminger occupancy. During the Smyth years, the family converted part of the building to use as a washhouse. The Sandburgs used the south room for a chicken house and the north end to house baby goats. The National Park Service installed shelving in the south room and used that space for storage. The HSR suggested that the two small rooms to the north be “displayed as an artifact,” since they still showed evidence of all three periods of use, and that the south room could be interpreted as well. However, if the building were to be open to the public, it would need to be made accessible and the electric supply would need to be improved to provide better lighting. Additionally, the HSR proposed reversing two exterior changes the NPS made in the 1970s that the report deemed inaccurate. The park needed to add a louver in one of the south elevation windows



and more accurately reinstall the ladder on the north elevation.<sup>31</sup>

## Managing the Cultural Landscape

As the management and strategic plans regularly articulated, the park has “one cultural landscape, and that is the entire park.”<sup>32</sup> Superintendent Backlund distinguished the natural plant



**Figure 10.25** The ponds require regular maintenance and upkeep as well as other historic structures. Here, the park repairs the Front Lake Dam and the reconstructed bridge leading from the Visitor Contact Station up to the Main House. July 9, 1996 (CARL Park Archive).

communities that the park was discovering and documenting during her years as superintendent from the “defined landscape features, which would fall under the *Cultural Landscape Report*. But it’s a fine point because the two really do merge.”<sup>33</sup> Biological Sciences Technician Irene Van Hoff

- 31 Joseph K. Opperman, Chicken House/Wash House Historic Structure Report, Cultural Resource Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, September 2007, 1-3.
- 32 Five-Year Strategic Plan, FY-2001 through FY-2003, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, April 14, 2000, 8, CARL Park Archive.
- 33 Backlund, interview.



**Figure 10.26** A group of volunteers called the Garden Committee for Margaret’s Garden worked to maintain this special feature of the cultural landscape. June 1997 (CARL Park Archive).

agreed, noting, “There is so much overlapping of what is cultural and what is natural that you can’t really divide them.”<sup>34</sup> The 2003 GMP stated that the “historical landscape is managed primarily as a cultural resource in which natural resource components play an integral role.”<sup>35</sup>

The *Cultural Landscape Report* guided work at the park during these years. Besides the historic structures, many elements of the cultural landscape

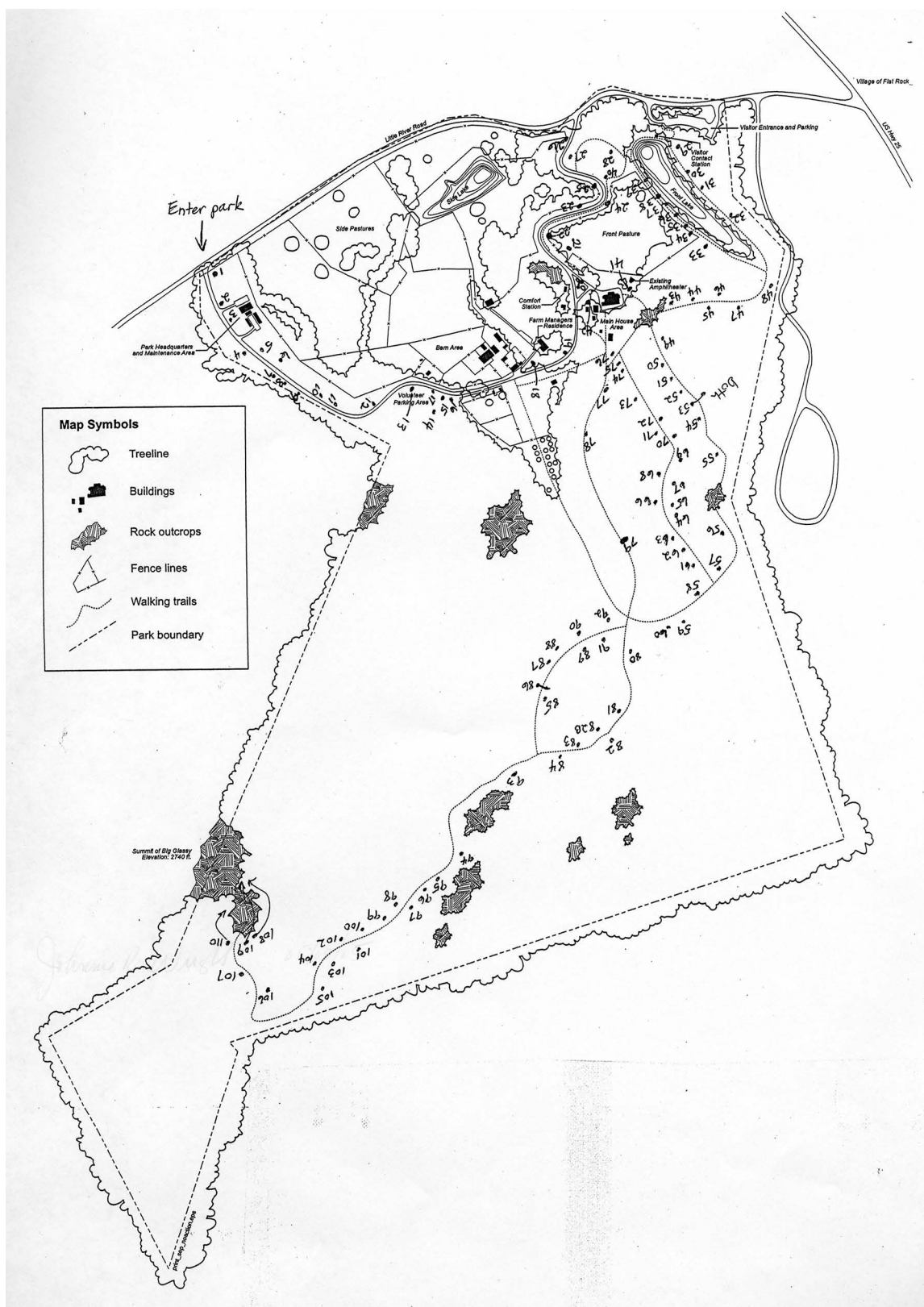
- 34 Irene Van Hoff, interview with Ann McCleary and Donna Butler, March 7, 2011, digital recording, CARL Park Archive.
- 35 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 71.



**Figure 10.27** The park has loyal volunteers who help to maintain the gardens. Here, several of these volunteers pose for a fun photograph. The gardens are an important part of the cultural landscape. No date (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 10.28** The pastures are an important part of the cultural landscape and also require regular maintenance and care. May 2007 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 10.29** The specimen trees are an important part of the cultural landscape, and the park works to preserve them. (CARL Park Archive).



required constant upkeep. Repairing pasture fences, gates, and stone walls appeared regularly throughout the Annual Reports.<sup>36</sup> In 1998, the park hosted a service-wide training course in which participants made repairs to the stone walls along the back drive.<sup>37</sup> The staff also continued to work on removing non-historic features from the historic core. When the new park's Headquarters was complete, the staff removed the non-historic sidewalk and volunteer parking lot located near the Farm Manager's House.<sup>38</sup>

Trails were an important part of the cultural landscape. One of the major concerns at the park was that that part of the historic Memminger Trail was located on property outside its boundaries. The NPS had been unsuccessful in negotiating continued use of the old trail or obtaining easements from the property owners. Finally, in 1998, to resolve this issue, the park's VIPs (Volunteers in Park) helped to reroute the Memminger Trail onto the park property, which required construction of a boardwalk over a rock slope. Volunteers also helped work on the Front Lake Trail and other trails throughout the park.<sup>39</sup> Trail repair occurred every year, sometimes receiving special project funding through Project Management Information System (PMIS). In 2003, for example, the park received \$2,000 for VIP trail work supplies and \$10,000 for trail maintenance.<sup>40</sup>

The park brought in Barbara Handy, a horticulturist from the National Park Service Olmstead Center for Landscape Preservation, in December 1998 to make suggestions for the care of these trees, especially around the Main House. A volunteer group, part-time gardener, Boy Scout troop, and park maintenance staff helped to implement many of her suggestions the next year.<sup>41</sup>

Besides routine resource management issues, the staff also faced major challenges pertaining to unexpected storms. In 1996, the park shut down for two weeks due to ice and snow. It took six weeks to clean up after the storms which left 200

trees "damaged or down throughout the core historic area" of the park.<sup>42</sup>

Two storms brought considerable damage to the park again in the fall of 2004. Hurricane Ivan, a category three storm with winds at 90 miles an hour, came in late September that same year, right after Hurricane Francis brought eight to twelve inches of rain to western North Carolina.<sup>43</sup> While the historic buildings were not damaged, the park lost 89 "culturally significant trees" due to "saturated ground and high winds." Hurricane Ivan uprooted trees, broke off limbs, and topped off many of the specimen trees. Park staff worried about the "high tree loss and exposed root balls in terms of maintaining the cultural landscape." Much of the storm impact occurred along the front drive, where the stone walls were also damaged.

42 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

43 *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report Amendment*, 2006, 6, CARL Park Archive.



**Figure 10.30** Historic trees at CARL suffer during major storms. An ice storm in 1996 greatly impacted the historic core of the park, including the cultural landscape, destroying over eighty trees, which had to be removed. Ca. 1996 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 10.31** A tree rests on the ground near the Farm Manager's House after an ice storm came through the area. Circa 1996 (CARL Park Archive).

36 For example, see Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

37 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

38 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

39 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

40 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

41 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.





**Figure 10.32** Damage to the trailer in the 1996 storm led to its removal. The park added the trailer to house Farm Caretaker Leroy Levi, and it had been used occasionally after he left. Circa 1996 (CARL Park Archive)

SERO provided special funding to remove some of the hazardous trees that year, and additional financial support came the following year to remove unsafe trees and debris and for repairs to help restore the historic area landscape in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. An archeologist from the NPS Southeast Regional Office came to the site “to examine disturbed ground under toppled trees prior to removal of root balls.”<sup>44</sup>

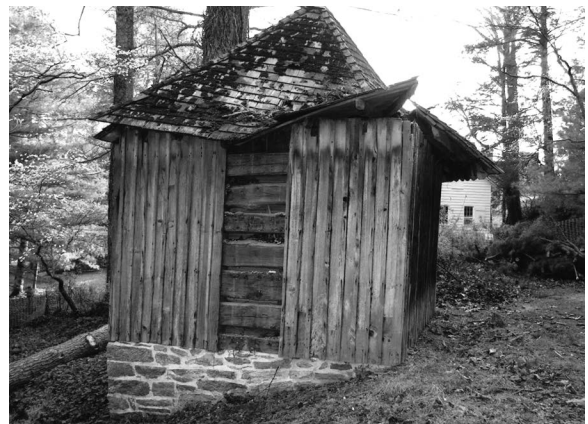
Ice storms in 2005 and 2006 brought more damage and “devastated tree crowns throughout the park,” causing concern for the “historic specimens in the cultural landscape.” Clean up included removing hazardous trees and debris. A “professional arborist” tended to the remaining significant landscape trees.<sup>45</sup>

Since the damage from these storms had been so severe, the park commissioned an amendment to the *Cultural Landscape Report* to assess the damage, produce recommendations for restoring the trees along the front drive, and develop plans in anticipation of future storms. The *Cultural Landscape Report Amendment*, completed in 2006, recommended a major replanting to reflect Sandburg’s “philosophy of nature and balance concerns of cultural and natural resources.” The preferred plan endorsed leaving the existing trees in place and adding a mixture of white pines and hemlocks, uniformly spaced along the front allée.<sup>46</sup>

44 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004-2005; CARL *Cultural Landscape Report Amendment*, 2006.

45 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006.

46 CARL *Cultural Landscape Report Amendment*, 2006, 6, 10.



**Figures 10.33, 10.34, and 10.35** Strong winds leave the park vulnerable to major damage each spring. These photos show the end result of one storm, which altered the historic landscape and structures near the Main House and the Springhouse. April 15-16, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

Managing the park’s cultural landscape also involved identifying its archeological assets. Planning documents consistently listed an archeological assessment as one of the park’s pressing needs. The National Register for Historic Places Nomination contained little information on archeological resources at the park. The only



**Figure 10.36** Damage to the Springhouse occurred from a tree falling during a spring storm. Large, specimen trees are also a valuable part of the cultural landscape, so the damage is both to the historic building and the landscape features. April 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

archeological records included on the Cultural Sites Inventory were three artifact scatters.<sup>47</sup>

In 1998, Heather Russo Pence, from the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC), prepared the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archeological Overview and Assessment. This report provided the environmental setting and cultural overview for the park site, a report on previous archeological research, a description of the already documented archeological sites, an assessment of existing research, recommendations for additional research, and a list of cultural resource management issues related to archeological resources at the park. The report recommended a “broad-scale program of systematic shovel or auger testing at regular intervals” to identify potential archeological resources at the park and additional testing at the Buck House, believed to be the oldest structure at the park. In addition, it endorsed the park’s interest in finding the Memminger-era privy believed to be near the Swedish House. An updated cultural resource base map was prepared as part of this project.<sup>48</sup>

The 2003 General Management Plan stated that the park had the potential for prehistoric sites associated with hunting camps and habitations near natural springs as well as historic resources connected with early Scots-Irish settlers in the area from 1807 through 1830, when Memminger

purchased the property. The plan recommended against disturbing these sites unless necessary. Some of the elements of the GMP would require archeological investigation before any design work could take place.<sup>49</sup>

Due to the previous investigations at the park, in association with “reconnaissance work adjacent to historic structures and cursory data on three sites,” the park accumulated a small archeological collection. The 1998 Resource Management Plan stated that the Southeast Archeological Center was storing “several thousand” artifacts from the park. The plan noted that these items were not yet catalogued but that SEAC would catalog the collection.<sup>50</sup> The updated Scope of Collections in 2003 stated that archeological materials would be kept at the SEAC “under long-term repository loan of ten years, subject to renewal.”<sup>51</sup> In 2005, this archeological collection was estimated at 10,040 artifacts.<sup>52</sup>

## Focusing on the Natural Resources

In 1999, National Park Service Director Robert Stanton announced a new program that would bring “active and informed management based on sound science” to the preservation of the natural environments in national parks. The Natural Resource Challenge called for “substantially increasing the role of science in decision-making, revitalizing and expanding natural resource programs, gathering baseline data on resource conditions, strengthening partnerships with the scientific community, and sharing knowledge with educational institutions and the public.” Further, the specific activities would involve “protecting habitat for endangered and native species, targeting non-native species for removal, inventorying natural resources and monitoring their condition, monitoring air and water quality, collaborating with other natural resource experts, and utilizing parks as laboratories and classrooms.” Finally, the Challenge recognized the importance of “America’s natural heritage” and expressed a

47 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 8-9.

48 Heather Russo Pence, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archaeological Overview and Assessment, Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1998, 9-10; 80-82.

49 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 27, 21.

50 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 3, 8-10.

51 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 12.

52 Collections Condition Survey, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 2004, 18, CARL Park Archive.



commitment for the parks to be instrumental in preserving that heritage for use by all Americans.<sup>53</sup>

The five-year program began in 2000, and the National Park Service received over \$14 million in increased operational funding for the first year of its plan. The funding, while not the \$20 million requested in the president's budget, represented significant congressional support for the NPS plan. The Park Service used these funds to undertake natural resource inventories, increase efforts to eradicate non-native species, and expand existing management and expertise of biological and geological resources.<sup>54</sup>

The action plan associated with the Natural Resource Challenge acknowledged that, although the National Park Service had been "charged with the trust of preserving" America's natural resources since 1916, "the lack of information about park plants, animals, ecosystems, and their interrelationships is profound." The plan also recognized the inter-relatedness of parks and their communities, urging that natural resource information be readily available to all. "Once this information is in our hands, we must share it widely, so that child and adult, amateur and professional can benefit from the knowledge uncovered in these places." Natural resource information "should help the surrounding communities make choices about their future."<sup>55</sup>

To facilitate the inventorying and monitoring of natural resources, the National Park Service grouped the parks having significant natural resources into 32 networks. This design allowed parks to leverage their resources by partnering with other parks and sharing expertise. Otherwise, most parks would not be able to afford to fully monitor the "vital signs" necessary to determine the health

of their natural resources.<sup>56</sup> The networks were created to foster "collaboration, information sharing, and economies of scale in natural resource monitoring" and to provide parks with a "minimum infrastructure for initiating natural resource monitoring that can be built upon in the future."<sup>57</sup> The parks in each network shared similar natural resource characteristics. Information and data collected throughout each network was to be used at the park level by the decision-makers responsible for maintaining park resources.<sup>58</sup>

The NPS placed the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the Cumberland Piedmont Network.<sup>59</sup> Like other networks, the Cumberland Piedmont group produced inventories on a variety of resources, including "Natural Resource Bibliography, Base Cartography Data, Air Quality Data, Air Quality-Related Values, Climate Inventory, Geologic Resources Inventory, Soil Resources Inventory, Water Body Location and Classification, Baseline Water Quality Data, Vegetation Inventory, Species Lists, and Species Occurrence and Distribution." In addition to these inventories, the networks participated in "Vital Signs Monitoring," the NPS "long-term ecological monitoring program," which tracked natural resources to determine whether changes were occurring that could signal problems within the environment that needed attention.<sup>60</sup>

While national legislation aimed at protecting the environment had an important impact on the National Park Service policies and management guidelines, little monetary support flowed into individual parks to cover the costs of implementing

53 National Park Service, "Natural Resource Challenge Original Press Release," press release. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/challenge/pressrelease.cfm> (Accessed December 16, 2011).

54 National Park Service, "Natural Resource Challenge: Funding the National Park Service's Action Plan for Preserving Natural Resources, A Report to the United States Congress 2000," 2000. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/challenge/pre2011.cfm> (Accessed December 16, 2011).

55 National Park Service, "Natural Resource Challenge..."

56 Larry West, "Long-term Monitoring of Natural Resource Conditions in U.S. National Parks: Getting Science into the Hands of Land Managers, Planners, and Partners," PowerPoint presentation, produced by the Inventory and Monitoring Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 2011.

57 National Park Service, "Cumberland Piedmont Network and Mammoth Cave National Park Prototype: Vital Signs Monitoring Plan" [http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/plans/CUPN\\_monitoringplan.pdf](http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/monitor/plans/CUPN_monitoringplan.pdf) (Accessed December 16, 2011).

58 S. G. Fancy, J. E. Gross, & S. L. Carter, Monitoring the Conditions of Natural Resources in U.S. National Parks, in *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 151, National Park Service, 2009, 161-174.

59 National Park Service, "Cumberland Piedmont Network ..."

60 National Park Service, "Nature & Science, The Inventory and Monitoring Program," <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/index.cfm> (Accessed December 16, 2011).



natural resource protocols.<sup>61</sup> The natural resources program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS developed over time, layer by layer, as the park could afford services from its own budget or received allocations from NPS and other federal agencies. Superintendent Backlund, with her science education background, brought her full support to managing the natural resources at the park. During her superintendency, and particularly after the Natural Resource Challenge, the park made great strides in identifying, monitoring, and managing its natural resources.

## Developing a Natural Resources Program

From the park's founding in 1968 to the late 1990s, most of the natural resources activity focused on routine upkeep and ridding the grounds of "exotic" or non-native invasive plants. The maintenance personnel managed the natural resources throughout the park. Due to time and funding constraints, maintenance usually entailed only what needed to be done to preserve the grounds and protect the safety of visitors and staff.<sup>62</sup> The Friends of Connemara and park volunteers helped to maintain trails and assisted with clean up when possible. Trying to keep the exotic plants under control remained an ever-present challenge.

In 1997, the park moved beyond maintenance in dealing with the exotic plant challenges. The neighboring Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM) helped to remove more of the park's non-native plants through contracted services.<sup>63</sup> The park worked with GRSM again the following year to complete an exotic plant survey. The survey team identified at least 30 invasive species of plants and suggested that the park could control the exotics within three months with a full-time staff member.<sup>64</sup> The GRSM personnel worked with park staff for three years to identify and control various exotic plants on the Connemara grounds.

In its 1998 Resource Management Plan, the park noted that the 1994 operations evaluation team told the staff to "cut back on some of its

activity dealing with natural resources because of the purpose of the park and staffing levels." At the time, the park reported that it was trying to gather "baseline information" and monitoring its hazardous trees. While the natural resources were listed as being in "fair" condition, the park reported a number of concerns that year, including dogwood anthracnose impacting some of the dogwood trees, exotic species that needed to be controlled, gypsy moths which were expected to arrive within five years, and beavers in the Side Lake, all of which were causing resource damage. Further, residential development around the park meant that the site had less undeveloped land nearby to help sustain larger animal populations and increased use of the trails placed additional "burdens on the park's resources."<sup>65</sup>

In 2001, two years after the Natural Resource Challenge began, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS natural resources program began in earnest with the hiring of a temporary forestry technician, Irene Van Hoff, through a collaborative arrangement with Great Smoky Mountain National Park. She assumed much of the responsibility for natural resource work such as hazardous tree inspections and exotic plant eradication efforts.<sup>66</sup> Van Hoff came to Carl Sandburg Home NHS from the U.S. Forest Service. She brought an extensive background in science, having worked over 20 years in nursing prior to joining the Forest Service. Deciding on a career change, she earned a two-year degree in forestry management technology and a four-year degree in natural resource management. Later, she completed a Master's degree in biology.<sup>67</sup> Van Hoff was prepared to develop the natural resources program at the park and to grow in the knowledge needed to protect the resources.

Van Hoff started by working on the exotic plant problem. "A forestry technician deals more with the forest and the natural resources, looking for the exotic insect pests that would affect the forest and forestry operations," she explained. This process included working with exotic plant species because "they have a very detrimental effect on the native plants growing in the forest habitat." As Van Hoff monitored the trees, more natural resource functions were added to her responsibilities. In

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61 West, "Long-term Monitoring of Natural Resource Conditions ..."

62 Backlund, interview.

63 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

64 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

65 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 5-7.

66 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001; Backlund, interview.

67 Van Hoff, interview.



**Figure 10.37** In 2008, Irene Van Hoff became the park's biological science technician. The appointment marked the first time the park had such a permanent position and recognized the importance of appropriate expertise and leadership to ensure that natural resources are a priority. July 2002 (CARL Park Archive).

discussing the way in which the position evolved over time, she explained that she worked with the historic gardens, added writing projects to secure funding, and accepted invitations for public speaking opportunities. The position “just grew with more duties and interesting and cool things to do. And it developed into this program.”<sup>68</sup>

Superintendent Backlund realized the importance of maintaining a consistent effort in managing the natural resources of the park if the work were to be effective. In the 2002 Annual Report, she wrote, “It is evident that a regular program of natural resource management is needed if the policies of the agency are to be supported and its goals achieved.”<sup>69</sup> Through leveraging budget dollars, partnerships, and grants, the park's natural resources division continued to grow. By 2007, staff for the year included a Student Temporary Employment Program STEP biological science technician, regular park personnel assigned to natural resource tasks, a five-month intern from the Chicago Botanical Gardens, and four college students. The intern and student volunteers provided in excess of 160 hours in support of the natural resources program.<sup>70</sup>

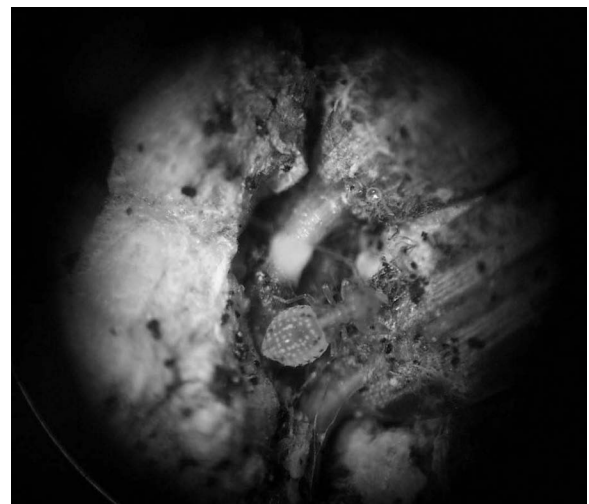
In 2008, Van Hoff accepted the position of biological science technician at the park, marking the first time that Carl Sandburg Home NHS had such a permanent position. The position evolved to become “much more broad than the forestry

technician position reads.” Now, she cared for both natural resources and the cultural landscape.<sup>71</sup> Creating the position demonstrated the importance Backlund placed on providing leadership in the area of natural resources—leadership to ensure that issues pertaining to the park's natural environment would remain a priority.

Growing the natural resources division at the park was a fortuitous decision, producing conservation results almost immediately. In 2002, while conducting inspections on the hemlock trees, Van Hoff noticed a very small insect making its home in the park's historic trees. Due to her specialized forestry training, Van Hoff recognized the pest as a Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). The insect, responsible for destruction in parks all along the east coast, had made its way to the park's hemlocks. Many of the park's hemlocks were actually planted by Mrs. Sandburg and were an important part of the cultural landscape. Discovering an insect that could destroy such an important cultural and natural resource in the park was significant to the management of the park's resources.

Backlund, Van Hoff, and the maintenance team set to work to rid the park of the threat. “We were at a huge advantage being in the Southern Appalachians with the hemlock because the early hemlock challenges were all up in the northeast and in the northern Appalachian Mountains and we learned

71 Van Hoff, interview.



**Figure 10.38** Invasions of the exotic species Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, shown in this 2002 photo, threaten the hemlock trees planted by the Sandburgs. Park staff follow aggressive measures to eradicate the insects. June 2002 (CARL Park Archive).

68 Van Hoff, interview.

69 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

70 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

so much from them,” recalled Backlund. The park rented large pieces of equipment with booms attached and sprayed the trees with an insecticidal mixture. The procedure was labor intensive, but proved successful in saving the hemlock trees.<sup>72</sup>

Van Hoff explained that finding the HWA, and “managing that exotic species on that tree,” provided an important boost in “developing a natural resource program for this park. Because that Adelgid was not something you can just have a term position here for. You have to stay on that ... You don’t do one treatment and then it’s gone and solved ... It’s an ongoing thing. I think that’s what really set the wheels in motion for the natural resource program.”<sup>73</sup>

The natural resources personnel became experts on treating the hemlocks, trying several different kinds of treatments before settling on a method whereby the soil near the trees is injected with pesticide to kill the HWA pests and the scale infestation. Park staff learned how to control the exotic pests by talking with colleagues in areas of the country that had already been infested and finding out how they stopped the infestations. Van Hoff and her staff then were able to pass their knowledge on to other parks and surrounding landowners concerned with combating outbreaks among their own trees.<sup>74</sup>

One of the most important reasons for controlling exotic plant and insect species is to prevent their taking over lands traditionally inhabited by native species. In managing the growth and re-growth of exotics at the park, the staff preserved the historical nature of Connemara by protecting the cultural landscape. In addition to the HWA, the staff combated outbreaks of Boxwood Leaf Miner, Asiatic Ambrosia Beetle, and Southern Pine Beetle.<sup>75</sup> The Asiatic Ambrosia Beetle brought serious destruction to the park, killing 62 maple and elder trees along the riparian corridor across the Sandburg pastures.<sup>76</sup>

While the HWA was an insect, most of the exotic species at Carl Sandburg Home NHS have been plants. Over the years, the natural resources

personnel sought to bring a variety of non-native plants under control, including English Ivy, Privet, Tree of Heaven, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, Chinese Privet, Japanese Siraea, Japanese Stiltgrass, Multifloral Rose, Nepalese Browntop, and Autumn Olive.

As Van Hoff observed, some of these exotic plants were introduced in the historic period, but the park needed to determine where they should be allowed to grow. She used the example of English Ivy. Someone likely introduced it to grow “from a landscape perspective” over the stonewalls and along trail borders. But historically, the property owners would not have wanted English Ivy in the pastures because it would kill the grass. “So where it doesn’t belong as part of a landscape planting, we



**Figure 10.39** Irene Van Hoff (right) supervises grounds staff as they trim Bamboo plants near the Family Garage. Crews are kept busy in their efforts to maintain the cultural landscape at CARL. July 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

control it there,” she explained. “But where it does belong from a historic landscape perspective, I actually take care of it there.” The park maintained a plan of “where English Ivy will be controlled, where its boundaries will be, and how we will manage it in different given areas.”<sup>77</sup>

In 2003, during the National Public Lands Day celebration, the park held a presentation about exotics. Staff and volunteers removed 120 pounds of Asiatic Dayflower from the park as part of the day’s activities.<sup>78</sup> The park turned a pesky problem into an outreach opportunity by inviting the public to learn about the role that natural resources management plays in the national parks and the methods the park used to control community exotic plants. Participants in the celebration also left with hands-on experience in ridding an area of invasive plants.

72 Backlund, interview.

73 Van Hoff, interview.

74 Van Hoff, interview; Backlund, interview.

75 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.

76 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005.

77 Van Hoff, interview.

78 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.



As the public became more aware of the natural resource conservation efforts at the park, people approached Van Hoff to ask for more information and assistance in managing their own natural resource challenges. For example, hemlock trees were a particularly important resource in the Flat Rock community and homeowners wanted to know how to protect their trees from HWA infestation and damage. Van Hoff explained that she arranges for area hemlock owners to come to the park to “show them what we are doing and how we do it. I’ve written up instructions on how we treat the trees, the actual step by step.” Residents often take advantage of these opportunities to learn about how their national park controls the insects.<sup>79</sup>

Controlling exotics remained an ongoing challenge in the management of the natural resources at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. As of 2007, park staff had treated over 56 acres in an attempt to control exotic species. Their efforts were part of an Integrated Pest Management program continuing throughout the year. Staff and volunteers continued to participate in research, treatment, and observational activities aimed at eradicating exotic pests, both insects and plants, from the park.<sup>80</sup>

## Inventorying, Monitoring, and Managing the Natural Resources

While the natural resources program developed at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the inventorying and monitoring of park resources, as mandated by the Natural Resource Challenge, went into effect nationwide. As a member of the Cumberland Piedmont Network (CUPN) for purposes of documenting park natural resources and sharing information regionally, the park benefited from the mandates and resulting cost-sharing needed to hire experts to assist in the research. The networks, with specialized professional expertise funded by federal money, were established so that national parks could learn more about what kinds of natural resources exist at the sites. Parks needed to know what they had in order to protect their resources. The monitoring and inventorying reports helped parks shape their stewardship of

the natural resources. It was important to know what impact maintenance, treatment, and control actions such as burning and spraying, might have on areas of the parks which are natural habitats for plant and animal species. Network reports, some commissioned by the NPS and some by individual parks, guided daily decisions about managing park natural resources.<sup>81</sup>

Even before the NPS mandated the Inventory and Monitoring Program, the staff at Carl Sandburg Home NHS wanted to know more about the plant and animal populations inhabiting the park. In 1993, the park began a small monitoring program when two volunteers, one a retired botanist, began surveying the vascular plants located at the park. They conducted what turned out to be an extensive undertaking in identifying and documenting vascular plants. The volunteers, Ann Ulinski and Millie Blaha, worked for two years on the study, providing excellent baseline data for the formal National Park Service research that followed.<sup>82</sup>

In 1996, Blaha and Ulinski began working with the Nature Conservancy to create a herbarium at the park. In the first year, the team identified 176 specimens which were “mounted and placed in the new herbarium cabinet at the park’s Headquarters.”<sup>83</sup> By 1999, the herbarium contained 418 specimens representing 354 species and sub-specific taxa, 224 genera and 90 families.<sup>84</sup> Backlund credits Blaha and Ulinski with starting the inventorying process, stating, “Here is one example where volunteers were starting to think ahead of the Park Service.”<sup>85</sup> Such inventorying efforts as the plant study and herbarium expanded as the park joined the NPS Cumberland Piedmont Network and participated in broader inventorying and monitoring programs.

### The Natural Resource Challenge Inventorying and Monitoring Program (I&M) helped to fund

81 Backlund, interview; Van Hoff, interview.

82 Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1993-1994; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, February 1994, Vol. 1, No. 6; Friends of Connemara, *Footnotes*, December 1994, Vol. 6, No. 5; Backlund, interview.

83 Robert Sutter to Suzette Kimball, memorandum, April 28, 1997, Carl Park Archive.

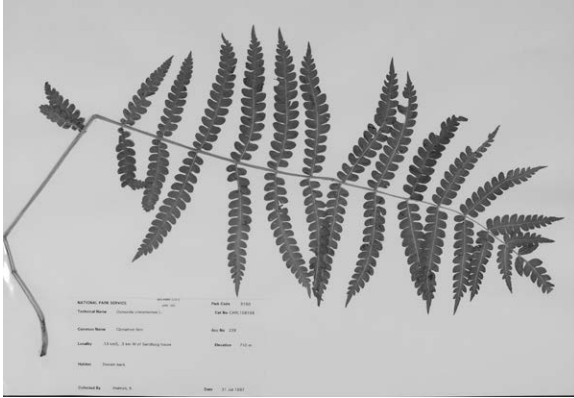
84 Millie Blaha, Karen Heiman, and Anne Ulinski, *The Vascular Flora of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: A Report on Plants Collected for an On-site Herbarium*, Carl Sandburg Home Historic Site, 1999, 19, CARL Park Archive.

85 Backlund, interview.

79 Van Hoff, interview.

80 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2007.

a variety of projects that could not have been undertaken otherwise. When the CUPN formed in 2001, the park gained official support in its efforts to document what natural resources existed on-site for the first time. By belonging to the network, Carl Sandburg Home NHS participated in Inventory and Monitoring projects that would not have been affordable or practical for an individual park budget alone. Carl Sandburg Home NHS



**Figure 10.40** CARL houses a large herbarium developed by volunteers, staff, and researchers who have identified over 500 plant species found on the grounds. (CARL Park Archive).

“encompasses immense ecological diversity in a rapidly developing area of North Carolina,” and must manage the site with the natural resources always in mind.<sup>86</sup> Their inclusion in the CUPN made such responsible management possible.

Van Hoff explained that inventories could be completed in several ways. Sometimes the inventories are done at the request of an individual park, several parks interested in a common topic, or as a result of NPS initiatives. For those developed through the Cumberland Piedmont Network, most of the arrangements, such as the funding, are handled through the network office. For example, several parks in the region included caves, and those sites wanted to know more about their bat population. Bats live everywhere, “so they were able to do bat inventories for all of the parks within their network.” Carl Sandburg Home NHS completed other inventories with project funding. Van Hoff considers all of these inventories essential in the stewardship of the park’s natural resources and the information they provide crucial to the success of the overall program. “If you don’t

know you have an endangered salamander and you know they are in the area, how do you know it’s okay to spray over here or do a prescribed burn over there?” she asked. “They [inventories] are all important. I don’t use all of them every day, but I use all of them every year, depending on what project I’m working on.”<sup>87</sup>

In 2003, Carl Sandburg Home NHS began its official I&M activities with a vascular plant inventory. NatureServe, a component of the Nature Conservancy, conducted the research. Fortunately, the work done by Ulinski and Blaha in surveying plants and setting up the park herbarium provided a foundation on which the research team could build.<sup>88</sup> Researchers documented around 90 percent of the vascular flora of the park, adding an additional 135 plant species to the existing list of 375 already identified by the park.<sup>89</sup> The research team noted that over 55 of these species and varieties of species were “county records, having not been previously documented for Henderson County, North Carolina.” They documented plants that were “globally rare,” including “the state threatened and globally rare piedmont ragwort and globally rare netted nutrush.”<sup>90</sup>

The NatureServe researchers also identified 14 distinct vegetation communities at the park, made up of plants that live compatibly together in groups. Carl Sandburg Home NHS communities include Water Lily Aquatic Vegetation, Rush Marsh, Cultivated Meadow/Old Field, Appalachian Low Elevation Granitic Dome, Blue Ridge Table Mountain Pine-Pitch Pine Woodland, Appalachian White Pine-Xeric Oak Forest, Eastern White Pine Successional Forest, Southern Appalachian Acid Cove Forest, Chestnut Oak Forest (Xeric Ridge Type), Appalachian Shortleaf Pine—Mesic Oak Forest, Appalachian Montane Oak Hickory Forest, Chestnut Oak Forest (Mesic Slope Heath Type), Appalachian Montane Oak—Hickory Forest (Red Oak Type), and Appalachian Montane Oak—Hickory Forest (Chestnut Oak Type). The Appalachian Low Elevation Granitic Dome community is considered “very rare globally,”

<sup>87</sup> Van Hoff, interview.

<sup>88</sup> Backlund, interview.

<sup>89</sup> Rickie D. White, *Vascular Plant Inventory and Plant Community Classification for Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Durham, NC: NatureServe, 2003), 1.

<sup>90</sup> White, *Vascular Plant Inventory and Plant Community Classification*, 7, 9.

<sup>86</sup> National Parks Conservation Association, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: A Resource Assessment* (Fort Collins, CO: NPCA Center for State of the Parks, 2009), 19.

and the park has “at least nine large patches of this association within the boundaries, some of which are very high quality examples of this community.” Some of the plant communities evolved from landscape changes made by people who lived at Connemara, such as the Water Lily Aquatic wetland pond. Still, these resources are not landscape features, as Backlund observed, but communities “that occurred naturally within the man-made lake.” NatureServe collaborated with the University of Georgia to create vegetation maps for the park to use to protect its vascular plants and to help the region “maintain its ecological heritage.”<sup>91</sup>

In 2008, the park worked with Appalachian State University to conduct an assessment of the vegetation growing on the “low-elevation granitic domes” at the site. There are 21 such domes at the park, ranging “from heavily impacted to high-quality examples of this community type.” The domes, or granitic outcrops, such as Big Glassy Mountain and the one behind the Main House, were important locations for the Sandburg family. The outcrop vegetation communities are considered a “globally-rare community type and have received special attention as a unique, local feature.”<sup>92</sup> The assessment offered suggestions for ways the park might protect the vegetation



**Figure 10.41** Granitic Domes are home to fragile and often rare plant communities found within CARL. August 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

communities, such as developing “strategies to maintain species diversity and community function, to mitigate the impacts of visitor use,

and to compensate for the disruption of natural processes.”<sup>93</sup>

The Inventorying and Monitoring Program also extended to the animal inhabitants of the national parks. In 2005, scientists at the University of Georgia documented the herpetofaunal resources for several parks in the Cumberland Piedmont Network. Researchers stated that the location of Carl Sandburg Home NHS, in the Blue Ridge and Piedmont regions, gave it a more diverse atmosphere for amphibians and reptiles. Today, the NPS website lists 22 certified species of amphibians living at the park, including toads, frogs, turtles, and a variety of salamanders. Also, there are 22 certified species of reptiles found on the grounds, such as copperheads, rat snakes, and timber rattlesnakes.<sup>94</sup>

The next year, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources conducted an inventory of fish at the park. The researcher sampled eight bodies of water at the park, including ponds, lakes, a spring, a reservoir, and streams. He found 15 species of fish, including non-native species such as the redbreast sunfish and flat bullhead. The report stressed the importance of good management of aquatic ecosystems, stating that “the role of the National Park System as good steward of these aquatic resources is valuable and plays an important part in the future persistence of our native fishes.”<sup>95</sup> During the year, NPS staff also conducted an assessment of fish health in the Front Lake. The biologist found some signs of disease among fish in the lake, but testing indicated that there was “no immediate management concern with the Front Lake fish populations.” He recommended annual monitoring over a five-year period to watch for signs of a worsening problem.<sup>96</sup>

- 91 White, *Vascular Plant Inventory and Plant Community Classification*, 6-7, 13, 21; Backlund, interview.  
 92 Gary Walker, *A Vegetational Assessment of the Granitic Rock Outcrop Communities at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Boone, NC: Appalachian State University, Southern Appalachian Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit, 2008), 7-15.

- 93 Walker, *A Vegetational Assessment of the Granitic Rock Outcrop*, 43.  
 94 Robert N. Reed and J. Whitfield Gibbons, *Results of Herpetofaunal Surveys of Five National Park Units in North and South Carolina* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 2005), 25; National Park Service, “Nature & Science ...”  
 95 Mark Scott, *Inventory of Fishes in Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Pendleton, SC: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 2006), 5, 10.  
 96 James M. Long, *Assessment of Fish Health in Front Lake, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, 2006), 5.



In 2006, the park worked with the NPS Southeast Regional Office to conduct an inventory of breeding and winter birds. Bird-watching was a very important activity for the Sandburgs. The family kept a set of binoculars in the dining area so that they could watch the birds on the feeders and in the yard. Additionally, they often went on special bird-watching walks on the many Connemara trails.



**Figure 10.42** The health, species, and numbers of fish found within the Connemara lakes are important issues in wildlife conservation for the staff. In this photo, researchers from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources collect data about the fish population. August 2005 (CARL Park Archive).

Researchers conducted their bird population surveys over a two-year period and found that vegetation present at the site provided an excellent home for birds. They stated that “the mosaic of grasses, fruiting shrubs, trees, and water features of this area attracted many species of birds” and stressed that maintaining the natural resources would determine the health of the bird population on-site. Today, the NPS website states that there are 102 certified species of birds making their homes at the park during various parts of the year.<sup>97</sup>

Three studies took place in 2007. In the first project, CUPN researchers conducted a water quality assessment at the park. They reported that the water quality was very good and that it was “the highest quality water found in the CUPN.” There was some concern about bacteria found in the Front Lake, but the “levels were not

exceptionally high nor does the park permit any aquatic recreational activities” in the Front Lake, so no management changes were suggested. The assessment requested that the lake continue to be monitored to keep track of any changes.<sup>98</sup>

The second study involved Clemson University researchers who conducted an inventory of bats in five CUPN parks, representing the first such inventorying effort in any of the parks. They found eight species of bats living at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, more than at any of the other parks surveyed, and suggested that the variety may be due to its geographic location, diverse and rich habitat, water supply, and lack of extreme development right around the park. Of the eight bat species found at the park, the “small-footed bat” is significant. It is “one of the rarest species in the eastern U.S. and little is known about their ecology.”<sup>99</sup> Management suggestions included continued care of the natural habitat to ensure the health of the bat populations.

In the third project, biologists under contract by the park completed an inventory of the mammal population. Researchers collected data at 19 park locations. Seventeen species were identified during the three-year surveying period. Examples of mammals included bears, beavers, squirrels, deer, rabbits, bobcats, coyotes, and gray foxes. Again, management suggestions centered on maintaining the habitats conducive to mammal health. The report commented that reducing the number of feral cats and dogs might “be desirable if populations of small mammals in the Sandburg site are to increase in the woodlands and pastures.”<sup>100</sup> Today, the NPS website lists 34 species of mammals for the park.<sup>101</sup>

Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff needed to know which plants and animals lived at the site, and to better understand how to manage the communities within the park’s boundaries. The park used the Inventorying and Monitoring Reports to manage

97 Scott M. Pearson and Alan B. Smith, *Bird Inventory of Carl Sandburg Home 2003-2006* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, 2006); National Park Service, “Inventorying and Monitoring (I&M) in Parks,” <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/index.cfm> (Accessed December 15, 2012).

98 Joe Meiman, *Cumberland Piedmont Network Water Quality Report: Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, 2007), 10.

99 Susan Loeb, *Bats of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site*, Cowpens National Battlefield, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Kings Mountain National Military Park, Ninety Six National Historic Site (Clemson, SC: Clemson University, 2007), 7.

100 Edward Pivorun and Linda Fulton, *Terrestrial Mammals of Carl Sandburg National Historic Site Flat Rock, North Carolina* (Flat Rock, NC: CARL, 2007), 13.

101 National Park Service, “Nature & Science ...”

every aspect of its natural resources. Irene Van Hoff explained that the Park Service Resource Management Plan covered cultural resources and natural resources, but “specific to the park, there’s not one plan.” She added, “We have an integrated pest management plan that gives us guidance on what plants and insects and other pests are here at the park and how those particular species, be they plant species or insect species or fungal species or whatever, how we should manage those, the techniques for managing those . . . We have a hazard tree program. So there’s not one overarching plan that encompasses all of the different things the natural resource program does.”<sup>102</sup>

The NPS encouraged parks to develop specific management plans for natural resource protection. For example, in 2003, Carl Sandburg Home NHS contracted with the Forestry Department at Virginia Polytechnic University to develop a forestry management plan for its “232 acres classified as forest or woodland.” The report pointed out that since the “Sandburgs had a strong no-management bias with their forest land,” there have been no timber harvesting or other forest management activities on the property since 1945. The NPS followed this same course of no-management where the forest is concerned, so that “natural processes in the forest are progressing, including plant succession, invasion of exotic plant species in many areas, soil building and covering of the rock outcrops, and gap formation as overmature trees succumb to blowdown, insects, and disease.” The report assessed the health of the forest at the park, looked at specific historic trees, and made specific recommendations about how staff should proceed in managing the resource. The foresters stated, “Like it or not, the park will need some form of management to maintain native biodiversity and achieve some objectives.”<sup>103</sup>

In 2004, Carl Sandburg Home NHS requested assistance from the NPS Southeast Regional Office to develop a plan for managing the Side Lake Creek riparian vegetation to preserve the area and to protect the “historic view of the barn from

Little River Road.” The report provided specific management recommendations for maintaining as much of the natural riparian area as possible, while altering the area enough to meet the goals of protecting the viewshed.<sup>104</sup>

That same year, the park developed a Fire Management Plan (FMP). The NPS-mandated FMP was a “detailed and comprehensive five-year program of action to implement fire management policy principles and goals, consistent with the unit’s resource management objectives.” Since the park adhered to a “general hands-off management” of the natural areas, much like the Sandburgs did, its FMP suggested “the minimum actions necessary to protect human life, park and private property, and natural and cultural resources.” While suppressing fires as necessary, the park should use “minimum impact” tactics whenever possible. Protecting neighboring lands was also a concern. To ensure containment and prevent fires from spreading, the plan recommended that the park



**Figure 10.43** Fuel breaks provide one means to combat fire within national parks. CARL staff and volunteers remain vigilant in maintaining fuel breaks within the park. January 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

“improve the wildland urban interface by reducing hazard fuels,” such as “dead and down timber,” exotic vegetation, and brush.<sup>105</sup>

The development of the natural resources program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS worked in partnership with cultural resource management.

102 Van Hoff, interview.

103 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Preserving and Protecting Historic Forests: *Forest Management Plan for the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* (Blacksburg, VA: Department of Forestry, College of Natural Resources), 2.

104 James M. Long, *Management Plan for Side Lake Creek Riparian Vegetation at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Balancing Natural and Cultural Values* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, 2004), 3.

105 “Executive Summary,” Fire Management Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 2004, National Park Service, Carl Park Archive.

Van Hoff contends that the cultural and natural resources management programs were closely intertwined. “Why did we need the exotic plants removed? Because they were changing the cultural resources. The pastures that we have here, well, they are hayfields now. We don’t really have many animals that go out on the pastures, but they are historic pastures, culturally significant, and were being overrun by a shrub called Autumn Olive, and vines, Honeysuckle and Oriental Bittersweet. And that was not historically or culturally correct. So you need to manage that resource because you are preserving the cultural resource at the same time you are doing natural resource management.” She argued that the same held true for the stream that runs through the pasture, a cultural resource. “To protect the riparian area, the natural species that occur there, you have to get rid of the exotic species. So there is not a clear boundary there.” The battle against the Woolly Algeid on the historic hemlock trees that Mrs. Sandburg planted represented another example of the connection between protecting natural and cultural resources.<sup>106</sup>

As Van Hoff pointed out, there are “always different ways of looking at an issue.” At a cultural park, the staff has to consider both the natural and cultural resources. Considering the example



**Figure 10.44** Protecting cultural and natural resources remains a top priority for the park. When a family of beavers moved into the park, the damage they inflicted on the Front Lake area caused concern. Staff faced decisions about how to humanely relocate the beavers in order to protect park resources. March 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

of English Ivy, she reflected, “We always find the common ground. We always find the best solution from a natural resource perspective, the common ground from the cultural resource perspective.” Today, the park manages its resources in the light of environmental compliance, considering the

National Environmental Protection Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. According to Van Hoff, “Whenever we are going to do something with a building, we go through a big process to evaluate those proposed actions. What initially might be a controversial subject always comes to a thoughtful solution that is as correct as it can be on both ends.”<sup>107</sup>

The park faced many different kinds of challenges in managing the cultural and natural landscape. When dog owners did not clean up after their pets, their residue impacted the park. Dog walkers often strolled on the trails around the Front Lake, and their walking routines impacted water quality in the lake. The park instituted a Rover Program to assist with the situation. Another issue was trash. The park had many trash cans, and raccoons invaded the cans, dragging out the trash, and tossing it on the grounds. In their efforts to protect the natural environment at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Van Hoff and the staff encountered “all different types of wildlife.” With more and more visitors walking in the park, the trails required “constant upkeep.” When conditions were dry, the park had to weigh how to maintain the gardens and water the plants that the Sandburgs planted and enjoyed. Van Hoff noted that the park endeavored to be greener, and recycled rainwater for watering the garden plants when possible. She wondered if the park would need to revise the Resource Management Plan with the challenge of climate change. The contradiction remained, as Van Hoff explained, that while it is the mission of the park to serve the public, “serving the public is not necessarily the best thing for the landscape you are trying to protect.”<sup>108</sup>

The 2003 *General Management Plan* acknowledged three major concerns. First, the park stated, “Preservation of sensitive cultural resources must be balanced against the desire to use them as an interpretive resource.” Second, the plan warned that development pressures around the park could affect its historic appearance. Third, the plan asked how it can manage recreational uses while reducing their impact on the park’s natural and cultural resources.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Van Hoff, interview.

<sup>108</sup> Van Hoff, interview.

<sup>109</sup> *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 17.

<sup>106</sup> Van Hoff, interview.



Ultimately, the park sought to preserve Connemara's cultural and natural landscape as the Sandburgs knew it and appreciated it. The Sandburg family enjoyed the historic structures and spending time on the farm. "They loved being outdoors and gardening and fooling with the animals and riding horses and hiking the trails,"



**Figure 10.45** Visitors better understand the important role that the natural resources played in the lives of the Sandburgs by reading interpretive waysides throughout the grounds. Through this sign, they can learn more about the Connemara trails and how the family used them. October 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

Van Hoff noted. "Mr. Sandburg in his elderly years enjoyed sitting on a chair behind the house on a rock outcrop," enjoying the view and landscape around him.<sup>110</sup> The family appreciated the flora and fauna at the park, and they created a cultural landscape which reflected their passions, values, and beliefs—all of which the park highlighted in its interpretation of the Sandburg story. Superintendent Connie Backlund proudly stated that the park team always tried "to keep the park at a good pace of stewardship, resource protection, and service to the public."<sup>111</sup>



**Figure 10.46 (above) and 10.47 (below)** Park maintenance staff remove two overgrown arborvitae adjacent to the Main House Front Porch as part of the cultural landscape management program. Longtime staffer Austin Ducker cuts down the trees. February 22, 2005 (CARL Park Archive).



<sup>110</sup> Van Hoff, interview.

<sup>111</sup> Backlund, interview.



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# CHAPTER 11

## “Management of a Large Museum Program,” 1994-2008

The museum collection has always been a significant element of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS). While the historic structures required immediate attention in the first years after the park was created, the cataloging of the collection occurred more slowly, gaining momentum when the National Park Service (NPS) gave backlog cataloging funds during the Hulick superintendency. After the park completed most of the cataloging, the attention turned towards improving storage, preservation, management, and access of the collection. In the last few years before Superintendent Connie Backlund arrived, the park staff made strides in the area of collection management, but much remained to be done. Backlund described the museum program as “large” and wrote in 1998 that it still required “much attention.”<sup>1</sup>

The new Museum Preservation Center provided a home for curatorial programs, which included cataloging new or unprocessed collections, establishing appropriate storage, ensuring professional preservation and conservation, renewing the drive to process the archives, updating the furnishings plan for the house, and expanding research activities. The park also worked to provide adequate environmental conditions in the Main House, the primary museum exhibit display area, and fought an outbreak of mold. As Backlund reflected, the museum collection at the park is a “primary example of textbook museum management,” illustrating the issues that can arise and how they should be resolved.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the park sought new ways to make its collections more visible and useful to the

public. The 2003 *General Management Plan* (GMP) emphasized the value of the museum collection. One of its two purpose statements was “to preserve Carl Sandburg’s home, associated structures and landscape, original furnishings, personal belongings and library.”<sup>3</sup> Further, the collection was featured in one of the three significance statements in the GMP: “the museum collection which preserves Carl Sandburg’s personal belongings, furnishings, farm equipment, library and papers provides a unique and rare perspective of this American author’s lifestyle, philosophy, intellectual pursuits, and experiences.”<sup>4</sup>

The goal of the preferred option from the GMP process—the Sandburg Center Alternative—was that the park “would serve as a national and worldwide focal point for learning about Carl Sandburg.” The strategies for achieving this goal included expanded use of the significant museum collections, from creating an extensive online database and exhibit to building a Visitor Center which would provide “additional access to information and objects currently housed in the museum preservation facility.” Gaining better control over and management of the museum collection remained critical to the park as it sought to reach these goals.<sup>5</sup>

### Managing the Museum Collections

Backlund’s reference to the “management of a large museum program” in her 2002 Annual Report

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1 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

2 Backlund, interview .

3 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 18.

4 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 18.

5 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 5.



reveals the changing focus to managing collection resources during her tenure.<sup>6</sup> Many of these activities aligned with the GMP process which occurred from 1999-2003.

Lynn Savage served as the museum's curator for most of these years. Her position as a GS-7 Museum Technician was reclassified to a GS-9 position in 1998, emphasizing the significance of the museum program at the park.<sup>7</sup> Although Museum Technician Bess Gibbs retired in March 1997, she continued to volunteer at the park.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the curatorial staff at this time included one museum technician, staff hired through project funding, and volunteers. When Savage left in August 2007, the park hired a temporary student curator, Ashley Falls Tate, who became the next curator.

The park applied for and received special curatorial services money to undertake a considerable number of projects during these years.<sup>9</sup> Many of these activities reflected the emerging trends in museum collection management and in the National Park Service. For example, as disaster planning became important among museums in the late 1990s, the park created a Museum Collections Emergency Operations Plan in 1999.<sup>10</sup> Park staff kept up-to-date on this topic by attending a workshop on disaster preparedness in 2001.<sup>11</sup>

In 2003 and 2005, the park completed two significant planning documents that would provide a new focus for management of the park's collection. In February 2003, the staff curator at the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and park Curator Lynn Savage prepared an updated Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS), which evaluated the collecting areas and acquisition procedures. This document was produced as the process for developing the *General Management Plan* was drawing to a close, and the SOCS supported the goals of the preferred Sandburg Center Alternative.

While the 1998 Resource Management Plan did not propose expanding the collection either by acquiring more objects or adding materials "resulting from resource management actions at the park," the updated Scope of Collections Statement recommended several new collecting areas that would guide the park over the next decade.<sup>12</sup> The park hoped to acquire "certain verifiable site-specific objects" if these became available. Although the Sandburg family left most of the household furnishings at Connemara, Mrs. Sandburg and her daughters kept "a number of significant items." The new SOCS emphasized "permanently acquiring original objects from family members," including any additional Native American materials collected by Sandburg owned by Sandburg family members.<sup>13</sup>

The park still needed some objects to complete the 1984 Historic Furnishings Report (HFR). The HFR provided a list of the objects required for two scenarios for furnishing the Front Room as well as the other rooms, from farm gear for the Laundry Room to a red rubber mat for the Kitchen and a floor lamp for Janet's Bedroom. Noting that "most of Mrs. Sandburg's milk cans disappeared from the park in its early years," the SOCS stated that the park would like to obtain examples of these objects.<sup>14</sup>

Other proposed collecting areas included books, manuscripts, and ephemera "with the same titles and editions" as those removed by the University of Illinois to fill in the bookshelves in the Main House. The document instructed that original fabric removed from historic structures during repairs should be preserved in the collection as well. Further, the report advised that the park should add any collections and materials related to Sandburg's work and family life if and when they became available.<sup>15</sup>

For research purposes, the SOCS stated that the park still needed copies of the finding aids from Sandburg family collections at the University of Illinois and elsewhere. Project records currently stored at the National Park Service Southeast Archaeology Center, copies of any park-related

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6 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

7 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

8 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

9 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5; Collections Management Plan, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, April 2005, v., CARL Park Archive.

10 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

11 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

12 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 8.

13 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, 2003, 12.

14 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 12-13.

15 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 13-15.

records at the Blue Ridge Parkway, and copies of photographs and archival materials related to previous owners of Connemara were important to acquire as they were critical to the administrative history of the park and to researching the historic buildings.<sup>16</sup> The SOCS acknowledged the park's responsibility to collect and maintain natural history collections in order "to provide baseline data of the park's natural resources and to document changes the resources undergo as a result of park use and environmental changes." This collection would grow with the ongoing research and inventorying and monitoring activities at the park.<sup>17</sup>

Immediately after completing the Scope of Collections Statement, the park turned its attention to preparing a new Collections Management Plan (CMP), which Backlund described as the "broad overarching document for the museum collection."<sup>18</sup> From June 16 through 27, 2003,



**Figure 11.1** Ann Ulinski began the first biological survey of the park in 1993. Here, she is showing some of the plant materials in the museum's Herbarium collection. 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

a team of nine interdisciplinary NPS museum and archives professionals visited the park. Working with the museum staff, they produced a draft Museum Collections Management Plan that year.<sup>19</sup> The final report, approved in 2005, stated that the park collection of "over 304,000 objects is a significant resource with high integrity encompassing the Sandburg's original furnishings and the majority of Carl Sandburg's working library. It contributes directly to the understanding



**Figure 11.2** Sandburg's cane collection is located in the Living Room in the Main House. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

and interpretation of the park's purpose, themes, and resources. The museum collection contains fine works of art, personal objects, literary awards, farm equipment, natural history specimens, archeological objects, household furnishings, personal papers, and books."<sup>20</sup> The CMP team recognized the advancements the park had made over the past 30 years and acknowledged the recent support in developing the museum collections program but noted areas where additional work was still needed. The CMP presented both short- and long-term issues in several areas. For Museum Archival Record Management, the report recommended processing the museum archives under the direction of a professional archivist and provided "tentative hierarchies, as starting points, for Series and Subseries ordering which may translate into physical rearrangement strategies." The report suggested that the park update its collections accessions records to meet NPS standards and improve storage conditions for the collection both in the Museum Preservation Center and in the Main House, including addressing a silverfish infestation in the Main House. Staffing for the museum management program was determined to be insufficient "to properly preserve, catalog, and make the collections accessible to staff and outside researchers," so the team proposed that the park create a full-time curator position and hire an archivist to process the archival collection. Another set of recommendations related to the furnishing report for the Main House, requested that the park reduce the size of the tour groups and reassess and update the Historic Furnishings Report. Last, the CMP suggested that the park update the Museum

16 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 16.

17 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 18-19.

18 Backlund, interview.

19 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003; Collections Management Plan, 2005, v.

20 Collections Management Plan, 2005.

Collection Fire Protection Survey and ask for funding to complete a new Museum Collection Security Survey.<sup>21</sup>

## Growing the Museum Collection

In response to these new planning documents, the park expanded its collections in several areas. The park acquired several significant cultural artifacts related to Sandburg and his family. In 2005, Joanna Steichen, Edward's widow, donated Carl Sandburg's circa 1927 Lyon and Healy Washburn Model 5270 bell-shaped guitar and case.<sup>22</sup> In 2006, the park added a collection of 60 photographs of the Sandburgs taken in 1956 by renowned Farm Security Administration photographer John Vachon.<sup>23</sup> The Sandburg family donated some items as part of the process of updating the Historic Furnishing Plan and staff also worked to acquire additional objects for that purpose.

Another significant area of growth proposed in the new Scope of Collections Statement was the natural history collection, especially with the NPS



**Figure 11.3** Biological Sciences Technician Irene Van Hoff and volunteer Ann Ulinski review specimens in the Herbarium collection at the park. 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

Natural Resource Challenge underway. The park already owned natural history specimens that the Sandburgs had collected from Connemara. As the Inventory and Monitoring program grew, additional natural history collections were added.

With funds from the regional office and support from the Nature Conservancy, the park began a two-year project in 1996 to "create a herbarium as part of the museum collection."<sup>24</sup> In 1998, the Park catalogued 133 biological specimens and 115 geological specimens into its collection and anticipated adding 400 specimens from the vascular plant inventory then underway.<sup>25</sup> As the inventory of the park's vascular plants evolved, the staff "located, sampled, pressed, dried and mounted" new specimens to add to the collection, with assistance from the curator, and the results were added into the NPSpecies and ANCS+ data bases.<sup>26</sup> The 2005 CMP noted that 375 species had been identified and collected. Through the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program, NatureServe identified and collected 135 additional vascular plant species. From 1997 through 2003, volunteer biologist Dr. Herb Sierk collected another 100 species of nonvascular plant specimens for the park's herbarium.<sup>27</sup> Proud of this work, Backlund recalled, "We are probably one of the few small parks that has such a wonderful herbarium."<sup>28</sup>

The park expanded its other natural history collections with 33 wet specimens from the reptile and amphibian inventory in 2006. The fish and mammal inventories to be completed that same year were expected to yield 13 wet fish specimens and two mammal specimens, which the park loaned to the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. The museum staff added the reports and archival materials generated from these surveys to the archival records.<sup>29</sup>

In 1998, the total number of accessioned items in the park collection was estimated at 226,000, most of which were donated by the Sandburg family.<sup>30</sup> By 2004, the park collection totaled 310,825 objects, including 181,515 items in the archives. Some of this increase came from processing the archival collection and the Collections Condition Survey that year projected that the archives would continue to grow.<sup>31</sup> Three years later, in 2007, the park collection had grown to 325,289, including:

21 Collections Management Plan, 2005, viii-ix.  
22 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005.  
23 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006.

24 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.  
25 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 11.  
26 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.  
27 Collections Management Plan, 2005, 3.  
28 Backlund, interview.  
29 Collections Management Plan, 2005, 3.  
30 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 3.  
31 Collections Condition Survey, 2004, 18.



8,631 objects for the archaeological collections; seven items classified as ethnological; 181,628 history artifacts; 133,731 archival materials; 1,161 biology specimens; nine items for the paleontology collection; and 122 objects concerning geology.<sup>32</sup>

According to these figures, the park collection grew by almost 100,000 items through 2007. This growth occurred for several reasons. First, the park acquired some collections, including the natural history specimens; objects to complete the furnishing plan, and selective donations relevant to Sandburg and his family. Another reason for the ever increasing number of collections, however, is that park staff more carefully processed what it already owned. During these years, the curator,



**Figure 11.4** The park continues to acquire some new items to use in the house so some of the more fragile historical objects can be removed to storage. This stove was acquired by the National Park Service to replace Sandburg's original stove. January 17, 2002 (CARL Park Archive).

museum staff, and volunteers cataloged objects found in the collection, added ANCS+ records for collections not previously included in the database, and undertook professional archival processing projects that more accurately described the park's extensive collections.

## Cataloging the Collection

Former Museum Technician Bess Gibbs recalled that "most" of the cataloging was done by the time that "Warren [Weber] had us start working on preservation," but the park staff still had some cataloging to do. Besides cataloging the objects found in the house that had not been processed,

the staff scoured through all the buildings to be sure that everything had been documented.<sup>33</sup>

Curatorial staff and volunteers assessed the collections in the woodshed in the summer of 1996, and then they began work in the barn loft, which Gibbs described as dirty and "filled with stuff." It contained a variety of objects "that you'd find in a barnyard. Milk cartons and big drip pans that [the Sandburgs] kept under the roof in the house to catch the rain because the roof was leaking." A cataloging team of five people worked in the barn loft that summer, climbing up and down a ladder to retrieve these sometimes large and awkward artifacts. Everything had to be cleaned and washed before being moved into the Preservation Center. Gibbs described this effort as "a major drive that summer to get that cataloged." Warren Weber put shelves in the Museum Preservation Center, covered them with Masonite and paint, and then the team rehoused the objects there. As the staff checked through all the buildings for uncataloged artifacts, they realized that some large items, like the Jeep and the fertilizer spreader, had not been cataloged. They found additional undocumented objects in the tool shed, so they processed those as well.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, the staff needed to enter some of its pre-ANCS collection into the database. In 1997, park staff added 6,500 records to this database.<sup>35</sup> By 1998, the staff received, installed, and was actively using the new ANCS+ collections management program, which came along with a \$3,000 increase in base funding for the new catalog program.<sup>36</sup> The park continued to receive funds for backlog cataloging that allowed staff and volunteers to enter "missing catalog descriptions" into the ANCS+ program, including 1,000 early catalog records and 417 vascular plant specimens in 2001.<sup>37</sup>

The numbers of items and records processed at the park increased between 2003 through 2005. During these three years, the staff accessioned 6,372 objects, cataloged 7,086 artifacts, and updated 32,238 records "to improve access and accuracy." Also entered into the ANCS+ database were the archival collections processed as part of the

32 Collections Management Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, National Park Service, 2008, CARL Park Archive.

33 Gibbs, interview.

34 Gibbs, interview.

35 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

36 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

37 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.



**Figure 11.5** After retiring from the park, Bess Gibbs remained supportive of the park. She volunteered with museum collections. Here she is working with the clothing collection in the Museum Preservation Center. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

Catalog Backlog Archival Collections (described later in this chapter). The numbers for accessions and cataloging declined in 2006 to 17 accessioned and 190 cataloged.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003-2006. The staff accessioned 3,200 objects and updated 32,238 records "to improve access and accuracy" in 2003, accessioned 1,623 objects and catalogued 3,384 objects in 2004, and park accessioned 1,549 and cataloged 3,702 in 2005.



**Figure 11.6** Volunteer Bess Gibbs works with the collections in the Museum Preservation Center. Circa 2010 (CARL Park Archive).

Gibbs still marveled at the quality of the cataloging the staff and volunteers accomplished during those years, remembering the "tremendous effort" to complete it. "And now, I'm absolutely amazed when I go in and take an archival box off the shelf and I go through it, and it's all in order. It's exactly like it should be."<sup>39</sup> A cadre of dedicated volunteers, including former park staff members Gibbs and Steve Harrison, continued to help with "organizing things, and then doing record keeping, and so on."<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 11.7** NPS retiree Steve Harrison helps to process materials in the museum collections. The park depends on experienced, knowledgeable, and hardworking volunteers like Harrison to help complete its museum work. 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

## Improving Collections Storage

When Connie Backlund arrived in 1994, the park staff was in the process of building a new Museum Preservation Center to house the collections not on exhibit. The 1994/5 Annual Report notes that the "major focus" of the maintenance team was "assembling" the Bally building. The 4,000-square-foot building contained 3,200 square feet of curatorial storage plus an office for the curator, a preservation laboratory, and a bathroom.<sup>41</sup>

Once the building was complete, maintenance staff assembled the storage shelving, and the staff began preparing to move the collection into the building in 1995. As Backlund wrote in her Annual Report that year, "many hours have been spent

<sup>39</sup> Gibbs, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Weber, interview, 2011.

<sup>41</sup> Sarah L. Van Beck, Archive Assessment, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Curatorial Services Program, Cultural Resource Stewardship, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, March 13, 2000, 20.





**Figure 11.8** The park staff celebrates the completion of the Museum Preservation Center with a ribbon cutting. While much of the construction of the building took place before Superintendent Backlund arrived, she was on duty for the opening. Circa 1994 (CARL Park Archive).

in preparation for the move.” The staff cleaned the “magazines, newspapers, clippings, journals, and programs” and placed these collections in archival boxes prior to the move. The same process occurred for the many archival collections on the top floor of the Swedish House, which were all “inventoried, cleaned, and boxed” and then moved into the Preservation Center.<sup>42</sup> The bulk of the move occurred in 1996, when the park received \$20,000 in special museum funding to clean and move objects into the Museum Preservation Center.<sup>43</sup> Warren Weber described the move as a “major undertaking with objects cleaned, properly packed for storage, inventories made and catalogue records updated.”<sup>44</sup>

Bess Gibbs remembered moving collections into the Preservation Center in January of 1996 “and it was just empty shelves.” Some “old tables and chairs” were placed in the outer room because there was no funding for furniture yet. The staff began by moving the archival boxes. In the summer of 1996, they moved the cabinets and drawers from the Tenant House.<sup>45</sup> Then they moved “much

from our Main House,” putting “non-exhibited items” into the new high-quality museum storage area. Backlund explained that the move “had the additional benefits of reducing the weight load” in the Main House.<sup>46</sup>

Backlund recalled that there were collections “everywhere in the house that you never saw,” just as in one’s own home where there are “cupboards,



**Figure 11.9 (above) and 11.10 (below)** The park continues to catalog the collections and place them into storage once the Museum Preservation Center is completed. These two photographs show the Barn Kitchen before the historical items were removed to the Center. Circa 1998 (CARL Park Archive).



and drawers, and boxes, and closets, and all these spaces.” Plus, there were collections in the outbuildings, and the Swedish House was full of “magazines, magazines, magazines!” The museum staff moved collections “from everywhere!”<sup>47</sup>

Once the collections were gathered into the Museum Preservation Center, the museum staff organized them. Gibbs remembered, “None of the collection had been stored properly. They had just been put in flat specimen boxes.” So the staff cut out the shape of the objects in foam and put the foam in the boxes, placing the objects within the cut-outs, “so that when you picked the box

42 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1994/5; Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 20.

43 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

44 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 10.

45 Gibbs, interview.

46 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

47 Backlund, interview.



up, they didn't wiggle. We did that for a long time to get those things in good shape." In addition, Gibbs numbered the shelves and storage units and then changed the locations for the artifacts on the catalog records "so that you could find things."<sup>48</sup>

There were some challenges in getting the new Bally building to function correctly. For the first several years, temperature and humidity levels fluctuated.<sup>49</sup> A visiting archivist in 1998 reported that the building was leaking during heavy rains, and maintenance staff was working to identify the leaks and fix them. The archivist also documented problems with relative humidity.<sup>50</sup> To combat the high humidity, the park installed a Munters Cargocaire HC-300 desiccant dehumidifier in 2000. After unsuccessful attempts to repair the leaks for several years, the park staff added a truss roof with flashing and a free-standing cedar-frame shell of panels in 2001 "to improve climate control."<sup>51</sup> Insulation was added between the structure and the shell.<sup>52</sup> After these improvements, the building finally functioned with appropriate environmental controls. "It's a building in a building, and that's why it's just so perfectly constant," Backlund recalled. "But it did take some



**Figure 11.11** The park installed compact shelving in the Museum Preservation Center in 2008 as Phase III of its program to improve collections storage. October 9, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

time to get that straight line hydrothermograph where the temperature and humidity are just so."<sup>53</sup>

48 Gibbs, interview.

49 Alan Levitan, *Collections Storage Survey, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site*, Harpers Ferry Center, Conservation Division, National Park Service, November 2004, 9, CARL Park Archive.

50 Van Beck, *Archive Assessment*, 2000, 20.

51 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

52 Levitan, *Collections Storage Survey*, 2004, 9.

53 Backlund, interview.

Over the next several years, the park received funding to purchase new storage equipment for the Museum Preservation Center. In 2001, for example, the park made "major improvements" to collections storage by adding "metal bases under museum cabinets, rolling large textiles and storing them on new metal racks, vertically storing framed art on new hanging screens," and adding additional metal shelves to store document boxes.<sup>54</sup>

The staff explored options to improve the storage area. Museum Specialist Alice Newton, from Harpers Ferry Center, visited the park from August 29 through September 1, 2004, to begin preparing a Collections Storage Plan.<sup>55</sup> Her survey reviewed the existing storage conditions in the Main House and Museum Preservation Center as well as in the Buck House and Wood Shed where the park kept additional collections materials and made recommendations about how to improve storage at the park.<sup>56</sup> To implement this plan, the park acquired 18 compact storage shelving units in 2006 to 2007 with support from special project funding provided to repair and replace "outdated and inefficient museum equipment."

Specific types of collections needed more focused evaluation. In 2007, Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) completed a Collections Condition Survey for the textiles at the park, from bedspreads, rugs, and tablecloths, to chairs, cushions, and bureau scarves.<sup>57</sup> That same year, HFC conservators also assessed the condition of the Steichen and Weston Photography Collection.<sup>58</sup> The following year, the park acquired funding to implement some of the recommendations in the Textile Condition Survey.<sup>59</sup>

In 2008, the park received \$148,200 to move objects, install compact shelving, and then return the artifacts to their new storage cabinets in the Museum Preservation Center. The configuration

54 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

55 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005.

56 Levitan, *Collections Storage Survey*, 2004.

57 Photograph Condition Report, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Conservation-Paper Laboratory, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, 2007, CARL Park Archive; Textile Condition Survey, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Conservation-Textile Laboratory, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, 2007, CARL Park Archive.

58 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

59 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.



**Figure 11.12** The park worked to upgrade its preservation storage in recent years. This photograph shows the Sandburg shoe collection. September 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

of shelving required the staff to create more "concise and consistent" labeling for the storage areas and to update "thousands" of the ANCS+ records with the new locations. Additional special project funds allowed the park to purchase freezers to store film-based materials. To ensure that the Museum Preservation Center met appropriate standards for fire, physical security, and storage, the park obtained money to purchase a back-up power unit and a second circuit breaker panel.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 11.13** With the construction of the Maintenance Building, the park remodeled the old Barn Garage into an exhibit space for the vehicles at the park. The curatorial staff and volunteers worked to conserve the Jeep and tractor in 1994 and 1995. October 19, 2006 (CARL Park Archive)

As Backlund reflected, the "storage, the internal cabinets, the new cabinets" represented the "essence of the National Park Service and what you do when you are trying to preserve something forever."<sup>61</sup>

The size and scale of some of the objects, such as the farm equipment, meant that not all collections could be stored in the Museum Preservation

Center. The 2005 Collections Condition Survey observed that the park kept some of these larger items in the Milk House, Barn, Barn Garage, Buck House, Shaving Shed, and Wood Shed.<sup>62</sup> Although the farm buildings did not provide a climate-controlled storage area, park staff continued to monitor these areas on a regular basis.

## Preserving the Museum Collections

Park staff began preservation and conservation of the collection before Backlund arrived, but these activities intensified during her tenure as superintendent. She noted in 1997 that the "cleaning and conservation of museum objects is systematic and on-going."<sup>63</sup> The 1998 Resource Management Plan stated, "As museum accountability is virtually completed, we are now conserving objects. This is a program that requires skilled personnel whether it is paid or volunteer labor. It is an ongoing and never ending program."<sup>64</sup>



**Figure 11.14** The book collection in the house poses significant challenges in preservation. This photograph shows the books stored on the Ground Floor (Room 018). Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

Routine cleaning of the collection in the Main House was part of the park's ongoing housekeeping tasks. As needed and as time and opportunity allowed, the curatorial staff undertook more extensive cleaning projects in the house. In 1994-5, for example, they cleaned three rooms "from top to bottom," waxing furniture and floors "where appropriate" and cleaning the books and phonograph records. The staff replaced Sandburg's bookmarks with acid-free paper and cataloged

60 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

61 Backlund, interview.

62 Collections Condition Survey, 2005, 7.

63 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

64 Resource Management Plan, 1998, 14.

the original bookmarks. While cleaning, the staff discovered over 1,000 objects that needed cataloging and completed those records, but noted that they had found an additional 1,500 items that still needed to be cataloged.<sup>65</sup> Maintenance projects in the Main House often led to more thorough artifact cleaning as well. In 2002, to prepare Sandburg's Bedroom and the Crow's



**Figure 11.15** The park covered the artifact collection in Sandburg's Study in preparation for painting in the room. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.16** The collection in Sandburg's Bedroom provides insight into his life. (CARL Park Archive).

Nest for painting, the staff removed all the historic furnishings from the two rooms, inventoried and cleaned the artifacts, vacuumed the textiles, waxed the wooden furniture, and then reinstalled the collection in the room after the painting was complete.<sup>66</sup>

The museum staff and an active volunteer group continued the park's focus on metal conservation following the preservation class taught in 1992 (See Chapter Seven). The Annual Reports recorded treating over 150 metal objects during 1994 and 1995, ranging from a Jeep and tractor to farm tools, kitchen equipment, lamps, and filing cabinets.<sup>67</sup>



**Figure 11.17** The museum staff at the park conserves many of the kitchen appliances after a workshop on this topic at the park in 1992. 1995 (CARL Park Archive).

Several years later, in 2002, the park once again reported conserving metal objects, including metal furniture and farm implements that had been left outside in a field since the Sandburgs moved away from Connemara.<sup>68</sup>

Some collections required treatment by professional conservators at Harpers Ferry Center. In 1994-5, the park sent nine objects to HFC and contracted with conservators to treat twelve other artifacts. Sometimes, the park staff went to Harpers Ferry for training. In 1997, for example, Lynn Savage learned how to properly mount photographs for museum storage so that she could professionally store the original Steichen photograph collection.<sup>69</sup> The park had been storing the photos in map cases, but the Collections Management Report recommended that they be matted. When the Friends of Connemara helped sponsor an art show featuring the Steichen photographs at the Asheville Art Museum, two volunteers completed the matting and framing. Bess Gibbs recalled that they matted "most or all of the very valuable photographs in the collection. That would have cost a lot of money for the labor."<sup>70</sup>

Sometimes the Harpers Ferry Center staff came to the park to assist with conservation work. In 1997, HFC paper conservator Nancy Purinton taught a workshop and prepared a report entitled Paper Collections on what the park needed to do to correctly store its paper resources.<sup>71</sup> This report provided recommendations primarily for the books, but it also included a discussion about

65 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5.

66 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

67 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5.

68 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

69 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

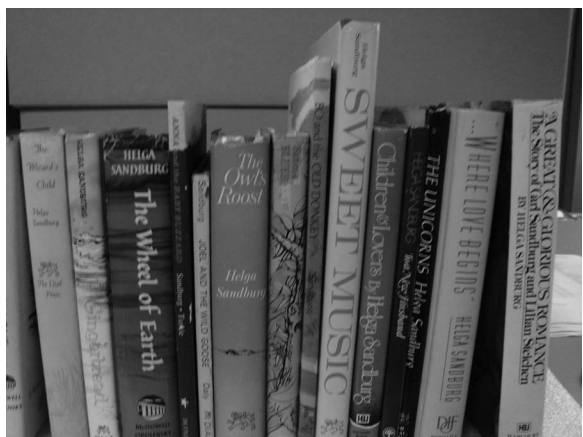
70 Gibbs, interview.

71 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.



how to preserve the Asian prints and Steichen photographs in the collection.<sup>72</sup>

The furniture collection gained attention in 1998, when Harpers Ferry Center furniture conservator Alan Levitan conducted an on-site evaluation of "wood objects needs" and a "furniture care workshop." While at the park, conservators treated several wooden bookcase covers.<sup>73</sup> Over the next two years, Levitan and other conservators



**Figure 11.18** The park staff and volunteers participated in a workshop on book repair and preservation in 1997, and for the next several years. Among the books in the collection are these publications by Helga Sandburg. (CARL Park Archive).

assisted park staff with furniture conservation projects by treating some of the objects at the park, training staff to do some tasks, and taking several pieces to HFC for treatment.<sup>74</sup> The Annual Report from 2000 stated that the museum staff and

72 Van Beck, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Archives Assessment*, 2000, 7; Collections Management Plan, 2005, 2.

73 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

74 Collections Management Plan, 2005, 3.



**Figure 11.19** Cleaning and conservation of the park's collections requires constant attention. Rooms like the Dining Room present a variety of challenges, from book to furniture conservation. The park held workshops on both these topics. Circa 1995 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.20** Museum volunteer Jim Stockman helps with cleaning the furniture. Photograph by Phil Smith. (CARL Park Archive).

volunteers "finished their furniture conservation efforts," and now the furniture would not need additional attention for 20 years.<sup>75</sup>

Sandburg's significant art and music collection also received conservation treatment during these years. In 1999-2000, Marion Hunter, a photograph conservator from Harpers Ferry Center, evaluated the conservation needs and storage conditions for the Edward Steichen prints and autochromes at the park.<sup>76</sup> Special project funding allowed the park to conserve 17 of the most significant Steichen photographs, to research 31 of the Asian prints that Sandburg had collected, and to prepare treatment plans for the art collection.<sup>77</sup> In 2002, the park conserved six autochrome plates and nine photographs by Steichen, as well as 60 of Sandburg's wire and reel recordings, producing preservation and use copies of the latter on compact disk. The next year, special funds supported the treatment of 29 Hokusai woodcut

75 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000. This project was completed with \$29,000 in artifact preservation funding.

76 Collections Management Plan, 2005, 3.

77 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001-2.



**Figure 11.21** The park utilizes plexiglass bonnets to protect the collections that are accessible to visitors. These bonnets protect the records in the main hallway on the second floor. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

prints sent to the paper conservation laboratory at Harpers Ferry Center.<sup>78</sup>

The park also treated the valuable collection of plates Sandburg acquired from the *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. In 2003, the 175 plates were cleaned and preserved and a finding aid for the *Atlas* was created. The park acquired the remaining three plates needed to complete the set the following year and each was cataloged "to capture the unique information they contain."<sup>79</sup> In 2006, the park digitized the *Atlas* to make the digital images accessible online.<sup>80</sup>

Some projects involved hiring short-term staff or individuals with special skills. In 2001, the park hired a temporary student employee and a part-time seasonal employee to continue to rehouse and

78 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

79 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2004.

80 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006.



**Figure 11.22** In 2006, the park obtains funding to scan the significant *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. August 4, 2006 (CARL Park Archive)

catalog museum and archival materials, prepare textiles for storage, and conduct other preservation treatments.<sup>81</sup>

As park staff gained more experience in caring for the collection, they began to assist other parks and museums in the region. In 1996, the museum staff led a workshop about the care of historic objects for the South Carolina Museum Council. They also helped other national parks, including Cowpens National Battlefield and Stones River National Battlefield, with preparing museum records and collection management reports.<sup>82</sup> To continue to expand their own knowledge, the park's curatorial staff partnered with other museums, such as the Biltmore, in their preservation efforts.

## Preserving the Collections in the Main House

The care of the collection on exhibit in the Main House continued to demand attention. The Main House was one of the primary tools the park used to tell the Sandburg story and the objects contained in the house were critical to this effort. A 2005 report stated that approximately 67,000 "period and associated collection objects" were on exhibit in the Main House.<sup>83</sup> Since 1974, the park had made significant improvements in the care and security of its collections on exhibit, but concerns about the climate in the Main House and an outbreak of mold would lead to changes in the way the park managed the house environment.

Balancing the need to bring visitors into the Main House to tell the Sandburg story with the security and preservation of the collection had consistently been a challenge. Efforts to improve care of the collections in the Main House improved during the Hulick years and continued after Backlund arrived at the park. To manage visitor traffic, the staff utilized floor runners for the tour routes, roped off some of the rooms to manage access, limited the size of the tour group to 15 people, and monitored the visitors during the tour.<sup>84</sup>

Annual Reports documented the staff's continued

81 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001-2.

82 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

83 Levitan, Collections Storage Survey, 2004.

84 Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 2005, 89.



commitment to protecting the collections in the house. For example, the park installed new carpet runners in 1996 and again in 2008.<sup>85</sup> In 1997, an internal operations evaluation team recommended against continuing the open house tradition for the Home for Holidays Christmas



**Figure 11.23** The park keeps magazines around the house as the Sandburgs would have done, but the museum staff and volunteers rotate the collections to avoid excessive wear, including these piles of magazines at the foot of the main floor stairwell. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

program, stating that this format did not provide "the best care of our museum resources" in the house. This recommendation contributed to the park's decision to change the event to a one-day celebration using guided tours rather than an open house format.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to challenges brought by heavy visitor traffic, the large windows in the Main House increased the potential for light damage to the collection on display. Although the Sandburgs

85 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

86 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.



**Figure 11.24** The park struggles to protect the valuable collection in the Main House with heavy visitor traffic, especially the paper materials that are accessible to the visitors. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.25** Park staff installs new carpet runners in the Main House to provide more protection for the collections. June 1996 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.26** The park uses carpet runners in the Main House to help protect the collections. They were replaced in 1996 and again in 2008. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

preferred to allow the maximum amount of light into the home, the park staff recognized the need to reduce the natural light in the house to protect the collection. In 1997, the staff installed a "new type of light filter" on the Main House windows. The Main House Historic Structure Report added that "all storm sash were glazed with a light-filtering material, and light filtering film was applied to the primary glazing for storm sash."<sup>87</sup> In 2001, staff mounted new window shades to reduce the amount of light coming into the house.<sup>88</sup>

Another conservation concern in the Main House was Sandburg's extensive book collection. Greensboro, North Carolina, book conservator Don Ethenrington led a workshop on book repair and preservation at the park in 1999, teaching the staff and volunteers how to make book boxes and Mylar covers for damaged books and to mend torn

87 Jones, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: Connemara Main House Historic Structure Report*, 2005, 89.

88 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997, 2001.





**Figure 11.27** The curatorial staff creates an exhibit in the Kitchen for the Christmas season. December 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

book jackets. The museum staff then cleaned and preserved 12,000 books and mended the jackets for more than 1,700 books in Sandburg's Office.<sup>89</sup> The work continued into 2002, as the staff made "protective Mylar covers or cardstock boxes for damaged books" and used "heat set tissue to mend torn and damaged book jackets."<sup>90</sup> In 2003, the park cleaned and preserved another 1,600 books.<sup>91</sup>



**Figure 11.28** To improve the environment in the Main House, Jesse from Tintworks installed film on the windows. 2005-6 (CARL Park Archive).

Probably one of the greatest preservation challenges in the Main House was the fluctuating temperature and relative humidity. The house had heat but there was no air conditioning, making it particularly difficult to monitor the temperature and humidity in the summer months. Backlund recalled that there had been a proposal for a "major giant HVAC system" when she first arrived, but she "didn't feel comfortable with it," nor did the

<sup>89</sup> Collections Management Plan, 2005, 2; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001

<sup>90</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.



**Figure 11.29** After a workshop on repairing and preserving the books in the Main House, park curatorial staff and volunteers launch a multi-year project to clean and preserve the book collection. Circa 2004 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.30** Park staff and volunteers clean and help to preserve the extensive Sandburg library, shown here in the hallway of the second floor of the Main House. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

chief of maintenance or the chief of resource management. Backlund had coordinated a training course at another NPS historic home that had installed a "huge" heating and air conditioning system and "it just wreaked havoc with the historic home." Instead, the park decided to pursue a

"thoughtful, diligent, careful approach" through a "really detailed assessment."<sup>92</sup>

To evaluate the conditions, the park began a Comprehensive Environmental Monitoring Project inside the Main House in 2002, a project that would ultimately extend through 2008. In May 2002, the Park Service contracted with Watson and Henry Associates, a New Jersey architectural and engineering company, to develop recommendations for improving the environment of the Main House. Company representatives



**Figure 11.31** The park's large collection of Sandburg books requires constant care. NPS book conservator Don Ethenrington led a workshop on book repair and preservation at the park in 1999. Circa 1999 (CARL Park Archive).

visited the park on June 25-26 of that year, observed the buildings and conditions, met with park and SERO staff, and submitted a report in October 2002.<sup>93</sup>

Taking into consideration the building, collections, and operational objectives, the report made several observations and offered recommendations. These suggestions included removing the staff break area into another building, relocating the boiler, controlling natural light, making all windows operable, opening and closing windows and doors based on internal climate needs, reducing moisture from gutters and drainage, and a variety of other strategies to maintain the best possible temperature and humidity conditions in the house. The report also advised that the park install a new mechanical and electrical system. In the absence of that system, however, the professional team recommended ventilation and attic fans and strategies for



**Figure 11.32** Environmental issues prove challenging to CARL's collection in the Main House. Concern about maintaining the collection in a stable environment led the park to embark on a Comprehensive Environmental Monitoring Project in 2002. The amount of natural light and inconsistent temperature and humidity are significant challenges. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

temperature and source moisture control and fire detection and prevention.<sup>94</sup>

One of the potential problems the report predicted was mold. Given the Preservation Index values in the house in the summer months, developed from the dry-bulb temperature and relative humidity values, the authors wrote that there was "reasonable certainty of mold risk" on the ground and first floor of the Main House, especially during the month of August.<sup>95</sup> Around August 19-20, 2003, volunteer Bess Gibbs discovered active mold growing on a record player and chair in the Dining Room while she and another staff member were conducting an inventory. The museum technician began to examine other rooms and objects using a flashlight and found mold on objects in every room of the main floor. The staff stopped their investigation immediately because of safety concerns and the "magnitude of the problem."<sup>96</sup>

"It had been a rainy summer," recalled Superintendent Backlund. "We had a lot of moisture. So we moved into our own internal

92 Backlund, interview.

93 Watson and Henry Associates, *Recommendations for Interior Environmental Improvements for the Main House, Final Report*, October 9, 2002, 1-28.

94 Watson and Henry Associates, *Recommendations for Interior Environmental Improvements for the Main House, Final Report*, 2002, 1-28.

95 Watson and Henry Associates, *Recommendations for Interior Environmental Improvements for the Main House, Final Report*, 2002, 10.

96 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003; "Mold Came on Little Cat Feet—Lessons Learned from the 2003 Mold Outbreak at Carl Sandburg Home NHS," PowerPoint presentation, 2003, CARL Park Archive. Note that the PowerPoint lists August 19 while the SAR lists August 20 as the date of the outbreak..





**Figure 11.33** The Comprehensive Environmental Monitoring Project, which took place 2002-2008, recommends that the park control the humidity by making windows operative and then opening and closing the windows and doors, based on internal environmental needs. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

incident management planning.” Backlund established a Mold Committee composed of park employees to focus on the project and she consulted with the NPS public health expert out of the Denver Service Center. He told her to change the environment so that the mold “goes dormant” and then “deal with it as if any mold that might be



**Figure 11.34** Bess Gibbs, a volunteer with the museum’s curatorial program, discovered the mold outbreak in August 2003. Mold was growing on a record player and chair in the Dining Room. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

bad. You have to attend to it, abate it, remove it and assume that it’s not good mold.”<sup>97</sup>

The park received a total of \$63,453 that year for emergency mold remediation from the regional office, which Backlund greatly appreciated, especially at the end of the fiscal year. The Mold Committee worked with professional contractors to dehumidify the home, a process that consumed most of the museum staff’s time during the latter part of that fiscal year.<sup>98</sup> The contractors installed



**Figure 11.35** A volunteer wears safety equipment as she began examining the rooms looking for mold. August 20, 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.36** Park museum staff discover mold on the seat of this chair. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).

six dehumidifiers, stationed on all three floors, and three HEPA air scrubbers. “We brought in the dehumidifiers and for the first time, we got some big . . . dehumidifiers that we still use,” recalled Backlund, and these “got rid of the humidity and moisture.” The museum team worked side-by-side with outside resource people to be sure that all collections were “carefully moved and carefully handled.”<sup>99</sup> Museum staff thoroughly cleaned the house, working closely with the contractors. The park completed the mold mitigation on October 10, 2003.<sup>100</sup> The 2004 Annual Report stated that the outbreak subsided because of better weather and the installation of the three dehumidifiers and three “air handles,” which created “a clearer and more stable environment for the objects on display.”<sup>101</sup>

After the mold outbreak, CARL began a “twelve-month comprehensive environmental monitoring

<sup>97</sup> Backlund, interview.

<sup>98</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

<sup>99</sup> Backlund, interview.

<sup>100</sup> “Mold Came on Little Cat Feet . . .”

<sup>101</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.





**Figure 11.37** Mold remediation took place on the piano. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.40** Curator Ann White Savage cleans a chair during the mold remediation. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.38** Air scrubbers were one of the pieces of equipment installed in the house for the mold outbreak. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.41** The placement of objects is documented before workers move smaller objects to the cart during the mold remediation efforts. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.39** Dehumidifiers are placed around the house to assist with mold remediation. August 2003 (CARL Park Archive).

program" from September 2004 through September 2005. The goal was to document the seasonal changes in temperature and humidity inside and outside the house and to assess how the temperature and humidity in the house related to the environment outside. Staff used data loggers

and a weather station to record the climate, both exterior and interior. CARL again contracted with Watson and Henry Associates to assist with data analysis and also worked closely with the regional office. While this work was going on, the museum staff removed some of the more sensitive pieces in the collections from the house, returning them when the environment was safer.<sup>102</sup>

102 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2004-6; Watson and Henry Associates, *Environmental Monitoring Report Phase II*, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, December 2008.

The park implemented a variety of recommendations from the *Environmental Monitoring Report*, from repairing the gutters to completing exterior renovations, in 2005. A report from that year noted that the temperature and the humidity levels in the house were "moderated through daily staff actions. Environmental moderation is achieved by opening and closing windows, utilizing screens, operating electrical fans to increase air circulation, and adjustment of window shades." In addition, the staff performed regular cleaning and daily monitoring of the temperature, humidity, and light in the Main House.<sup>103</sup>

The park continued to study the conditions inside the Main House and to make changes to improve the environment through 2008. The park extended the contract for environmental monitoring with Watson and Henry Associates for another twelve-month cycle, from September 2006 through September 2007. The park made some changes to the Main House as part of the "on-going project to implement environmental improvements," including plaster repair, interior painting, and removal of asbestos in 2005 and window repair and other exterior "restoration work" in 2006.<sup>104</sup> The goals of the new monitoring project were similar: to install monitoring devices, analyze data, and assess the "seasonal behavior" of the interior and building systems in relation to the climate conditions.<sup>105</sup>

The final report by Watson and Henry Associates in 2008 made recommendations for long-range changes, which again included the installation of new mechanical and electrical systems. The park added a radiant heat barrier in the attic as well as attic fans and new ductwork "to improve air flow during the summer months" in 2008. The consulting team also suggested that the park staff continue the monitoring program already underway. The company did not believe that outside consultants were needed unless the park changed the building or other equipment.<sup>106</sup>

The new dehumidifiers and careful monitoring helped the park staff to better maintain an appropriate environment within the Main House.

103 Levitan, Collections Storage Survey, 2004, 7.

104 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005-6.

105 Watson and Henry Associates, *Environmental Monitoring Report Phase II*, 2008, 1-2, 33.

106 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.



Figure 11.42 Painting in the interior rooms was part of the park plan to implement the environmental recommendations in 2006. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



Figure 11.43 To implement the recommendations for improving the house environment, the park undertook repairs on the windows in 2006. Here, Larry from Enola is repairing the window on Room 207. November 15, 2005 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 11.44** Painting the interior of the house, one of the recommendations included in the environmental monitoring report, required removing the many books around the Main House. February 23, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

"We have done a pretty detailed environmental assessment of the main home with a contractor coming in and assessing the home and the structure and when do we open windows, when do we close windows." The park did not install an air conditioning system in the Main House, choosing instead to perform detailed research and monitoring to move the air and to employ plenty of fans. As Backlund reflected, "When you are managing something for forever preservation, you'd better know clearly what you do before you do it."<sup>107</sup>

## Implementing and Updating the Historic Furnishings Report



**Figure 11.45** Park rangers Paula (left) and Pat Prywood (right) carefully remove the books in advance of the painters. 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

The Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) prepared for the Main House in 1984 offered a well-researched and thoughtful plan for selecting and arranging the furnishings in the Main House. While the staff had begun to utilize the HFR during

<sup>107</sup> Backlund, interview.

the Hulick years, some of the recommendations still needed to be implemented. In addition, new source material and continued debate over some of the recommendations in the report led the park to update the HFR between 2006 and 2007.

In 1996, when the park moved the curatorial offices out of Margaret's Bedroom and into the new Museum Preservation Center, staff began to prepare her bedroom as an interpretive space, thus implementing one of the recommendations in the Historic Furnishings Report.<sup>108</sup> The first staff at the park had removed the furniture in the room to convert it into office space. The park kept and reinstalled the pieces so that "all the furniture that we have is actually what Margaret had," recalled Warren Weber.<sup>109</sup> Margaret's Bedroom opened for visitors in 1998.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, the park discontinued staff use of the bathroom off Margaret's Bedroom and interpreted this space as an exhibit area for visitors.<sup>111</sup>

Questions about how to furnish and interpret the Front Room lingered among both Sandburg's family and park staff. The updated Scope of Collections Statement from 2003 noted that the



**Figure 11.46** The 2007 *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update* focuses attention on furnishing and interpreting Margaret's Bedroom. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

Historic Furnishings Report produced two options for the Front Room but had not recommended one "set plan," due to two different opinions on how this room should be furnished and interpreted. Some members of the family hoped to interpret this space "in its early period of use" as a "music room/family room," but the SOCS observed that

<sup>108</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996; Donovan, interview.

<sup>109</sup> Weber, interview, 2011.

<sup>110</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

<sup>111</sup> Gibbs, interview.



the remainder of the house was interpreted at a later period, during which time the family used the Front Room as one of Sandburg's "work rooms." Since "some of the Music Room era furniture is not currently available," the Scope of Collections Statement argued that objects "documented to the site or to Carl Sandburg are more desirable than a similar object without any association." Thus, keeping the room furnished at its last date was the preferred suggestion. Still, the SOCS provided a list of furnishings needed for both options.<sup>112</sup>

The 2005 Collections Management Plan (CMP) recommended that the 1984 Historic Furnishings Report be updated to resolve some of the lingering issues. Besides the questions about the period for furnishing the Front Room, there had been some debate among park staff and members of the family as to whether the Main House should be interpreted at an earlier date. The CMP suggested clarifying "the period of interpretation" and incorporating new information unavailable at the time the HFR was prepared. The CMP recommended utilizing archival materials acquired by the park since 1984, including photographs John Vachon took of the Sandburg family circa 1956 as well as images by *Citizen-Times* photographer June Glenn.

New information could also be drawn from oral histories. The park received funding to begin the Sandburg Family Oral History Project in 2006, the first step in developing the Addendum to the Historic Furnishings Report. The project began with an oral history workshop for park staff, along with staff from other nearby NPS and cultural sites.

112 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 12.

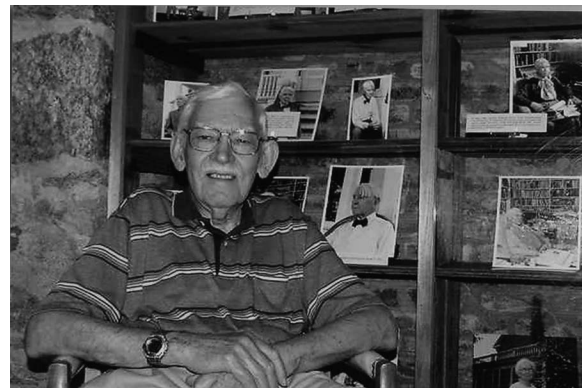


**Figure 11.47** Lingering questions about how to furnish and interpret the Front Room (shown here) sparked an update to the Historic Furnishings Report. Approved in 2007, the new report recommended interpreting the room ca. 1959. Circa 1995 (CARL Park Archive).

Funding included the purchase of a recorder and costs for professional transcriptions. In June 2006, Curator Lynn Savage completed three interviews with Helga Sandburg, John Carl Steichen, and Flat Rock historian Louise Bailey, who had worked for

Sandburg, all of which were utilized in preparation for the Addendum to the HFR.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the Addendum incorporated information gleaned from a newly acquired 1968 interview with Lilian Sandburg and two 1970s interviews with Margaret Sandburg and Paula Steichen Polega, all of which were transcribed for the oral history project.<sup>114</sup>

Sarah Heald, the staff curator at Harpers Ferry Center, completed the *Historic Furnishings*



**Figure 11.48** In 2003, Asheville *Citizen-Times* photographer June Glenn, Jr. shares the photographs that he took of Connemara while the Sandburgs lived there with the park. These images proved to be valuable sources and were used to prepare the *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update* in 2007. May 5, 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

*Report Addendum and Update* in August 2007, with assistance from park staff, HFC staff, and the Sandburg family.<sup>115</sup> Heald's report included "fairly minor additions and changes" that utilized the new sources as well as information gleaned from the old evidence. The *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update* endorsed the recommendations from the 1984 document to interpret the home in the later years of the Sandburg residency, from the mid-1950s through the early 1960s, when Sandburg was active but before his health declined and before Mrs. Sandburg completed some redecorating. The rationale for this decision was that the park had "solid documentary evidence for these years,"

113 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006; Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report, Main House and Swedish House*, 1984, 7.

114 Wallace, *Historic Furnishings Report, Main House and Swedish House*, 1984, 3-7.

115 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

the original furnishings from the period survived, and the interpretive story that could be told for visitors "highlights all the vital themes desired for a full understanding of the Sandburg family and home." While some rooms had furnishings dated after 1961, these items were in the character of the Sandburg residency and thus would not detract from the interpretive story.<sup>116</sup>

The HFR Addendum and Update proposed changes to the Front Room "to achieve a more consistent time period, circa 1959, that makes good use of the documentary evidence for the room and retains the interpretation of the space as a family room with music and socializing as its main purpose." The report cautioned against including items postdating 1959. The plan included reintroducing the Victrola, adding a game of Chinese Checkers, retaining the sheer curtain on the Conservatory door to protect against light, and keeping the magazines, books, newspapers, and ephemera but qualified that these items should "tend towards music, Sandburg's writing, and current events." The recommendations were made based on the documentary evidence, especially photographs.<sup>117</sup>

The report also addressed the furnishings needed for Margaret's Bedroom, since specific recommendations had not been made in the 1984 HFR. The updated plan utilized 1968 and 1970 photographs to produce a list of needed items. These images "thoroughly document the room and indicate how Margaret furnished and used it, and it is unlikely that they had changed significantly from the early 1960s." The report included a list of items that would reflect her musical taste and her reading interests in Asian art and literature, French and Russian literature, as well as birds, nature, and art in general.<sup>118</sup>

## Processing the Park Archive

Processing the park archive had been a challenge since the Carl Sandburg Home NHS was created,

- 116 Sarah H. Heald, *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update, Carl Sandburg National Historic Site*, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, November 2007, 3-5, CARL Park Archive.
- 117 Heald, *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update*, 2007, 21.
- 118 Heald, *Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update*, 2007, 25.



**Figure 11.49** The bathroom by Margaret's Bedroom opened for interpretation when the park moved the curatorial offices to the new Museum Preservation Center. Circa 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

because the collection was so large. At the beginning of the process, park staff and volunteers cataloged the archival documents as they would objects, with one catalog sheet for each piece of paper. Cataloguers removed letters and ephemera and processed each item individually. Around 1986, the staff began "lot cataloging," which involved "lumping items together based loosely upon how they were found." This change sped up the process. The park obtained backlog cataloging money in the late 1980s and early 1990s and much of the work on the archival collection occurred as a result of that funding.<sup>119</sup>

By the late 1990s, the park turned its attention towards improving and updating the archival processing. In 1998, the park received \$4,000 in funding from SERO to conduct an archive assessment.<sup>120</sup> Sara L. Van Beck, of the Curatorial Services Program at the Southeast Regional Office, came to the park from March 23-27, 1998, to begin

119 Van Beck, *Archive Assessment*, 2000.

120 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

this project. She completed the Archive Assessment Report on March 13, 2000.<sup>121</sup>

Beck noted that the archive at CARL contained both papers related to Sandburg and his family—referenced as the “museum collection”—and collections donated since the park was created—called the “park archives.” The latter documents were reports and records generated as part of the administrative history of the park.<sup>122</sup> The Scope of Collections Statement from 2003 described these two collections as the Resource Management Records, “official NPS records deemed to be permanently active,” and the Museum Archival and Management Collections (MAMC), which are “non-NPS archival records created by Carl Sandburg and his Family.”<sup>123</sup>

Beck wrote that the two collections “were extremely large and of a high level of complexity.” Although the items were cataloged, there were no archival descriptions. Beck reported that the

“current park management” recognized that important information and documents had been lost at the park over the years and supported the creation of a “park archives.” The chapter on “Unaccessioned Collections” in her report listed all of the offices and buildings in the park where past and current administrative records that should be archived were located and provided guidance for the development of a records management program at the park.<sup>124</sup>

The report urged the staff to address all types of archival materials, including documents, photographic and magnetic media, and oversized plans and maps. Beck included specific guidelines and recommendations for how to organize and process the collection. Her report argued that the park’s archival collections were becoming “more intellectually accessible and more widely known,” so she expected research requests to increase. She worried that the curator was already over-extended in her position, that she did not have adequate archival training, and that volunteers were “inappropriate for some of these tasks.” The report recommended that the park hire a professionally trained archivist to prepare the archival descriptions, “preferably someone experienced in processing large author collections or with Carl Sandburg specifically.” She remarked that the park had received approval to fund a backlog cataloging project to focus on the archival collection.<sup>125</sup>

Beck drew particular attention to the extensive photographic collection at the park. Photographs taken prior to 1987, which would include most of those in the collection, were eligible for backlog cataloging funds, so Beck urged the park staff to identify these records.<sup>126</sup> Curator Lynn Savage complied right away, asking Bess Gibbs to pull all the photographs as she processed the collections. “She wanted all of those redone,” Gibbs recalled, most likely in support of this initiative.<sup>127</sup>

The Archives Assessment helped to launch a four-year backlog cataloging project at the park from FY 2000 to 2003 to “appraise, process, arrange, describe, and catalog more than 35,000

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121 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000.

122 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 2, 30.

123 Museum Scope of Collections Statement, 2003, 16.



**Figure 11.50** The park staff and volunteers continue to process the collection, especially the archival materials. Here, volunteer Bess Gibbs reviews archival documents. January 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

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124 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 2, 30.

125 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 1.

126 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 2.

127 Gibbs, interview.



park archival materials."<sup>128</sup> In 2000, the park hired Stacey Cummings as an archives technician and two college students to work on the park archives, and the team reorganized photographs and maps and put these in appropriate museum-quality housing.<sup>129</sup> The following year, the "catalog backlog archival collections project" expanded when the archives technician became a multi-year term position with special funding. Cummings continued on to catalog and rehouse 40 of the museum's 100 archival collections, cataloging 16,000 items in 2001 and 13,514 in 2002. She worked with park files and reports, including the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Oral History Project, completed in the early 1980s (see Chapter Five), as well as the photograph collections from the family and those produced by the NPS. Cummings rehoused all of the collections and processed the oversized maps and plans. One issue was that the NEH Oral History project required permission to "open the restricted tapes



**Figure 11.51** In 2000, the park hired Stacey Cummins to work on processing the museum's archives. She continued on through 2003 in a multi-year cataloging project. July 12, 2002 (CARL Park Archive).

of this collection."<sup>130</sup> In 2003, the archivist finished cataloging the park's resource management files and "fine-tuned the related archives catalog records and finding aids."<sup>131</sup>

One of the recommendations in the 2000 Archives Assessment was to establish cold storage for photographic materials, and the park received funding to purchase a freezer for this purpose in 2004.<sup>132</sup> The staff completed a survey of the more than 17,000 photographs during the year and identified those that required duplication and cold storage. SERO provided additional funding to reproduce the photographs.<sup>133</sup>

The 2003 Scope of Collections Statement recommended that the park work with an archivist to correct the arrangement of the archival collection. The Collections Condition Survey, completed in 2005, urged the park to correct the problems with the archival material processed early on in the park's history, those items that had "been catalogued as museum collection objects rather than arranged using archival hierarchies." The Survey explained that putting the collection in order and creating finding aids was essential to providing web-based offerings and encouraging research, both goals of the new *General Management Plan*.<sup>134</sup>

In 2007, the park hired contract archivist Ginny Daley to undertake more work with the archive. Besides processing 3,324 items at the folder or item level, she updated the archival records in ANCS+ and prepared finding aids. Daley also processed five new collections, adding them to the database and creating finding aids.<sup>135</sup> In 2007-8, when the park installed new compact shelving in the Museum Preservation Center, the museum staff updated the archival records to include the new locations and corrected some cataloging errors.<sup>136</sup>

## Using the Collection

Now that the collection was more organized and accessible, the park staff looked for ways to share the collection with the American public. The Sandburg Center Alternative, highlighted as the preferred vision for the park in its new *General Management Plan* in 2003, emphasized the importance of using this significant collection and making it more accessible. One avenue was to develop new exhibits in the Visitor Center

128 Collections Management Plan, 2005, 3.

129 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

130 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001.

131 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

132 Van Beck, Archive Assessment, 2000, 53.

133 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2004.

134 Collections Condition Survey, 2005, 15.

135 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

136 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

in the lower level of the Main House. The park curators added exhibits in this space as time permitted, often showcasing new or significant elements of the collection. For example, in 1994-5, Curator Lynn Savage prepared an exhibit, *Carl Sandburg: The War Years, 1941-45*.<sup>137</sup> The park also developed new exhibits for the barn complex in 2005.<sup>138</sup>

Increasingly, the park used the collections in off-site exhibits. In 1997, Lynn Savage curated and installed an exhibit at the Arts Center in Hendersonville called, *The Poet and the President*, which included items Sandburg had acquired for his Abraham Lincoln collection.<sup>139</sup> Four years later, Savage curated an exhibit of the park's Edward Steichen photographs entitled *Steichen and Sandburg: Artistic and Family Ties* at the Asheville Art Museum, from November 9, 2001 through January 9, 2002. The exhibit focused on the relationship between these "two 20<sup>th</sup> century creative giants." Savage also wrote the text for the exhibition brochure.<sup>140</sup>



**Figure 11.52** The park uses its collection to update the exhibits in the Visitor Contact Station. Circa 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

More researchers used the collections during these years, supporting the goal of the GMP to make the park a center for Sandburg study. With the museum collections organized and stored in the Museum Preservation Center, the park staff could respond more efficiently to the growing number of research requests. In 1994 to 1995, even as the park was moving into the Preservation Center, the staff received 59 such requests, and the number

continued to grow.<sup>141</sup> Among the requests in 2003 was one by Wofford College music professor Jhon Akers who was researching three publications on Sandburg's love of the guitar and wanted to feature photographs of Sandburg's guitars in his publications.<sup>142</sup> Researcher Dan Zanes used photographs and the *American Songbag* manuscript in the park collection to prepare his compact disk recording *Parades and Panoramas: 25 Songs Collected by Carl Sandburg for the*



**Figure 11.53** CARL Curator Lynn Savage's 2004 exhibit on Sandburg-related photographs by June Glenn, Jr., informs guests in the Basement (officially called the Ground Floor by 2005) Visitor Center. It was called *A News Photographer's View: Carl Sandburg*. Here she poses with Glenn and some of his photos. May 5, 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

*American Songbag*.<sup>143</sup> Paul Bonesteel utilized the collection to prepare his documentary *The Day Carl Sandburg Died*, which would be released in 2011.

The museum improved documentation for the collection and generated new research materials. In 2003, the park worked with *Citizen-Times* photographer June Glenn to gather more details on his donated photographs and these images

137 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994-5.

138 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005.

139 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

140 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001-2.

141 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5.

142 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

143 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2004.



**Figure 11.54 (above) and 11.55 (below)** The Poet and the President exhibit that Lynn Savage curated in 1997 for the Arts Center in Hendersonville included papers and artifacts from the museum collections. 1997 (CARL Park Archive).



were then used in the Historic Furnishings Report Addendum and Update. That same year, to increase knowledge of the park's administrative history, the park partnered with Appalachian State University to complete oral histories with four former or long-serving staff members who were retiring.<sup>144</sup>

Another goal of the Sandburg Center Alternative was to provide "worldwide access" to the museum collection through new technologies. This objective was listed in Phase I implementation of one to five years.<sup>145</sup> When Joan Bacharach from the NPS Museum Management Program asked Connie Backlund about participating in the Digital Imaging Project, the superintendent was eager to do so since the project supported one of the park's immediate goals for use of the collection. The Museum Management Program (MMP) initiates, develops, and coordinates internet exhibits to make National Park Service museum collections

<sup>144</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

<sup>145</sup> *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 44-6.



**Figure 11.56** Photographer June Glenn poses with some of the photos he donated. Lynn Savage created an exhibit of these photographs in the Main House Visitor Center. 2004 (CARL Park Archive).

more widely accessible. The park staff collaborated with the MMP staff to create a virtual museum exhibit and "Teaching with Museum Collections" lesson unit to showcase the park's extensive museum collections.<sup>146</sup>

Planning for the project began in 2007. In the summer of 2008, the National Park Service sent a team to photograph over 300 museum objects in the Main House for inclusion in the digitization project. The curator and museum technician helped with the project, including obtaining copyrights, and both the museum and interpretive teams worked with Bacharach to prepare the text for the online exhibit.<sup>147</sup> Superintendent Connie Backlund, Chief of Visitor Services Sarah Pershall, Education Specialist Jill Hamilton-Anderson, and Curator Lynn Savage served as the project team at the park. Backlund described it as "a great collaborative effort." This project earned the NPS Southeast Region Keeper of the Light Award for the "effort of our interpretive team and museum team working together, two different teams coming

<sup>146</sup> Virtual Museum Exhibit at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Credits, Museum Management Program, <http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/carl/credits.html> [accessed December 15, 2012].

<sup>147</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008. The SAR lists Harpers Ferry Center photographer Frank Ruggles and Harpers Ferry Center Museum Technician Jim Carey, but the project credit web page lists Joan Bacharach as the project coordinator and one of the photographers, Carol Highsmith as the photographer, and Amber Dumler as the visual information specialists. Virtual Museum Exhibit at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Credits, Museum Management Program



together to help that virtual museum exhibit become reality."<sup>148</sup>

148 Backlund, interview; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007-8.



**Figure 11.57** Curator Lynn Savage worked with Jill Hamilton-Anderson to create the digital exhibit in association with the NPS Museum Management Program. The project team won the NPS "Keeper of the Light" award. Circa 2003 (Friends Scrapbook).

As the park staff prepared for the 40th Anniversary Celebration, they could reflect back on the tremendous changes that had taken place in the management of the park's cultural resources. Much of the museum's collection was now safely stored in the Museum Preservation Center and the collections on exhibit in the Main House were in better storage conditions with more control than ever before. Preservation and conservation work was well underway on many of the objects. Researchers both inside and outside the park service as well as the park staff were using the museum resources for a variety of purposes, from publications to exhibits, sharing the story of Carl Sandburg in new ways, and the collections were now available to Americans across the country through the internet. The park was on its way to achieving the goals established in the new *General Management Plan*, showcasing its excellent collection and sharing it with the public. As Backlund reflected, "We have such a great collection. It goes back to that high integrity, there's just so much here and a lot with historic buildings, the wonderful landscape, but especially with the museum collection."<sup>149</sup>

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149 Backlund, interview.

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# CHAPTER 12

## Redefining Interpretive and Educational Programming, 1994-2008

When Superintendent Backlund came to the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (NHS), the staff had two decades of experience interpreting the Carl Sandburg story. They had developed the role of interpretation, identified the methodologies to be used, trained the staff and volunteers, established the house tour, commissioned a park guidebook, and defined the stories about Carl Sandburg and his family and their life at Connemara. On a daily basis, volunteer and staff guides talked about Carl's work, Lilian's goat herd, the lives of Sandburg's daughters and grandchildren, and the work of Lilian's brother, internationally known photographer Edward Steichen. Special programs and festivals entertained and educated the public, attracting new visitors to the park and drawing return visitors who looked forward to these ongoing events. The challenge during the Backlund years would be discovering ways to keep Carl Sandburg relevant and to introduce his work to new generations.

These challenges came at a time when the National Park Service (NPS) approach to interpretation was evolving. While the NPS "trained hundreds of interpreters in the importance of professional delivery skills and the effective use of themes, goals and objectives" between 1983 and 1992, interpretive leaders felt that more could be done to help visitors experience a stronger personal connection with NPS sites. In 1993, "an interpretive revolution was launched," calling for a redefinition of methodologies and philosophies pertaining to interpretation in national parks. The NPS Interpretive Development Program (IDP) trained interpretive staff in new techniques and evaluated new approaches to interpretation, such as using "compelling stories" and interpreting

the "intangible meanings of tangible resources."<sup>1</sup> Having worked as an instructor and training coordinator at Mather Training Center before coming to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Connie Backlund would bring an awareness of and dedication to these new ideas to the park when she came in March 1994.

The NPS demonstrated its commitment to redefining interpretation through several actions between 1993 and 2006. Not only would interpretive training, printed materials, and eventually online courses be available to interpretive staff, but so would a "rigorous peer review program." NPS began to develop specific "national standards for each of the essential interpretive products and services NPS interpreters provide" during this period and supported the concept that "successful interpretation provides visitors with opportunities to form their own intellectual and emotional connections to the relevance and significance of the resources." New NPS bedrock interpretive tenets held that "resources possess meanings and have relevance; visitors are seeking something of value for themselves; and interpretation facilitates a connection between the interests of the visitor and the meanings of the resource."<sup>2</sup>

In 2005, park superintendents received Director's Order #6: Interpretation and Education, which further defined the new NPS approach to interpretive services and the ways in which parks should include the services in comprehensive interpretive plans. The publication was followed in 2006 by the Interpretation and Education Action

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1 National Park Service, "About Interpretation," <http://idp.eppley.org/about-interpretation> (Accessed September 24, 2012).

2 National Park Service, "About Interpretation."

Plan. The plan offered detailed actions that would ensure service-wide success in strengthening interpretation and education in the national parks.<sup>3</sup>

The changing NPS direction for interpretation occurred at a time when the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site was examining its planning documents and processes. Most of the founding goals for the park had been accomplished by the late 1990s and the leadership team was anxious to undertake comprehensive planning that would set the direction for Carl Sandburg Home NHS for the next 15 to 20 years. In 1999, the park began work on its new *General Management Plan* (GMP) to guide all areas of park operations. Interpretation would play an integral role in the new GMP, both through on-site methodologies and electronic delivery options. The preferred “Sandburg Center Alternative” outlined by the GMP created opportunities for the park to serve as focal point for national and worldwide research and programming about the poet’s life and work.<sup>4</sup> This option emphasized the importance of interpretation in the overall efforts to keep the Sandburg story relevant, interesting, and accessible to visitors and scholars. Additional exhibit and programming venues would help tell the story, using the latest technology to provide greater access to the collection and forming strategic partnerships for supporting research and teaching

- 3 National Park Service, *Director’s Order # 6: Interpretation and Education, 2005*; National Park Service, *Interpretation and Education Action Plan, 2006*.
- 4 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2003, 3*.



**Figure 12.1** The park updated the exhibits in the Visitor Contact Station, showcasing the Sandburg family and samples of Carl Sandburg’s poems and writings. Among the photographs were several taken by Mrs. Sandburg’s brother, Edward Steichen, an internationally-known photographer. 2012 (Photography by Ann McCleary).

about the Sandburg legacy.<sup>5</sup> When the GMP was authorized in 2003, it became the foundation from which the park interpretive staff would develop future programs and activities. The Long Range Interpretive Plan, completed in 2007, supported the GMP and provided a blueprint for making the proposed interpretive vision a reality for the park.

During the Backlund years, Carl Sandburg Home NHS was fortunate in having several experienced leaders in the chief of visitor services position. In May 1996, Carol McBryant transferred to Carl Sandburg Home NHS, replacing Martha Bogle to become the new chief of visitor services. Before coming to the park, Chief McBryant worked at several national parks, most recently as a supervisory interpretive ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park. She previously managed the Alpine Visitor Center and Horseshoe Park interpretive operations.

Following McBryant, Sue Bennett served as chief of visitor services from July 2002 to February 2006. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Bennett worked at Mount Rainier National Park, Assateague Island National Seashore, and Everglades National Park early in her career with the NPS. She was Everglades Gulf Coast Sub-District interpreter and North District interpreter at Smoky Mountains National Park prior to joining the staff at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. After leaving the park in February 2006, she joined the staff of National Capital Parks-East in Washington, DC, becoming site manager for Anacostia Park and Kenilworth Park Aquatic Gardens.<sup>6</sup> While at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Bennett served on the board for the National Association for Interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

When Bennett left the park, Sarah Perschall was selected as chief of visitor services in August 2006 and continues to serve at present. Graduating from Ball State University with a degree in history and criminal justice, Perschall worked in visitor services and interpretation positions at Little

- 5 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2003, 43*.
- 6 National Park Service, “National Park Service Welcomes Chief of Interpretation to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore,” <http://www.nps.gov/indu/parknews/national-park-service-welcomes-chief-of-interpretation-to-indiana-dunes-national-lakeshore.htm> (Accessed July 15, 2013).
- 7 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.



Bighorn Battlefield, Natchez National Historical Park, and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park.<sup>8</sup> After the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina forced temporary closing of the latter park, she joined the Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff on a detail assignment in October 2005. When Bennett left the park in February 2006, Perschall became acting chief of visitor services and was competitively selected to fill the position later that same year.<sup>9</sup>

As the NPS approaches to interpretation continued to evolve, the park's interpretive program did as well. Building on the work and expertise of interpretive professionals and park staff preceding them, each chief of visitor services appointed during the Backlund years provided important leadership in the areas of interpretation and education, expanding opportunities for visitors to better understand Sandburg's story.

## Refocusing the Interpretive Programs

Several changes had already been underway to increase attention to visitor services at the park before Backlund arrived. In 1992, Superintendent Kenneth Hulick created the new position of chief of visitor services. Martha Bogle, who accepted this position, could now devote more attention to interpretive programming at the park. Bogle, who held a botany degree from the University of Tennessee, brought her previous NPS experience as a ranger, outdoor recreation planner, and interpretive specialist to this new position at the park. She served in this position through October 1995.<sup>10</sup>

In August 1995, soon after Backlund arrived, an Interpretive Planning Team from the Appalachian Cluster visited the site to work with the park team in "developing a Strategic Services Plan" for the site<sup>11</sup>. The team identified areas on which the park could focus attention to improve its interpretive services. This visit helped the park staff set a new agenda for interpretation, one which closely

mirrored the developments occurring within the National Park Service. The staff developed a "comprehensive informal" plan to guide their interpretive work over the coming months.<sup>12</sup> Although the Visitor Services Division did not need to develop foundational interpretive opportunities for visitors during this period, the staff refocused the house tour to reflect new NPS practices and refined all of the park interpretive media, such as park folders, wayside exhibits, and exhibit panels in the Visitor Contact Station.

The annual management goals for 1995 included a variety of interpretive goals to help start on this new path. The staff sought to ensure "effective media and personal services are available to carry out resource-based park interpretation" and increase "public appreciation and understanding of park values through quality outreach programs, effective interpretive media and management accountability." Corollary actions for the year included working with Southeast Regional Office (SERO) to develop the park's interpretive prospectus, developing a new audio tour for the site, revising park bulletins, training staff and volunteers, evaluating programs delivered by staff and volunteers, and initiating planning and seeking partners for a curriculum based-education program.<sup>13</sup>

When Superintendent Backlund arrived in 1994, she felt that the non-personal interpretive media at the park had served well, but that these materials needed updating and redesigning to better reflect the current NPS standards. In August 1995, a team from Harpers Ferry Center began working with park staff to develop a new park brochure.<sup>14</sup> In 1996, the park staff expanded its efforts in non-personal interpretive services to include revising the park handbook and creating a new wayside exhibit plan. That year, the park completed an audiotape walking tour of the park with Paula Steichen Polega as the narrator, funded by Eastern National.<sup>15</sup> The revised and improved park folder, completed in 1997, was a collaborative effort between the park and NPS Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) and featured new material about visitor

8 Sarah Pershall, email communication with Donna Butler, July 31, 2013.

9 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006; Pershall, email communication.

10 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5.

11 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5.

12 Backlund, interview.

13 Superintendent to II Employees, memorandum, October 20, 1994, park files, CARL Park Archive.

14 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/5,

15 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

activities at the site, color pictures of the park, and an updated map.<sup>16</sup>

In 1996, Carol McBryant brought another strong voice for developing innovative interpretive programming at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. When considering the chief of visitor services position



**Figure 12.2** Joining the park staff in 1996, Chief of Visitor Services Carol McBryant assisted Superintendent Backlund in developing CARL's curriculum-based education program. McBryant's efforts led to a new direction for CARL interpretive programs in the early 2000s. She worked with staff and volunteers to refocus the tours and interpretation at the park, moving from "object and place" tours toward tours that told the story of the Sandburgs and their time at Connemara. August 1996 (CARL Park Archive).

at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, McBryant stated that she was "very familiar with the western North Carolina area and felt like it would be a great place for me to get my first chief job and began to look into the park itself. [I] was really drawn to the story and so decided to apply for the job." Although she was attracted to the career opportunity at first, she explained that as she started working at the park and got to know the Sandburg story better, "certainly the subject matter became a real interest to me and a passion to tell the story of Carl Sandburg was a huge part of my life."<sup>17</sup>

McBryant was very passionate about the importance of interpretive services. She stated, "I have some real strong feelings that unless something is interpreted, we rely on fate for connections between our resources and our visitor. And why not take a proactive role in connecting them to the resource? I believe that

all interpretation should certainly be factual, but I think even more so than that, it needs to be provocative, it needs to be emotional, and it needs to shed light on multiple perspectives. And I'd say above all, it needs to include all people. People should be able to see themselves in the stories of Carl Sandburg, if you will. They should be able to see his works and how they reflect their life." With degrees in natural resource interpretation and speech communication, McBryant came to the park ready to create interpretive and educational programs that could keep the Sandburg story relevant to visitors, students, and teachers.<sup>18</sup>

While Carl Sandburg Home NHS was ready for a more comprehensive interpretive program and the park leadership provided the support to do so, McBryant stated that it "certainly doesn't mean that it was easy. It was very difficult to fight at the table for funding to build those programs and to compete for funding at the Washington level for special project funds, to seek foundation monies and tourism monies. It was not an easy job." In addition to fundraising for the program, other challenges included inadequate staffing for the base visitor services operations during a large part of the year and dependence on volunteers who were not at the park on a regular basis. McBryant explained that one of the most challenging aspects for "interpretation and education was consistency in interpretation, interpretive programming. I also think a big challenge for me was the entrenched practices of interpretation."<sup>19</sup>

Superintendent Backlund reported that "major efforts in long range interpretive planning took place" in 1997. Permanent staff met for a week to set priorities and direction for the future of interpretation at the site." The staff concentrated their efforts on the visitor's first impression, non-personal interpretive services, and the park's interpretive volunteer programs.<sup>20</sup> Harpers Ferry staff came to the park to help develop the wayside exhibits and proposed six exhibits to be developed and installed at the site, funded through Eastern National.

A group of park staff and volunteers came together as an "internal operations evaluation team" that

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16 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1994/95-1997.

17 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

18 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

19 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

20 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.

year to consider special events and the impact of those events on park resources and the core historic district. One of the programs the team considered was the open house, self-guiding Christmas at Connemara program that took place on four Saturdays between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The team decided to discontinue the event in its current format. Instead, the event would become a one-day celebration with guided



**Figure 12.3** Music is an important part of the Christmas at Connemara festivities each year. In this photo, a choir entertains with carols in the Garage. December 12, 2009 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.4** Superintendent Connie Backlund and Mark Haines show off a specially designed Christmas ornament featuring a snow-covered Connemara. December 12, 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

tours during which the public could still visit to observe the holidays, but it would be a less costly event and put less stress on the Main House and the museum collection on exhibit there.<sup>21</sup> The resulting “Home for the Holidays” proved successful, and it remains a popular program today. The team also decided to add poetry presentations to the annual Sandburg Folk Music Festival and rename the event the “Carl Sandburg Folk Music and Poetry Festival.”<sup>22</sup>

21 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997; Backlund, interview; Donovan, interview.

22 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

By 1997, additional interpretive space became available at the park. Backlund reported, “Rehabilitation of the Family Garage was complete and available for interpretive programming. The renovated Garage was to be a program site for visitors and school children, with an interpretive focus of ‘Carl Sandburg: Poet of the People.’” She described the new Garage as “simple yet functional.” It would serve as a “place where the personal interpretive services can take place.



**Figure 12.5** Staff and volunteers appear in period costumes, bringing the Lincoln Festival to life during a performance in the Family Garage interpretive area. October 16, 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

The close proximity to the Main House lent itself to more detailed studies of Sandburg through ranger programs, field trip activities, and video presentations.”<sup>23</sup> In the Main House, daughter Margaret Sandburg’s Bedroom became part of the house tour in 1998. It was the first time this room was open for public viewing. Margaret, a trusted editor for her father and a leading authority on his work, wanted the space opened to visitors to enhance understanding of life at Connemara.<sup>24</sup>

The park valued the importance of diversity in recruiting, hiring, and training of staff and volunteers as well as in programming for new audiences. The park carried out the goals of diversity in recruiting and hiring via STEP (Student Temporary Employment Hiring Program), seasonal positions, and internship programs. Staff sought new audiences via schools and visiting Boys and Girls Clubs to talk about national parks and ranger

23 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

24 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997; Miller, interview.



careers. They also developed opportunities, such as the Junior Ranger Program, for children and families to enjoy together during a visit to the park or on the park's website.<sup>25</sup>

Reaching new and diverse audiences was both a challenge and an opportunity. The effort to attract a diverse audience brought about new programming opportunities and introduced the park to potential visitors who might not have spent time in a national park in the past. McBryant explained, "It's an issue that I think, and did think, was critical. My philosophy of interpretation is that it's inclusive. You begin to look at Carl Sandburg and his life and his works are very inclusive of all Americans. And in order for us to do what Congress has asked us to do in the National Park Service—and especially at Carl Sandburg Home, to tell the story in a whole and tell the story to all Americans."<sup>26</sup>

## Refocusing the House Tours

The more traditional interpretive programming at Carl Sandburg Home NHS included the Main House tours, on-site ranger programs, off-site ranger programs, special events, and Flat Rock Playhouse performances. As chief of visitor services, Carol McBryant devoted considerable attention to reshaping the house tours, which were the core of the interpretive program at the park, to reflect the new NPS philosophy.

McBryant was inspired by the Main House and believed that the site had unique interpretive possibilities. "Well, certainly anybody who comes in to the chief's position there will probably give you the same answer," she reflected. "The strengths of Carl Sandburg Home as it relates to interpretation and education are the places and the stories. It's the experience-based capabilities that you have as an interpreter there. It's like walking into a book. I think that's a huge strength, is that when people come there they are actually walking into the life of Carl Sandburg. So it's almost like, as an interpreter, you have the world in your fingertips. You can really do anything. And when I got there, the superintendent was very encouraging

for me to build and grow the interpretive program."<sup>27</sup>

When McBryant arrived, the park began to provide interpretive training for all new seasonal employees and interpretive volunteers. In 1997, all seasonal interpretive rangers were required to complete a forty-hour training program that utilized the national interpretive competency curriculum. The training also featured issues specific to the park, such as "tour variations and program development."<sup>28</sup> But McBryant believed that more work needed to be done to improve the house tours.

During McBryant's tenure, the focus of the house tours changed to develop new ways to tell the Sandburg story and to provoke visitors to want to learn more about the family and how they lived. Her work was solidly grounded in the new NPS interpretive philosophies. Some staff, including



**Figure 12.6** Tours of the Main House remain the most in-depth interpretive experience available to CARL visitors. Each year, thousands of visitors learn more about the Sandburgs and life at Connemara through the efforts of staff and volunteers. Longtime park volunteer Mary Ann Byrd leads the tour. Circa 1978 (CARL Park Archive).

Interpretive Ranger Elena Diana Miller, felt that the house tours had been object and place-based tours, rather than tours that told the story of the Sandburgs and their lives at Connemara. "I noticed a lot of that was done," recalled Miller. "Well, 'Over here you see a guitar,' or 'Over here you see a chair,' and . . . that's not the way that one should do a tour at all. If you take the Freeman Tilden approach, you talk about concepts, ideas, innovations, contributions, and then if the guitar is there, so be it. You're talking about the music. Sandburg played the guitar. Object touring is not the way to give a tour."<sup>29</sup>

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25 Backlund, interview; Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

26 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

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27 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

28 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

29 Miller, interview.

McBryant began training sessions with all of the staff and volunteers who led house tours to grow the art and skills needed to mitigate some of the entrenched practices of interpretation. During her time as chief of visitor services, she continuously attempted to help them better understand how to “interpret” the Sandburg story through the Main House, Barn, and grounds. Education Program Coordinator Jill Hamilton-Anderson recalled, “The house tours were definitely the single-most significant part of interpretation that existed there and the house tour was exactly that. It was a tour of the house and not an interpretive program about Carl Sandburg, which changed, at least, I know, under Carol’s tenure.”<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 12.7** Volunteer Don Levin leads a tour group through the Dining Room of the Main House. Photograph by Phil Smith. (CARL Park Archive).

McBryant explained that the changes in the way the house tours were conducted were meant to enhance the interpretive experiences of visitors. “As I started going on house tours and beginning to understand the operation as it was when I arrived, if you were a visitor on a house tour you would have learned about the house, you would have learned about the objects within the house, but it was very rare that you would learn very much about the people of the house. You would learn what rooms they sat in and where they ate and where they slept, but you didn’t really learn about the person Carl Sandburg and his contributions to America.”<sup>31</sup>

The Carl Sandburg Home was McBryant’s first experience with interpreting a historical home, so she had to determine how best to design the experience so that it was about Sandburg and not

just the physical setting. “I challenged the staff there as well as the volunteers. There was a huge reliance on volunteers to do tours. Now, you kind of have to keep in mind that these volunteers had been doing this for many, many years and it’s really hard to change. It’s easy to talk about a chair and that it was bought at Sears and Roebuck, but it’s a little bit more difficult to bring the visitor to a point of understanding maybe the thought processes of Carl Sandburg when he was sitting in that chair—and that was the real challenge for the tour guides.” She challenged the tour guides to think about the setting and furnishings as “props” they could use to tell the story of Sandburg and his family. She told them, “If you wanted to talk about the typewriter, you might want to read a piece of his work that he perhaps typed on the typewriter. And you could use the imagery of, imagine Carl Sandburg, bring him back into the house, imagine Carl Sandburg sitting here at this typewriter. This was a piece of his work that perhaps he wrote right here. And then read it.” The guides were encouraged to let Sandburg’s words reach the visitors by reading his poetry as part of the tour. Some volunteers adapted to this new way of planning and conducting tours, but others chose not to continue working with the house tours.<sup>32</sup>

McBryant felt that she made progress in working with the staff and volunteers to change the house tours from object-based to interpretive. She stated, “I think through that kind of coaching and that kind of training it began to slowly evolve and change while I was there. I didn’t see it in everybody, and I didn’t see . . . every visitor didn’t get the same sort of experience. But there were some that really took to that notion and really began to do interpretive programs as opposed to an objects tour.”<sup>33</sup>

As interpretation of the Main House evolved, decisions were made about the tour route visitors would follow. After 1998, the route changed to go through the Living Room and into Margaret’s Bedroom and then visitors would come out in the Dining Room. Current Chief of Visitor Services Sarah Perschall explained that the route was changed again in November 2008 “to better reflect a thematic approach to the house tour.” For example, “Though it was nice to see Margaret’s

30 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

31 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

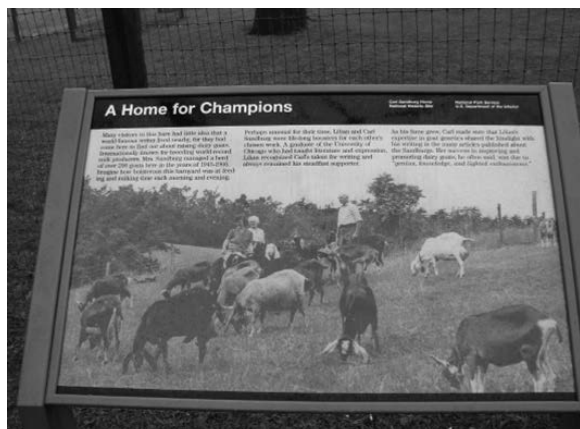
32 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

33 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

furnished bedroom, the arrangement of the tour to accomplish walking through her room altered the furnishings in the front room from what was historically accurate. The family kept the piano located in front of her bedroom door. The piano had to be moved to allow access through the doorway which gave the front room a different feel. It also made following a theme more difficult—moving from the front room into a bedroom, into the Dining Room, and then in the Farm Office, and then Sandburg’s Study. Moving from the Front Room into Sandburg’s Study and then the Farm Office allowed the initial focus of the tour to remain on the key characters of the story, Carl and his wife. At this time the carpet runners in the house were also replaced which offered the logistical opportunity to reroute the tours.”<sup>34</sup>

## Expanding Non-Personal Interpretive Services

At the same time, park staff continued to move ahead on developing more opportunities for sharing the Sandburg story through new wayside exhibits, new exhibits at the Visitor Contact Station, and updated interpretive signage at the Barn.



**Figure 12.8** The park installs new wayside interpretive signage in 2002 to expand its non-personal interpretive services. This sign introduces the barn area to visitors. October 19, 2006 (CARL Park Archive)

Park staff stated that the purpose of the waysides should be to explain the significance of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS to visitors choosing not to tour the Main House or participate in ranger-led programs. The research and design phase for the waysides was to be completed by 1999.



**Figure 12.9** Interpretive waysides such as this one tell visitors about where and how Sandburg often wrote outside when the weather permitted him to do so. He kept a chair on the granite outcropping near the Main House where he would sit for hours engrossed in his latest writing project. October 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

By that time, the staff at the park was working with the HFC staff to evaluate and select the best locations for the wayside panel placement within the park. In 2000, the project team completed their reviews and awarded the contracts for fabrication. Unfortunately, the original company hired to construct the waysides went bankrupt and the HFC and park staff pulled together, creating temporary fiberglass exhibits at the park. Final installation of these waysides was completed in 2002.<sup>35</sup>

35 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997-2002.



**Figure 12.10** This wayside exhibit, created by CARL staff, welcomes visitors to learn more about Sandburg’s writing rituals. The exhibit stood near the spot where Sandburg often worked outside. It featured his chair, satchel, and various objects that he might have used as he created new stories and poems. Circa 2000 (CARL Park Archive).

34 Pershall, email communication.



During this same period, the park secured funds to revise exhibits at the Visitor Contact Station. These exhibits were important to the first impressions visitors formed about the park, since the station is located adjacent to the parking lot, and the staff considered the existing exhibit panels outdated with some inaccurate information. In 1999,

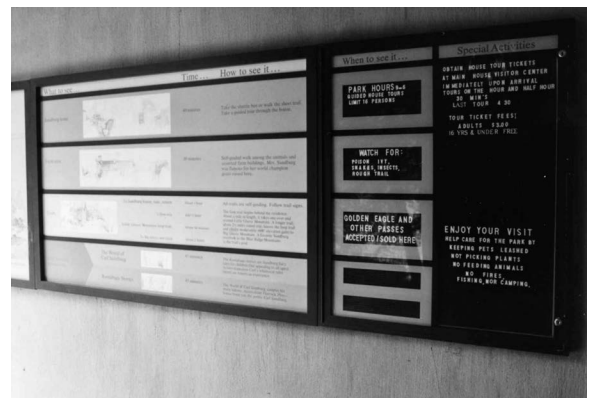


**Figure 12.11** The Visitor Contact Station provides an informative introduction to Carl Sandburg and his family. Visitors can tour the brief exhibits, picnic at nearby tables, or just relax on the benches and enjoy the scenic views. 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

specialists from Harpers Ferry Center began to assist the park with planning the new exhibit. They selected “Carl Sandburg: The Voice of the People” as the theme. The exhibit consisted of flat panels and HFC handled the construction contracts. Most of the panels were in place by August 2001 and the park invited neighbors and visitors to a celebration marking the completion of the exhibit panels and waysides.<sup>36</sup>

Once the park waysides were installed and the Visitor Contact Station rehabilitated, attention turned to adding the interpretive exhibits in the barn area. For some visitors, the barn exhibits, along with the waysides and Visitor Contact Station exhibits, were the only interpretation they encountered since many of them choose to tour the grounds and the farm area without participating in ranger-led tours.

Under the direction of Chiefs of Visitor Services Bennett and Perschall, park staff continued to refine and expand non-personal interpretive services. For example, the park designed, created, and installed the interpretive exhibits at the Barn in 2005 and 2006 to help visitors better understand the role of the dairy goats in the Sandburgs’ lives at



**Figures 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14** For many years prior to development of the more modern current exhibit, these wayside exhibits at the Visitor Contact Station introduced visitors to the Carl Sandburg Home NHS story. Circa 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

Connemara. The following year, the staff added a site bulletin detailing the barn operations.<sup>37</sup>

## Developing a Curriculum-Based Education Program

By far, one of the most significant program developments during this period was the creation of a curriculum-based education program. Through collaborative planning and

36 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998-2001.

37 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005-2007.



**Figure 12.15** Janene Donovan talks with visitors near the Barn. One of the first full-time rangers hired at CARL, she provides interpretive services for both the Barn complex and the Main House. August 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

implementation, the staff changed the park's interpretive philosophy to one encompassing both interpretation and education. These two terms connote different approaches to vision and practice in bringing the Sandburg story to the public.

Traditional interpretation involves the tenets and practices designed to make the visitor experience as enjoyable and relevant as possible. Education programs encompass the same goals, but there is a



**Figure 12.16** Apprentice actors from the Flat Rock Playhouse present the Rootabaga Stories each summer. Here, they are performing for guests from the local Boys and Girls Clubs. August 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

difference in that the content and methodologies are curriculum-based. As Jill Hamilton-Anderson, the park's first education program coordinator, explained, "In an education program, you are working with classroom teachers to develop your programming so that that programming is meeting a target audience, a particular grade level, a particular curriculum goal of the state or

of that district. Though it is not an interpretive program that reaches a broad audience of youth, it is targeted to meet certain goals of both the Park Service and the education community."<sup>38</sup>

Hamilton-Anderson describes interpretation and education as "tools to stewardship." She adds, "It is using these tools we are able to provoke people to want to learn more, understand more, and then care for those resources. It is a tool that is adaptable to any audience. That is the only way, in my opinion, to preserve these resources for the next generation. It's vital to use interpretation and education with the youth so that they'll grow up to love these places and know that they're special and know that they hold an important part of who we are as a country."<sup>39</sup> Although Carl Sandburg Home NHS had successful interpretive programming, Superintendent Connie Backlund recalls that the park "did not have a dedicated education program" with curriculum-based education materials. That would soon change as the staff began to create innovative, award-winning educational programs.<sup>40</sup>

Backlund stated in 1996 that educational programming was "a high goal for the park" offering "tremendous potential for greater work with schools." That same year, Carol McBryant joined the staff as chief of visitor services. It was a turbulent year, with the park closing for six weeks: four weeks from government shut downs and two weeks from snow and ice storms.<sup>41</sup> Turbulent or not, it was a good year for thinking about and starting projects to enhance the interpretation at Carl Sandburg Home NHS.

The park's goal was to create an education program that connected the resources of the park to the course content of North Carolina classrooms. Although school groups had been visiting the park since it opened, the field trips were not formally connected with what they were studying in the classroom. McBryant collaborated with Superintendent Backlund to define what the park education program would be and how it would meet the needs of teachers and students. In 1996, Carl Sandburg Home NHS received a Parks as Classrooms grant of \$11,000 to "begin initial planning and design of a curriculum guide

38 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

39 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

40 Backlund, interview.

41 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

for middle school children and teachers.” A small group of teachers worked with park staff to complete the initial planning stage for the guide which was written in 1997, with field-testing taking place in 1998.<sup>42</sup> Seventeen teachers, selected from middle schools in North and South Carolina, came to the park for a week-long workshop in August 1997 during which “the first draft of the national middle school curriculum was developed.”<sup>43</sup> This beginning activity proved to the park that teachers were interested in Sandburg and willing to collaborate to ensure quality learning experiences for their students and professional development opportunities for themselves. The park mission and the goals of the education program were in sync.

In 1998, the park hired a seasonal temporary employee, Jill Hamilton-Anderson, to work closely with teachers in field-testing and fine-tuning the kinds of curriculum-based materials needed to encourage teachers to include more content in their lessons about the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and poet.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 12.17** Through the educational programs at the park, students experience a more in-depth understanding of who Sandburg was and his contributions to American music and literature. Jill Hamilton-Anderson developed many of these programs for the park. March 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

Hamilton-Anderson had worked as an NPS seasonal ranger at Blue Ridge Parkway and had experience in interpretation. She was also a

middle school teacher and stated that she saw the opportunity to use her skills in a setting that seemed “like the perfect synthesis between the experience I had with the National Park Service prior to teaching and then my classroom experience.”<sup>45</sup> Hamilton-Anderson felt that interpretation and education should teach visitors about their personal roles as stewards of cultural and natural resources.

Superintendent Backlund also had a background in middle school education, so the decision to work first with middle school teachers in developing education resource materials came as no surprise. She recalled, “We just had a group of us who loved middle school. Most people don’t, but we did.”<sup>46</sup> Hamilton-Anderson worked throughout most of the school year. She also held summer workshops during which teachers participated with park interpretive staff on creating the Middle School Curriculum Guide as well as field-testing on-site activities designed to complement the Guide materials.<sup>47</sup> The Guide was developed with direct input from regional teachers and field tested with teachers around the country. Once it was ready for publication in 2000, the staff made the Guide available to classroom teachers at no charge. The Middle School Curriculum Guide project proved to be a major step in park efforts to keep Sandburg relevant to the next generation.<sup>48</sup>

Given the success of working with teachers, park leadership decided to create a full-time education ranger position. McBryant recalled that Superintendent Backlund was very supportive of the education program “and eventually convinced the management team that the education program was vital if we were going to do our job as National Park Service employees and stewards of the story of Carl Sandburg. So I was able to build and grow the program.”<sup>49</sup> Since a position did not exist in the NPS exactly as envisioned by the superintendent and chief of visitor services, they set about working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defining a job description that captured what they needed to ensure a successful education program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS.

45 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

46 Backlund, interview.

47 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

48 Backlund, interview; Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

49 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

42 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1996.

43 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

44 Superintendents Annual Report, 1998; Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.





**Figure 12.18** When the students reach the Barn complex, they participate in interactive experiences with the goats, sustainability, and genetics as they learn about the role the dairy played in the Sandburg farming operation. Here, Jill Hamilton-Anderson speaks to a group of children. September 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

McBryant, who was adamant about the importance of the role of the education program coordinator, wrote the position description. She explained to NPS that she wanted to find someone who was “qualified as a teacher. Someone who has the education and classroom experience so that they can apply those skill sets to an experience-based program so that they speak the same language as teachers, they understand what teachers are required of in their classrooms and they also understand the various learning styles of different grades and the requirements for teaching at different age levels.” Traditionally, most interpreters are park rangers who happen to be assigned responsibilities with school groups. McBryant did not want that. Her philosophy was that “an education program is very different from an interpretation program” and the park needed “someone who knew that and could bring those skill sets to building a program at CARL.” The park leadership knew the kind of skills necessary to develop education programs and they crafted a new NPS job description defining just the right position. Today, thanks to the innovative efforts at Carl Sandburg Home NHS, McBryant notes that there are education program coordinators in parks throughout the service.<sup>50</sup>

In 2000, when Jill Hamilton-Anderson joined the interpretive staff as the first education program coordinator, Carl Sandburg Home NHS welcomed “over 2,000 middle school children through the park’s established middle school program and 3,200 educational waivers were issued for other educational groups.”<sup>51</sup> Hamilton-Anderson faced

challenges in developing the new program. “It was a charge I was really, really excited for,” she recalled. “The one challenge I saw immediately was because this was new, because I was a new position, there were some challenges with interpretation, just trying to educate co-workers about what it means to have an educator on staff as opposed to an interpreter. Carol was really good at helping to educate people about that. This position was not only new to the Carl Sandburg Home, but it was pretty darn new in the Park Service, too. So to try to make that delineation between the interpreter and the educator was a challenge. What it gave me as an educator was time to focus on the education program and to do what I was charged to do in the time that I was there with her. So, that was essential, I thought.”<sup>52</sup>

To assist the park’s interpreters, the education program coordinator recruited and trained volunteers to work with the new Park as Classroom programs for middle school students. Beginning their work in 1999, most of the volunteers were former educators who wanted to continue working with children through the park. The new field trip programs enhanced the school group experience at the park. Before the new programs, “There were schools that would bring busloads of kids to the park and they’d climb all over the mountain and go through a house tour and be done . . . eat

52 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.



**Figure 12.19** Jill Hamilton-Anderson provides a tour for children, beginning on the front porch of the Main House. In the late 1990s, CARL staff began developing its curriculum-based educational program. Teachers worked with staff to develop lesson plans and on-site activities that tied directly with what the students were learning in school. March 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

50 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

51 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

a lunch and be done, pet the goats.” Interpretive Ranger Janene Donovan recalled, “We used to have unlimited amounts of school groups that came in. So when they changed how many kids could go into the house and take tours of the house and how many could come to our park, there was a huge cut in school groups. Our visitation dropped in general because of that. So that changed and now of course it is coming back up slowly, but we still only accept 80 at a time now and we are very organized about it.”<sup>53</sup>

The new education program included “three 50-minute circuits which, through a multidisciplinary interactive approach,” taught the students about Carl Sandburg, his family, and their life at Connemara.<sup>54</sup> As the education program evolved, the school group tours became more focused and organized. Teachers received materials to prepare their students better for what they would see and experience. Tours were planned with specific goals in mind, and the number of students at the park at any given time was controlled to ensure a high quality experience for teachers, students, and the park.<sup>55</sup>

Under the direction of Chiefs Bennett and Perschall, the park interpretive staff expanded the education programs beyond the initial middle school endeavors by developing curriculum materials appropriate to all grade levels. After 2006, new materials included a “Life on the Farm” program for kindergarten through second grades, “Sandburg Through Time” for third through fifth grades, “Something about Sandburg” for sixth through eighth grades, and “Through the Eyes of a Poet” for ninth through twelfth grades. The materials that accompanied the programs prepared teachers for a class visit to the park if appropriate; however, the materials also could be used in the classroom without the visit. Another resource developed by the park was “Where to? What Next?”—an educational film for use in the classroom.<sup>56</sup> According to Chief Perschall, between 2006 and 2008, the curriculum materials “aligned with North Carolina standard course of study and

national standards and were loaded on the website for teachers to download,” making it easier for teachers to use the materials for pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit lessons.<sup>57</sup>

The barn operation was also important to the park education program. The school children found seeing the goats to be one of their favorite memories from their visit. Janene Donovan observed that the barn tours have changed over time. “We used to have 40 kids that would just swarm down to the Barn and it would just be kind of chaos for a little while. We’ve gotten a lot more organized with our groups. So, I think they probably get a lot more out of it now, actually, than they used to.” The interpreters at the Barn had a specific, brief presentation for children in the school groups. The presentation became more standardized and organized over time. Donovan explained, “There are specific things we want to get across to them. When it is curriculum-based, we have definite things we have to tell them . . . So, I try to train our volunteers in doing that.”<sup>58</sup>

One of the additions to the education program made possible by the goat operation was that interpreters used Lilian Sandburg’s genetic research to teach science lessons to older students visiting the park.<sup>59</sup> The staff conducted research on the goat herd, located additional goats to improve the operation at the Barn, and continued affiliation with the American Dairy Goat Association, carrying on Mrs. Sandburg’s tradition of quality herd efforts. The meticulous records kept on the dairy goat operation under her direction provided primary documentation for explanation of her genetic methods and theories as applied to milk and butterfat production. Students benefitted from the real life example of how scientific research supports agricultural activities in rural areas.

Teacher workshops were integral to the success of the education program at Carl Sandburg Home NHS and remained a continuous part of staff activities. For example, in 2003, the park hosted two Parks as Classroom funded workshops offering opportunities for the teachers to hear from Sandburg scholars and become immersed in Connemara and the Sandburg lifestyle.<sup>60</sup>

53 Donovan, interview.

54 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.

55 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview; Donovan, interview.

56 National Park Service, “Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Curriculum Materials,” <http://www.nps.gov/carl/forteachers/curriculummaterials.htm> (Accessed September 25, 2012).

57 Perschall, email communication.

58 Donovan, interview.

59 Donovan, interview.

60 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.

All of the park's curriculum-based materials were incorporated into its website, demonstrating how the education program evolved using new technologies. Use of such technology to digitize educational resources and collections proved so successful that it remains an important endeavor emphasized within the NPS. The Carl Sandburg Home NHS *General Management Plan* also emphasized the importance of using technology as a way for the global community to access the park's vast collection. As a result of electronic resources developed and utilized by the park, teachers and students from most locations in the world can now take advantage of the park's education program. The successful project proved an important educational resource accessible by students of all ages.<sup>61</sup>

Two of the most compelling web-based resources were Imagine It! and the Virtual Museum Exhibit. Imagine It!, a children's website, allowed students, as well as their teachers, to enjoy a "virtual visit" to the park. Officially introduced to educators at the North Carolina Middle School Conference in 2005, the website won a NPS Southeast Region Keeper of the Light Award in 2006 for the "partnership effort from the Education Division and Museum Collection staff."<sup>62</sup> The Virtual Museum Exhibit, begun in 2007, was a partnership between Carl Sandburg Home NHS and the NPS Washington, DC-based Museum Management Program to photograph the collection and develop an exhibit online. In 2007, Eastern National, the site's bookstore operator, partnered with the park and the NPS Museum Management Program to support a special teacher workshop to develop lesson plans and methodologies for utilizing the extensive Sandburg collection in the classroom.<sup>63</sup>

In 2008, the park received special recognition for its youth education programs through a National Park Foundation grant of \$50,000 to support and expand its educational programming. First Lady Laura Bush, Honorary Chair of the National Park Foundation, presented the award on-site during a special ceremony at Carl Sandburg Home NHS. Superintendent Backlund called the visit "the highlight of the year and perhaps of the site's first

forty years."<sup>64</sup> The education program had evolved over a 14-year period, from the consistent day-to-day efforts of park interpretive staff, volunteers, and partners. It is an interpretive success story for the park.

## Developing and Sustaining Strong Interpretive Programs

As the park designed and implemented its prized education programs, the visitor services staff continued to improve interpretive programming at the park. The Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff envisioned new interpretive approaches. In 2000, Backlund noted, "An emphasis in providing interpretive messages on the park's shuttle bus, extended ranger programs, special on-site events, greater outreach and increased volunteer training all contributed to the success" of the park's programs. The staff also started using a new ticketing system for house tours. The tickets had "a short interpretive message" printed on them so that visitors could begin learning about the Sandburg's time at Connemara before their Main House tour ever started.<sup>65</sup> Partnerships with professional and community groups also became very important to developing park programs. Funding and in-kind contributions from groups such as Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara, Eastern National, Flat Rock Playhouse, Arts Council of Henderson County, and Henderson County Travel and Tourism, Community Foundation of Henderson County, Unilever, and the National Park Foundation helped the park sustain and expand its programs.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most popular and perhaps controversial interpretive areas for the park was the Barn and dairy goat herd operation. While it was very popular with visitors and the community, the barn operations were costly in terms of funding and volunteer time. The dairy goats were a very important part of life at Connemara, but Carl Sandburg was not personally involved with the operation. It was Lilian Sandburg's area of interest and expertise, and she was assisted by

61 Backlund, interview.

62 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2005; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006.

63 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

64 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

65 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

66 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2001; National Park Service, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Long Range Interpretive Plan* (Atlanta, GA: NPS Southeast Regional Office, 2008), 13.





**Figure 12.20** A volunteer feeds a baby goat. Volunteers play an important role in the barn operations. Photograph by Phil Smith. (CARL Park Archive).

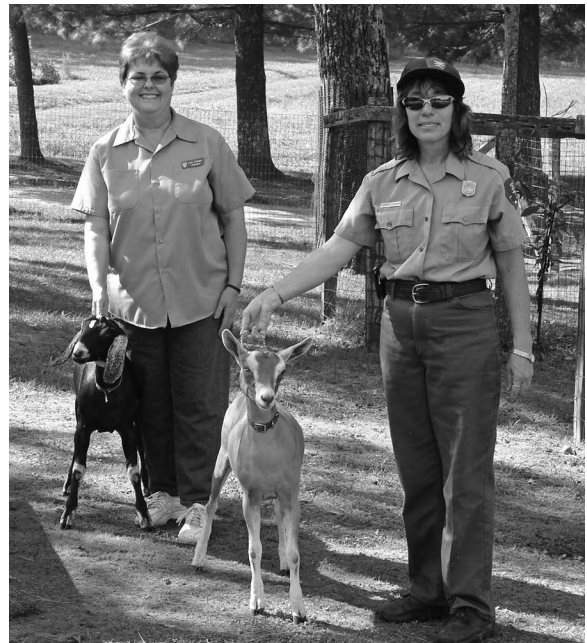
her daughters. While some park staff members have not considered the farm operations essential to telling the Sandburg story, interpreters have increasingly sought to connect the two more closely, arguing that the farm reflects the Sandburg family's sustainability efforts and their simple lifestyle.<sup>67</sup>

67 Ron Thoman, email communication with Ann McCleary, July 31, 2013.



**Figure 12.21** CARL Ranger Katie Dotson demonstrates cheese-making for park visitors. The program remains one of the most popular among visitors and teaches them about how important the goat milk was in the lives of the Sandburg family. July 15, 2010 (CARL Park Archive).

Janene Donovan, interpretive ranger and manager of the barn operations, believes that having the goats at the park is important to interpretation efforts. "I think it brings it to life because you've got the living bodies here and it shows that the family worked together. They didn't have to live like that. They didn't have to be farmers and work that hard, but they enjoyed that lifestyle. It was a simple, clean life for them." Recent surveys indicate that more people visit the Barn and the goats than go on the Main House tour. According to Donovan, return visitors find the setting serene. "We get people that literally come there almost every day and just sit there. I've seen people, just sitting out in the pasture for an hour, just soaking it in, enjoying the peace and quiet."<sup>68</sup>



**Figure 12.22** Volunteer Lois Kaupa and Ranger Janene Donovan train the goats. Since the goats interact with the public on a regular basis, they are socialized from a young age. 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

Retired park interpretive ranger Elena Diana Miller added that the living barn operation had a "unique importance as a living farm in terms of interpretation." She feels that Mrs. Sandburg played an important role in supporting her husband's dreams of a literary career. Also, "She was very important, too, in her own right because she was internationally known as a published author. She was published in the *London Dairy Goat Journal* and she was a forerunner in the American Dairy Goat Industry when no woman had taken that role in this country."<sup>69</sup>

68 Donovan, interview.

69 Miller, interview.

Hamilton-Anderson considered the barn operation to be an exciting aspect of the park, stating that “the power of that live operation, the immediate emotional connection as well as that kinesthetic connection that can trigger memory is extremely unique in the National Park Service, extremely.” While the Barn provided an opportunity to interact with the breeds of goats that Lilian Sandburg raised, Hamilton-Anderson remains unsure that the interpretation of the operation goes beyond the interaction with the goats to the Sandburg story about sustainability and “Carl Sandburg’s philosophy on life . . . the feelings he shared with his wife about sustainability, about the simplicities of life, about appreciating nature.” She continued, “It wasn’t simply the fact that Mrs. Sandburg was a champion goat farmer and raised champion goats, and produced so much milk and whatever. And it also had much more to do with not only that sustainability philosophy I mentioned, but also the relationship between Carl Sandburg and his wife and the trade-off they made for each other to do what both wanted and needed to do for themselves as well as for their family. So it was so much larger than going to the Barn every day and taking care of these animals.” Hamilton-Anderson fears that the overall picture of how the Sandburgs lived together and worked together is often lost in the recreational attachment visitors feel for the goats and the living farm.<sup>70</sup>

Former Chief of Visitor Services McBryant believed that “the goats and the farm, the vegetable garden, all those things associated with the property are critical to interpretation education. How I would describe interpretation at, of the farm, is I think one word: potential. I think there’s huge potential for the farm to be the springboard for many, many, many different things to be told. People come there specifically, they don’t even see the house, and they specifically come to see the goats. Locals as well as people from all over the world come to see the goats. I think there truly is a story to behold and I think as long as the National Park Service can afford to maintain a goat herd I think it should be there.” However, she added that where park interpretation needs to change is in the value of interpreting the full story of Carl Sandburg and his family who lived there. . . . So I’d say the farm has great potential to be the springboard to all the stories that you could ever

70 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.

tell about Carl Sandburg. . .” And, the stories could be told while “standing petting a goat with a young family, or with a group of children.” McBryant felt that visitors would be drawn in by the goats and then the rangers could connect the goats to the Sandburg story in new and exciting ways. “The visitor will leave with that experience of petting the goat, watching the goats out in the field, maybe even holding a young baby, and those are powerful, powerful memories for those visitors. But it’s our job to instill in them the stories of Carl Sandburg and what holding that young goat means to us as Americans, as it weaves in the stories of all of us. So when they’re thinking about the experience of holding that young kid, or petting on the mama goat, or smelling the buck across the roadway, that they’re not just remembering that physical experience, but they’re remembering what they heard from the ranger and how powerful that can be for a lifetime.”<sup>71</sup>

While the use and interpretation of the goat herd has garnered considerable debate among the park staff, it has helped provide a valuable resource for park programs. An example is the important youth program developed through the partnership with Henderson County Cooperative Extension Service for the F.R.E.S.H. (Flat Rock Exceptional Sandburg Helpers) group. The young people sometimes assisted visitors and volunteers by providing “informal interpretive messages.” Most often, they competed, through caring for the animals, for the opportunity to show the Connemara kid goats at the North Carolina Mountain State Fair each year. In 2006, a park Nubian kid won the first

71 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview.



**Figure 12.23** Participants in the F.R.E.S.H. program enjoy a presentation in the Amphitheater. 1993 (CARL Park Archive).

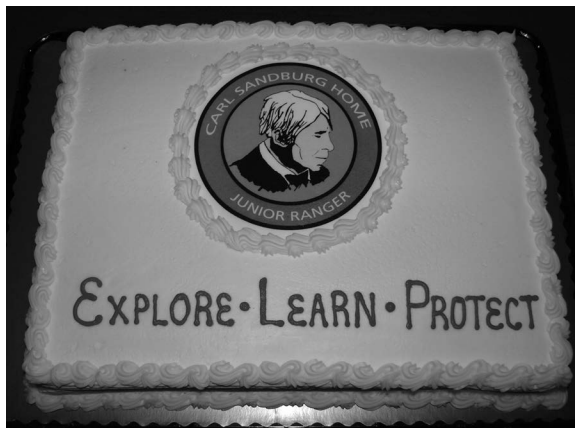


place award for her class and a park Toggenburg kid earned the first place honor for her class in 2007.<sup>72</sup> Showing the goats provided outreach opportunities, attracting visitors who might want to know more about how the NPS sustains living farm operations in a national park.

The park developed other programs specifically for children during these years. In 2007, the park created a Junior Ranger Program after receiving a grant from the National Park Foundation and matching support from the Community Foundation of Henderson County, Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara, and Eastern National. The program included activities that children completed as they learned about the work of rangers in the NPS and, in particular, about Carl Sandburg the writer. Children obtained the booklet at the park and worked through the lessons on-site, or they could download the materials and use the website to complete the activities. After the booklet was completed, a ranger “checked” the answers, either on-site or through the mail. Then the child could earn “a badge and the honor of being a Junior Ranger who vows to learn about and protect National Parks throughout our country.”<sup>73</sup>

72 Donovan, interview; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2007.

73 National Park Service, “Carl Sandburg Home NHS, For Kids,” <http://www.nps.gov/carl/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm> (Accessed September 25, 2012); Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2007.



**Figure 12.24** A cake and celebration greet visitors interested in Junior Ranger Day activities at CARL. Visitors of all ages participate in “Junior Ranger Day” activities as parents, staff, and volunteers assist the children in completing the requirements to become an honorary park ranger. December 19, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.25** Jill Hamilton-Anderson greets visitors at the Junior Ranger Day festivities, explaining the benefits of the program to children and families. December 19, 2006 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.26** With a 2007 NPS Foundation grant and additional support from the Community Foundation of Henderson County, Friends organization, and Eastern National, the Junior Ranger Program continues to serve children and families as they experience the park together or participate in activities via the website. In this photo, potential Junior Rangers wait to be sworn in as ranger Pat Prywood checks over their materials to make sure that they have the knowledge necessary to protect national park natural and cultural resources. May 2007 (CARL Park Archive).

Carl Sandburg Home NHS continued many of its popular annual events during these years as well, including the Sandburg Folk Music and Poetry Festival, held each year on Memorial Day, and Home for the Holidays, held each December. The park staff developed a new program, A Day with Lincoln Festival, in 2001. Continuing through 2008, the program highlighted Sandburg’s scholarship on the sixteenth president and his resulting Pulitzer Prize-winning biography on Lincoln.<sup>74</sup>

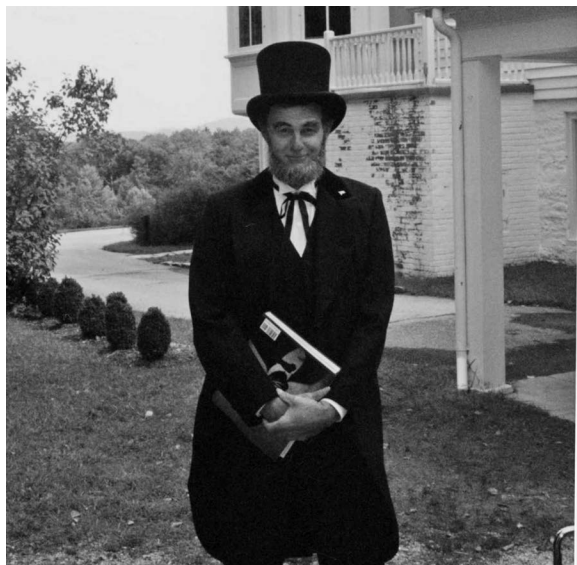
74 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001.



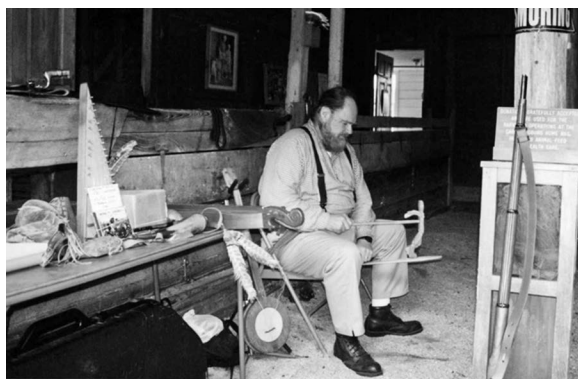
The Flat Rock Playhouse performances at the park continued to be a core interpretive program in the summer months and reflected the park's on-going relationship with the Playhouse and its Apprentice Program. Each summer, the park provided partial funding to support apprentice actors who perform plays such as *Rootabaga Stories*, *The World of*



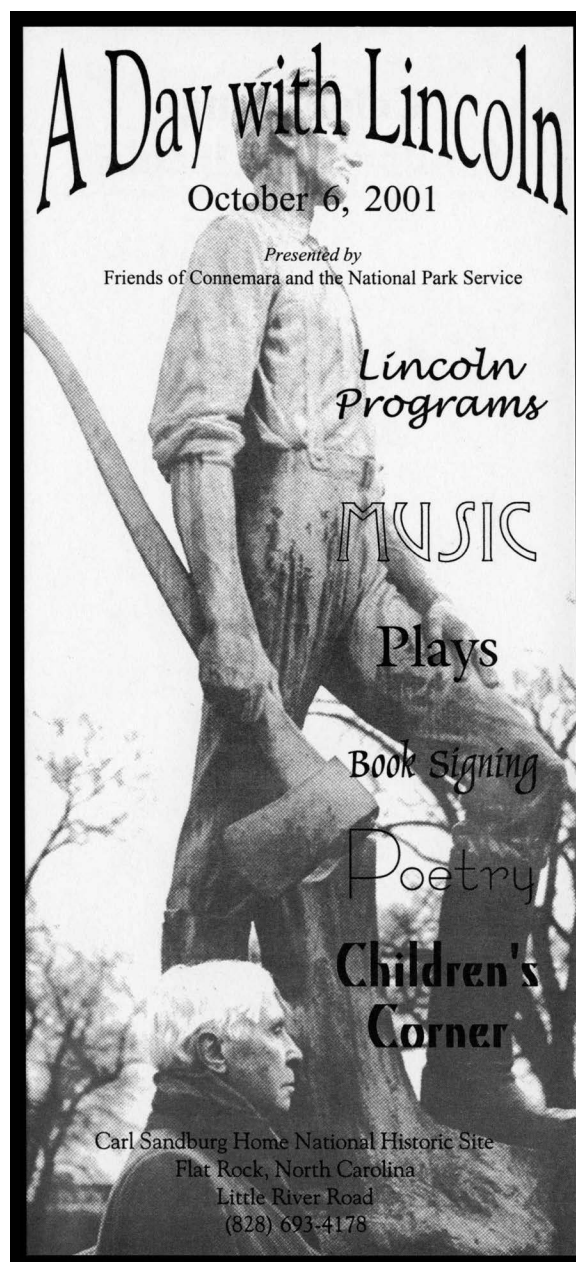
**Figure 12.27** Holiday celebrations continue in partnership with the community. December 2007 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.28** Dressed as President Lincoln, this actor provides an exciting performance for visitors. October 16, 2001 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.29** As part of the Lincoln Festival, performers entertain visitors with homemade toys such as the wooden puppet seen in this demonstration. October 16, 2001 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.30** This poster invites visitors to the park for a day of learning about Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, through poetry, plays, and other interpretive activities. The first annual A Day with Lincoln Festival, held in 2001, highlighted Sandburg's scholarship on the president and his resulting Pulitzer Prize-winning biography about Lincoln. October 6, 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

*Carl Sandburg*, and *Sandburg's Lincoln* in the park Amphitheater. The Friends of Connemara raised funds for these performances in 1997 and local partnerships underwrote some of the performances each year. Eastern National funds also continued to support the performances during the Backlund years.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Annual Agency Report to Eastern National, 2002-2008, Office of Chief of Visitor Services, CARL.

To further strengthen the partnership with the Flat Rock Playhouse, in 1997 and 1998, the Friends group also led a community effort to rebuild the Amphitheater where the performances were held. They secured grant funding from Georgia Pacific and the National Parks Conservation Association to purchase \$7,000 worth of lumber to rebuild the facility.<sup>76</sup> The project was accomplished entirely as a result of the work of partnerships, volunteerism, and the park's maintenance team. The architect, planners, and student builders donated their time so that Carl Sandburg Home NHS and the Friends

76 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997.



**Figure 12.31** Superintendent Backlund welcomes visitors to the Carl Sandburg Folk Music and Poetry Festival held in the Amphitheater at Connemara. May 1998 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.32** Musicians entertain the audience with traditional mountain music at the festival. May 1998 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.33** Multi-talented staff members, such as Ranger Diana Miller shown here, often participate in musical programming. May 1998 (CARL Park Archive).

of Carl Sandburg at Connemara could complete the Amphitheater for the comfort and convenience of park visitors. The dedication event for the rebuilt Amphitheater occurred at the annual Sandburg Folk Music and Poetry Festival in May 1998.<sup>77</sup>

## Cultivating the Arts

In the late 1990s, park interpretive staff also began to expand their programs by focusing on the arts through special exhibits, presentations, and partnerships. Since the park is the home of one of America's best-loved poets and a collector and performer of American folk music, it seemed important to staff that a connection to the arts be nurtured at the park. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) partnered with the park to designate Carl Sandburg Home NHS as a National Literary Landmark. Other partnerships for the arts initiative included the Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara and the Arts Council of Henderson County.<sup>78</sup>

Providing a direct connection to writing and writers was a major goal of the interpretive staff when developing the park's arts programming. In April 1999, the park sponsored the grant-funded Sandburg Poetry Celebration for the first time

77 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1998.

78 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2006;  
Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.



in honor of Carl Sandburg and National Poetry Month. Backlund noted that activities included a “poetry writing workshop, poetry reading workshop, public open mic and guest local poet as the keynote speaker, followed by a book-signing session in the park’s Bookstore.”<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 12.34** In 1998, the Friends of Connemara sponsored special programming in recognition of the park’s 30th anniversary. “Living with Poetry” featured Helga Sandburg. October 8, 1998 (CARL Park Archive).

The annual Student Poetry Contest represented another way in which the park supported development of writing skills and opportunity for public presentation of original work. The contest encouraged and provided opportunity for young students to develop their writing skills. Each year, the park announced the theme for the event and teachers facilitated student entries for the contest. Over 200 original poems were submitted annually. The park held a celebration for the young poets



**Figure 12.35** Superintendent Backlund welcomes author Galen Reuther and a guest to the park. Reuther joined the many authors who are affiliated with the park through their books. She came to the park in 2006 for a book signing for her work *The Carl Sandburg Home: Connemara*. August 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

who won in their age categories, during which they read their poems.<sup>80</sup>

One of the newest arts programs at the park has been the Carl Sandburg Writer-in-Residence program. In 2005, the park and the Friends group initially tried to work with Western Carolina University to develop a program proposal that would guide the development and implementation of an on-site writer’s program. For several years, they continued to develop the program and, in 2008, the “Friends contracted with Asheville-based poet, Glenis Redmond to develop and plan the site’s Poet/Writer-in-Residence Program, a long-time dream of the park.”<sup>81</sup>

Superintendent Backlund described the writing programs as special additions to the park’s interpretive program. “I think the programs that really, in my opinion, if we can so describe ourselves at the top of our game, are those programs that truly link in as close as possible to the theme of this place and those interpretive themes. It is a writer’s home. How do we engage people with writing today? I mean any program that hones in closely to that. All of the other programs are very good and we have abilities to relate in so many ways because Sandburg did so

80 National Park Service, “Carl Sandburg Home NHS, Student Poetry Contest,” <http://www.nps.gov/carl/parknews/student-poetry-contest.htm> (Accessed September 29, 2012).

81 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2008.

79 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999.



much, but things that tie into that art of writing. And, the Writer-in-Residence Program, that was such a wonderful labor of love for many years with the Friends and the park together.” The writing programs are important to the park because they are the core of who Sandburg was as a professional.<sup>82</sup>

Recognizing the potential interpretive impact of outreach, the park also sought opportunities for exhibits in public venues that supported the emphasis on the arts. In 1997, park staff developed an exhibit at the downtown Hendersonville Arts Center. The temporary exhibit titled, *The Poet and The President*, included objects from Sandburg’s Lincoln collection.<sup>83</sup> In 2000, the park partnered with the Wofford College Sandor Teszler Library Gallery to present an exhibit titled, *Carl Sandburg and his Guitar*, for the Spartanburg, South Carolina, area. As part of the exhibit, Sandburg



**Figure 12.36** The Bookstore, located on the Ground Floor of the Main House and operated by Eastern National, provides an inviting place to begin the tour experience, to rest and look over Sandburg’s materials, or to finish out a trip to the park. January 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

Ambassador Jhon C. Akers presented Sandburg and Segovia, a classical guitar program.<sup>84</sup> Over 3,000 people visited the Asheville Art Museum for the Steichen and Sandburg: Artistic and Family Ties exhibit. Available from November 2001 through January 2002, the exhibit brought part of the park collection to the public and featured approximately 39 Edward Steichen photographs. Lynn White Savage, museum curator for Carl Sandburg Home NHS, developed the exhibit and wrote the text used in the exhibit and the brochure.<sup>85</sup>

## Developing the Long Range Interpretive Plan

In 2004, as the *General Management Plan* process came to a close, the Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff began working with the NPS Southeast Regional Office to develop a Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) to replace existing interpretive planning documents dating back to the founding of the park. The LRIP, published in 2008, outlines major interpretive topics for the park as Life, Family, Being an American, Social Activism, Place, and the National Park Service. The plan delineated goals for the park to be phased in over a four-year period. All goals and associated actions supported those of the 2003 *General Management Plan* for the park. Chiefs of Visitor Services Sue Bennett and Sarah Perschall provided leadership for the LRIP process.

Superintendent Backlund stated that the SERO team came in to work with the park and that teams allowed new ideas to enter the process. Further she said that the process helped to “bring us up to date on some of the things we were beginning to do that we wanted to just kind of fine-tune and to be sure to put into a planning document. It brought in all the things with the education program and how that program has grown . . . a lot of the new things started with the GMP, with even more emphasis on education.”<sup>86</sup>

## Engaging the Community through Celebrations

Celebrations have been an important part of park interpretive programming. The park staff members planned and implemented special interpretive events that highlighted the life and works of Carl Sandburg. In January 1998, park staff and the Friends of Connemara met to plan for one of the largest celebrations the park had seen to date: the 30th Anniversary of the founding of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. From January to October, staff and volunteers worked diligently to make the celebration special for the park and for the community.<sup>87</sup>

82 Backlund, interview.

83 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

84 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000.

85 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1997.

86 Backlund, interview.

87 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.

While the 30th Anniversary of Carl Sandburg Home NHS was celebrated in October, events surrounding the anniversary were scheduled for September through October. Among the highlights were “October Paint, a juried art exhibition at the Singleton Centre; a presentation by Helga Sandburg at Blue Ridge Community College; a musical performance by Phil and Gaye Johnson in the park amphitheater; an entry in the Apple Festival Parade [Hendersonville]; and a series of four special “Be Our Guest” articles in the newspaper.” Superintendent Backlund called it “a perfect celebration” and noted that the community



**Figure 12.37** CARL staff celebrates the park’s 30th anniversary with a group photo, clear evidence of growth in numbers and expertise since the early days. 1998. (CARL Park Archive)



**Figure 12.38 (above) and 12.39 (below)** As part of the park’s 30th Anniversary Celebration, artists were invited to submit their Sandburg and Connemara-related paintings for a juried exhibit at the Singleton Center in Hendersonville. September 27- October 23, 1998 (CARL Park Archive).



contributed “an estimated \$25,000 of in-kind services” during the event.”<sup>88</sup>

In 2002, park staff and the Friends of Connemara board planned “a very ambitious 2003 year-long celebration” commemorating the 125th birthday of Carl Sandburg and the 35th Anniversary of the park.<sup>89</sup> Seven of the programs were in addition to regular annual special events, making the staff and volunteers responsible for eleven public activities during the year-long celebration. Highlights included January Winter Gold, an evening featuring a performance of Sandburg and Segovia; an April Poetry Celebration, including a contest for elementary and secondary students, poetry recital, and a poetry workshop; an Evening with Penelope and Jennifer Niven; the Sandburg Folk Music Festival; a special Birthday Celebration at Connemara in July; Sandburg’s Lincoln Festival in September, and Home for the Holidays in December.<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 12.40** A copy of this group photo, commemorating collective contributions made to the park, was presented to park volunteers during Volunteer Recognition ceremonies. September 4, 2003 (CARL Park Archive).

Superintendent Backlund reported that the 2003 year-long celebration “reached out in new and enduring ways to diverse audiences and new partners. As a result, the celebration partnership was profiled on the NPS Partnership Program homepage and the site was recognized as the Southeast Region’s 2004 George B. Hartzog, Jr. Outstanding Volunteer Program.” During that year,

<sup>88</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1999; Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Turns 30!, event program, CARL Park Archive.

<sup>89</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> “Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Celebrates Carl Sandburg’s 125th Birthday and 35th Park Anniversary,” Calendar of Events, CARL Park Archive.





**Figure 12.41** Musicians participating in the Lincoln Festival, add an authentic feel and sound to the festivities. In this photo, a banjo player performs in the renovated House Garage. October 16, 2001 (CARL Park Archive).

179 park volunteers contributed 13,696 hours.<sup>91</sup> Further, Backlund noted, “Fifty area businesses provided underwriting costs for events, in-kind services, donations of items, and support for publicity which totaled approximately \$38,000. These celebration partnerships will serve as the foundation for an expanding partnership role in the future.”<sup>92</sup>

The 40th Anniversary of Carl Sandburg Home NHS was officially celebrated in October 2008, but the whole year provided opportunity for celebration and festivities. The surrounding communities again participated in the year-long celebration. Superintendent Backlund observed, “A special celebration such as this affords the park and the community opportunity for forging new partnerships and strengthening those already in place.” For example, Downtown Hendersonville “chose Nubian goats to be the theme of their public art display” in recognition of the park’s 40th Anniversary. In April, Backlund visited with North Carolina senators and congressmen in Washington to thank them for their support and to brief them on the park’s 40th Anniversary plans.<sup>93</sup> The highlight of the year was the visit by First Lady Laura Bush who delivered the \$50,000 grant from the National Park Foundation in support of the youth education programs.

On October 17, 2008, Carl Sandburg Home NHS held its “40th Anniversary Celebration” on-site at the park. While the day was filled with



**Figure 12.42** Superintendent Backlund welcomes visitors to the park’s 40th Anniversary Celebration during ceremonies held in the renovated Garage interpretive space. October 17, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.43** The celebration features this special cake for the Alumni Dinner. October 17, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).



**Figure 12.44** Musicians Diana Miller (left) and Steve Harrison (right) entertain guests during the park’s 40th anniversary festivities at the Kellogg Center in Hendersonville. October 16, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

91 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2004.

92 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003.





**Figure 12.45** Exhibits during the event highlight Sandburg's career. The curatorial staff developed the exhibits using CARL's collection of photographs, awards, and publications honoring the poet. October 17, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

special presentations and activities by NPS and political leaders, there was special recognition and appreciation for the way the park had developed since its founding in 1968. Chief Perschall acknowledged a unique recognition with the following description: "The park received a special donation from former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who was instrumental in establishing the historic site in 1968. The donated items were from his personal collection and deeded to the park's museum collection. Many



**Figure 12.47** A special part of the NPS Foundation visit was the opportunity for young volunteers to spend time with First Lady Laura Bush, Senator Elizabeth Dole, and Superintendent Backlund. This photo captures the occasion as they pose with F.R.E.S.H. volunteers near the barn complex. The children explained their responsibilities with the goats and introduced some of the animals to the visitors. July 28, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

of the items were gifts from the Sandburg family when Udall visited in 1967 after Carl Sandburg's death. The Udall's sent the donated items to Congressman Heath Shuler who then passed them on to Carl Sandburg Home NHS at the October 17 event where they were displayed for the public." A letter to Congressman Shuler from the Udalls accompanied the donation. In the letter, the Udalls said, "Both of us deeply appreciate the effort you



**Figure 12.46** Jill Hamilton-Anderson and Superintendent Backlund give Mrs. Bush and Senator Dole a tour of the Main House during the NPS Foundation visit. July 28, 2008 (CARL Park Archive).

have made to enlarge the Carl Sandburg historical site and celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Act of Congress honoring this great American.” After the day-long anniversary celebration, the park hosted an alumni dinner. It was held at the Kellogg Center, with 73 past and current employees and volunteers attending.<sup>94</sup>

## Visitation

Amidst all of these successes and innovations, collecting data about the number of visitors to Carl Sandburg Home NHS remained an important yet often frustrating task for the staff. The park measured visitation by ticket sales for the house tours, but this number did not accurately reflect park visitors. Backlund believed that “for every one person who visits the house there are two others who visit the grounds.” The park tried several techniques for counting visitors, including purchasing electronic counters, which were placed throughout the park. The counters picked up much higher numbers than those reflected in the number of tickets sold for house tours, but the same visitor might be counted three times. As a result, this data was interpreted as “contacts” rather than actual visitors.<sup>95</sup>

In an effort to change the formulas used by the NPS to determine the number of visitors, the park and NPS Washington Office conducted a visitor use survey during 2006 to 2007. While most official statistics in visitor use reports were based on the number of tickets sold for the Main House tours plus twenty percent, the survey proved that the site should be using a higher factor of multiplication. The survey suggested that NPS missed over 70 percent of its visitors when only the number of those touring the Main House was reported. NPS developed new formulas for calculating the Carl Sandburg Home NHS visitor statistics for 2008.<sup>96</sup>

Given the fact that accurate data do not exist for park visitation, it is not possible to cite visitation trends with a high degree of confidence. However, using NPS data reported in the 2008 Long Range



**Figure 12.48** Superintendent Connie Backlund celebrates the park's anniversary. October 17, 2008 (CARL Park Archive)

Interpretive Plan for the period between 1994 and 2007, visitation to Carl Sandburg Home NHS varied greatly from a high of 54,478 in 1994 to 28,820 in 2007, the last year of reporting with the old incorrect formula.<sup>97</sup> The park could identify reasons for the drop in house visitation during that period, such as decreased regional tourism due to the economy or high gas prices. By 1997, park staff members were reporting an increase in the number of visitors coming to the site to walk. Also during this time, visitor surveys reflected a 95 to 99 percent rate of satisfaction with park facilities and a rate of 77 to 95 percent for those who knew the significance of the park and could correctly answer questions about who Sandburg was and his contributions to American literature. Those rates met or exceeded park goals.<sup>98</sup>

In 2006, the park experienced an increase in the number of visitors, even though the Main House tours were limited during preservation efforts. One reason for this increase may have been that the Visitor Services Division tried new ideas for marketing the park in 2005. They ran promotions in print publications in hopes of attracting new

94 Sarah Perschall, correspondence with author, April 18, 2013.

95 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1997; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

96 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 6; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2008.

97 *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 2003, 3.

98 Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996-2008.

audiences.<sup>99</sup> Additional marketing opportunities developed during 2006 to 2008, when the park received grants from Henderson County Travel and Tourism to publish special events calendars highlighting annual festivals and the Flat Rock Playhouse summer performances.<sup>100</sup>

In 2008, through a collaborative effort with the NPS Visitor Services Project directed by the University of Idaho, the park held a comprehensive Visitor Survey. It was the first such effort at an in-depth assessment of who was coming to Carl Sandburg Home NHS, why they were coming, and what they did on-site. The survey results, which would guide park programming and marketing, had a 76.6 percent response rate and provided important information for park staff, such as age, education level, reason for visit, number of visitors in party, amount of time spent in the park, and satisfaction with the experience. Visitors, defined as “groups,” ranged from the lone visitor to those who were members of families or organized tours, such as a church group.<sup>101</sup>

Researchers found that 50 percent of the “visitor groups” came to the park with another person, 29 percent with two or more people. Only 22 percent of visitors came to the park alone. Of those visiting the park, 53 percent reported that they were visiting as part of a family group. Ninety-nine percent of those visiting the park were from the United States; 63 percent were North Carolinians. Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed reported living in the area. Visitor groups reported that they came to the park for recreational purposes (48 percent) or to know more about Sandburg (21 percent). Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups reported that they went to the barn area most often. Favorite activities were walking or hiking in the park (81 percent), followed by spending time at the barn complex with the goats (67 percent).<sup>102</sup>

Those visitor groups age 56-70 years old comprised 41 percent of the people visiting the park. The

researchers reported that 35 percent of the park visitor groups included those with physical conditions making it hard to “access or participate in park activities or services.” This was particularly important when walking from the parking area up to the Main House, with 76 percent of the visitor groups including someone who experienced difficulty with accessing that part of the park.

Carl Sandburg Home NHS staff received good news through the results of the survey pertaining to their frontline efforts in visitor services and conservation. Ninety-seven percent of the visitor groups reported that park “visitor facilities, services, and recreational opportunities” were either “very good” or “good” with no group reporting poor ratings for services. Visitor groups gave their highest ratings pertaining to visitor services including assistance from the park staff and the tour of the Main House. Finally, researchers found that visitors valued the resources of their national park, indicating that it was “extremely important” or “very important” to protect the clean air, clean water, and scenic views they enjoyed while at the park.<sup>103</sup>

## Eastern National: Cooperating Association and Partner

The importance of keeping Carl Sandburg’s work available to the public cannot be overstated. Allowing his legacy to pass would be a great loss to both the park and the nation. Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association, the park’s cooperating association, has been an important partner in keeping Sandburg’s work before the public. The organization changed its name to Eastern National in 1998 and has continued to provide on-site sales to visitors so that they can take something home with them to remind them of their visit to Connemara—and more importantly, of Sandburg and his impact on American literature.<sup>104</sup>

Eastern National and the park partnered in their attempts to support education and interpretation through providing materials such as books and other educational materials for purchase by

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99 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2005.

100 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2006-2008.

101 Yen Le, Nancy Holmes, Eleonora Papdogiannaki, Douglas Eury, and Steven Hollenhorst, *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Visitor Study* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Social Science Program, 2008), Report Summary.

102 Le et al., *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Visitor Study*, 2008, Report Summary.

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103 Le et al., *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Visitor Study*, 2008, Report Summary.

104 Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1998.





**Figure 12.49** Rangers welcome visitors to the Ground Floor of the Main House. Circa summer 1999 (CARL Park Archive).

visitors.<sup>105</sup> Those efforts were tied specifically to the interpretive mission of the park. For example, in 1999, the park and Eastern National worked together with the Library of Congress on an extensive search for information about the copyright status of several of Sandburg's works that were out of print. The Eastern National site manager was able to use the information to negotiate with publishers to reprint the books on demand. Using one of the latest technologies in printing, Eastern National provided four Sandburg works for visitors. Titles added to circulation through these kinds of efforts include *Windsong*,



**Figure 12.50** CARL rangers and volunteers gather in the bookstore as they await visitors for the next tour of the Main House. June 2006 (CARL Park Archive).

*The Chicago Race Riots, Early Moon, The Sandburg Range, The Letters of Carl Sandburg, Storm Over the Land, Smoke and Steel, The Cornhuskers, The Rootabaga Stories, The Rootabaga Stories Part Two, Complete Poems, Lincoln Biography, and Prairie Years.*<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

<sup>106</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000; Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

In addition to Sandburg's works, Eastern National has secured a reprint for *A Great and Glorious Romance*, written by daughter Helga Sandburg, and funded the development of a taped walking tour of Connemara featuring granddaughter Paula Steichen Polega.<sup>107</sup> As technology advanced, the tour was produced on compact disc to make it more accessible for visitors. *My Connemara*, a



**Figure 12.51** Guests beginning their visit in the Main House bookstore can learn more about life at Connemara by watching videos featuring the Sandburgs. March 2009 (CARL Park Archive).

memoir written by Polega, was also reprinted and remained popular with visitors.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, in 2000, Eastern National and the park learned that the recordings of Sandburg reading his work might not be available for re-release due to copyright challenges.<sup>109</sup> Overall, the park continued to ensure that all of the poet's published works remained available for those visitors who wanted to purchase the materials on-site, thus supporting the NPS efforts to keep Sandburg's legacy alive.<sup>110</sup>

The partnership between Eastern National and Carl Sandburg Home NHS has proven successful for both organizations. The park is fulfilling its

<sup>107</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1996.

<sup>108</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 2000.

<sup>110</sup> Superintendent's Annual Report, 1999.

mission to keep Sandburg's work available for the public and Eastern National has enjoyed several years of increasing sales on-site, achieving sales of over \$103,000 in 2002.<sup>111</sup> The company's staff has continually looked for ways to provide items that will be useful and or enjoyable for visitors. In 2007, they added bottled water for thirsty hikers and a "plush Nubian goat" for visitors who wanted a token to remind them of all they learned about the Sandburg story via the Barn and goat herd. Sales in 2007 were twelve percent higher than in 2006.<sup>112</sup>

Eastern National donates a percentage of the sales money to the park each year. The park uses the money to enhance programs for visitors. Often, these funds have provided financial support to underwrite the summer plays and special festivals or to bring an author or musician to the area for public presentations. In 2007, Eastern National donated over \$9,000 to the park. The funding covered costs of a "week-long teacher workshop to develop curriculum-based lesson plans for an online museum exhibit." In addition, the organization helped to cover printing costs for a Spanish language version of the Junior Ranger Program materials.<sup>113</sup> Eastern National continues to be an important partner for the park, providing products and supporting services that are enjoyable for visitors and the community, as well as essential in teaching the next generation about Carl Sandburg.

In the area of interpretation, the Backlund years will be remembered for the lasting legacy of updating the interpretive programs at the park

to meet new NPS expectations, establishing a formal curriculum-based education program, and adding a staff position dedicated to the education program. While Sandburg is "so relevant," Backlund observed that "he's not always there in current studies in high school or middle school and to help this place remaining relevant and meaningful, the best way for us to share him is with young people." When asked to identify the strongest interpretive programs the park developed during her tenure, she chose the Sandburg Student Poetry Contest and the Writer-in-Residence Program, both of which foster creative writing endeavors. The programs are about writing and helping people to become writers—what Backlund describes as "the core of what Sandburg was" personally and professionally.<sup>114</sup>

Backlund believes that "education and informed young people are so important, especially at this site, a site of a literary figure." She wanted the park to interpret how "multifaceted Sandburg was, to be sure that we captured his full dimension. We preserve a legacy." In the spirit of Sandburg's approach to life and citizenship, Superintendent Backlund increased diversity in staff, audiences, and programs, ensuring that Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site remains a place of welcome and inclusion—a fitting tribute to the Poet of the People.<sup>115</sup>

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111 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2003.

112 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

113 Superintendent's Annual Report, 2007.

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114 Backlund, interview

115 Hamilton-Anderson and McBryant, interview; Backlund, interview.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Authorizing Legislation



Public Law 90-592  
90th Congress, H. R. 13099  
October 17, 1968

### An Act

82 STAT. 1154

To authorize the establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire, by donation or purchase with donated or appropriated funds, all or any part of the property and improvements thereon at Flat Rock, North Carolina, where Carl Sandburg lived and worked during the last twenty years of his life, comprising approximately two hundred and forty-two acres, together with approximately six acres of adjacent or related property which the Secretary may deem necessary for establishment of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

Carl Sandburg  
Home National  
Historic Site,  
N. C.  
Establishment.

SEC. 2. The national historic site established pursuant to this Act shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461-467).

Administration.

SEC. 3. There are authorized to be appropriated the sums of \$225,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and \$952,000 for development expenses incurred pursuant to the provisions of this Act.

Appropriation.

Approved October 17, 1968.

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#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 1676 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).  
SENATE REPORT No. 1592 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 114 (1968):  
Sept. 16: Considered and passed House.  
Oct. 2: Considered and passed Senate.



## Appendix B: Timeline Of Notable Events

1878	Carl Sandburg is born	1969	Mrs. Sandburg and four rangers from the Blue Ridge Parkway give the first tour of the property, under the auspices of the National Park Service, for the wives of the Flat Rock Lions Club District Cabinet in town for a meeting
1883	Lilian Steichen is born		
1908	Sandburg marries Lilian Steichen		
1940	Sandburg receives first Pulitzer Prize for history for <i>Abraham Lincoln: The War Years</i>		
1946	Sandburgs move to Connemara with daughters Janet, Margaret, and Helga, and grandchildren John Carl and Paula Steichen	1970	NPS approves CARL Interpretive Prospectus
		1970	NPS hires James Krestchmann as CARL's first historian and "area" superintendent
1951	Sandburg wins second Pulitzer Prize for <i>Complete Poems</i>	1971	NPS approves CARL Master Plan
1959	Sandburg addresses joint session of United States Congress on Lincoln Day	1971	CARL hires first curator, Gordon Gay
1960	Lilian Sandburg's goat, Jennifer II, receives international recognition as the top producing Toggenburg dairy goat in the world	1971	Volunteers begin working with staff at the park
		1972	CARL hosts "Establishment Day" ceremony with 300 people attending, including Lilian Sandburg and NPS Director George Hartzog
1964	Sandburg receives Presidential Medal of Freedom		
1967	Carl Sandburg dies, age 89	1972	CARL establishes first elements of the living farm with purchase of 3 Toggenburg goats descended from Lilian Sandburg's herd
1967	Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior visits Connemara to discuss making the estate a national park		
		1973	Krestchmann area superintendency ends
1968	Mrs. Sandburg sells Connemara to U.S. Government for a national park site dedicated to her husband	1973	Park purchases house trailer for on-site staff residence
		1973	Superintendent Ron Thoman enters service at CARL
1968	President Johnson signs Public Law 90-592, authorizing establishment of Carl Sandburg Home NHS, the first NHS dedicated to a poet	1974	Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site opens to the public on May 11
1968	NPS hires long-time Sandburg farm employee, Leroy Levi, as first park staff member to act as caretaker of the site	1974	CARL hires second curator, Warren Weber
1968-1970	CARL administered by Blue Ridge Parkway	1975	Administrative offices move from the Main House into the Tenant House
1969	Congress passes Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Act, authorizing parks to recruit and utilize volunteers in site operations	1975	The Flat Rock Playhouse debuts play "The World of Carl Sandburg" at park
		1975	Thoman area superintendency ends

1975	Benjamin Davis arrives at CARL as superintendent, the first to report directly to the regional office, rather than the Blue Ridge Parkway superintendent	1986	Warren Weber appointed acting superintendent
1976	The Flat Rock Playhouse adds <i>Rootabaga Stories</i> and <i>An Afternoon with Mr. Lincoln</i> to its summer performances at the park	1986	Kenneth Hulick becomes superintendent
1977	Lilian Sandburg dies, age 93	1987	CARL begins charging \$1.00 fee for Main House tour
1978-1984	Penelope Niven conducts the Carl Sandburg Oral History Project	1987	Park holds first Carl Sandburg Folk Music Festival
1978	Carl Sandburg Home NHS celebrates 100th Anniversary of Sandburg's birth	1988	Park founds Friends of Connemara group
1978	CARL decides to cut back on the dairy goat herd operation	1988	Park participated in "Poetry and Politics: the Carl Sandburg Symposium," sponsored by the University of North Carolina-Ashville and the North Carolina Humanities Council
1979	NPS approves CARL Development Concept Plan	1988	"Christmas at Connemara" held for first time
1981	Administrative offices move from Tenant House into Farm Manager's House	1989	CARL limits tour of Main House to 15 visitors at a time
1981	CARL hires Elena Diana Miller as first full-time park ranger	1990	Friends of Connemara incorporates as nonprofit organization and gains 501(c) 3 status.
1981	Big Glassy Trail becomes a "National Recreation Trail"	1990	First "March for Parks" event held in support of local, state, and national parks
1981	NPS rebuilds Front Lake Dam, stabilizes Side Lake Dam, and dredges lakes	1991	Publication of Penelope Niven's book, <i>Carl Sandburg: A Biography</i>
1982	CARL parking lot and Visitor Contact Station completed	1991	75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Park Service with celebration at CARL
1982	Carl Sandburg Day at the North Carolina Pavilion at the World's Fair	1991	CARL completes majority of collection cataloging after 17 years, using backlog cataloging funds
1982	Visitation reaches 50,000 for the year—the highest since the park's founding	1992	Hulick reorganizes CARL management, creating new Chief of Visitor Services and Chief of Resource Management positions
1983	CARL becomes demonstration site for SERO computerized collections catalog system which was the prototype for the Automated National Catalog System (ANCS)	1992	<i>Mr. Sandburg's Lincoln</i> performed for first time by Vagabond Players from the Flat Rock Playhouse
1983	Elena Diana Miller earns Southeast Region Freeman Tilden Award for Interpretive Excellence; is runner up for the National Freeman Tilden Award; and earns the Best Interpretive Arts Program in National Parks Award	1992	F.R.E.S.H. (Flat Rock's Exceptional Sandburg Helpers) Program begins
1985	CARL completes maintenance facility	1992	CARL's new <i>Cultural Landscape Report</i> published and guides park's cultural resource decisions
1986	Superintendent Davis retires		

## Appendix B: Timeline Of Notable Events

1992	Elena Diana Miller earns a second Southeast Regional Freeman Tilden Award	1997	Farm Manager's House renovations complete
1993	Hulick superintendency ends	1997	Old park residence (house trailer) sold and removed
1993	Warren Weber appointed acting superintendent	1997	CARL completes all of the work mandated by the park's original Master Plan
1993	NPS begins to redefine interpretation in the national parks	1997	Friends of Connemara found Carl Sandburg Home Endowment through the Henderson County Foundation
1993	NPS Preservation Seminar held in collaborations with North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Friends of Connemara, Johnson Farm Committee, and Biltmore Estate	1997	Publication of Penelope Niven's book, <i>Steichen: A Biography</i>
1993	Carl Sandburg Home NHS celebrates 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	1997	Friends of Connemara group begins sponsorship of summer plays performed at CARL by Flat Rock Playhouse apprentices
1993	Publication of Kathleen Byrne's book, <i>Paula Sandburg's Chikaming Goat Herd</i>	1997	Margaret Sandburg dies, age 85
1994	Connie Backlund becomes superintendent	1998	CARL Education Program begins with hiring of temporary staff member to work on development of the Middle School Curriculum Guide
1994	Appalachian Cluster forms		
1995	Park completes Preservation Center	1998	Friends of Connemara group receives the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award recognizing the best volunteer group in Henderson and Buncombe Counties
1996	CARL staff move into new Headquarters Building		
1996	CARL becomes Appalachian Cluster's lead park in implementing the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)	1998	Daniel Lyons, Friends leader, receives the NPS Southeast Region Volunteer of the Year Award
1996	CARL amends Master Plan to convert the Farm Manager's House into a park residence	1998	Friends and community partners complete the rebuilding of the park's Amphitheater, through all volunteer efforts
1996	Park moves collection into the new Museum Preservation Center	1998	Carl Sandburg Home NHS celebrates 30th Anniversary
1996	Tenant House becomes new CARL Park Rangers' Office	1998	Cooperating association Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association changes name to Eastern National
1996	CARL shuts down for six weeks: four weeks for government budget reasons and two weeks for ice and snow storm		
1996	CARL Volunteer Program receives North Carolina Governor's Award for Excellence	1999	NPS launches the Natural Resource Challenge, mandating new management standards for the ways national parks oversee resources
1996	CARL chosen as a "Cultural Treasure" for the "Year of the Mountain"	1999	"Sandburg Poetry Celebration" honors Carl Sandburg and National Poetry Month
1996	House Garage renovated to become interpretive center		



1999	Park forms new volunteer group, comprised of former educators, to work with education program staff	2003	Carl Sandburg Home NHS celebrates 35th Anniversary
2000	CARL Education Program expands with hiring of first Education Program Coordinator, a position dedicated full-time to working with education community on ways to use park resources in meeting requirements of their curricula	2003	Park staff discover mold outbreak in Main House
2000	Park publishes its Middle School Curriculum Guide	2004	Park installs new wheelchair lift, making Main House accessible to physically challenged visitors
2001	CARL's Natural Resource program begins in earnest with hiring of temporary forestry technician to manage hazardous trees and exotic plants	2004	CARL Volunteer Program receives the Southeast Region's Georgia B. Hertzog Volunteer Program Award
2001	Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) purchases 22 acres adjoining CARL to protect historic viewsheds	2004	Hurricanes Ivan and Francis, along with other tropical storms cause significant damage to park's historic landscape, forcing park closure for clean-up and repairs
2001	"Sandburg Rovers," volunteer group begins walking park trails and grounds assisting visitors and educating them about cleaning up after their pets	2004	North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources secures funding through the State Natural Heritage Trust Fund to purchase 22 acre parcel from CTNC to protect CARL viewshed
2001	CARL becomes park of the Cumberland Piedmont Network for purposes of Inventory and Monitoring of natural resources	2005	Superintendent Backlund reorganizes management team to include: Chief of Visitor Services, Chief of Maintenance and Resources Management, and Administrative Officer
2001	CARL and Harpers Ferry Center complete new exhibits at the Visitor Contact Station	2006	Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara hold first "Hobo Ball," raising \$25,000 for the park
2001	Janet Sandburg dies, age 85	2006	Flat Rock opens its Village Greenway, a collaborative effort with NPS Southeast Regional Office Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Division.
2002	Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) threatens historic trees at park	2006	Park wins NPS Southeast Region Keep of the Light Award for its Imagine It! website for teachers and students
2002	Friends of Connemara changes name to Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara	2006	CARL installs new Barn interpretive exhibits
2002	Village of Flat Rock completes collaborative project with NPS and other partners on Sewer Project begun in 1996	2007	CARL develops its "Virtual Museum Exhibit" website in collaboration with the NPS Washington, D.C.-based Museum Management Program
2002	CARL and Harpers Ferry Center complete park wayside exhibits	2007	CARL hosts Director of National Park Service and all Southeast Region Superintendents, marking the first time an NPS director had visited the park since its official opening in 1974
2003	CARL completes new <i>General Management Plan</i>		
2003	Park celebrates 125 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Carl Sandburg's birth		

## Appendix B: Timeline Of Notable Events

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- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2007 | CARL staff, in collaboration with SERO, complete Long Range Interpretive Plan   |
| 2007 | Park develops Junior Ranger Program with special funding from the NPS Foundation, Community Foundation of Henderson County, Friends, and Eastern National                     |
| 2008 | President Georgia W. Bush signs Consolidated Natural Resources Act (Public Law 110-229) into law, authorizing boundary expansion of up to 110 acres for the park              |
| 2008 | CARL hires first biological science technician, Irene Van Hoff  |
| 2008 | Friends partner with Ashville poet to develop proposal for CARL Writer-in-Residence Program   |
| 2008 | NPS and CARL complete first comprehensive Visitor Study and methods for counting visitation are changed to better reflect all visitors, not just those touring the Main House |
| 2008 | First Lady Laura Bush delivers NPS Foundation \$50,000 grant to CARL in support of the park's youth education programs  |
| 2008 | Carl Sandburg Home NHS celebrates 40th Anniversary  |

# Appendix C: Carl Sandburg Home NHS Staff History

This Staff History is compiled from information found in Superintendent's Annual Reports, oral history interviews, and park records. It is as complete as possible using available information. Dates indicate full-time employment; some employees may have started earlier at the park

as seasonal, temporary assignment, or student employees. Earlier dates are not shown for those staff members. Position titles reflect the last position held; some employees may have started out in a different position with the park.

Backlund, Connie Hudson	Superintendent	March 6, 1994	October 2012
Bennett, Susan	Chief of Visitor Services	2002	2006
Bogle, Martha	Chief of Visitor Services	1992	1995
Brumbelow, Jerre	Acting Superintendent (From Everglades National Park)	September 1993	
Byrne, Kathleen Triggs	Museum Technician	1984	1985
Davis, Benjamin	Superintendent	April 27, 1975	May 24, 1986
Donovan, Janene	Ranger and Living Farm Manager	1985	Still on duty
Eldridge, James	Museum Technician	1981	
Gall, Mark	Ranger	1981	1984
Gay, Gordon	Curator Acting Superintendent	1971 February 5, 1973	1973 April 1973
Gibbs, Bess	Museum Technician	1988	1997
Hale, Dallas	Administrative Officer	2007	
Hamilton-Anderson, Jill	Education Program Coordinator	2000	2008
Hamm, Charlie	Chief of Maintenance	1970	1984
Harrison, Steve	Chief of Maintenance and Resources Management	2005	2007
Haynes, Jimmy	Park Technician	1971	
Hellmich-Bryan, Judy	Museum Technician Curator	1985 1987	1986 1991
Hulick, Kenneth	Superintendent	October 12, 1986	August 1993
Ketterson, Andrew	Acting Superintendent (Superintendent for History at BLRI)	February 1975	April 26, 1975
Kretschmann, James	Area Superintendent	August 23, 1970	February 4, 1973
Levi, Leroy	First NPS Employee at CARL (Caretaker)	1968	
Liles, Granville	Superintendent (as Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway)	October 17, 1968	August 22, 1976
McBryant, Carol	Chief of Visitor Services	1996	2001
McDonald, Susan	Administrative Officer	2005	2007
Miller, Elena Diana	Ranger	1981	2007



## Appendix C: Carl Sandburg Home NHS Staff History

Payne, Shirley	Archives Technician		1988
Perchall, Sarah	Ranger Chief of Visitor Services	2006	Still on duty
Savage, Lynn White	Curator	1992	2007
Shuler, James	Ranger	1981	1984
Staley-Vaughan, Anne	Administrative Officer	1982	2005
Tate, Ashley Falls	Curator	2008	2012
Thoman, Ronald	Area Superintendent	April 1973	February 1975
Weber, Warren	Curator Chief of Resources Management Acting Superintendent Acting Superintendent	1974 1992 May 25, 1986 October 1993	1992 2004 October 11, 1986 February 1994
Wilson, Phil	Chief of Maintenance and Resources Management	2007	
Wright, Johnnie	Chief of Maintenance	1985	2005

## Appendix D: Carl Sandburg Home NHS Visitation 1974-2011

1974	19,400		1993	56,992
1975	30,200		1994	54,478
1976	38,000		1995	48,634
1977	38,200		1996	42,879
1978	39,126		1997	41,402
1979	34,062		1998	37,911
1980	37,160		1999	36,442
1981	44,059		2000	35,240
1982	50,216		2001	34,769
1983	46,673		2002	38,052
1984	48,756		2003	32,570
1985	53,689		2004	28,372
1986	61,346		2005	26,640
1987	55,196		2006	28,799
1988	57,863		2007	28,820
1989	55,435		2008	21,233
1990	54,568		2009	83,550
1991	65,157		2010	86,740
1992	54,941		2011	89,721
<b>Total Visitation:</b> <b>1,737,291</b>				

SOURCE: Adapted from National Park Service,  
[https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Visitation%20\(All%20Years\)?Park=CARL](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Visitation%20(All%20Years)?Park=CARL)  
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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.







Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site  
Flat Rock, North Carolina

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