

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site



Pre Visit Lesson: All in the Family *Grades 5-8*

Lesson Length

1 to 3 class periods

Common Core State Standards

Standard for Speaking and Listening

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Standard for Reading Literature

- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5

Standard for Reading Informational Text

- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- RI.8.7 Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present a particular topic or idea. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3

Standard for Writing

- Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing. CCSS.ELA-Writing.W.5.6, W.6.6, W.7.6, W.8.6.



Materials Needed

- A Place to Write* article copy
- The Other Sandburg* article copy
- Materials to develop presentations (These will vary depending on availability of resources and teacher's preferred method of presentation.)

Optional Materials

- A Place to Write* questionnaire
- The Other Sandburg* questionnaire
- Computer lab access or craft supplies to create presentation

Learning Targets

- I can determine the central idea of a text.
- I can use technology to produce and publish writing that demonstrates my understanding of the central idea or ideas of a text.

Procedure

The students will be reading articles written about Carl and Paula Sandburg, identifying the main ideas of the articles, and creating a different way to present the information from the articles to their classmates using technology. (ex: Web 2.0, PowerPoint, commercial, interview, song, etc.)

Activating Strategy

Frayer Model, independently students will complete the provided Frayer Model. Student volunteers will share their ideas whole group. Students will revisit the Frayer Model as a summarizing strategy for this lesson.

(FYI - <http://www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic-organizers/frayer.html> is a fabulous website to create your own Frayer Model for future lessons)

Teaching Strategy

1. Divide the class in half. Have half of the students read “A Place to Write” and the other half read “The Other Sandburg”.
2. Students may read article individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
3. In small groups or pairs, students will determine the central idea and key points of information from the article and decide (with teacher guidance, reinforcement and clarification on what exactly what is central idea & what are key points) how best to present that information to students who read the other article.
4. Depending on time and resources allotted, student groups or partners, using technology, may create a web 2.0, develop a PowerPoint or other multimedia presentation, write and perform a “talk show”-type interview with Mr. or Mrs. Sandburg, or create a teaching game. The teacher should define project expectations and limitations based on his/her schedule and needs.
5. Students groups may present to entire class, or the teacher may choose a “jigsaw” arrangement in which two groups of students teach each other.

Summarizing Strategy

Frayer Model, independently students will review Frayer Model completed as an activating strategy and make changes to the original using a different colored pencil, marker or pen. Teacher will ask students to share the changes they made and why those changes were made.

Alternative: Students will read article and answer questions

A Place to Write

Carl Sandburg was already famous when he moved with his family to the Blue Ridge mountains of western North Carolina in 1945. Poet, minstrel, lecturer, biographer, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, he had spent his lifetime championing social justice and the American people through his writings and his singing. At 67, an age when many people retire, Sandburg was still actively working.

Sandburg's wife Lilian had discovered the mountain farm named Connemara with their youngest daughter Helga. The farm had everything the family wanted, including a gentle climate and ample pasture for Mrs. Sandburg's goat herd and seclusion for her husband's writing. Carl Sandburg would call it home for 22 years.

The estate had a long history—an ironic history for the biographer of Abraham Lincoln—for Christopher Memminger, who built the main residence around 1838, had served from 1861 to 1864 as Secretary of

the Confederate Treasury. The second occupant, textile tycoon Ellison Smyth, named it Connemara to honor his Irish ancestry. Smyth's heirs sold it to the Sandburgs, who moved from Michigan with their three daughters, two grandchildren, a library of over 14,000 volumes, and the Chikaming goat herd.

The years at Connemara were productive for Carl Sandburg. He published poems, children's literature, fiction, and nonfiction. He continued to travel, lecture, sing, and earn accolades, including another Pulitzer Prize. The family was busy too. Mrs. Sandburg bred her prize-winning goats and ran the farm business. Margaret helped her father, attended to the library, and worked in her flower garden. Janet helped on the farm, which was especially active when Helga and her children, John Carl and Paula, lived here. Until her second marriage and move from Connemara, Helga managed the dairy operation with her mother. The



This rock behind the house was Carl Sandburg's favorite place to work outdoors.

grandchildren rode horses and played in the woods and pastures.

Carl Sandburg kept late hours. He often worked most of the night, while it was quiet and still, and slept until late in the morning. After a midday meal he read, answered letters, and wrote wherever his imagination took him—his upstairs office or study, the living room, the front porch, or on the large, sloping rock behind the house.

There were frequent visitors at Connemara. A favorite guest was the well-known photographer Edward Steichen, Mrs. Sandburg's brother and Carl Sandburg's closest friend. Guests or not, dinner was a social gathering for the family. Afterward Sandburg would read aloud or sing with them. In the afternoon or evening, he walked with his wife, children or grandchildren, or his friends along one of the winding paths or through the woods.

Carl Sandburg died at home on July 22, 1967. In 1968 the Sandburg family sold the property, donating the contents of the home to the National Park Service to be preserved as the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Always a voice for the American people, Carl Sandburg speaks to us still through his words, songs, and the beauty and serenity of Connemara.

Carl Sandburg



Carl Sandburg in his third floor study.

A Place to Write: A Pre-visit Questionnaire

1. In what year did the Sandburgs move to North Carolina? How old was Carl Sandburg at the time of the move?
2. What two separate requirements did Connemara Farm meet for Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg?
3. Considering the date the house was built and its original owner's historical connections, why does the article call Carl Sandburg's ownership of the property "ironic"?
4. Who was Ellison Smyth, and why did he name the estate "Connemara"?
5. Other than Mrs. Sandburg, who were the family members who lived here along with Sandburg? What were their roles in the life of Connemara?
6. What were some of Mr. Sandburg's activities and accomplishments during the period of his life from age 67 until his death at 89?
7. What was a typical day at Connemara like for Carl Sandburg?
8. Can you infer why the National Park Service chose to acquire the Sandburg property?

A Place to Write: A Pre-visit Questionnaire – **Teacher’s Answer Sheet**

1. In what year did the Sandburgs move to North Carolina? How old was Carl Sandburg at the time of the move?

The Sandburgs moved to Connemara in 1945, and Sandburg was 67 years old at the time of the move.

2. What two separate requirements did Connemara Farm meet for Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg?

Mrs. Sandburg was seeking a milder climate and grassy pastures for her Chikaming goat herd. Mr. Sandburg needed seclusion in order to do his work.

3. Considering the date the house was built and its original owner’s historical connections, why does the article call Carl Sandburg’s ownership of the property “ironic”?

It is ironic that Sandburg, writer of a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Abraham Lincoln, would live in the former home of Christopher Memminger, a slave-owner and Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

4. Who was Ellison Smyth, and why did he name the estate “Connemara”?

Smyth, a textile tycoon, claimed the farm’s landscape reminded him of his Irish ancestry, so he named it Connemara after a location in Ireland.

5. Other than Mrs. Sandburg, who were the family members who lived here along with Sandburg? What were their roles in the life of Connemara?

Sandburg’s three adult daughters and two grandchildren also lived at Connemara. Margaret assisted her father, maintained his library and worked in her garden. Janet helped with the goats, and Helga managed the dairy operation of the farm. Paula and John Carl, the two grandchildren, played on the estate.

6. What were some of Mr. Sandburg’s activities and accomplishments during the period of his life from age 67 until his death at 89?

He traveled, published extensively in several genres, lectured, and performed. He also received another Pulitzer Prize.

7. What was a typical day at Connemara like for Carl Sandburg?

He would sleep late because he usually worked during the night. After lunch, he would write, correspond, and join the family for dinner and walks in the evening.

8. Can you infer why the National Park Service chose to acquire the Sandburg property?

Answers will vary but may include references to Sandburg’s literary legacy, the natural resources of the property, or the historical background of the home.

THE OTHER SANDBURG

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WASO

“To my wife Paula, who so often threw in with a rare mind and great heart, “ wrote Carl Sandburg in his dedication to *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*. For the 59 years of their marriage, Mrs. Sandburg was the woman of crucial importance to the emotional and physical support of the famous writer. In the dairy industry of America, however, the Sandburg name was famous, not for poetry and biography, but for Paula Sandburg’s herd of dairy goats. Paula Sandburg was both the woman behind the famous man, and the woman in the forefront of a growing agricultural industry. Her life and achievements are a distinctive part of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site.

Paula Sandburg’s farm office is appropriately located in the center of the large, comfortable house in Flat Rock, North Carolina, where the Sandburgs lived for more than twenty years. Like all the rooms of the Carl Sandburg Home, it looks as though the inhabitants have just left. The desks are cluttered with correspondence. The office walls are covered with pictures of family and goats. One wall holds rows of prize ribbons her goats won at the big Midwest fairs that Paula Sandburg attended when the family lived in Michigan. Large file cabinets contain the papers and records needed for managing the goat herd, a 240-acre farm, and the family finances. From this office, Paula Sandburg conducted all the family affairs, giving Carl Sandburg the freedom to write and travel. It is also where she studied the pedigrees of her goats, calculating the percentages of bloodlines in order to make the breeding decisions that resulted in a herd of dairy goats with an international reputation for high milk production. Chikaming was the



herd name for these goats. The herd was started in Harbert, Michigan, in the early 1930s with four goats bought for family milk and butter. In a just a few years, Paula Sandburg was a serious breeder of purebred Toggenburg and Nubian dairy goats. In 1937 she put the herd on official test, the dairy industry’s method of determining milk production, and she continued testing until 1967, when the herd was dispersed. Herd size varied over the years, but at times there were close to two hundred goats, including kids.

One of the reasons for the Sandburg move to North Carolina in 1945 was to have more pasture for the goats. After moving to North Carolina, Paula Sandburg and her daughter Helga ran a grade A dairy for several years, selling goat’s milk through local distributors.

These goat activities are part of the interpretation at the park site. The barns and milk house are maintained by the Park Service, and there is a small herd of goats at the site for visitors to see. Besides the farm office, the house tour includes the basement “kid kitchen” where the new-born goats were fed.

Paula Sandburg’s main work with dairy goats involved breeding and promotion. She was a very intelligent woman, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago in 1904, when most women didn’t even go to high school. She studied the genetics behind breeding better animals and practiced line breeding

to produce uniform and consistent families of goats that improved many of the herds in America. Chikaming goats were sold and shipped all over the United States and to numerous foreign countries. In 1960, Jennifer II, a Toggenburg goat of Chikaming breeding, established an all-time high milk production record that was not broken until 1982.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Paula Sandburg was probably the most influential promoter of dairy goats in the industry. For more than ten years she was a director of the American Milk Goat Record Association, and she wrote many articles for the national goat magazines. She was always willing to give time and advice to anyone interested in goats. In addition, the publicity generated by the Sandburg name created prime opportunities for dairy goat promotion.

Why goats? Many Americans might question the importance of these animals, but for two-thirds of the world, goats and their products are a main source of protein. Paula Sandburg firmly believed in the practicality and usefulness of dairy goats and worked to improve and promote them in America.

Breeding better animals was also challenging to her. "I find my own herd very engrossing and the thousand problems that come up with milk goat improvement are real problems and interesting ones to tackle," she wrote in a 1940 letter.¹

And how did the Sandburg family react to her activities? Paula Sandburg was a serious breeder of dairy goats, but that did not prevent the whole family from enjoying the animals. Daily life revolved

around feeding, milking, evening walks to the barn. From winter to summer there were new-born kids jumping around in the basement. Two of the three Sandburg daughters were involved with caring for the herd, and the grandchildren grew up with goats for playmates. One daughter recalls the Christmas Eve they spent drying off two new-born kids in front of the Christmas tree. The goats were definitely an integral part of the family, and no description of Sandburg family life would be complete without them.



As for Carl Sandburg, he has often been called a goat farmer, although he had nothing at all to do with management or care of the herd. He took great interest and pride in his wife's work and derived much pleasure from being around the animals, but the fame surrounding the Chikaming herd belonged totally to Paula Sandburg.

Carl

Sandburg would be the first to agree. While in Hollywood in 1961, he wrote to his 78-year-old wife, "Today came those two photographs of Jennifer II [P. Sandburg's record-breaking goat] . . . I tell people you are a champion breeder of a champion, that you are a geneticist, a naturalist, an ornithologist, Phi Beta Kappa and a sweet gale. This is so near a real love letter that I'm going to quit here and sign. Carlo"²

¹Letter from Paula Sandburg to Mr. Gott, March 29, 1940. CARL collection.

²Herbert Mitgang, ed., *The Letters of Carl Sandburg* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1968) 543.

THE OTHER SANDBURG: Pre-Visit Questionnaire

1. When and where did Mrs. Sandburg begin her dairy goat herd?
2. Why did Mrs. Sandburg initially want to raise dairy goats?
3. What herd name was given to Mrs. Sandburg's dairy goats?
4. Why did the Sandburgs move to North Carolina?
5. What background did Mrs. Sandburg have which helped in raising dairy goats?
6. What did Mrs. Sandburg want to accomplish in raising dairy goats?
7. Why was Mrs. Sandburg influential in the dairy goat industry?
8. What was Mrs. Sandburg's biggest accomplishment as a dairy goat breeder?
9. Why is Mrs. Sandburg a distinctive part of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS?
10. What was Mr. Sandburg's role in the dairy goat operation?

THE OTHER SANDBURG: **Teacher's Answer Sheet**

1. When and where did Mrs. Sandburg begin her dairy goatherd?
Harbert, Michigan; early 1930s
2. Why did Mrs. Sandburg initially want to raise dairy goats?
Initially for family milk and butter
3. What herd name was given to Mrs. Sandburg's dairy goats?
Chikaming
4. Why did the Sandburgs move to North Carolina?
One of the main reasons was to have more pasture land for the dairy goats.
5. What background did Mrs. Sandburg have which helped in raising dairy goats?
She was a graduate of the University of Chicago and she studied the genetics of breeding
6. What did Mrs. Sandburg want to accomplish in raising dairy goats?
She wanted to promote dairy goats as a viable source of milk and butterfat production and she wanted to improve dairy goat breeds so those breeds were more consistent and reliable in milk and butterfat production
7. Why is Mrs. Sandburg considered to have been influential in the dairy goat industry?
She was an avid promoter and breeder of dairy goats, she was the director of the American Milk Goat Record Association for over ten years; she wrote numerous articles in several dairy goat journals about breeding for higher milk production and traveled around the country giving speeches about the same; her goats were "on test" for thirty years which created consistent and accurate data for scientific research.
8. What was Mrs. Sandburg's biggest accomplishment as a dairy goat breeder?
The record for highest milk production by a dairy goat anywhere held by Jennifer II, a Toggenburg goat of Mrs. Sandburg's Chikaming herd, in 1960 until 1982.
9. Why is Mrs. Sandburg a distinctive part of the Carl Sandburg Home NHS?
She was Mr. Sandburg's biggest fan and supporter; she managed the home front, financially and otherwise, as well as having a very successful career herself. She had made her own mark on the world while giving her husband all the freedom to write and travel.
10. What was Mr. Sandburg's role in the dairy goat operation?
He got pleasure out of visiting and playing with the goats, but was not a part of any breeding or business decisions; he amassed tremendous pride from his wife's work.