

Sandburg Chronology

1878	Born on January 6 in Galesburg, Illinois; second child and eldest son of Swedish immigrants August and Clara Sandburg; baptized Carl August, called Charles.
1883	Lilian Steichen, Sandburg's future wife, born May 1 in Hancock, Michigan.
1891-97	Leaves school after eighth grade to help support his family; works long hours delivering milk and at other jobs; leaves home at 19, travels the country as hobo and works as laborer on farms and railroads; sharpens his interest in labor laws and the plight of working people
1898	Serves as a private in the Spanish-American War; returns to Galesburg, enrolls as special student at Lombard College.
1899	Receives appointment to West Point but fails entrance exams in math and grammar; returns to Lombard College; becomes editor of college journal and yearbook and captain of basketball team; encouraged by a professor, begins writing in earnest.
1902-07	Leaves college without a degree; sells 3-D stereographs; writes for Galesburg <i>Evening Mail</i> using pseudonym "Crimson," first poetry and prose <i>In Reckless Ecstasy</i> published in 1904 as booklet by his college professor; active in Social Democratic party; lectures and writes against exploitation of workers; calls for end of child labor practices.
1908	Marries Lilian Steichan, who shares his interest in social reform and human rights; he calls her by nickname Paula; she calls him by birth name Carl.
1909-13	Writes and edits for several newspapers and magazines; daughter Margaret born.
1914	Poems published in <i>Poetry: A Magazine of Verse</i> ; wins a cash award for best poems of the year and is discovered by publisher Alfred Harcourt.
1916-18	Daughter Janet born; joins Chicago <i>Daily News</i> as a reporter; daughter Helga born.
1919-23	Harcourt, Brace and Howe publishes <i>The Chicago Race Riots</i> ; publishes <i>Rootabaga Stories</i> .
1926	Publishes two-volume biography <i>Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years</i> ; establishes reputation as a biographer.

1927 -32	Publishes <i>The American Songbag</i> ; buys property on Lake Michigan and Mrs. Sandburg designs house; leaves newspaper to focus on his writings—poetry, children’s stories, and the Lincoln biography.
1935-37	Lilian Sandburg buys first goats, registers the herd’s name as Chikaming after the township where they live; begins breeding program to improve goat’s blood lines and milk production.
1939	Publishes four-volume set <i>Abraham Lincoln: The War Years</i> .
1940-41	Wins the Pulitzer Prize for history; elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters; receives honorary degrees from Harvard, Yale, and many other colleges and universities.
1945	Sandburg family moves to Connemara Farm, Flat Rock, N.C.
1950–58	Publishes <i>Complete Poems</i> ; wins the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1951; receives many medals and honors, including National Institute of Arts and Letters gold medal for history and biography in 1952; writes prolifically; travels the country lecturing, reading poetry, and singing.
1959	Delivers Lincoln Day address before joint session of Congress; travels to Moscow with Edward Steichen as cultural envoy for State Department and represents the United States at Family of Man exhibit.
1960-64	Works as Hollywood film consultant; receives International United Poets Laureate award in 1963; receives Presidential Medal of Freedom from Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964.
1965	Receives honors from NAACP for his coverage of 1919 Chicago race riots and for his “life-long struggle to extend the frontiers of social justice.”
1967	Dies July 22 at home in Flat Rock, N.C., at age 89; the nation mourns and acclaims him as writer, biographer, folk-singer, lecturer, and Poet of the People who spoke for those who did not have words or power to speak for themselves.
1968	Congress authorizes the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, the first park to honor a poet.
1977	Lilian Steichen Sandburg dies February 18 at age 93.