

National Historic Site - Carl Sandburg Home

Driving Directions: I-26 E to exit 53; right onto Upward Rd. to end; left onto US 25; right onto Little River Rd.; left into parking lot for Carl Sandburg Nat'l. Historic Park.

Hike Directions:

From parking lot take the sidewalk to the bridge over a small stream and walk along the trail with the lake to your right. At the intersection take a left and continue up the hill. At the next intersection, take a left onto Memminger Trail. This follows around Little Glassy and has a deck with a view to the south. Pass the intersection of Little Glassy and head towards the next large intersection. Take a left and go up to Big Glassy. At the top of the mountain, the trail turns right. Once at the rocky opening, continue to until you see the trail to the left, which will open up to a beautiful view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. You may see Mt. Pisgah on a clear day behind Davis Mountain where Jump Off Rock sits. You can spot it by its tall antennae tower. Once ready to head down, go back the way you came to the large intersection. Take a left turn onto a path that goes into the rhododendrons and follow that path until you see steps on the left. Take the steps down and go through the apple orchard and head towards the barn to visit the goats. Once finished at the barn, head back towards the house and down the path to the cars. Stop in the house bookstore and look around. For a small fee, you can take a tour of the house if you would like.

History

From:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Sandburg_Home_National_Historic_Site

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site preserves Connemara Farms, the home of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and writer Carl Sandburg. Though a Midwesterner, Sandburg and his family moved to this home in 1945 for the peace and solitude required for his writing and the more than 30 acres of pastureland required for his wife, Lilian, to raise her champion dairy goats. Sandburg spent the last twenty-two years of his life on this farm and published more than a third of his works while he resided here. The site includes the Sandburg residence, the goat farm, sheds, rolling pastures, mountainside woods, 5 miles (8 km) of hiking trails on moderate to steep terrain, two small lakes, several ponds, flower and vegetable gardens, and an apple orchard. Visitors to the site can tour the Sandburg residence and visit the dairy barn housing Connemara Farms' goat herd, representing the three breeds of goats Lillian Sandburg raised. From June until mid-August, live performances of Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories* and

excerpts from the Broadway play, *The World of Carl Sandburg*, are presented at the park amphitheater.

The Memminger years:

In the middle 1830s Christopher Memminger, of Charleston, South Carolina, took a tour of Flat Rock in an attempt to find a summer home. He had one built to suit his likings. The kitchen house and stable were actually completed first in the summer of 1838. The house was not complete until 1839. A cook's house was added in 1841, a wagon shed in 1843, and an icehouse in 1845. An addition to the main house was constructed over the course of 1846-1849, and servant quarters were built in 1850. In 1855, he had a stream in front of the house dammed up to create a small, artificial lake. During the war, the house was fortified and used as a shelter for friends who needed protection from raids by Union soldiers and Confederate deserters turned bandits.

The Gregg and Smyth years:

After Memminger's death, his son Edward sold Rock Hill to Colonel William Gregg, Jr., a Confederate veteran. During his ownership, he built new steps at the front of the house, since the originals had been removed during the war for defense. He also installed a bay window and fireplace mantles. The Greggs used Rock Hill as their summer home for about ten years before they sold it in 1900 to Captain Ellison Adger Smyth. Smyth changed the name of the house from "Rock Hill" to "Connemara," after his ancestral district in Ireland. The Smyths winterized the house and enclosed the porch to convert it to a dining room. They also painted the house green for a brief period and even installed an eight-hole golf course in the pastures. The captain and his family used Connemara as a summer home until 1925 when they decided to make it their permanent residence. Smyth died in 1942, and the house remained vacant until 1945.

The Sandburg era:

Sandburg purchased Connemara on October 18, 1945 for \$45,000. Mrs. Sandburg had been looking for a new farm in a warmer climate to raise her Chikaming dairy goats. When she showed Connemara to her husband, he reportedly said, "This is the place. We will look no further." Upon buying the house, the Sandburgs immediately began remodeling. Contractors were hired to work on the heating, plumbing, electrical, the roof and the cement floor of the basement. The Sandburg's installed new chimneys and bathrooms, as well as dozens of bookshelves for his large library. They also repainted the house and installed a new indoor kitchen, having turned the original kitchen building into a three- car garage. The entire remodeling process lasted for some two and a half years. In addition, more than

42,000 lbs. of personal belongings, primarily Sandburg's library were sent by train from their old house in Harbert, Michigan. The Sandburgs lived at Connemara from October 1945 to July 1969. Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg lived there along with their three daughters, Margaret, Janet, and Helga, as well as Helga's two children, John Carl and Karlen Paula. Sandburg published more than a third of his works while living at Connemara, and it was at this house he died of natural causes in 1967. After his death, his wife decided to sell Connemara to the U.S. government to preserve the house as a memorial to her husband. The Secretary of Interior and family friend Stewart Udall visited the house in October 1967, and Mrs. Sandburg signed a deed of gift in June of the following year. On October 18, 1968, President Johnson approved a congressional act making the home a historic site. The home officially opened to the public in 1974. The National Park Service restored the house and installed Plexiglas covers over the bookcases during the time between the purchase and its opening

The site today:

Today the Carl Sandburg National Historic site attracts more than 26,000 visitors a year, most of who come during the leaf season. The U.S. government has designated the goats a historic herd. About fifteen goats are kept on the farm at any given time. The interior of the home is arranged in a manner similar to how Sandburg's maintained it during the 1950s. Under the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, supported by North Carolina's congressional delegation, authorizes the expansion of the site by 115 acres to protect the scenic view, create additional parking, and to establish a visitor's center.

You can read more about Carl Sandburg here

<http://carl-sandburg.com/biography.htm>