

***Prairie Town Boy* excerpts**  
**by Carl Sandburg**  
(in chronological order)

Of the house where I was born I remember nothing—a three-room frame house on Third Street. The date was January 6, 1878, a little after midnight.

We moved to another three-room one-story house, on the north side of South Street, three doors west of Pearl. Here I wore dresses and watched my father spade a garden and plant and dig potatoes.

When I was about four we moved two blocks over to Berrien Street into a ten-room house with a roomy third-story garret running the length of the house.

Though I had been solemnly christened by the name of Carl August Sandberg, I decided in the first year or two of school to use the name Charles.

I was six years old on the October night I walked holding my father's hand to Seminary Street near South. It was the first time I saw politics run hot in the blood of men.

Those two letters *ch* bothered many a Swede boy. In our third-grade reader was a story titled “Charlie’s Chickens”. One after another, Swede boys blurted out “Sharlie’s Shickens” when they read aloud.

I was seven and a half years old when General Ulysses S. Grant died and I went to his funeral. He had died far from Galesburg and I didn’t hear where.

One winter Friday afternoon when I was in the fifth grade, I took home the first volume of John S.C. Abbot’s *The History of Napoleon Bonaparte* and most of the weekend I sat and read the book.

In the sixth grade Miss Goldquist kept at us about getting “the reading habit,” saying, “You don’t know what good friends books can be till you try them, till you try many of them.”