

Upcoming Webinar

**Local Druggists: Advertising, Bottles,
Medicine Glasses, Photos, and History**

**April 21, 2022, 6 p.m.
See HSSR Website for details**

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Visitors Drawn to Luther Burbank

by Rebecca Baker and Lisa Kranz

Because of his world renown, many well-known people came calling at horticulturist Luther Burbank's Santa Rosa home and gardens, four acres along Main Street (now Santa Rosa Avenue) near downtown Santa Rosa. The following recounts two of those visits.

In 1915, Luther Burbank had lived and worked in Santa Rosa for nearly 40 years, introducing hundreds of new varieties of plants including the Santa Rosa plum and Shasta Daisy. He was known around the world for this work.

In San Francisco in 1915, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (the Expo) offered a wonder-filled party to visitors from around the world.

Burbank's plant creations were exclusively marketed by a private company known as The Luther Burbank Company. The company formally dedicated its exhibit at the Expo on Luther Burbank Day in June. Burbank received a gold medal "IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICES TO MANKIND."

Thomas Edison's visit to the Expo made it possible for him and Burbank to meet after a lifetime of mutual admiration. While Burbank was "creating" fruits and flowers, Edison was inventing the light bulb, phonograph, motion picture film and equipment, and improving the telephone.

Burbank and Edison described themselves as long distance

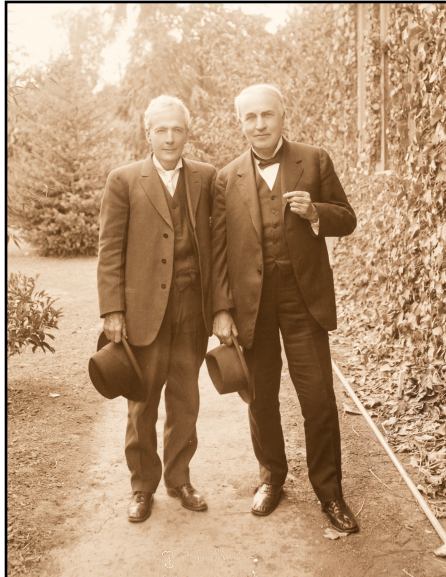
friends. The men were born three years apart and both were inventors with similar methods of trial and error.

Edison's good friend Henry Ford said: *Burbank had many of the Edison qualities and used precisely the same methods as did Edison, although in a very different line of work!*

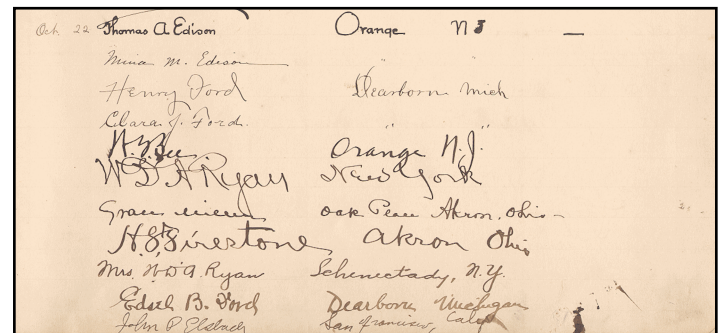
Burbank was asked by the editor of the San Francisco Examiner to greet Edison's train when it arrived in California. Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone were also traveling with Edison.

Nothing more fitting than that the Wizard of the West should extend welcome and greetings to the Wizard of the East. (The men, similar in method, similarly disliked the nickname "Wizard.")

The two met for the first time at the train yard near Sacramento. A worker at the yard later wrote to Burbank that he told his dispatcher to come onto the gallery overlooking the tracks to take a look at: *the three greatest men, in their lines, that the U.S. had ever produced. I can see Mr. Edison yet with his hand cupped behind his ear trying to get what Mr. Ford was saying. Every now and then he would turn to his wife and yell: "What did he say Mother?" Then laugh like a schoolboy on a vacation when she told him.*



Luther Burbank and Thomas Edison at
Burbank's Tupper Street home
October 22, 1915
*Courtesy Luther Burbank Home and
Gardens Collection*



Burbank's Guest Book with signatures of Edison, Ford, Firestone and
other members of their traveling party, October 22, 1915

Courtesy Luther Burbank Home and Gardens

Continued on page 6

Message from the Board

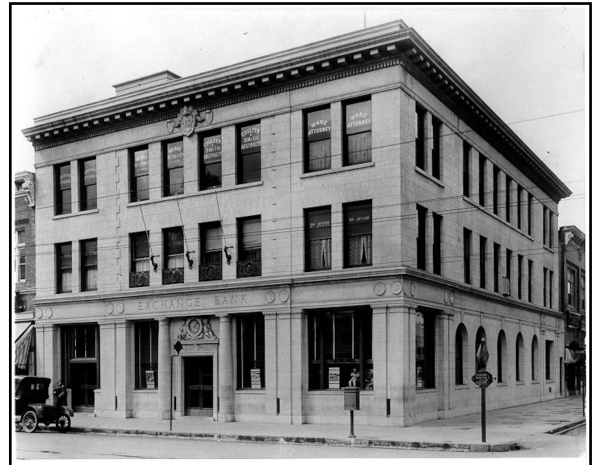
Spring is here in beautiful Santa Rosa. A walk through one of the city's historic neighborhoods is a treat for the senses, with many mature, blooming plants bursting forth, complementing unique architecture. Visitors to Santa Rosa now, as in the past, can enjoy both the natural and built environment here.

A few well-known people who have visited Santa Rosa over the decades are featured in this quarter's newsletter. Famous inventors, artists, actors, and entertainers have visited here and added to the story of Santa Rosa over time. We hope you enjoy this quarterly newsletter.

The Historical Society of Santa Rosa continues to plan on-line and in-person events for 2022, so please stay tuned for dates and more information on our website. A walk through Juilliard Park, including a tour of the Church of One Tree, is planned for June 4, and a walking tour of the Oddfellows Cemetery and Mausoleum is planned for August 27. Please join us for these fun and enlightening events!

The HSSR Board of Directors

One Hundred Years Ago



This building housed the Exchange Bank and several small businesses at 545 Fourth Street in 1922. The site, at the northwest corner of Fourth Street and Mendocino Avenue, today remains home of the Exchange Bank, in a different structure.

Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photograph Collection



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Eleanor Roosevelt's Day in Santa Rosa

by Karen Stone

In early 1957, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, age 72, embarked on a nine-day speaking tour. The tour was part of a nationwide program sponsored by the non-partisan League of Women Voters to focus attention on the United Nations during a period of world crisis. Eleanor Roosevelt had been a United States delegate to the United Nations from 1945 to 1952.

School Auditorium. The flag and colors were presented by Santa Rosa Girl Scouts Alicia Atkinson, Mary Beth Jackson, Katherine Nelson, Bonnie Olibas, Judy Race, Alda Marie Rose, and Sandra Talbot. Roosevelt spoke for one hour — without notes — on the topic, “Is America Facing World Leadership?” She answered written questions submitted by the audience. Approximately 1,150 people attended, with



Coverage of Eleanor Roosevelt's Visit to Santa Rosa
Press Democrat February 15, 1957

Roosevelt and her secretary arrived in Santa Rosa by car on February 14, 1957, and they checked into the Santa Rosa Hotel, which was located at the southeast corner of B and Fourth Streets. She held a news conference in the hotel with a small group of student journalists from Santa Rosa Junior College and Santa Rosa High School.

That evening, Roosevelt had dinner at the Topaz Room with her secretary, Mr. and Mrs. William Luckhardt (Dorothy Luckhardt was president of the Santa Rosa League of Women Voters), Mr. and Mrs. Merle Vincent (Helen Vincent was head of the United Nations Committee of the Santa Rosa League of Women Voters), and Dr. and Mrs. Paul Holmer (Jean Holmer was president of the California League of Women Voters).

After dinner, Roosevelt gave a speech at the Santa Rosa High

tickets costing \$1.50.

Later that evening, Roosevelt was the guest at a reception for 160 people at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Alexis Maximov on Talbot Avenue. Due to her busy schedule, she stayed only 30 minutes. The reception was attended by members of the Santa Rosa League of Women Voters, their husbands, and guests. The next day, Roosevelt left Santa Rosa for a speaking engagement in Fresno.

In her February 16 “My Day” column (the daily newspaper column she wrote from 1936 to 1962), she described her impression of Santa Rosa: “...driving into the town I would say that it was a thriving county center with a great many stores and more real estate signs than I have seen anywhere...”

Quiet Visit to SR for Gable, Lombard

by Karen Stone



Clark Gable and his wife Carole Lombard spent the night at a Santa Rosa motel on May 10, 1941, en route to a fishing vacation. The next day they had breakfast at Students' Inn, a diner across the street from Santa Rosa High School.

At left, Carole Lombard and Clark Gable pose in front of Santa Rosa High School. The photo was taken by a local resident and was recently for sale on eBay.

At right, a May 13, 1941 Press Democrat article chronicles the couple's quiet visit in Santa Rosa as they traveled north.

Gable, Lombard Stop in S. R. on Vacation Outing

Hollywood's number one heart-throb—Clark Gable—and his wife, the beautiful Carole Lombard, were in Santa Rosa Saturday night and Sunday morning, but only a few Santa Rosans recognized them—and those didn't have their autograph albums handy.

Traveling by station wagon on a three weeks' outing trip the Gables are bound for Redwood, Empire fishing grounds.

They arrived at midnight Saturday and stopped at the Llano Auto Courts, 2400 Redwood highway south, according to Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Bassett, owners of the courts. The party included Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Flischman of Santa Monica. Sunday morning the party had breakfast at the Students' Inn, opposite the high school, before leaving for their northern destination.

Actor and Political Activist Robert Vaughn Visits Santa Rosa

by Denise Hill

It was May 17, 1972, and Robert Vaughn was speaking to staff, students, and others at the Santa Rosa Junior College. Vaughn was supporting George McGovern - candidate for president in the 1972 presidential campaign (McGovern ultimately lost to Nixon). As reported by the SRJC Oak Leaf newspaper, Vaughn was delegated by the McGovern campaign to visit campuses to encourage students to go out and canvas their community.



Robert Vaughn, circa 1965
NBC Television/Getty Images

earned a Master's Degree in theater at the Los Angeles College of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Vaughn's first notable appearance in a motion picture was in *The Young Philadelphians* (1959), where he received a nomination for Best Supporting Actor for both an Academy Award and a Golden Globe Award. A year later he campaigned for John F. Kennedy in the presidential election and then continued his involvement in politics as the chair of the California Democratic State Central Committee speakers' bureau, actively campaigning

This wasn't Vaughn's first appearance in Santa Rosa. He had campaigned here previously in 1966 for Phil Drath, a Marin general contractor and candidate for California's 1st congressional district. After giving his speech at SRJC, Vaughn left for a rally that same day at Sonoma State University.

Well known at the time for his role in the TV series "Man From Uncle" which ran from 1964-1968 (younger folk might remember guest appearances he made on "Law and Order" or "The Magnificent Seven" decades later), Robert Vaughn had a resume suited as much for politics as for acting. His family was involved in politics in Minneapolis where he grew up. After high school he enrolled as a journalism major at the University of Minnesota, but left for Southern California before graduating. In L.A., he

for candidates throughout the 1960s.

In 1970, after a stint in the army, he received a Ph.D. in Mass Communications from the University of Southern California all the while continuing to act in theater, TV, and film. Around the same time, Vaughn became the first popular American actor to take a public stand against the Vietnam War and was active in the peace group Another Mother for Peace. He was strongly opposed to the Hollywood Blacklist of suspected Communists on freedom of speech principles and in 1972 released a book called *Only Victims: A Study of Show Business Black Listing* stressing the importance of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and citing the dangers of what happens when its tradition is jeopardized.

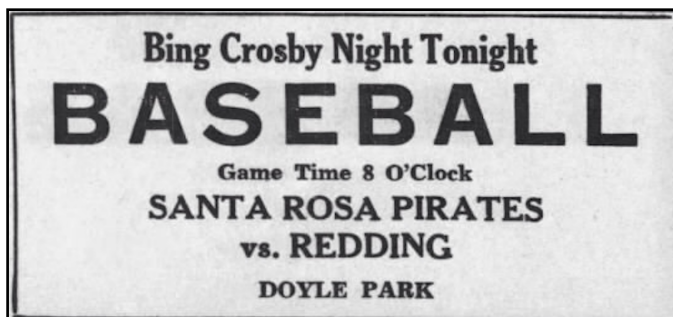
Doyle Park Hosts Bing Crosby

by Karen Stone



NO CROONING—Bing Crosby gives out at the microphone at Doyle Park where an overflow crowd turned out to see Bing and the Santa Rosa Pirates last night. Behind Bing is Lewis H. De-Castle who introduced the crooner.

The Santa Rosa Pirates, a farm team for the Pittsburgh Pirates, was one of many baseball teams that played at Doyle Park. Bing Crosby, a popular singer and actor, was vice-president and one of the owners of the Major League team. Crosby visited Santa Rosa to watch the Santa Rosa team as it played the Redding Browns. Bing Crosby Night was held at Doyle Park on June 2, 1948. The promotion drew a large crowd, who stood and cheered as Crosby made his way to the field to address them. While the home team was not victorious that night, it was a memorable night at the old ball game.



Advertisement for Bing Crosby Night
Press Democrat June 2, 1948

Jayne Mansfield Appears at Flamingo and Cotati Raceway

by Denise Hill

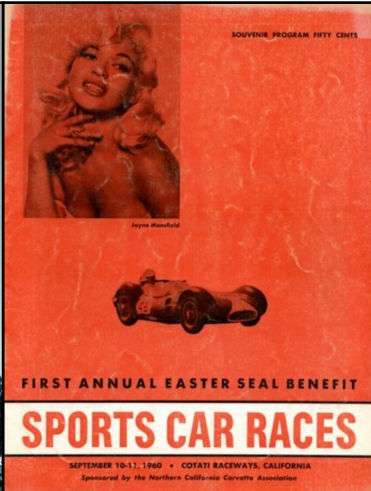
A sex symbol of the 1950s and early 1960s, Jayne Mansfield was known for her well-publicized personal life and hour-glass figure. Jayne started her career in Texas by winning a number of beauty contests including Miss Photoflash, Miss Magnesium Lamp, and Miss Fire Prevention Week. The only titles she refused were Miss Roquefort Cheese, and Miss Prime Rib. After moving to California, she landed her first acting assignment in Lux Video Theatre, a series on CBS that aired in 1954. In 1955, she posed as February Playmate of the Month for the recently launched Playboy magazine and again in 1958 and 1960.

Mansfield's first film part was a supporting role in Female Jungle, a low-budget drama completed in ten days. Some of her other movie roles included Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter? (1957), the musical comedy The Girl Can't Help It (1956), the drama The Wayward Bus (1957), and the sex comedy Promises!



Jayne Mansfield at the Flamingo Hotel, September 9, 1960
Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photograph Collection

Promises! (1963); the latter established Mansfield as the first major American actress to perform in a nude scene in a post-silent era film. While her career was short-lived (she died in a car accident at the age of 34), she had several box-office successes and won a Theatre World Award and a Golden Globe Award.



Cotati Raceways Program for Easter Seals Benefit
September 10 - 11, 1960

So how did it come to be that Jayne Mansfield made an appearance at the Flamingo Hotel in 1960? It started at an unlikely setting – an Easter Seals fundraiser event at the Cotati Raceways.

Mansfield had been recruited by the Northern California Corvette Association and for two days in September, she presided as Race Queen. Its estimated 5,000 fans were at the racetrack to watch both the races and Jayne. Later, an invitation-only cocktail party was held at the Flamingo Hotel to welcome Mansfield and her husband, body builder Mickey Hargitay, to the area. So for one evening, Jayne Mansfield was in Santa Rosa, California.

Weissmuller Helps Dedicate Santa Rosa Pool

by Karen Stone

In 1944, Army Engineers built a 240,000-gallon swimming pool at the Santa Rosa Army Air Base northwest of Santa Rosa (now the location of the Charles M. Schulz - Sonoma County Airport). The pool was constructed with locally-raised funds and was used for combat-swimming training and recreational activities for the servicemen.

The pool was dedicated on May 16, 1944. Lt. Gerald Simmonds acted as master of ceremonies and presented Maurice Nelligan, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce committee that sponsored the fundraising; base commander John Weltman; and Santa Rosa mayor Robert Madison.

Entertainment at the dedication was provided by former Olympic swimming star and movie "Tarzan" Johnny Weissmuller and water comedian Harold "Stubby" Kruger, former champion swimmer and diver.

To read more about the swimming pool at the Santa Rosa Army Air Base, see the Historical Society of Santa Rosa's Fall 2021 newsletter article, *Santa Rosa Pools of Bygone Days*.



A BIG DAY INDEED at the Santa Rosa Army Air Field was dedication of the swimming pool, constructed by the Army Engineers with substantial contributions from the people of the Santa Rosa area. This was taken May 16, 1944. Left to right: an aquatic comedian remembered as Stubby; Mrs. John W. Weltman, and daughter Ellen, the latter now married and living on Okinawa; Col. Weltman, Col. D. D. Welch, Johnny Weissmuller, the swimming star; Mayor Robert Madison and Mrs. Welch. Stalwart Weissmuller tried out the water and found it fine, using Stubby as the foil of many clever antics.

This photograph appeared in the April 23, 1967 Press Democrat in a story about Santa Rosa's World War II pilots.

Burbank Visitors, continued from page 1

Burbank continued the train journey with Edison, Ford, and Firestone. They visited the Expo in San Francisco together, celebrating Edison Day at the fair in honor of the 36th anniversary of incandescent lighting.

The next day Edison and Ford visited Burbank's gardens after their train cars were placed on a barge and floated to Sausalito. On October 22, 1915, the men rode in fine, borrowed cars from the train station to Burbank's pink house on Tupper Street (demolished in 1964) and stayed for 4 ½ hours. They enjoyed the visit thoroughly.

Ford felt that: *It was remarkable how easily and how quickly each understood the other's thoughts. Each worked patiently by a process of elimination and trusted luck not at all.*

As Burbank told it, both Ford and Edison: *Wanted to know everything about the flowers and the plants and the programme, and Edison was particularly quick to see the beauty and catch the vision of what was being done and attempted. ... The ladies said we acted like three schoolboys, but we didn't care. We were having a BOSS time.*

With Edison, Burbank, and Ford on an upper balcony, at 3 o'clock school children gathered around the house with politicians, reporters, and local folk. The crowd yelled three cheers for Edison and sang "I Love You California."

Then the men came down and walked among the crowd, followed by press and motion picture cameras. While Edison and Ford were at Burbank's garden, local garden club members decorated their train cars. Edison and his party returned to San Francisco on the 5:42 train. It had been a significant, memorable day for Santa Rosa's residents, which numbered about 8,000.

Burbank never met Edison again, but he was invited on at least one of Edison and Ford's annual two-weeklong camping trips across the Eastern U.S. Burbank never chose to take that much time away from work. Burbank received a beautiful photo album of the first such trip.

Ford gave Burbank and Edison each one of the first two Fordson tractors to leave the assembly line. Burbank quipped that the lean machine reminded him of Ford – all engine and no frame. Edison later sent gramophones to every school in Santa Rosa.

Although the men didn't meet again, after Burbank's death in 1926, Burbank, Edison, and Ford were united again as



Artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in front of Burbank's Cedar of Lebanon, 1931
Courtesy Ella Wolfe / Hoover Institution Archives

symbols of their era – through exhibits and original buildings displayed at the Ford Museum in Dearborn Michigan.

Famous people continued to visit Burbank's gardens after his death. In 1930, Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera arrived in San Francisco, where already well-known Rivera had been commissioned to paint a fresco at the Luncheon Club (now the City Club) of the San Francisco Stock Exchange. Rivera worked on the fresco, *Allegory of California*, from 1930 to 1931. Spanning a two-story stairwell, the completed work shows California as a giant golden goddess representing the wealth of California horticulture, including a representation of Luther Burbank hybridizing plants.

During their time in San Francisco, Kahlo and Rivera visited Burbank's widow, Elizabeth Burbank, at her home in Santa Rosa. According to an article in the January 26, 1931 Santa Rosa Republican, Rivera called on Mrs. Burbank to talk with her about his anticipated fresco. Among the many photographs taken that day, one shows the pair in front of the greenhouse and one shows them in front of the Cedar of Lebanon that marked Burbank's grave.



Portrait of Luther Burbank by Frida Kahlo, 1931
Courtesy www.fridakahlo.org

In 1931, Frida Kahlo completed a painting influenced by her visit to Santa Rosa, *Portrait of Luther Burbank*. Many art historians note that this portrait marks a shift in Kahlo's painting style. Her blending of representational and symbolic elements in the painting also created what would become a familiar theme in her art: the birth of new life through death. In Kahlo's work Burbank himself became a hybrid, where he appears both man and tree.

This portrait also reflects Burbank's statement that he would like to feel that his strength flowed into the strength of a tree. Burbank was buried under the Cedar of Lebanon that he had planted from seed and which stood in front of his home until 1989.

Strike a Pose, Part 2 - History of Portrait Photographers in Santa Rosa

by Denise Hill

In part one, found in the HSSR Winter 2022 newsletter, the partnership of photographers Miltz and Swart was covered. At almost the same time they were offering photography services in Santa Rosa, another partnership opened a studio in town.

The Downing, Rea, Rauscher Studio - opened on Third Street across from the courthouse. Advertisements used the partners' names, but the studio was also known as the Third Street Gallery.

Joseph Henry Downing (1840-1914) grew up in New Hampshire before arriving with his parents in Sonoma County at the age of 17. At the age of 28, he went to the east coast to study the art of photography. He returned to Healdsburg and opened a photographic studio on Center Street. He specialized in portraits taken in his "Operating Room" which contained the latest equipment and a large skylight. He also travelled the countryside with his wagon load of equipment and his dark room tent, chronicling Healdsburg and the surrounding area's early development. Between 1875 and 1878, Downing was associated with Rea and Henry Rauscher in the Third Street Gallery.



Photograph Gallery, Third Street, 1875
Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photograph Collection



Joseph Henry Downing
Courtesy Healdsburg Museum



Portrait taken at Downing, Rea & Rauscher Studio
Courtesy Hill-Lilienthal Collection

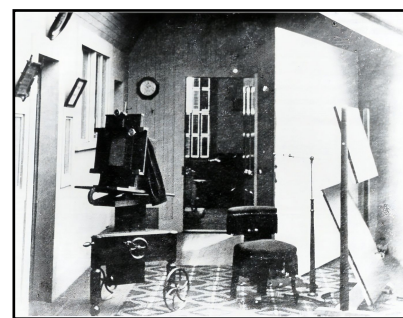
**Photographs, Ferrotypes, Tintypes,
Downing, Rea & Rauscher, Third Street, Santa
Rosa.**

1875 Print Ad for Downing, Rea, & Rauscher Studio

Henry Rauscher (1849-1927) was born Pennsylvania. He worked as a merchant in Tennessee before he arrived in

Sonoma County. From 1875 until 1884 he was partnered with Downing and Rea. He sold out his interest in the gallery to J. K. Piggott and moved to Fresno by 1884 establishing a photographic parlor there. At some point, he gave up photography and worked as a miner and as a proprietor of a cigar store.

Thomas Laughlin Rea (1845-1890) was also born in Pennsylvania. By 1875, Rea was living in Sonoma County and employed as a photographer partnering with Downing and Rauscher through 1883. In 1884, he opened his own photography studio, called Rea T.L. & Co. which was located on Third Street, south of the Plaza. In 1885, he had partnered with photographer James K. Piggott. By 1886, he had relocated to the town of Liberty in Fresno County where he was a farmer and rancher. When he died, his body was brought by train from Fresno County and buried in the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery.



At right: Downing Photo Studio, Healdsburg, 1873
Courtesy Sonoma County Library Photograph Collection

Carl Sandberg Entertains Locals in Lecture

by Karen Stone

A local literary society, along with the Santa Rosa Junior College English Club, brought poet Carl Sandberg to Santa Rosa on April 2, 1934. Sandberg appeared at the Santa Rosa High School Auditorium, speaking and singing for an hour and a half to a capacity crowd of students and residents. He read a list of 38 tentative definitions of poetry, including, "Poetry is a pack-sack of invisible keepsakes." He utilized a style described as "poet-troubadour" and played the guitar while singing

popular folk songs. Sandberg was accompanied to Santa Rosa by Ernst Bacon, who won a Pulitzer Scholarship for best American symphonic arrangement in 1932. While in Santa Rosa, Sandberg met for the first time Frank Holmes, his only blood relative outside his immediate family. Holmes was a resident of rural Santa Rosa. It was Sandberg's only appearance in northern California.



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