

# State Inspired Literary Giants

Michigan has been the home of many of the nation's literary giants over the years. Some lived here all their lives, while others, such as Carl Sandburg and Ernest Hemingway, spent only a few years in the state, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

A panel of university English professors has selected about a dozen authors and poets, both past and contemporary, who were native Michiganders or did a good portion of their writing here.

Others, although not as well known, have won widespread recognition. In some cases, visual reminders for the visitor were factors in compiling this list.

**HURON CITY** was the summer home for almost 40 years of William Lyon Phelps, professor of English literature at Yale University from 1903-37 and one of the giants of American letters.

Five buildings in this Lake Huron community have been restored as a memorial to Phelps and are open to the public. The buildings are a museum, the "Carolyn H" Inn, a general store, an authentic log cabin dating back to 1825 and an early Coast Guard station. In addition, there is the twin-belfried Hubbard-Phelps Memorial Chapel where Prof. Phelps once served as guest preacher.

Owosso was the home of James Oliver Curwood, author of popular and exciting tales of the Canadian North.

Curwood's home, Curwood Castle, is a replica of a Norman castle resembling the much-publicized castle in Disneyland. The Curwood home formerly housed the administrative offices of the Owosso Public Schools but is now vacant and there are plans to make it into a museum.

Curwood produced about 20 full-length novels in just short of two decades before his death in 1927 at the age of 49. His adventure stories earned a fortune for the Owosso-born writer.

**SOME 30 AUTHORS** live or have lived in the Grand Rapids area. Unquestionably the most prolific was Stewart Edward White who wrote about 50 books, most of them with the lumber camps of northern Michigan as background.

The Grand Rapids house where White was born in 1873 was torn down years ago, but a later family home at 427 E. Fulton is still standing. White's father was a lumber pioneer.

Other Grand Rapids writers include Constance Mayfield Rourke, American biographer who used America's past as her themes. Reared in Grand Rapids, she lived there until her death in 1941. She wrote numerous articles on American folklore, literature and art for magazines.

Niles was the birthplace of Ringgold Wilmer Lardner, who as Ring Lardner became one of America's greatest humorists. He was born on March 6, 1885, which he said was "have a baby week."

He was columnist for the

Chicago Tribune between 1913-19. His stories are racy and witty and considered an excellent source for the study of the slang of the time. "You Know Me, Al" was one of them.

The Lardner family home at 519 Bond is now divided into apartments. Lardner died in 1933, in East Hampton, N.Y.

Two miles east of Hudson is the farm home of Will Carleton, once poet laureate of the state, who wrote "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse."

It won him national fame. In 1919 the State Legislature decreed that memorial services be held on the poet's birthday, a custom that was soon forgotten. He died in New York in 1912.

**AT GREENFIELD VILLAGE**, in Dearborn is a two-story home, the Ann Arbor House. Until moved to its present location by the late Henry Ford, it stood at 1223 Pontiac Street and was occupied by Robert Frost during 1925-26 when he was one of the University of Michigan staff as a "resident poet."

The dean of American poets,

Frost won four Pulitzer prizes before his death in 1963.

Edgar Albert Guest, Michigan's beloved poet and better known as Eddie Guest, came to Detroit in 1891 when he was 10 years old and in 1914 began working for the Detroit Free Press, where he won 12 awards and prizes. He died in 1963.

Carl Sandburg, the poet, worked in an attic study high on the lake dunes at Harbert to write the tome on Abraham Lincoln that won him a place high in the ranks of American biographers.

Sandburg lived in Michigan from 1929, when he began his voluminous history of Lincoln, until 1945, when he moved to Hendersonville, N.C.

Bruce Catton, famed Civil War historian who has won the Pulitzer prize for his histories, divides his time between New York and his home overlooking Traverse Bay.

Ernest Hemingway spent summers in the Waukeon Lakes area of northern Michigan as a young man and used some of this background in his later novels.

Theodore Roethke, of Saginaw, a poet, taught at several colleges and universities after attending the University of Michigan and Harvard. His published poems and contributions to nearly a score of monthly magazines won him more than 12 awards and prizes. He died in 1963.

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BESIDES JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD, OTHER MICHIGAN AUTHORS AND THEIR HOME TOWNS AROUND THE STATE INCLUDE:

**RING LARDNER**  
NILES  
**STEWART EDWARD WHITE**  
GRAND RAPIDS  
**WILL CARLETON**  
HUDSON  
**WILLIAM LYON PHELPS**  
HURON CITY  
**ROBERT FROST** (HOME IN GREENFIELD VILLAGE, DEARBORN)

**EDDIE GUEST**  
DETROIT  
**KARL DETZER**  
LELAND  
**CONSTANCE ROURKE**  
GRAND RAPIDS  
**JOHN D. VOELKER** (ROBERT TRAYER)  
**ISHPERING**  
**THEODORE ROETHKE**  
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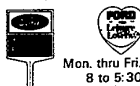
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