

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
SINCLAIR LEWIS INTERPRETIVE CENTER OPENING  
SAUK CENTRE, MINNESOTA  
JUNE 15, 1975

I am pleased to be back with you today to join you in the grand opening and dedication of the new Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Center. I know the effort every one of you put into building this fine facility, and you can be very proud of the results. I feel certain that if Sinclair Lewis were alive today, he would be gratified.

Writers, and especially journalists, seem to have been amused that we here in Minnesota and in Sauk Centre should be honoring this native son of ours who was the first American writer to win the Nobel Prize. There really is no cause for amusement.

Sinclair Lewis criticized the foibles of Sauk Centre and of other towns in Main Street. But, his criticism was laced with love and admiration for the strengths of Sauk Centre and its citizens.

Like most folks who grew up in small towns and went elsewhere to find their fortunes, he chose his home town as his final resting place. Like Carol in Main Street, he learned that small towns and the people who populate them are good and decent, and that their defects are at least matched, if not overshadowed, by their virtues.

As our Nation begins to celebrate the 200th anniversary of its founding, I am particularly pleased by the efforts of our fine citizens in Minnesota to make this celebration both a meaningful memorial to our past and a living testimony to our future.

Nothing could be more appropriate than the efforts of the citizens of Sauk Centre to build this interpretive center. This center, through exhibits and audio-visual displays, takes a visitor through the Main Street about which Sinclair Lewis wrote, to the writing desk at which he worked, and on a short journey through Sinclair Lewis' five major novels-- Main Street, Babbitt, Elmer Gantry, Arrowsmith, and Dodsworth.

The Center will also house a sound-and-slide show summarizing the history of Sauk Centre and provide information on a walking tour to Sauk Centre's points of interest.

I want to pay special tribute to the people of Sauk Centre, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Minnesota Department of Highways for their joint efforts in making this center a reality.

I especially want to single out the citizens of Sauk Centre for their vision and community spirit. It was your idea to build an interpretive center convenient to both the local citizenry and passers-through.

It was your idea to combine in this center a historical museum, through which people could come to understand Sinclair Lewis and the small town which was to have such a lasting influence on him. This rest stop for weary travelers is much in spirit like that which Sinclair Lewis' mother established in Sauk Centre and which the good women of Gopher Prairie established in their home town. It was your hard work which made this effort a reality.

My good friends Pat DuBois and Bill McDonald have told me all about your efforts. I know that all of you--men, women and children --have chipped in, held variety shows, had bake sales, and rung

doorbells to make this center a reality. I am proud and honored by your example, but in all honesty, I would have expected no less.

Sauk Centre is Main Street America. It is the spirit of America, the spirit which says that if we work together, we can solve our problems and make a better tomorrow for our children.

But, I don't think I need to dwell on the importance of community spirit with you--you know what it is and practice it. Community spirit is as alive in rural America today as it was 200 years ago when our nation was founded.

I feel certain that this center, and the Boyhood Home which we worked together to restore, will make an important contribution to our heritage. The Boyhood Home has already won national acclaim. I am certain this Interpretive Center will also become a national source of pride. Together with the Home, it will enable Americans from all sections of our nation and visitors from abroad to understand Sinclair Lewis, and to comprehend the America about which he wrote.

After viewing these fine exhibits, I am confident that our visitors will understand why Sinclair Lewis said, "This is America."

# # # # #

Sen. Schron  
Rep. Niehaus

Fred Manfred (Fete Fekama)

- Mayor Bernard Robischon
- Bill Cranz - Pres. City Council
- Russell Fridley
- Leonard Foster

Don Hanson  
Pat Dubois  
Ben Dubois

Tillie  
Filsow

→ Mrs. Dielson

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

① David Jackson - President, S. Lewis Foundation.

SINCLAIR LEWIS INTERPRETIVE CENTER OPENING

SAUK CENTRE, MINNESOTA

JUNE 15, 1975

Funds Raised locally past 2 years  
Chamber of Commerce Center  
State of Minnesota

- ✓ A museum - life + work of Sinclair Lewis
- ✓ Rest Stop for Travelers
- ✓ Home for Sauk Centre Chamber

I AM PLEASED TO ~~BE BACK WITH YOU TODAY~~ TO JOIN YOU IN THE  
GRAND OPENING AND DEDICATION OF THE NEW SINCLAIR LEWIS INTERPRETIVE  
CENTER. I KNOW THE EFFORT EVERY ONE OF YOU PUT INTO BUILDING THIS  
FINE FACILITY, AND YOU CAN BE VERY PROUD OF THE RESULTS. I FEEL  
CERTAIN THAT IF SINCLAIR LEWIS WERE ALIVE TODAY, HE WOULD BE  
GRATIFIED

WRITERS, AND ESPECIALLY JOURNALISTS, SEEM TO HAVE BEEN AMUSED  
THAT WE HERE IN MINNESOTA AND IN SAUK CENTRE SHOULD BE HONORING  
THIS NATIVE SON OF OURS WHO WAS THE FIRST AMERICAN WRITER TO WIN  
THE NOBEL PRIZE. ~~THERE REALLY IS NO CAUSE FOR AMUSEMENT,~~

<sup>to be sure</sup> SINCLAIR LEWIS CRITICIZED THE FOIBLES OF SAUK CENTRE AND OF  
OTHER TOWNS IN MAIN STREET. BUT, HIS CRITICISM WAS LACED WITH  
LOVE AND ADMIRATION FOR THE STRENGTHS OF SAUK CENTRE AND ITS  
CITIZENS.

When he was dying in Rome in 1951  
with only a Franciscan nun  
to see him go, he asked to have  
his ashes sent to Sault Centre  
at his burial service a former  
school mate read from a  
piece that Sinclair Lewis had  
written for the 50th anniversary  
of his High School Graduation

"It was a good time;  
a good place; and a good  
preparation for life"

"Deep in his heart a love  
for this Prairie town"

"This is America", Lewis wrote  
of Sopher Prairie"

LIKE MOST FOLKS WHO GREW UP IN SMALL TOWNS AND WENT ELSEWHERE  
TO FIND THEIR FORTUNES, HE CHOSE HIS HOME TOWN AS HIS FINAL RESTING  
PLACE. LIKE CAROL IN MAIN STREET, HE LEARNED THAT SMALL TOWNS  
AND THE PEOPLE WHO POPULATE THEM ARE GOOD AND DECENT, AND THAT

THEIR DEFECTS ARE AT LEAST MATCHED, IF NOT OVERSHADOWED, BY THEIR  
VIRTUES. ⓧ People today Returning to Rural America

AS OUR NATION BEGINS TO CELEBRATE THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY,  
~~ITS FOUNDED,~~ I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED BY THE EFFORTS OF OUR FINE  
CITIZENS IN MINNESOTA TO MAKE THIS bicentennial CELEBRATION BOTH A MEANINGFUL  
MEMORIAL TO OUR PAST AND A LIVING TESTIMONY TO OUR FUTURE. (Unstated)

NOTHING COULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE THAN THE EFFORTS OF THE  
CITIZENS OF SAUK CENTRE TO BUILD THIS Interpretive Center. THIS  
CENTER, THROUGH EXHIBITS AND AUDIO-VISUAL DISPLAYS, TAKES A VISITOR  
THROUGH THE MAIN STREET ABOUT WHICH SINCLAIR LEWIS WROTE, TO THE

WRITING DESK AT WHICH HE WORKED, AND ON A SHORT JOURNEY THROUGH  
SINCLAIR LEWIS' FIVE MAJOR NOVELS-- MAIN STREET, BABBIT, ELMER  
GENTRY, ARROWSMITH AND DODSWORTH.

↳ THE CENTER WILL ALSO HOUSE A SOUND-AND-SLIDE SHOW SUMMARIZING  
THE HISTORY OF SAUK CENTRE AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ON A WALKING  
TOUR TO SAUK CENTRE'S POINTS OF INTEREST.

↳ I WANT TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF SAUK CENTRE,  
THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
HIGHWAYS FOR THEIR JOINT EFFORTS IN MAKING THIS CENTER A REALITY.

↳ I ESPECIALLY WANT TO SINGLE OUT THE CITIZENS OF SAUK CENTRE  
FOR THEIR VISION AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT ↳ IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO BUILD  
AN INTERPRETIVE CENTER CONVENIENT TO BOTH THE LOCAL CITIZENRY

TOURISTS - those who visit here - or  
AND PASSERS THROUGH pass by -

It was a good time;  
a good place;  
and a good preparation for life.

*A PLACE OF RELAXATION AND*

IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO COMBINE IN THIS CENTER A HISTORICAL MUSEUM,

THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE COULD COME TO UNDERSTAND SINCLAIR LEWIS AND

THE SMALL TOWN WHICH WAS TO HAVE SUCH A LASTING INFLUENCE ON HIM.

L THIS REST STOP FOR WEARY TRAVELERS IS MUCH IN SPIRIT LIKE THAT

WHICH SINCLAIR LEWIS' MOTHER ESTABLISHED IN SAUK CENTRE AND WHICH

THE GOOD WOMEN OF GOPHER PRAIRIE ESTABLISHED IN THEIR HOME TOWN.

L IT WAS YOUR HARD WORK WHICH MADE THIS EFFORT A REALITY.

L MY GOOD FRIENDS PAT DuBOIS AND BILL McDONALD HAVE TOLD ME ALL

ABOUT YOUR EFFORTS, L I KNOW THAT ALL OF YOU--MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

--HAVE CHIPPED IN, HELD VARIETY SHOWS, HAD BAKE SALES, AND RUNG

DOORBELLS TO MAKE THIS CENTER A REALITY, L I AM PROUD AND HONORED

BY YOUR EXAMPLE, BUT IN ALL HONESTY, I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED NO LESS.

① Wolfe - Everyman has chance

SAUK CENTRE IS MAIN STREET AMERICA. IT IS THE SPIRIT OF

AMERICA, THE SPIRIT WHICH SAYS THAT IF WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN

SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS AND MAKE A BETTER TOMORROW FOR OUR CHILDREN. (X)

*Bicentennial - Pioneer, optimism, accommodation*  
*industrialization*

BUT, I DON'T THINK I NEED TO DWELL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF

COMMUNITY SPIRIT WITH YOU--YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS AND PRACTICE IT.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT IS AS ALIVE IN RURAL AMERICA TODAY AS IT WAS 200

YEARS AGO WHEN OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED.

I FEEL CERTAIN THAT THIS CENTER, AND THE BOYHOOD HOME WHICH

*you* WE WORKED TOGETHER TO RESTORE, WILL MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION

TO OUR HERITAGE. *Sincere Leases* THE BOYHOOD HOME HAS ALREADY WON NATIONAL ACCLAIM.

I AM CERTAIN THIS INTERPRETIVE CENTER WILL ALSO BECOME A NATIONAL

SOURCE OF PRIDE. TOGETHER WITH THE HOME, IT WILL ENABLE AMERICANS

FROM ALL SECTIONS OF OUR NATION AND VISITORS FROM ABROAD TO

UNDERSTAND SINCLAIR LEWIS, AND TO COMPREHEND THE AMERICA ABOUT  
WHICH HE WROTE.

AFTER VIEWING THESE FINE EXHIBITS, I AM CONFIDENT THAT OUR  
VISITORS WILL UNDERSTAND WHY SINCLAIR LEWIS SAID, "THIS IS AMERICA."

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Carl Sandburg @



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