

Name: Carl Lamson Carmer

Years: October 16, 1893 – September 11, 1976

Residence: Octagon House, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

Brief Biography: Carl Lamson Carmer was born to Willis Griswold Carmer and Mary Lamson Carmer in Cortland, New York, in the Finger Lakes region. He received his baccalaureate from Hamilton College in 1914 and his Masters from Harvard in 1915. Carmer taught English at Syracuse University and the University of Rochester and then served as an artillery instructor in Oklahoma during World War I. Following the war he taught English at the University of Alabama from 1921 to 1927. It was during this time that he began travelling around Alabama to study the folklore with the intention of publishing a scholarly paper based on his observations. Carmer then took a job as a newspaper reporter for the *New Orleans Item-Tribune*; in 1928 he became an assistant editor for *Vanity Fair* in New York; and in 1929 he became an assistant editor at *Theatre Arts Monthly*. In 1930 he published *Deep South*, a book of poetry based on his travels in Alabama. In 1934 he published a book of prose, *Stars Fell on Alabama*, which quickly became a bestseller. Carmer's career as an author began to flourish and he wrote several more books about New York State folklore. In 1939 he wrote *The Hudson*, part of a collection named the *Rivers of America Series*. His prolific writing career chronicled folk and Native American themes and regional history. He began to develop a keen interest in the myths and lore of Americana. He became active in the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1963 Carmer joined with several other pioneer environmental activists at his home, the historic Octagon House in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York. They began a grassroots movement that would successfully prevent Consolidated Edison from carving a giant pump storage facility out of the scenic Storm King Mountain near Cornwall, New York. These maverick meetings were called the Scenic Hudson Preservation Committee which became Scenic Hudson, Incorporated, in 1974. Carl Carmer died on September 11, 1976. Five years later, in 1981, Consolidated Edison agreed to abandon its plan for the Storm King Mountain project. Carl Carmer's living room meetings had essentially started a modern environmental preservation movement.

Major Achievements: Carmer preserved Americana with books like *Stars Fell on Alabama* and *The Hudson*; As an environmental activist he preserved the beauty of the Hudson River Valley.

More Information: Marist Environmental History Project:
<http://library.marist.edu/archives/mehp/index.html> ; Marist College Archives and Special Collections: <http://library.marist.edu/archives/overview.html>

Sources:

Scenic Hudson, Inc.

Marist Environmental History Project (MEHP).

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By Steve Grim