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# INKLINGS and IDLINGS

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The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361

*Spring, 1999*

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The name, "Inklings and Idlings", comes from the title of Carl Sandburg's first column, printed in the **Galesburg Evening Mail** under the pseudonym "Crimson", in 1904.

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## The Association's Purpose

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site is owned and staffed by the State of Illinois. However, not all that should be done to maintain the Site can be accomplished by the state alone.

Consequently, the nonprofit Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association came into being to meet some of the Site's needs. Since it was established, it has done much to enhance the Site.

But the Association's purpose is greater than that. It strives to keep the vision of Carl Sandburg alive by reminding people a son of working class immigrants achieved fame and greatness in the nation.

It also works toward that goal by sponsoring events at the Site, helping to welcome visitors, and providing them with materials that inform, educate and entertain.

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## Sandburg Days Festival 1999

The fourth annual Sandburg Days Festival, sponsored by Carl Sandburg

College and the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, will be held April 15 - 17th. More than 25 events are scheduled to take place over the three day period.

They include a writer's workshop led by Dr. John Hallwas, an author and professor of English; a presentation by Penelope Niven, the leading Sandburg biographer; an invitational golf outing and black tie gala; and a two and a four mile run/walk.

Helga Sandburg, a writer and the poet's daughter, is to be an honored guest at the Festival.

Several of the Festival's features will occur at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, which is the Festival headquarters. Among them is a folk concert at 7 pm, on April 15th. It is one of the Songbag Concert Series being presented at the Site during the winter and spring. The featured artist will be Larry Penn.

Also at the Site, the first Sandburg Festival Garden Show and Sale is to begin at 10 am on Saturday, April 17th. Garden-related exhibitors have been invited to participate. Plants, seeds and other items are to be offered for sale.

An enclosed area has been set aside for 20 to 25 minute demonstrations on gardening, building birdhouses and related subjects. The presentations will be given throughout the day.

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**The Officers and Directors  
of the Carl Sandburg  
Historic Site Association**

President - Norm Winick  
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Secretary - Julie Bondi  
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**Newsletter Editors**

Barbara Schock  
William Brady

Site Manager--Carol Nelson  
Site Interpreter--Steve Holden

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**Music at the Historic Site**

A monthly Songbag Concert Series is being offered by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association in an intimate smoke-free and alcohol-free setting. The concerts showcase acoustic music in the traditional and folk styles. They are given in the Visitors' Center next door to the Sandburg birthplace.

On February 18th, John Heasly, Mike Terry and Amy Hacker performed. On March 18th, Charlie Hays, who is prominent on the Galesburg music scene, was the featured artist.

Larry Penn, a noted folk singer from Milwaukee, will appear at 7 pm on April 15th. His concert will be followed by the Sandburg Days Kick-Off reception.

Coriander, a Galesburg folk trio,

will perform in the Visitors' Center at 7 pm on May 20th.

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**Added to the Rolls**

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association:

Dr. and Mrs. Benton (Ruth) Allen  
William Barton  
Margaret Chiafos  
Marjorie Elvin  
Marjorie Jones  
Richard Millman  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael (Mary) Panther  
Frances Ray  
E. Katheleen Stout  
Audrey Swanson  
Marjorie Swanson  
Dr. and Mrs. Ray (Grace) Thompson  
Nancy Youngquist

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**From the Manager**

A number of improvements have been made at the Site. The garage at the back of the premises was remodeled to look like a barn with a steeper roof line, board-and-batten siding, and barn-type doors. The edifice was painted dark gray-brown by members of the staff.

Last year the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association engaged the services of master gardener Becky Swanson and the D.A. Hoerr Nurseries to design professionally and plant a flower garden in the rear yard of the Site. The approximate cost of the project was \$5,000.

In the autumn, Steve Holden and I planted 500 bulbs. We are anxious to see how the garden fared over the winter, and look forward to enjoying the flowers.

Three in-ground exterior flood lights were installed in front of the Sandburg cottage and the

Visitors' Center next door. The lights provide a striking accent to the buildings at night. The flag was also illuminated by an in-ground light.

Not all of the improvements are readily apparent. Extensive electrical projects were completed. Among them were underground wiring to the cottage and a complete re-wiring of its interior. Also added were new underground lines to the barn, two exterior outlets, and an additional circuit.

Progress can be painful. This year, the concrete front porch of the Visitors' Center will be torn out. The foundation across the south facade will be rebuilt. The porch will be replaced in a style more appropriate for the 1858 structure. If you visit us during this renovation period, please excuse our mess.

The museum store is being stocked for spring sales. New this year is "The Great Carl Sandburg: Songs of America"; a CD whose purchase price is \$12.99. It is also available as an audiotape, priced at \$9.98.

--Carol Nelson

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#### An Invitation, If One Is Needed

Although he died more than thirty years ago, Carl Sandburg's memory remains ever green. The proof of that is found in the number of visitors who come to his birthplace each year. They arrive from all over the United States, and the world.

In 1997, 18,674 came to the little cottage on East Third Street. In 1998, 18,823 were welcomed there.

Amazingly, there are many residents of Galesburg and Illinois who have yet to set foot in the place. If you

are among them, please come and get acquainted with the city's best-known son.

The visiting hours at the Site could not be more convenient. They are 9 am to 5 pm, seven days a week. The Site is closed only on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Election Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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#### Wrinklings and Wild Things

*In the spring an old man's fancy  
lightly turns to thoughts of  
flummywisters.*

On a Friday morning when the flummywisters were yodeling yisters high in the elm trees, the Potato Face Blind man came down to his work sitting at the corner nearest the postoffice in the Village of Liver-and-Onions and playing his gold-that-used-to-be accordion for the pleasure of the ears of the people going into the postoffice to see if they got any letters for themselves or their families.

"It is a good day, a lucky day," said the Potato Face Blind Man, "because for a beginning I have heard high in the elm trees the flummywisters yodeling their yisters in the long branches of the lingering leaves. So--so--I am going to listen to myself playing on my accordion the same yisters, the same yodels, drawing them like long glad breathings out of my glad accordion, long breathings of the branches of the lingering leaves."

FOR THE REST OF THE STORY, SEE: How the Potato Face Blind Man Enjoyed Himself on a Fine Spring Morning" from Sandburg's Rootabaga Stories, Part One.

--Steve Holden



## Cooking at Connemara

Carl Sandburg's last years were lived at Connemara Farms in Flat Rock, North Carolina. There he wrote while his wife raised and sold dairy goats. She also sold goat's milk, and made yogurt and cheese from it.

She did little of the cooking. Others were hired to do that. She preferred to devote her time to breeding the goats and maintaining their pedigrees.

The Sandburgs appreciated simple foods which reflected their heritages. At the same time, like most American families, they had somewhat eclectic tastes. For example, a dish often served was Spaghetti Italienne. To be sure, making it helped use up the tomatoes which were raised in abundance in the family garden.

With the assistance of Carl Sandburg's daughter Margaret, Elena Diana Miller compiled a number of the family recipes. She published them under the title of *Cooking at Connemara*. There are no exotic dishes in it, although some of the them may seem unfamiliar. Here are two of the recipes:

### Koch Kaese (Boiled Cheese)

1 quart cottage cheese  
1 teaspoon caraway seed  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 1/2 cups water  
Yolk of 1 egg, beaten

Press cottage cheese until dry; add salt and caraway to taste. Put in earthen dish; cover well. Set in a warm place. Stir with a fork every day for a week or until ripe and clear. Place butter and water in a spider [skillet]. When warm, add cheese and boil slowly 20 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from stove; add yolk of egg and beat until glossy. Pour into bowl or

cups, rinsed with cold water; serve when cold.

### Swedish Spritzer Cookies

1 1/2 cups butter or oleo  
1 cup sugar  
1 well beaten egg  
2 teaspoons vanill extract  
4 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder

Thoroughly cream butter and sugar; add egg and vanilla. Beat well. Add sifted dry ingredients; mix to smooth dough. Use cooky press. (Usually formed as an ess.) Decorate with candied fruits, colored sugar or decorettes. Bake at 400 degrees till light brown, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Copies of *Cooking at Connemara* may be purchased at the museum store of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site for \$10.95. The book is illustrated with drawings, and contains kitchen tips, as well as a reminiscence by Margaret Sandburg.

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### The Workingman's Lot

Carl Sandburg was born in Galesburg on January 6, 1878. He was the second of the seven children of August and Clara Sandburg. Providing food, clothing and shelter for a large family has never been easy. It was especially difficult more than a hundred years ago, when Carl Sandburg was a boy.

His father worked as a blacksmith's assistant for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. For his labor, he was paid approximately \$35 per month. The dollar was considerably more valuable in those days than it is now. Even so, August Sandburg's wages were barely adequate to sustain his family. It

was a struggle just to provide that which was absolutely needed. There was not money left over for luxuries.

In 1909, in a magazine article, Carl Sandburg had occasion to write of how far a workingman's wages had to go. No doubt he remembered what a hard time August Sandburg had, supporting his wife and children.

He could have been writing about his father when he said: "Out of this sum he must buy flour, meat, potatoes, beans and prunes to nourish his body; out of this comes clothing, boots and shoes for himself and family.

"Out of this he must pay for tables, chairs, stoves, chinaware, and if there is anything left, carpets, books, a daily paper and a phonograph or piano.

"How does he do it? Well he does it by not doing it. The average workingman does not have what he needs even of simple necessities."

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### What's In a Name?

Many immigrants changed their names after they arrived in the United States. Some did so because they wanted to make a clean break with their past. They hoped to build better lives in a new land. Others had names which were clearly foreign, so they altered them to make them seem more American.

Carl Sandburg's father changed his name because he wanted to be paid promptly. What his true name was is not known. There are suggestions it was Johnson or Danielssen.

Unfortunately, those were all common Swedish names, carried by many employees of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

August Sandburg discovered that when he found work with the company as a section hand. All too often, a Johnson or Danielssen would receive the pay due to a different Johnson or Danielssen.

August Sandburg quickly resolved that difficulty by taking the name of Sandberg. It is not likely he did so by going to a court. He just had his employment records changed. No further formality was required.

Years later, the name underwent an additional change. In Carl Sandburg's youth, the Swedes of Galesburg, including his parents, were regarded as honest, industrious and hardworking. For the most part, they were respected.

However, no Swedes were to be found at the top of Galesburg's social ladder. Very few even occupied the middle rungs.

Carl Sandburg was a sensitive lad. He suspected he was looked upon as just another Poor Swede Boy. He determined to change that perception to the extent he could. The first step was to modify the spelling of his last name.

It had been S-A-N-D-B-E-R-G. The "burg" part of Galesburg was spelled with a U. Therefore, he and his sister Mary, and his brother Martin, concluded that would be appropriate for them. Thereafter, they spelled their name S-A-N-D-B-U-R-G.

Carl Sandburg went one step further. He Americanized his first name to "Charles." It seemed grander and less Swedish than Carl.

Most of the Swedish immigrants of Galesburg, and even their children, had a real problem pronouncing the "Ch" of Charles. Although they tried, the best they could do was "Sharles." His father addressed him as "Sharlie."



It was not until many years later, after he had married, that Charles Sandburg became Carl again. His wife Lilian, whom he called Paula, convinced him to return to the name with which he had been christened, and by which the world would know and admire him.

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### Strong Drink

During the 1880's, when Carl Sandburg was a boy, Galesburg had about a dozen saloons. However, his father, August, never visited any of them.

In that respect, he was unlike most of the city's workmen. They would spend hours in the grog shops. When they departed, they left behind too much of the money they had worked so hard to earn.

Their unrelentingly arduous work was the chief reason they patronized the saloons. They worked ten hours a day, six days each week. Their daily wages seldom exceeded a dollar and fifty cents. It was barely enough to support their families.

Not surprisingly, they went to the saloons, seeking solace from their burdens and cares. Often they tarried there too long.

August Sandburg looked upon their behavior as the height of folly. He was incapable of handing any part of his wages across a bar. Even so, he was acquainted with the taste of alcohol.

At the onset of winter, he would betake himself to one of the city's drugstores. He would purchase a pint of raw grain alcohol.

Thereafter, several times each week, he would put a teaspoon of the stuff into a cup of hot black coffee. He would sip the beverage slowly, giving every evidence of enjoying

it. The pint would be made to last until spring. More often than not, there would still be a few drops left in the bottle.

His oldest son's initial encounter with alcohol was somewhat more elevated, at least so far as its quality was concerned. Carl Sandburg tasted really fine wines and liquors when he was employed in Harvey Craig's drugstore.

At the time, more than a hundred years ago, drugstores sold considerable quantities of whiskey, wine and other spirits. Under the law, they could only be dispensed on a prescription basis, for "medicinal purposes."

The drugstores had longer hours than most saloons were permitted. Consequently, there were those proprietors who would allow special customers entrance into their back rooms. There, out of the public's eye the favored few were able to purchase whiskey or rum without the authorization of a physician.

Harvey Craig was not one of the unethical members of the profession. His sale of the hard stuff was done wholly within the limits of the law. Even so, he was obliged to maintain an extensive inventory of alcoholic beverages.

One of Carl Sandburg's responsibilities was to fill bottles from the casks and barrels in the stores' basement. Sometimes he would sample their contents.

He decided whiskey was not for him, but he rather liked the port wine and claret. Because they were to his taste, he decided it might well be dangerous to sample them too frequently. The same was true of a fine old rum.

Early on, Carl Sandburg had learned the insidious nature of strong drink. He saw nothing wrong with an

occasional libation, but he knew that for his own well-being, those occasions had to be rare.

There was another form of alcohol with which he was acquainted, but he never consumed. It did not enter his family's house, except in an innocent guise.

Each year, in his boyhood, his family would obtain a copy of Hostetter's Illustrated United States Almanac. The booklet was published by the manufacturers of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. It was filled with useful information about the phases of the moon, the times of the sunrises and sunsets, the ocean tides and many other facts of general interest.

The almanac also contained advice on curing boils, warts, corns, earache, ingrown toenails and a host of other ailments. Interspersed among those items were several pages of cartoons, jokes and "wise sayings".

All through the almanac were claims made about the efficacy of Hostetter's Bitters. The manufacturer declared "it refreshes the fatigued, imparts appetite and affords tranquillity to overworked brains and sensitive nerves. The facts relating to it we do not wish to embellish by hyperbole or lessen the force by exaggeration."

It was certainly true a dose of the Bitters would give tranquillity to most persons. The nostrum was largely alcohol, infused with bitter herbs. One shot of it provided approximately the amount of alcohol to be found in a cocktail

Many customers of the product found it necessary to resort to the tonic several times a day. A remarkable amount of the elixer was consumed in temperance households where other spirits were unwelcome. After all, Hostetter's Bitters was just a "tonic".

## The Honorables

Over the years, several residents of Knox County have served in the United States House of Representatives. Perhaps the most distinguished of them was Philip Sidney Post.

Post was born in Orange County, New York, which was known chiefly for its dairy farms. Like many residents of that area, he went west as soon as he had completed his education.

He was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1856, and practiced law until 1861. In that year, he answered President Abraham Lincoln's call and joined the Union Army.

His ability and bravery under fire brought him several promotions. The last came when he was brevetted a brigadier general in December, 1864. That elevation in rank resulted from his gallant service at the Battle of Nashville. His conduct there eventually earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

After being mustered out, he was appointed consul, and later consul general, to Austria-Hungary. He returned to Galesburg in 1879, and entered the real estate business. He was elected to Congress in 1886, and remained there until his death in 1895.

His congressional record was unremarkable. Even so, a throng of United States senators, representatives and Civil War veterans came to his burial in Hope Cemetery.

As Carl Sandburg noted, they were there more to pay tribute to the soldier than to the politician. To be sure, the soldier deserved all of the honors he was accorded, and more.

There is a saying in Washington, D.C., about members of Congress who

are defeated for re-election. It is that "They never go back to Pocatello."

It means the involuntarily retired public servants seldom return to the districts or states they formerly represented. Instead, they remain in the nation's capitol. That was partly true of George Washington Prince, of Galesburg.

Prince was a graduate of Knox College. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1880. He became active in Republican Party politics. In a special election, he was elected to the House of Representatives to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Philip Sidney Post.

He was re-elected seven times, but in 1912, he became a victim of a split in the Republican Party.

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William Howard Taft, the party's presidential nominee that year, was badly defeated. He took many other candidates down with him.

That was the case in several congressional districts, including the 15th of Illinois. Prince lost to Stephen A. Hoxworth, a Democrat from Rapatee, a small town in the southeast corner of Knox County.

Prince had a handsome home at 546 North Academy Street. Apparently he no longer took pleasure in it, because he did not tarry there after his defeat. As soon as his successor had been sworn in, Prince moved to Los Angeles, California.

There he practiced law for several years. Life in the Golden State must have agreed with him. He was eighty-five years old when he died in 1939.

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