
INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Winter 2002

Added to the Rolls

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

M/M Eric (Kim) Swartz

If you have joined the Association recently, and your name is not listed above, please notify **Inklings and Idlings** of the omission so it may be rectified.

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Music from the Songbag

After a winter respite, the Songbag Concert Series will resume on Thursday, February 21st. "Hammer and Pick" will provide the music. The group is composed of Jon Wagner on hammer dulcimer and banjo, Jan Sams on guitar and bass, and John Heasley on guitar. Each of the artists will contribute their vocal talents to the program of old time traditional American folk music.

John Heasley, the coordinator of the Series, has announced the dates and artists for the rest of the spring season. On March 21st, Mike and Ellen Baum will be featured. Chris Valillo is scheduled to appear April 18th and Bob and Christi Black on May 16th.

All of the performances start at 7:00 p.m. at the Carl Sandburg State

Historic Site, 313 East Third Street.

Additional information about the schedule is available at www.johnheasley.com.

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From the Superintendent

We have been helping the Sandburg Days Festival committee make plans for the event which will be held this year on April 18, 19, 20 and 21. There are some big changes.

Many of the activities will be held outdoors on Seminary Street on Saturday, April 20th. The restaurants will participate with food booths. There will be a tent set up for entertainment including barbershop singers, musicians, and local children reciting Sandburg poetry.

Helga Sandburg Crile, Carl Sandburg's daughter, will be available for visiting and autographs. There will be an exhibition of decorated fiberglass life-size goats. Other events for children and adults will be held. You can pick up a schedule at our Site or the shops on Seminary Street.

At our Site we will have our Thursday night folk music concert to kick off the festival on April 18th

at 7:00 p.m. Featured will be Chris Valillo, singer-songwriter, who entertains audiences wherever he plays with music that portrays the joys and sorrows, ups and downs of Midwestern life. He speaks from the heart of rural Illinois and has been affiliated with the Shad Hill Coffee House and public radio's Rural Route 3. There will be refreshments.

Saturday, April 20th, we will have our awards ceremonies at 11:00 and 11:30 for the Knox Children's Poetry Writing Contest and the Association's Memoir Writing Contest for adults.

Sunday, April 21st, will be particularly special. At 2:00 Theo Ubique, a professional drama troupe from Chicago will perform a staged adaptation of Carl Sandburg's anthem poem, *The People, Yes*, in our newly remodeled Barn. The cast consists of three actors portraying various characters which include farmers, politicians, poets, construction workers, mothers and fathers, business leaders, the lonely, the rich, the poor, *The People, Yes*.

This will be an opportunity to see a Sandburg work performed by professionals in a unique setting. Admission is free to all. The costs are absorbed by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Don't miss this wonderful performance.

- Carol Nelson,
Site Superintendent

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Penny Parade Produces Plenty

The Penny Parade, begun in 1961 by the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association, was the major fundraiser for the Sandburg Museum. As the *331 Memo*, the group's annual newsletter, states in the January 6, 1961, issue:

"A parade of pennies contributed by Galesburg citizens will be an innovation for the Sandburg Association on January 6, 1961.

The plan will have the following purposes:

1. To honor, on his birthday, each year on January 6, Galesburg's most famous living author, Carl Sandburg.
2. To create interest and pride in the Galesburg birthplace of Mr. Sandburg.
3. To assist in the maintenance of the birthplace cottage at 331 East Third Street."

The idea for the Penny Parade was inspired by Sandburg's writings about the Lincoln penny.

In the 1962 newsletter, a financial report was made in which the proceeds from that year's Penny Parade overshadowed the site's "Partial Total Maintenance" by only \$13.97!



January 4, 1962, Esther Sandburg Wachs, Carl's younger sister, accepts pennies from local schoolchildren.

The 1969 issue reported that "contributions from the Penny Parade are the largest single source of income for the Birthplace, and amount to around \$2,000 yearly from Illinois school children alone. In addition, contributions are received from all over the country where school children are taught the great worth of Carl Sandburg's genius and wish to perpetuate the man's memory at this shrine where he was born and where his ashes now lie buried under Remembrance Rock in the park at the rear of the cottage."

The following year was the final year the Birthplace Association held its fundraiser, as it was the last year they owned and operated the Sandburg Site before the State of Illinois acquired the property.

At that time, there was no need for raising funds for upkeep and maintenance, since the site was state-supported. However, by the 1980s, a "friends" or "support" group was established in order to help the Site with developmental and educational projects. That group still exists and is called the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Under its leadership the Penny Parade was reinstated in the mid-1980s.

Until this year the Penny Parade was held on the Friday closest to Sandburg's birthday, January 6. Upon receiving input from area educators, it was decided to hold the event later in the month in order to give the principals, teachers and students enough time after the holiday break to develop plans for collecting pennies and include Sandburg in their curriculum. It appears that this strategy is a good one, as the response has been good (netting over \$800, with several schools yet to check in). Letting the students know exactly where their contributions are going is also a good idea.

This year's attendees were treated to folk music by John Wagner, balloons, a penny keychain, cupcakes and the knowledge that their money is to be used for improvements in the barn (lighting, in particular). Participating schools were given a compact disc of Sandburg reading his *Rootabaga Stories*.

- Steve Holden,
as a volunteer for
the Carl Sandburg
Historic Site
Association

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Getting the Association's Goat

Goats were an important part of the latter part of Carl Sandburg's life. His wife, Lilian, raised Nubian goats at their Chikaming Farm in Michigan, and then later at the Connemara Farm near Flat Rock, North Carolina. She gained a considerable reputation in that field of endeavor.

A Nubian goat has taken up residence at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, but the animal will not require food or drink, nor will it have to be tethered to prevent it from wandering away.

It stands three feet tall, and is four and one-half feet long. It is made of fiberglass. Other goats like it were sold as a fund-raiser by the Carl Sandburg Days Festival steering committee. Several businesses and organizations joined with the Association in purchasing goats for decoration and display.

Similarly, cows graced downtown Chicago, and pigs populated Galesburg and other communities. Steve Holden, the Site's interpreter, has agreed to use his artistic talents on the Association's goat.

John Barnstead

The Association lost a good friend in December when John Barnstead passed away. He had been a volunteer with the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association, and later with its successor organization, the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association.

He owned a construction company for many years. Later, his skills were employed to enhance the Visitors' Center on the Site. He also demonstrated his wood-working abilities by fabricating birdhouses which were miniature versions of the Birthplace. They were a popular sale item in the museum store.

Mr. Barnstead's interest in preservation was not limited to the Association. He was also active in the Galesburg Historical Society, as was his late son Raleigh, who was also a much-valued member of the Association.

Mr. Barnstead was 82 years old.

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Four Tons of Documentation of an American Life

(The most important Sandburg research center in the United States is located at the University of Illinois Library in Urbana-Champaign. In this article Dr. Richard Sandburg describes how it came into being and of his visit to it forty-six years ago.)

During the summer of 1956, I felt a strong urge to visit the newly designated Carl Sandburg Room at the University of Illinois Library in Urbana, Illinois.

Penelope Niven, the author of the definitive biography of Carl Sandburg, declares University of Illinois Professor of English, Bruce

Weirick, felt that "Carl Sandburg should let the whole library go back to Illinois," as the last resting place for the books then at the Connemara Home in Flat Rock, North Carolina.

In 1955, the University of Illinois authorized Professor Weirick to negotiate with Sandburg on the price for his books. Carl said he had been offered \$100,000, but after some discussion, it was agreed he would be paid \$30,000 in five equal annual installments.

Niven added, "On May 7, 1956, a moving van arrived at the University of Illinois Library bearing 150 boxes of Sandburg's books and papers, 8,560 pounds, more than four tons of documentation of a singular American's life." Two-thirds of Sandburg's library still remained at Connemara, Carl's last home.

I obtained permission to visit the new Sandburg Room and, armed with my reel-to-reel recorder, I was ushered to the hallowed area by a library official.

We paraded up and down past the metal shelves loaded with cartons of Sandburg memorabilia. About half of the cartons were from the Mayflower Van Lines Company and the rest were marked "Carling's Black Label Ale." The guide rubbed his chin and surmised, "Mr. Sandburg must have enjoyed his beer and ale to have emptied all of those boxes."

I replied, "He enjoyed his beer, usually warm, and drank it with some of his favorite cheese."

The guide took his leave, entrusting me with a key. He said I could lock myself in so nobody else could enter, I should take my time, and return the key to him when I was finished.

It would have taken weeks or months

to go through the entire room. I examined several cartons which contained many of Sandburg's original typewritten manuscripts. In others were his First Edition books, and still others had letters written by friends and dignitaries such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our longest-serving president.

I found an outlet for my electrical recorder, spread my equipment on the floor, and sat with it, all the while reading into my reel-to-reel machine.

One of the letters from President Roosevelt was as follows:

Dated April 6, 1937 from the White House--"My Dear Mr. Sandburg: Your letter has at last reached my desk and I am indeed grateful to you. I have long wanted to talk with you about Lincoln and many other things. So, if anytime you are coming to Washington, I hope you will let me know beforehand and come in to see me. Signed--Franklin Delano Roosevelt."

I also found a news story from the Galesburg Register-Mail which told of a Centennial celebration of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Galesburg.

Carl Sandburg was seated in the sixth row at one event. He was summoned to the stage by the Knox College president, Albert Britt. Sandburg was presented with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters. The crowd was pleased as they felt Sandburg was one of their own.

I spent about five hours in the Sandburg Room until I was exhausted. I packed my equipment and returned the key to the official, thanking him profusely.

Several years later, my wife and I made a visit to Connemara, and during the tour of the home, we were

taken to the basement. There were tiers of books which were so stacked that the walls bulged and the shelves sagged.

It is difficult to visualize what the vast Connemara library resembled before the \$30,000 collection of books and manuscripts was removed from the premises. Additionally, it is hard to imagine how the old house could have contained them all, and still have room for Sandburg and his family.

- Richard Sandburg

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The Common Copper

In 1909, on the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, a penny bearing his likeness was issued. Carl Sandburg, then a newspaperman in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, wrote an encomium to Lincoln and to the humble penny. Years later, it served as the inspiration for the Penny Parade.

In a future issue of *Inkling and Idlings*, a portion of Carl Sandburg's words about our most common coin will be printed.

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Wrinklings and Wild Things

John Wagner, professor of anthropology at Knox College here in Galesburg, entertained the Penny Parade participants in our new barn facility on January 25th. One of the several songs he sang is a favorite of mine from Sandburg's *American Songbag*. For your edification, I quote it here in its entirety. It is sung to the tune of *Dixie*. As Sandburg mentions in the introduction to the song, "The tempo for this song is indicated as 'lucid intervals if possible'."

The Horse Named Bill

Oh, I had a horse and his name was Bill,
And when he ran he couldn't stand still.
He ran away-one day-
And also I ran with him.

He ran so fast he could not stop.
He ran into a barber shop,
And fell exhaustionized-with his eyeteeth-
In the barber's left shoulder.

I had a gal and her name was Daisy
And when she sang the cat went crazy
With deliriums-St. Vituses-
And all kinds of cataleptics.

One day she sang a song about
A man who turned himself inside out
And jumped-into the river-
He was so very sleepy.

I'm going out in the woods next year
And shoot for beer-and not for deer-
I am-I aint'-
I'm a great sharpshootress.

At shooting birds I am a beaut.
There is no bird I cannot shoot
In the eye, in the ear, in the teeth
In the fin(g)ers.

Oh, I went up in a balloon so big,
The people on the earth they looked like a pig,
Like mice-like a katydid-like flieses-
And like fleasens.

The balloon turned up with its bottom side higher.
It fell on the wife of a country squire.
She made a noise like dog hound, like a steam whistle,
And also like dynamite.

Oh, what could you do in a case like that?
Oh, what could you do but stamp on your hat,
And your toothbrush-and everything-
That's helpless.

- Steve Holden

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A Warm Breakfast

On cold winter mornings, a hot breakfast can do wonders for the spirit. This recipe is similar to a dish we call French toast. Frugal cooks in many countries have used their day-old bread to make this economical dish. We don't know why the recipe is titled this way.

Fattiga Riddare
(Poor Knights)

6 slices day-old bread
1 egg
1 tablespoon flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
Butter for frying

Place bread in a single layer in a flat baking dish or baking sheet with sides. In a bowl, whisk the egg and add milk and other ingredients; whisk until well blended. Pour egg mixture over bread and allow to soak through. Add butter to medium hot griddle or skillet. Brown bread on both sides. Serve hot with lingonberries and cream or syrup or jelly. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

- Barbara Schock

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A Horse! A Horse!

One often hears unhappiness expressed about the prices charged for automobiles, and the costs of maintaining them. Many of the same complaints were made about horses in Carl Sandburg's boyhood, more than a century ago.

Carl Sandburg's father August owned a horse named Dolly for a year or two. He had paid ten or fifteen dollars for the aged equine. That was the equivalent of several days' wages.

Dolly was capable of pulling a two seat spring wagon, but only at an extremely slow pace. Mostly Dolly was used for short trips out of town. Otherwise, the Sandburgs walked, or if unusually flush with cash, would take a trolley.

Eventually August Sandburg sold Dolly, and received about what he had paid for her. Whether he needed the money, or found Dolly's upkeep too great an expense, is not known.

The purchase of a horse a hundred years ago was no small investment. A really good equine would fetch three hundred dollars or more. That is the equivalent of ten thousand 2001 dollars. Moreover, hay and oats with which to feed the beast were not cheap. From time to time it was necessary to have it shod.

Its harness had to be kept in good repair, so that it would pull a buggy or small carriage. The purchase of that vehicle was not inconsiderable, and it also required maintenance. Its wheels were prone to break, as were its shafts and thills. All things considered, the ownership of a horse was an expense most people could not afford.

From time to time before the turn of the century, drivers were charged with "furious driving." It was not the road rage of these times. Instead, furious driving was simply a matter of exceeding the speed limit in a reckless manner.

In most municipalities there were limits on how fast a horse and carriage could be driven. Usually, it was six miles per hour. In the winter months, the same limitations applied to horse-drawn sleighs and cutters. They seldom approached that speed, because snow tended to slow the vehicles.

Having invested large sums of money in their equines and equipages, men

were eager to demonstrate how fast they were. They would challenge other proud horsemen to races. As they sped down city streets, they would scatter pedestrians and other carriages. A policeman on foot could not halt them, but as a rule he would recognize the miscreants. Later, he would take them into custody, and into court.

Police magistrates and justices of the peace took a dim view of furious driving. A horse and carriage weighed several thousand pounds, and could do considerable damage. Moreover, there was much doubt as to how much control the driver was able to exercise over his equine at high speeds. Therefore, fines of a hundred dollars or more were not uncommon. That might not seem to be a heavy amount. However, it was substantial in a time when monthly wages seldom exceeded forty dollars.

So far as is known, Dolly, the Sandburg horse, was never involved

in a case of furious driving. With her plodding gait, she would have been likelier to be accused of "obstructing the road."

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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.

The newsletter welcomes articles, particularly about Carl Sandburg, Galesburg, and Knox County. Space limitations may require that they be edited. The articles should be sent to:

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-Barbara Schock
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