

# INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Winter 2003

## Proclamation

WHEREAS, Carl August Sandburg has been internationally acclaimed as writer of poetry and children's stories, Lincoln biographer, singer and collector of American folk songs; and

WHEREAS, he was born in the City of Galesburg, Illinois on January 6th, 1878; and

WHEREAS, his remains were returned to the City on the event of his death in 1967;

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Galesburg, I do hereby deem it an honor and a pleasure to issue this proclamation as a Certificate of Recognition to the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site and its Historic Site Association on the 125th anniversary of Carl Sandburg's birth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand, and cause the Corporate Seal of the City to be affixed this 6th day of January, in the year 2003.

(Signed) Robert P. Sheehan  
Mayor

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## Added to the Rolls

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association has been joined by new

friends. A warm welcome is extended to:

M/M Robert (Eleanor) McCombe  
M/M Roger (Anne) Taylor

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 in the next issue.

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## Musical Notes From the Songbag

On Thursday, March 20th, at 7 pm, the Songbag Concert Series will present Rick Neeley, a Chicago folk singer.

Originally from the Quad Cities, Neeley began his career in the 1960s, and has had a forty year relationship with folk music.

Neeley performs on 12-string guitar and banjo. He will present a broad sampling of contemporary and traditional American folk music.

Recently, Neeley issued a new CD entitled "General Merchandise." One critic described Neeley as someone who sings songs without artifice, but plenty of skill and style.

The March Songbag Concert will be held at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, in Galesburg.

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## She Shared Her Memories

Eva Marie Henley, a valued member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, died last year at the age of 94 in Independence, Missouri, where she had lived a number of years.

At one of the times she renewed her membership, Mrs. Henley told of traveling to Galesburg from her childhood home in Kansas City. From the age of four, via the Santa Fe, she made visits to her father's relatives here.

When she reached the age of eighteen, she moved to Galesburg and found employment in the local Montgomery Ward store. She also helped her father's sister and her husband, who owned two large greenhouses.

Mrs. Henley was taught much about floral arranging, including the making of funeral sprays, at which she was proficient.

During World War II, she served as a technical sergeant in the Women's Army Corps. Until the time of her death, she lived alone in an apartment in Independence, near a Veterans' Administration hospital.

We had hoped she would share more details of what must have been an interesting life. Unfortunately, that was not to be.

However, many of you have stories to tell of Galesburg or of your lives. We hope you will send them to:

Inklings and Idlings  
Carl Sandburg Historic Site  
Association  
313 East Third Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

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## Lincoln on Pennies

(This article was Carl Sandburg's first published writing on Lincoln. It appeared in the Milwaukee Daily News in 1909, when the now familiar penny was minted in observance of the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Mr. Sandburg was then a reporter on the Daily News staff. The article was the inspiration for the annual Penny Parade at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.)

The face of Abraham Lincoln on the copper cent seems well and proper. If it was possible to talk with that great, good man, he would probably say that he is perfectly willing that his face is to be placed on the cheapest and most common coin in the country.

The penny is strictly the coin of the common people. At Palm Beach, Newport and Saratoga you will find nothing for sale at one cent. No ice cream cones at a penny apiece there.

"Keep the change," says the rich man. "How many pennies do I get back?" asks the poor man.

Only the children of the poor know the joy of getting a penny for running around the corner to the grocery.

The penny is the bargain counter coin. Only the common people walk out of their way to get something for 9 cents reduced from 10 cents. The penny is the coin used by those who are not sure of tomorrow, those who know that if they are going to have a dollar next week they must watch the pennies this week.

Follow the travels of the penny and you find it stops at many cottages and few mansions.

The common, homely face of "Honest Abe" will look good on the penny, the coin of the common folk from

whom he came and to whom he belongs.

- Carl Sandburg

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### Acting Is My Life

WE'VE JUST BEEN SUPREMEY OVER-THUNKED, had we suggested "A penny for your thoughts," to the school kids participating in this year's Penny Parade. I'm quite sure that Steele School has the award for the largest contribution (over four hundred pounds of pennies, to which my aching back can attest.)

The Penny Parade celebration was held Friday, January 31st at 11 am in the Visitors' Center. Representatives from six regional schools attended the festivities, as well as a representative from the Carl Sandburg Elementary School at Charleston, Illinois. There are several other schools which are participating but were not able to attend the party.



There were balloons galore, wonderful folk music by our own John Heasley, cupcakes, jawmusic by yours truly, and gifts of an oversize 1909 penny to each guest. The event was covered by local newspapers as well as NBC and ABC television stations

from the Quad Cities.

In recent years the funds received have totaled around one thousand dollars. To date the receipts are quite close to double that amount. And we know that there is more on the way!

In the past the pennies have been used for tangible, "concrete" items that the children can point to and say "I helped pay for that!" Such items have included lighting for the barn, garden landscaping, and a camcorder for the Site. This year, since it is such a special one, the contributions will be used to fund the events honoring Carl Sandburg on his 125th anniversary.

Beyond the Sandburg Days Festival in May, there will be a performance by the Chicago theater group **Theo Ubique**, of "The People, Yes" on the afternoon of July 5th (hopefully accompanied by a brass band, hot dogs and all the red-white-and-blue we can muster). At present I am working toward having the late Bob Gibson's musical theater piece, "The Courtship of Carl Sandburg," become a reality. If the event does happen it will be in September or October. I'll keep you informed on that.

Norm Winick, the president of the our Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, has been brainstorming for a variety of lectures and seminars. All this is above and beyond the Songbag Concert Series held on the third Thursday of the months of February, March, April, May, September, October and November.

Now for something entirely different--January 27th, Carol Nelson, Norm Winick and I attended the debut screening of WILL-TV's "The Song and the Slogan" at Krannert Center, University of Illinois, in Urbana. The musical work, based on Sandburg's poem

"Prairie," was commissioned by world-renowned operatic tenor and University of Illinois graduate Jerry Hadley.

Film footage, including interviews by David Hartman with Carol and myself were done here at the Site. The sixty-minute film will have its air debut on WILL February 20th at 9 pm. It will be available later to other PBS stations in our viewing area (Peoria and the Quad Cities.)

- Steve Holden  
Acting Site Manager

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### The Rissywarn

When cast iron stoves first came into homes in the late 1830s, some people thought they would be poisoned by the fumes. It quickly became obvious that the stoves were more efficient than fireplaces.

The Sandburg family had a stove in the kitchen of their home which was used for cooking and baking as well as heating. There was a reservoir on the stove which held water. The heat from the stove kept the water hot for dishwashing, cleaning and bathing.

As in many immigrant homes, there were words of both English and the language of the home country used. Sometimes, the words were mangled in the translation and became "inside" jokes to family members. But, the words stuck around for a long time.

The word "reservoir" was one of those words for the Sandburg family. The place on the stove that held the hot water became the "rissywarn". From French to English to Swedish is only a short vocal trip.

Here a few other Swedish words for

your edification:

Mother = Mor  
Father = Far  
Children = Barn  
Grandmother = Farmor or Mormar  
(depending on whether it is your mother's mother or your father's mother)  
Grandfather = Farfar or Morfar  
(depending on whether it is your mother's father or your father's father)  
Town = Stad  
House = Hus  
Farm = Lantbruk  
Farmer = Lantbrukare  
Farmer's Wife = Lantbrukarhustru  
Farmhouse = Lantgard

We will make no attempt at pronunciation.

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### Wheels and Wheelmen

Albert Pope, a former colonel in the Civil War, bought the rights to the patents of European bicycle inventors in 1876. His company manufactured the vehicles in Boston and within the next decade or so, the fad of bicycle riding spread across the country.



This advertisement from **The Daily Republican-Register** of April 1893, shows the style of bicycle that was common at the time. Avery Brothers & Brooks sold several excellent lines of bikes. A new bicycle cost more than a hundred dollars so the renting of bicycles was probably a profitable sideline for the company.

During the 1890s young people in many communities organized clubs and pedaled to attractive spots for picnics and went on sightseeing jaunts. There were 100-mile races among young men for prizes such as gold watches or cash. People boasted about the miles they had covered in a certain length of time.

Carl Sandburg bought a bicycle while he was attending Lombard College in the late 1890s. He could travel faster from the campus to the Brooks Street fire station where he was employed in case there was a fire.

The advertisement indicates there was a riding school for ladies. From the style of bike pictured, we are wondering whether the ladies rode side-saddle or wore a special outfit to sit astride. Was the teacher male or female? Oh, so many questions come to mind.

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### Lace Curtains

With the advent of machine-made lace in the middle 1800s, lace curtains became fashionable. They were used to decorate the windows of the front parlor in homes across America.

The curtains looked lovely when first put up to the windows. But dust, gas fumes and coal smoke gradually had their effects. The curtains became dingy and limp over a period of time.

Every homemaker with lace curtains had to wash them several times a year. After washing, the curtains were dipped in cooked starch to stiffen them. Then, the panels were put on curtain stretchers to dry.

The curtain stretchers were wooden strips with metal pins set in them at one inch intervals. At the ends of the wooden strips were open spaces through which thumb screws and wing nuts were inserted to tighten the frame. The boards could be adjusted to the exact finished measurements for the curtain. The numbers were printed on the boards so the homemaker could be sure she had each panel the correct size.

The frame with the attached curtain would be set outside to dry. A sunny day with a light breeze was considered best for drying.

Lace Curtain Stretcher.



This is the BEST STRETCHER on Earth.

It is economy to use one. They are having a big sale.

CHURCHILL & WETHERBEE,  
220 Main Street,  
YELLOW FRONT, GALESBURG, ILL.

made in U.S.A.

This advertisement from Churchill and Wetherbee, 220 Main Street, in Galesburg, shows how the curtain stretcher was assembled as well as the way it could be folded into a smaller bundle for storage in the attic.

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## Valuable Memories

As part of the Carl Sandburg Days festival in May, the Historic Site Association is sponsoring a memoir writing contest. Anyone who has personal knowledge of Carl Sandburg; was affected by his life or his works; or has interesting memories of life in Galesburg prior to 1967, is encouraged to submit an entry.

All entries should be no longer than five pages in length. It is preferred they be typewritten, but they may be in longhand. Those who are unable to write may dictate their stories to others.

At either the beginning or end of each entry, the author's name, address and telephone number should be provided. Relevant photographs will be welcomed. They will be returned if they are properly identified.

You may hesitate to submit an entry because you believe your writing ability is not great. The content of the entries is more important than writing style. What is vital is that the story be true. If there are any questions about the foregoing, please call Betsy Rinehart at (309) 343-2286.

All those submitting their memoirs will receive a participation prize. Awards of \$100, \$75 and \$50 will be given to the three submissions which the judges deem to be the best. The prizes will be awarded at 11 am on Saturday, May 10th at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.

In the past, many of the entries have been published in *The Zephyr* and *The Register-Mail* newspapers. Therefore, all are subject to editing.

All entries should be sent to:

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site

Association

Attention Memoir Writing Contest  
313 East Third Street  
Galesburg, Illinois 61401

They are due by April 15th.

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## Winter Meals

During these cold winter days, a bowl of hot soup is good for the spirit and the stomach. The Sandburg family grew cabbage and other vegetables in the backyard garden of their home. August Sandburg even worked by moonlight to cultivate and plant the garden after a very long day working in the railroad's blacksmith shop. The heads of cabbage were stored in the basement for later use.

### Cabbage Soup

Small head of cabbage  
3 tablespoons butter (or other fat)  
1/2 cup brown sugar (or 1/4 cup molasses)  
2 quarts water (or better still stock or cans of beef broth)  
8 to 10 black peppers (whole)  
Salt to taste

Remove thick veins from cabbage leaves and slice the rest. Brown well in butter and brown sugar (or molasses), but be careful not to burn it. Add water or stock and season. Let cook 30 to 50 minutes. Serve very hot with small meat balls, sausages, or meat cubes. The flavor can be improved by letting this mixture cook a couple of hours and then straining off the cabbage. Add fresh slivers of green cabbage and cook 6 to 8 minutes and serve this in the soup.

Makes 6 servings.

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# Wrinklings and Wild Things

*A very special year, eh? One Hundred and Twenty-five!  
For me the following poem brings up the image of  
Father Time and the Baby New Year, but more...*

## LET THEM ASK YOUR PARDON

Child, what can those old men bring you?  
If they can bring you a new handful  
Absolutely warm and soft as summer rain,  
Let them ask your pardon and do it soon.  
Otherwise, why are they old?  
Otherwise, why should they look at you  
And carry assumptions in their old eyes  
And speak such words as “ig-no-rance”  
And “wisdom”--let them ask your pardon  
Showing you how summer rain is an old pal  
Of the wriggle of the angleworm,  
The flip of the muskalonge,  
And the step of the walking rain  
Across the prairie. If the old men, child,  
Tell you no stories about rockets,  
Shooting stars, horses of high ranges,  
Let them ask your pardon, excuse themselves,  
And go away.

*Carl Sandburg*

*from Good Morning, America, 1927.*

(Holden: “Sandburg, forever young.”)

## The Steele School Pennies

Some folks said there were no more pennies in the neighborhood around Steele School. The children had gathered up every penny to be found.

We thank the children and hope they enjoyed the party on January 31st.

The pennies will help celebrate the 125th birthday anniversary of Carl Sandburg all year through.



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