
INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Summer 2003

Annual Meeting

In accordance with Article III of the By-Laws of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, the annual meeting of the organization will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 8, 2003, at the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

At that time, officers and directors of the Association will be elected for the coming year, and such other business as may properly come before the Association will be transacted.

Light refreshments will be served. All members are encouraged to attend.

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Additions to the Rolls

Three new names have been added to the membership roster of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. A warm welcome is extended to the new friends.

They are:

David Bowles
James Purlee
Harry Tillman

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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"Asides" from the Acting Site Manager

The tourist season is well upon us and our visitation numbers are quite good, especially considering our shortened operating schedule. Kelly McGunnigal began her seasonal work here on May 25th, and her efforts really show up on the grounds and in the organization of the museum store. What a welcome relief you are, Kelly!

The kick-off for the Sandburg Days Festival on the evening of May 8th was a great success. Standing Room Only! Having Helga Sandburg present made it a very special event.

Mark Dvorak presented a wonderful program of songs (from **The American Songbag**), stories and readings from "The People, Yes" on May 31st. The star-spangled presentation was sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council (Road Scholars Program) and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, through the Sandburg State Historic Site.

I am greatly looking forward to the return performance of the Chicago theater group, **Theo Ubique**, on Saturday, July 5th, at 2:00 p.m. The chamber theater company presents a very moving selection of pieces from "The People, Yes." They will be joined by patriotic music provided by The Bishop Hill High Society Band. **FREE ADMISSION. FREE REFRESHMENTS--Y'ALL COME!** (Sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.)

Harry Tillman, the phantom

volunteer, has completed painting the picket fence. He has caulked the cottage storm windows, repaired dry-rot in the siding of the cottage and repainted the flagpole as high as he could go. What next? Harry's going to repaint the cottage exterior. Does this awaken any volunteer tendencies out there? We could use some help in yardwork (weeding, mulching) and also in managing the museum store.

Kelly has done a marvelous job with the weeding, mowing, planting, as well as shop inventory and organizing a system to ease reordering. But, hey, there is always room for extra help. Give me a call if you are interested.

- Steve Holden

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Both Sides of the Tracks

Sunday, June 8th was windy, not very warm and somewhat damp, but a number of hardy souls turned out for the tram tour conducted by Rex Cherrington. The tour included sections of Galesburg frequented by Carl Sandburg in his youth. Sites described included the Brooks Street Fire Station, Lombard College, Fairgrounds and homes of well-to-do citizens and the houses where the Sandburg family lived.



The Galesburg Historical Society loaned its tram for the tour and Jim

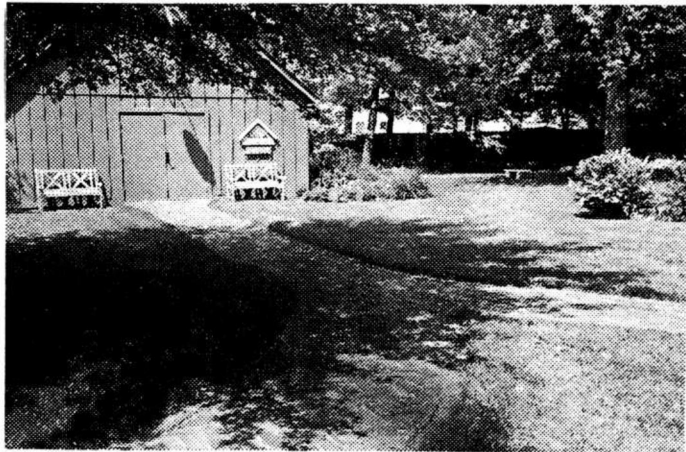
Purlee attached his new tractor to provide the power for the trip through Galesburg. Their generosity was much appreciated.

Rex Cherrington, a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association Board of Directors, hopes to repeat the tram tour in the fall when the weather might be better. He is an expert on Galesburg history so taking time to go on the tour will be well worth your while.

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Old Bricks Make New Walk

A new walk has been laid from the Visitors' Center to the Barn at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. The bricks were made by the Purington Brick Company of Galesburg. They had been saved from old constructions by the City of Galesburg. Ralston-Mangieri Garden Center personnel installed the new walk last spring in time for the Sandburg Days Festival.



Contributions to the Penny Parade by area school children financed the major portion of the new walk.

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The Nun's Letter

(Early in May a note was received from Gary Crawford of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He enclosed a typewritten letter received by his mother in

February, 1938. The letter was written by an unidentified teaching nun at the College of St. Francis in St. Paul. The nun describes an event she attended in Los Angeles.)

Sunday, Feb. 21, '38.

"Before it goes out of my mind, I must tell you about the interesting day I had yesterday. Carl Sandburg was to speak to the children of Los Angeles at the Public Library at 3. A kind lady gave me a ticket, though the lecture was for children rather than for grown-ups. About three, an unpretentious gray-haired man with a guitar under his arm came into the rotunda of the Library, where about a thousand children were sitting on cushions on the floor and about five hundred grown-ups on camp chairs. The impression made on me during the talk was one of quiet and force. The acoustics were awful, and spoiled an otherwise perfect afternoon. First, Mr. Sandburg read from his new poem, "The People, Yes." He read here and there from the book and, believe it or not, those children measured up to what was expected of them and seemed to get the thought. Many couldn't hear what he was saying, but they all listened attentively. He next read two or three stories from "Rootabaga Stories" about potato face, and he finally wound up the program by playing and singing to the accompaniment of the guitar some of his own lyrics, one about gold digging, one about minstrels, and one about North Carolina.

"After the program was over, the president of the Library Board, a Mrs. Smith and a very sweet woman, asked me if I would like to meet Mr. Sandburg. You can imagine how delighted I was. He was in a little office with a Mr. Pollio, who sponsored the lecture, and a doctor from Galesburg, Illinois, who removed some growth from his eyes years ago, which would otherwise have caused blindness. Three girls

were talking as we came in. I thought Mr. Sandburg looked exhausted--he is sixty years old, you know, and I am sure the exertion of talking in that high rotunda was considerable. He looked gray and tired. When we were introduced, he was most gracious, said he had noticed us in the audience, and thanked us for our interest in his poetry. He looks exactly like his picture on the cover of Life for February 21. On pages 42 and 43 of the same issue, there are some splendid pictures of him; the one I like best is the one of his daughter, Helga, and four of his pet goats in the parlor of his home in Elmhurst, Illinois, (sic) near the sand dunes. He is playing some of his American folk songs to the group on his "git-tar."

"One of the most interesting things about the gathering was the audience. It struck me when I came in, and he mentioned it before he began to speak. He said, 'All the world is here. I see children from Italy and from France and Germany and Ireland and Japan and Africa, etc.' I don't know whether there would be any place else in the United States with such a variety of nationalities. It was most interesting.

"He is rather indifferent as to dress, but full of vitality and interest. His presence makes for calm and peace. He was unhurried and tranquil. His voice is flexible and sonorous.

"Gwen Rude Simpson, '34, and her nice husband took us. They have built themselves a lovely home in Glendale."

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A Letter to the Editor

(The May 3, 2003, issue of The Register-Mail published a Letter to

the Editor from Pete Creighton of Galesburg. It described the history of the cottage where Carl Sandburg was born in 1878 and how it was saved from destruction. Some of our readers may be unfamiliar with the story, so we asked Mr. Creighton for permission to reprint his letter. He very generously agreed to share it.)

Galesburg is justly proud of its original three-room Sandburg Birthplace. The fact that we have it, now nicely restored, we owe first of all to one very determined lady. And she found it just in time. It was in sad shape and about to be torn down in 1945 when she ended her search.

Carl Sandburg left his hometown, he wrote, with a determination to be more than "just another Swede boy" here. He was very proud. He returned in triumph years later, but as a young writer with high ambitions he left Galesburg behind. He slowly gained recognition, but not yet in Galesburg. A fitting proverb might be: "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown."

With much effort, Sandburg rose to be a first-rate poet, writer and Lincoln biographer. Galesburg paid little attention and showed little appreciation for Sandburg while he was gaining stature nationwide.

His birthplace was of no evident interest here. The Sandburg family lived in three other Sandburg homes which were much more adequate. The first was at 641 East South St. from 1879 to 1882; and later two at 809 and 810 East Berrien St. The last, at 809, still is a sturdy two-story home. This was the one Sandburg's two older sisters wanted to be known as the famous writer's Galesburg home. And it almost happened that way.

Enter Adda Gentry George, widow, of a Knox College professor. She was a

former English teacher at Galesburg High and later in Milwaukee. She remembered reading a newspaper column in the Milwaukee Journal written by Sandburg wherein he described being born in a little three-room frame house near the railroad tracks. His father, August, toiled 10 hours a day, six days a week in the car shops of the C.B.&Q. for a reported 14 cents an hour.

After retiring, Adda George moved back to Galesburg, her hometown. She was a graduate of Knox College, class of 1895. She was surprised that no one knew or cared about the location of the little birthplace. When asked, Sandburg's older sisters, Mary and Margaret, at first feigned ignorance of it, but Adda George persisted. They finally gave in and told her it was on East Third Street near the tracks. Mrs. George found it to be a very run-down tiny home at 331 East Third. The home in 1945 was that of an elderly immigrant woman who knew nothing of Sandburg. She was suspicious of Mrs. George's intentions.

But Adda George was triumphant. She had found her prize! She made a sign which read: "In this house famed poet Carl Sandburg was born" which she placed on the little house. The woman removed it. Adda replaced it with a permanent plaque on the terrace. The owner said the three-room house would be taken down soon.

Adda George quickly formed the Carl Sandburg Association, which raised funds to purchase the home site for \$1,200. She had to advance most of this to secure the home. Later donations repaid her. A board of directors was formed and the home was restored and opened to visitors. Gifts of furniture, some from the Sandburg sisters, soon came in.

The dedication of the birthplace was Oct. 7, 1946. Marshall Field agreed to be the speaker. (Sandburg first

achieved artistic recognition in Chicago for his "Chicago Poems," then for his six-volume Lincoln biography and for his children's "Rootabaga Tales.") The dedication was a grand affair with reporters and photographers coming from New York and Chicago. Also speaking that day was Professor Herman Muelder of Knox College. He credited Adda Gentry George with "Giving Galesburg a new importance. It now has an important landmark."

Sandburg himself did not attend the 1946 dedication. He first saw his restored birthplace in 1948, on his 70th birthday. He was surprised and grateful for this belated hometown recognition, according to Mrs. George. He spoke at GHS and was the house guest of Knox College President Lyndon Brown.

A tribute to Adda Gentry George and to Juanita Bednar, the two heroines of the Birthplace, was written by Gerald J. Shea and is part of the large Birthplace file at the Galesburg Public Library. It is a complete report of the discovery and how these two women completed the restoration. It was Juanita Bednar, wife of popular GHS teacher and coach, Charles Bednar, who was the principal fund raiser and first president of the Association.

Foremost among the volunteer hosts and hostesses serving the Birthplace were Lauren and Mary Goff, who gave many years of dedicated service. Many others served on the board and greeted visitors, etc.

The State of Illinois did not assume custody of the Birthplace until 1970. This was a great relief and benefit to Galesburg. Many valuable improvements have been made by the state, including the recent museum next door.

But we should not overlook the years of dedication of local volunteers--

especially the original stubborn determination of Adda Gentry George to find and restore the little birth house of Galesburg's most outstanding personality; and to Juanita Bednar, her partner--and to the Goffs and to many others. It was a labor of love for all of them.

(I can still see Adda George, a slim smiling bright-eyed figure in her sixties, driving her old Chevy, always on business to forward the preservation of the little house at 331 East Third St., which she alone discovered and saved for posterity.)

- Pete Creighton

* * *

Another Galesburg Author

(Last winter a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, Janet Lundeen, told me about her project of researching early authors who had a Galesburg connection. Mrs. Lundeen later presented the program she had prepared to several local organizations. There are a number of individuals who had very interesting lives and deserve recognition. In addition, Carl Sandburg mentioned some of them in his autobiography **Always the Young Strangers**. In the next few issues of **Inklings** and **Idlings** several of those stories will be told.)

During the 1880s Carl Sandburg played baseball with other boys of the neighborhood in the dusty street in front of his home. In a house on the opposite side of the street lived a lady who sat in her rocking chair on the porch when the weather was pleasant. She surely saw those boys at play and was reminded of her own children who were now grown up. Her name was Julia Carney.

In her younger days Mrs. Carney had written many poems. They were meant for children and the poems were

known around the world, having been translated into a number of other languages. Nobody in Galesburg paid much attention. The teachers in the schools didn't teach the children about Julia Carney's poems and that she lived right here in Galesburg.

Julia Fletcher was born April 6, 1823, in Lancaster, Massachusetts, the daughter of Joshua and Nabby (Warren) Fletcher. Both of her grandfathers served in the War for Independence.

Julia became a teacher in both private and public schools in the East. She became a member of Universalist Church and wrote many verses and lessons for use in Sunday School. She also wrote the words for numerous hymns which were set to music by others. Some of those hymns were adopted by other denominations for use in their church services.

In 1849 she married the Reverend Thomas J. Carney. He served a number of pastorates in Maine, New York, Wisconsin and in 1858, they arrived in Galesburg. The family continued to live in Galesburg because Lombard College was located here. Mr. Carney died in 1871.

Mrs. Carney had nine children, four of whom died in infancy. Two of her sons became attorneys and practiced in Galesburg. Her son Fletcher served as Mayor of Galesburg in 1899 and 1900. He provided leadership in the establishment of the city light plant and also improved the city water system. The other son, James, studied for the clergy, but later became an attorney and practiced with his brother Fletcher. Both men were widely respected for their integrity and honesty.

Mrs. Carney died November 1, 1908, at the age of 85. A large photograph of Mrs. Carney appeared on the front page of *The Republican-Register* the day of the funeral along with a

description of the simple service in the Universalist Church on South Prairie Street.

A large number of the city's residents attended to pay a last tribute. There were many flowers adorning the church. The music was very special. Two hymns composed by Mrs. Carney were sung: "Spirit of Love" and "Our Heaven Is Everywhere."

Edson Reifsnider, pastor of the church, described Mrs. Carney's "cheery nature, and her loyalty to, and interest, in every good cause of civic, or national, or world-wide importance." He closed his eulogy by quoting another of Mrs. Carney's poems "On Being Missed."

Mrs. Carney was buried in Hope Cemetery beside two of her children.

About five years before Mrs. Carney's death *The Galesburg Republican-Register* reprinted on the front page an article from the *Chicago Tribune* honoring Mrs. Carney's eightieth birthday. "Little Things," possibly the most famous poem written by Mrs. Carney, was included and the article explained that she wrote the poem in 1845 "to help her pupils understand the value of little things." Many years later, President Dwight Eisenhower's wife, Mamie, told *Life* magazine her favorite poem as a child was "Little Things."

LITTLE THINGS

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.

So the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

So our little errors

Lead the soul away
From the path of virtue,
Far in sin to stay.

Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Help to make earth happy
Like the heaven above.

- Barbara Schock

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Wrinklings & Wild Things

In anticipation of our July 5th
program by *Theo Ubique* of "The
People, Yes."

The free man willing to pay and
struggle and die for the
freedom for himself and others

Knowing how far to subject himself
to discipline and obedience for
the sake of an ordered society
free from tyrants, exploiters
and legalized frauds--

This free man is a rare bird and
when you meet him take a good
look at him and try to figure
him out because

Some day when the United States of
the Earth gets going and runs
smooth and pretty there will be
more of him than we have now.

(From Section 87 of "The People,
Yes," page 578 in Carl Sandburg's
Complete Poems.)

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Further Information

In the last issue of *Inklings and
Idlings* we reported on the death of
Dorothy Davison Bowles who passed
away March 26, 2003. She married her
high school sweetheart, Charles E.
Bowles.

Her son, David Bowles, wrote a short
note to the Carl Sandburg Historic
Site Association in early May and
accompanied it with a large
contribution. In the note, he wrote
that his parents had "grown up with
one of the Sandburg family nephews.
They affectionately related
conversations by the family during
those deepest days of the Depression
referring to the now-esteemed poet
and author as 'crazy Uncle Carl'.
Such is fame..."

Mr. Bowles has been added to our
membership roll and the Association
greatly appreciates his
contribution.

* * *

Old Weather

From *The Galesburg Republican-
Register*, July 9, 1881, p. 6:

Vannor's Weather Almanac gives the
following predictions for July: July
bids fair to be excessively hot and
tempestuous, the hottest days
probably being the 4th, 5th, 9th,
11th, 16th, 17th, 25th and 26th.
Thunder and lightning storms are
likely to occur in many localities
on the 1st, 4th, 8th, 9th, 15th,
17th or 18th, 27th or 28th. Should
frosts occur during this month, the
13th, 21st, 23d and 31st are likely
dates for such. The month will
probably terminate with cool
evenings and nights.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

* * *

Cheesecake

Ostkaka is a dessert beloved in many
Swedish families. There are as many
versions as there are families.
Rennet is a combination of enzymes
which coagulate milk. It is used in
cheesemaking, ice cream and
custards. Here is one example.

Ostkaka

2 quarts milk
2 1/2 rennet tablets
1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup milk
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup half and half
1 teaspoon almond or vanilla extract
Lingonberries or other sweetened
berries for an accompaniment
Whipped cream for an accompaniment

In a large, heavy saucepan heat 2 quarts milk until lukewarm (98 to 100 degrees F.). Dissolve rennet tablets in 1 tablespoon warm water.

In a small bowl mix flour with 1/2 cup milk with a wire whisk until smooth. Add to the lukewarm milk and mix well. Stir in rennet mixture and let stand about 15 minutes or until set.

Cut through the curd a few times until the mixture is in about 3/4 inch cubes. Let stand until curds and whey separate, about 5 minutes. Turn into a colander lined with cheesecloth and drain off as much whey as possible. Discard whey.

In a medium bowl combine eggs, sugar, cream, almond extract and salt. Stir in curd. Turn into a well greased 10x6x2 inch baking dish. Bake in a 325 degrees F. oven for 55 to 60 minutes or until the center is firm. Serve hot or cold with lingonberries or other sweetened berries. Top with whipped cream.

Makes 6 servings

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Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, Illinois 61401

July 5, 2003
2:00 p.m.

"The People, Yes"
Carl Sandburg Historic Site
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, Illinois

EXPERIENCE

Carl Sandburg's
American Anthem

"The People, Yes"

performed by Chicago's THEO UBIQUE THEATRE

**2:00 pm Saturday,
July 5th 2003**

**CARL SANDBURG STATE
HISTORIC SITE
313 East Third Street, G'bg. IL**

**AND A PATRIOTIC PERFORMANCE
BY THE BISHOP HILL
HIGH-SOCIETY BAND**

free admission—free refreshments
RAIN OR SHINE

sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

