

INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Spring 2004

A Few New Friends

We are always happy to be able to welcome new members to our ranks.

Joining the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association are:

Honorable and Mrs. Donald Moffitt
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Sandburg

We hope they will be able to be frequent visitors to the Site and to participate in its activities.

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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One Last Item From the Songbag

The final Songbag Concert of the spring will take place in the Barn of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site at 313 East Third Street on Thursday, May 20th. As is true of all the concerts, it will begin at 7 p.m.

John Heasley, the coordinator of the Songbag Concerts over the years, has invited Dan Zahn to be the artist for this concert.

He is a favorite of Songbag audiences, and will be performing with his new partner, Kate Moretti. Reviewers have said "His choice of songs evoke memories of yesteryear

and his own compositions speak of the past, both in words and musical style. His excellent guitar and mandolin picking really shine!"

The Association has received nothing but favorable comments about each of the programs. If you have never attended one, this would be a good choice.

Refreshments will be served and a wholly voluntary contribution of two dollars will help to defray the costs. The atmosphere is smoke and alcohol free.

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From the Acting

"The Season" is about to begin again, and it is starting a bit early this year with the help of Bert McElroy, new seasonal employee. He will start his duties beginning May 1st. He is a Knox College graduate, having majored in history. Welcome, Bert.

The Carl Sandburg State Historic Site has been given the go-ahead from Springfield to repaint the Visitors' Center. The contract has been awarded to H. Nordeen of Bishop Hill, who has done a wonderful job for us several times in the past.

The Sandburg Days Festival Kickoff will take place Thursday, May 6th at 7 p.m. in the Barn. It will feature chamber theater readings of Carl Sandburg's poetry and prose, all with a **SPRINGTIME SLANT**. The Kickoff

is sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and the theater presentation is being produced by Phil Funkenbusch, Chief of Theatrical Interpretation, for the IHPA. The event will be quite entertaining, with no admission fee to the general public. Plus, delicious free refreshments.

Many Festival activities are occurring at the Site. Please pick up a brochure for the event at the Visitors' Center or at the Galesburg Visitor and Convention Bureau on East Main Street for specific details.

I need volunteers for May 6th and May 8th. Call me at (309) 342-2361 or at home (309) 927-3500.

-- Steve Holden

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"The Song and the Slogan"

Readers of *Inkling & Idlings* will recall mention of a performance-documentary produced by public television station WILL at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. It was based on a poem, "Prairie," written by Carl Sandburg. Composer Daniel Steven Crafts created a musical adaptation of the poem, which was sung by Jerry Hadley, the renowned operatic tenor.

Parts of the documentary were filmed at the Historic Site. They included commentary by Steve Holden, the Acting Site Manager, and Carol Nelson, the Site Superintendent emeritus, and actor David Hartman.

The film received a 2003 Emmy Award for best music from the Mid-America Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Our congratulations go to all the creative women and men who were

involved. Tim Hartin produced the film.

A copy of the video may be viewed at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site Visitors' Center.

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Sandburg Days Festival

The eighth annual Sandburg Days Festival will take place May 6th through May 8th. The kickoff event on May 6th will be held in the Barn at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, at 7:00 p.m. It is jointly sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association.

As Steve Holden noted in his report, poems related to spring and excerpts from *Rootabaga Stories* will be presented by two actors, accompanied by musical backgrounds. Admission is free and light refreshments will be served.

In conjunction with Knox College, the Association will sponsor a poetry contest for Knox County students. Prizes will be awarded at 11:30 a.m. by the College and the Association on Saturday, May 8th at the Site.

The Festival will include many other events of interest. More information can be obtained by calling 1-800-916-3330, extension 733, or by e-mailing any of these Internet sites:

visitors@visitgalesburg.com
www.visitgalesburg.com
www.sandburg.edu/festival

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Memorial Day 1893

After he graduated from the eighth grade, Carl Sandburg became a full-time worker. His earnings went to support his family. The money he brought home helped to provide food and clothing for his brothers and sisters.

August Sandburg, his father, worked long hours in the roundhouse of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. However, like most employees of the railroad, he was not overpaid. And, although August planted a large garden every year, which helped greatly to meet his family's food needs, the extra income Carl provided eased the financial pressures on the family purse.

Still, in 1893, Sandburg was a lad who enjoyed many of the pleasures of youth, including parades and patriotic celebrations. Memorial Day in Galesburg provided both, judging from the newspaper accounts.

Each year, the James T. Shields Post No. 45 of the Grand Army of the Republic, planned and carried out the observance of Memorial Day in Galesburg. The organization was composed of veterans who had served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Post No. 45 was organized in 1876.

Of course, Carl knew a number of the old soldiers as they conducted businesses with which his family traded.

On the Sunday evening before Memorial Day, the pastors of the city conducted a memorial service to honor the dead of the Civil War. On May 28, 1893, the services were held in the Auditorium on Broad Street. The crowd was so large that people were turned away.

It is not known if Carl Sandburg attempted to attend the Sunday

evening commemoration. It is not likely he would have tried to squeeze into the Auditorium.

The Auditorium had been lavishly decorated with flags and bunting as well as black crepe to symbolize the patriotic and solemn aspects of the service.

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" was sung as the opening hymn. The Reverend Hess of the Swedish Methodist church read the first scripture lesson and Dr. Sturtevant said the first prayer. Reverend H.A. Bushnell, retiring minister of the First Methodist Church, gave the memorial sermon. He based his discourse on Psalm 24, said to be the most patriotic in the Bible.

The Reverend Mr. Bushnell closed his discourse by declaring that some of the battles of the Civil War had not yet ended. "The battle will never cease as long as human prejudices remain as they are."

The weather was perfect on Memorial Day. Most businesses on Main Street decorated their storefronts and closed for the afternoon.

Promptly at 2 o'clock the parade stepped off from Main and Seminary streets. The policemen of the city led the way, followed by the Mayor, Councilmen and the speaker of the day. The Lindoft band provided the music. Members of Company C of the Illinois National Guard and the cadets of Knox College followed the band.

A wagon, laden with flowers, followed members of the Grand Army, Sons of Veterans and Womans' Relief Corps. School children, carrying bouquets of flowers, marched with the Superintendent of Schools, L.W. Steele, who was a veteran of the Civil War.

The line of march also included

members of the Painters and Decorators Union, the Knights of Pythias and the general public. The procession went directly to Hope Cemetery at Main and Academy Streets.

At the cemetery, Post 45 Chaplain C.C. Cleveland read the G.A.R. ritual, followed by a reading of the Roll of the Dead for the past year. The National Guard unit fired a salute after each name was read. A quartet sang "Peace Guard Their Beds," after which the flowers were strewn on the soldier graves.

Then, the marchers re-formed and proceeded to the Auditorium where Reverend C.M. Blodgett, a veteran of the Civil War, gave the oration of the day. He closed his remarks with the following:

"They sleep well. The time is coming when they shall rise. Gettysburg, Arlington, Vicksburg, Corinth, will give up their dead. From Appomatox they shall come. From the rock ribbed coasts of Maine; from the beautiful prairies of the West. Until then their graves will be covered with beautiful flowers for what they did and sacrificed and gave us in their death."

At the conclusion of the service, the audience sang "America."

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The Racetrack

Now there are houses on Baird Avenue, Robertson Avenue, Clay Drive and other streets in the southeastern section of Galesburg. In the 1890s, on that site, a horse racing track was constructed on more than a hundred acres east of Farnham Street. It was built by Charles W. Williams who was a native of Iowa. He owned several famous racehorses

of that time.

The track opened for business on September 17, 1894. It was a one mile flat track. The straight-ways and curves were each a quarter mile long making an elongated oval shape. The curves were banked so the sulkies could go around them safely.

The entrance to the track was on Grand Avenue between Ohio and Michigan Avenues. The streetcar line was located on Grand Avenue which made it very easy for patrons from other parts of the city to visit the track.

There were sheds and stalls for the horses on the Grand Avenue side of the track. A paddock and blacksmith shop which served the horses were also located there. The grandstand stood next to the track on the northeast side as well.

As a teenager, Carl Sandburg worked for the horsemen doing odd jobs and running errands. He worked for tips rather than being regularly paid. He had a pass to the grounds during the six-week season of racing.

Later he wrote of the excitement caused when Mr. Williams' trotter Alix broke the world's record by a fraction of a second. It happened the second day of the season in 1894, just one day after the track had opened.

In his mind's eye, Carl could see the lathered horse and the sweaty people around her. The crowds cheered themselves hoarse. The record run made Galesburg a well known track in the horseracing world. Mr. Williams achieved a good reputation for himself and earned large sums of money in stud fees from his fast horses.

The map on page 7 was created by Dale Panther in the 1980s. He lived in the area where the racetrack once

stood. He superimposed the current street layout over the racetrack facilities.

The last horse race was held at the track on August 17, 1922.

After the conclusion of World War II, the racetrack grounds were developed for much needed housing. It was said that the contractors dug up bales of straw which had been buried under the track to improve water drainage.

...More next time

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Wrinklings & Wild Things

A snippet and snatch
from the Rootabaga Story

*"How Dippy the Wisp and Slip Me Liz
Came in the Moonshine Where the
Potato Face Blind Man Sat with His
Accordian"*

The Potato Face looked up again and said, "It is a misty moisty evening in the moonshine. Now tell us about the blue-violet honeybee, Spanish Onions."

And Dippy the Wisp tied a slipknot in the pearl-color handkerchief around the yellow neck of Spanish Onions and said, "Spanish Onions came buzzing back home with her face dirty and scared and she told us, 'I flew and flew and I buzzed and buzzed till I came where I met the Queen of the Empty Hats. She took me by the foot and took me across the City of the Empty Hats, saying under her breath, "There is a screw loose somewhere, there is a leak in the tank." Fat rats, fat bats, fat cats, came along under empty hats and the Queen always said under her breath, "There is a screw loose somewhere,

there is a leak in the tank." In the houses, on the street, riding on the rattlers and the razz cars, the only people were hats, empty hats. When the fat rats changed hats with fat bats, the hats were empty. When the fat bats changed those hats with the fat cats, the hats were empty. I took off my hat and saw it was empty. *I began to feel like an empty hat myself.* I go scared. I jumped loose from the Queen of the Empty Hats and buzzed back home fast. I am so, so glad to be home again."

The Potato Face sat hugging his accordion. He looked up and said, "Put the bees back in the beebag--they buzz too many secrets, syllables and snitches."

Read the entire bee-zar yarn in "Rootabaga Stories, Part Two," pages 85-92. The book is available at Museum Store in the Visitors' Center.

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Swedish Migration

Some fifty million people have crossed the Atlantic Ocean to become part of these United States. Many of the readers of *Inklings & Idlings* have ancestors who came from another country. Most of the earliest immigrants came from the British Isles and settled along the Atlantic seaboard.

Between 1607 and 1790 about 400,000 individuals made a choice for a new life. From 1820 through 1860 about five million souls arrived here. The Civil War caused much apprehension so migration was limited during that time. Twenty-four million travelers came between 1880 and 1920.

The Swedes began migrating in significant numbers in the 1840s. Many of them settled in the northern

states because there was work in logging operations and canal building. Land for farming was also opening up in the Midwest.

The decision to migrate was a serious one. The conditions in the old country may have become intolerable because of the lack of enough land to farm, poor paying jobs, religious discrimination and arbitrary social classes. The process entailed many hurdles. The journey was exceptionally hazardous and time consuming. Those who decided to leave their homeland had to have great faith and confidence that they would have a better life.

In order to leave, the head of the household had to obtain permission from the landowner for whom he worked, get a letter of recommendation from his or her church and apply for a permit to emigrate (depart) from local officials. Often he had to settle all his debts too. He also had to sell any property he owned to raise cash for the trip.

The next step was to secure passage on a ship to America. Agents helped secure accommodations and made sure people weren't cheated. There could be long waits at the port of departure which forced families to spend their money on food and lodging.

Sailing ships depended on the weather, which could be advantageous or disastrous. More than one person never reached the other side--theirs was a watery grave.

The Swedes who came to the Midwest had even more traveling to do after they had landed on this continent. They took canal boats to the Great Lakes and sailed across them to the major cities. They walked the last part of the distance. In later years they took trains to the Midwest.

During the trip there was always the threat of contagious disease and accidents. Being unable to speak the language presented even more barriers to the immigrants. The followers of Eric Janson who settled in Bishop Hill were told they would be able to speak English when they landed in the New World. Oh, if only it had been true.

Carl Sandburg's parents made the long journey from Sweden to America separately when they were young. They hoped to have a better life in this country. Their prospects in Sweden had been limited so they made a choice to risk their lives on the unknown.

After they met and married, they worked hard. They produced a fine family of children. One of their sons achieved a stature in the world that endures and inspires many.

...More next time

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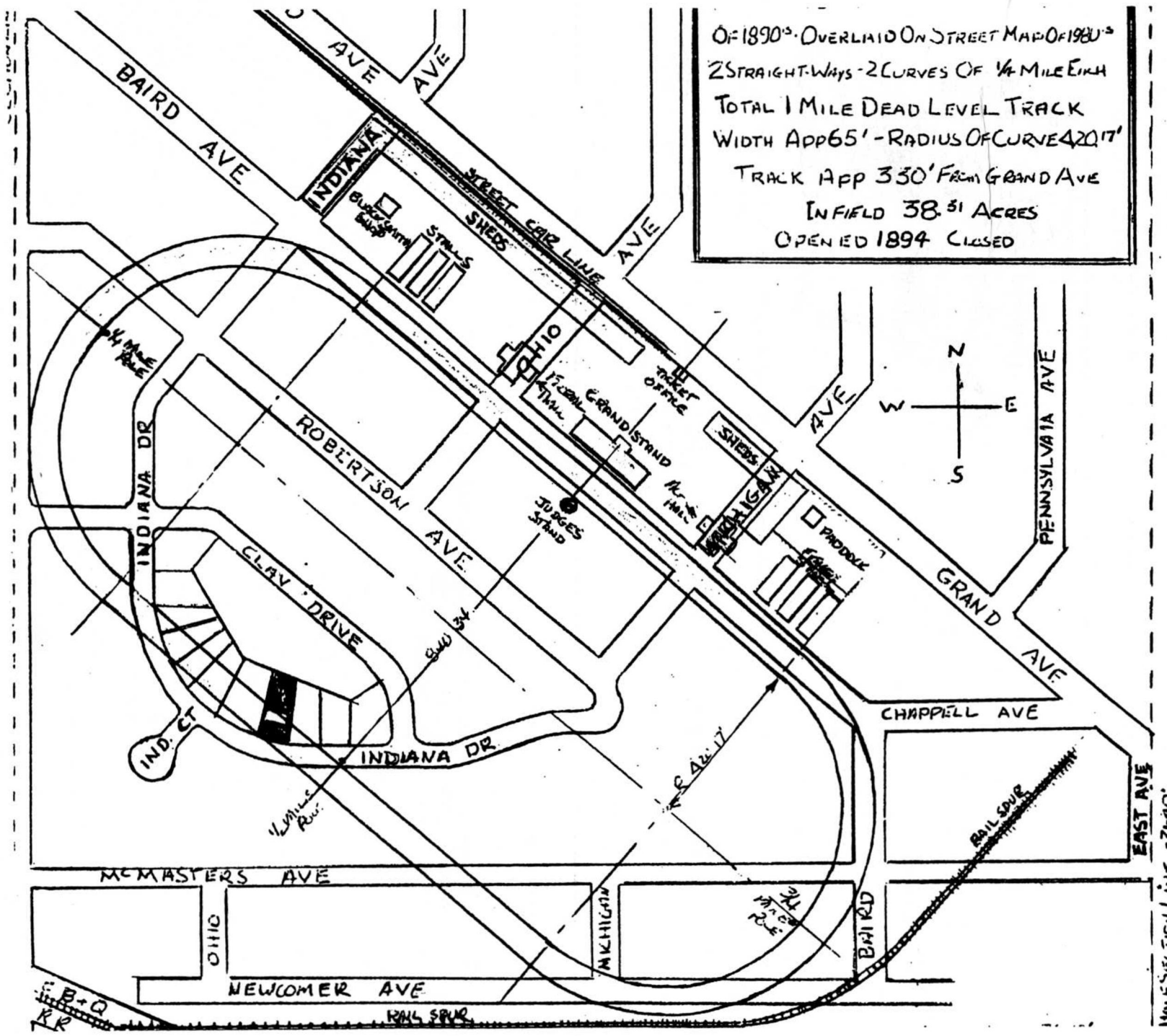
What Goes With What

The Galesburg Daily Mail carried these suggestions for "Easy Housekeeping" in 1894.

Some cooks never know just what to serve with different meats as relish. Following is a table of things considered the proper caper:

Roast beef, grated horseradish
Roast mutton, currant jelly
Boiled mutton, caper sauce
Roast pork, applesauce
Boiled chicken, bread sauce
Roast lamb, mint sauce
Roast turkey, oyster sauce
Venison or wild duck, black currant jelly
Broiled fresh mackerel, sauce of stewed gooseberries
Boiled bluefish, white cream sauce

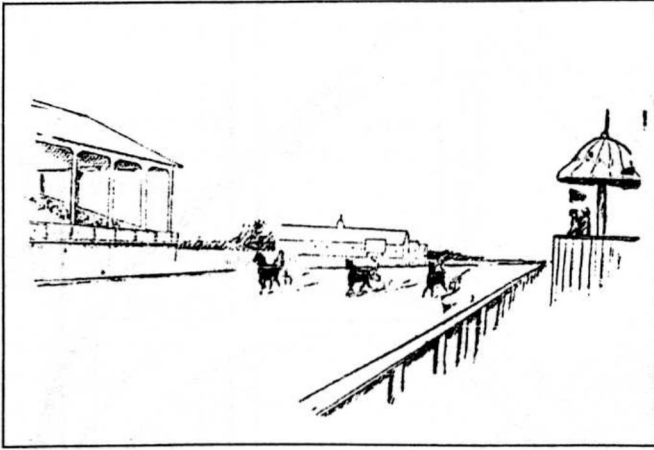
OF 1890'S OVERLAIN ON STREET MAP OF 1980'S
 2 STRAIGHT-WAYS - 2 CURVES OF 1/4 MILE EACH
 TOTAL 1 MILE DEAD LEVEL TRACK
 WIDTH APP 65' - RADIUS OF CURVE 420.17'
 TRACK APP 330' FROM GRAND AVE
 IN FIELD 38.51 ACRES
 OPENED 1894 CLOSED



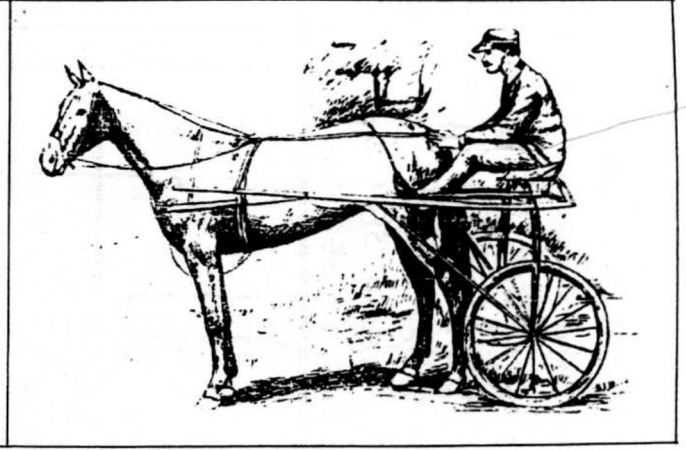
7

B-Q RR

1/4 SECTION LINE - 2640'



THE HOME STRETCH



ALIX WITH DRIVER ANDY McDOWELL

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