

# INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361 • www.sandburg.org

*Holidays, 2006*

## Let's Go!

The University of Illinois holds a large collection of material from Carl Sandburg's life—several tons of it. As recently as the fall of 2005, the children of Eric Johnson, a nephew of Carl Sandburg, added a significant collection of material about him to the University's holdings. There were phonograph records, magazine and newspaper articles, autographed books, correspondence and photographs. Stephen Johnson and his wife, Laura, traveled to the campus to deliver the gift. They added to the many items in the collection which provide insight into the life of Carl Sandburg as well as the history of the twentieth century.

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association is planning a trip to Urbana on Friday, January 12, 2007. A guided tour of original Sandburg manuscripts and other documents will be conducted by the University Librarians. If you would like to see these items and hear an explanation of how they have been preserved, please let Brian Tibbets know. His e-mail address is [btibbets@insightbb.com](mailto:btibbets@insightbb.com). There will be a charge for transportation.

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## The Schedule

After a successful autumn season, the Songbag Concerts are on hiatus during the holidays. They

will begin again in February with a talented group of artists engaged by John Heasley. As always, the performances will be held on the third Thursday of the month.

February 15—Larry Penn

March 15—Doug and Bonnie Miller from the Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin

April 19—Chris Valillo

May 17—Lee Murdock

Each of the concerts will take place at 7 p.m. in a smoke and alcohol free environment at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, in Galesburg.

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## Outta Site

Who left the Frigidaire door open? This December 7, 2006, seems to be the coldest pre-winter day yet, in my estimation. Don't get your tongue anywhere near that pump handle!

I'm really looking forward to the January trip to the University of Illinois Library and the Sandburg Collection. Our dear friend in charge of the collection, Gene Rinkel, will be our guide to the collection tour. Mr. Rinkel has done wonderful work with the archives there. He will have retired by the date we arrive, but he has graciously agreed to be our host. Because of the brevity of our visit there, Gene is requesting that we submit any

specific questions or requests to view particular items prior to our scheduled visit.

If you have any questions or requests, please mail or call them in to me and I will forward them to him. Details of the trip to the U. of I. are in the first article in this newsletter.

Activity has slowed down considerably here at the Site, apart from the snow activity. It is usually that way this time of year. But it gives us time to plan and contemplate projects for the coming season. And, there is always the joy of annual inventory audit. Such excitement!

One project that I have not yet followed through on is putting up some bird feeders on the grounds. I know the National Sandburg Home at Connemara, North Carolina, has plenty of them, and the feeders would at least increase activity here.

That's all for now, apart from my apology to Helga Sandburg Crile for not getting a birthday card sent. Belated birthday wishes, dear.

Steve Holden  
Site Superintendent

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### **Read, Read, Read**

The National Endowment for the Arts has announced the awarding of a \$20,000 matching grant to the Sandburg Days Festival. The Festival will be held April 26-28, 2007, in Galesburg. It is just one of a hundred organizations in the nation which were selected to participate in "The Big Read" program. The Endowment aims to encourage the reading of America's literature in communities all over the country.

Gary Tomlin, the executive director of the

Sandburg Days Festival, hopes everyone will read a novel during the month of April next year. Programs are being developed around "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck.

Carl Sandburg and John Steinbeck were contemporaries. Both men wrote about the ordinary people during the Great Depression. Both men were awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. The year Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize for Literature, he said it should have gone to Carl Sandburg.

Director Tomlin hopes one of the books written by Sandburg will be included in The Big Read at a future time. The Festival will also include a "Californy or Bust Jalopy" parade, several concerts and exhibits of Depression-era images.

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### **All Aboard**

Carl Sandburg has his name on a train now. Another Chicago-to-Quincy Amtrak train began service October 30<sup>th</sup>. Ridership between Galesburg and Chicago has topped 70,000 annually for the past several years. There was a definite need for expanded service.

The State of Illinois increased funding by about \$12 million in order to add the Galesburg route as well as additional trains to Springfield and Carbondale from Chicago.

Since Galesburg and Sandburg have so many historical connections to the railroad, it is appropriate that the route was so named. The Springfield line was named for Abraham Lincoln and the Carbondale train was named Saluki in honor of the Southern Illinois University sports teams.

The train leaves Chicago at 8 a.m. and arrives in

Galesburg at 10:39 a.m. The return trip leaves Galesburg at 6:56 p.m. and arrives in Chicago at 9:48 p.m. with intermediate stops.

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### One Less

We were sad to learn of the death of James Harvey Young on September 19, 2006.

He moved to Galesburg when he was thirteen years old and graduated from Knox College. He earned his graduate degrees from the University of Illinois. Dr. Young later became Candler Professor of American Social History at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Young was a world-renowned authority on food and drug regulation and health quackery. He wrote several books and numerous articles on the subject.

He was a good friend of Dr. Richard Sandburg, a nephew of Carl Sandburg. As often as possible, the two men would meet in Galesburg to visit the sites of their youth, and reminisce.

Dr. Young wrote of his experience meeting Carl Sandburg in an article which appeared in the Spring 2000 issue of *Inklings and Idlings*.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Dr. Young's family.

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### A Great Ten Years

Paul Berman has edited a new collection of Carl Sandburg's early poems. *Carl Sandburg: Selected Poems* was published this past October

as part of the Library of America series.

Mr. Berman, in an interview on National Public Radio, expressed the opinion that Sandburg's great period as a poet occurred between 1914 and 1924. Poems such as *Chicago*, *Fog* and *Grass* were inspired by the signs and places of the times in which Sandburg was living. Berman said "And he was able to figure out that this language itself contained poetry."

These poems have become so familiar to us that they have become part of our everyday vocabulary.

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### The Gettysburg Address

A hundred forty-three years have passed since Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863.

The previous July a three-day battle had been fought between Union and Confederate forces around that Pennsylvania town. The two armies sustained more than 45,000 casualties.

In *The War Years*, Carl Sandburg wrote: "In the helpless onrush of the war, it was known too many of the fallen had lain as neglected cadavers rotting in the open fields or thrust into so shallow resting-places that a common farm plow caught on their bones. Now by order of Governor [Andrew] Curtin of Pennsylvania seventeen acres had been purchased on Cemetery Hill, where the Union center stood its colors on the second and third of July, and the plots of soil had been allotted each State for its graves."

Eighteen states shared the cost of the burying ground. The Governor of Pennsylvania had also established a commission to prepare plans for the dedication. Clark E. Carr of Galesburg, Illinois, was a member of the commission.

Invitations were sent to members of Congress, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court and governors of other states as well as President Lincoln. Since the battle was considered a turning point in the Civil War, Lincoln was asked to make "a few appropriate remarks."

The major address was delivered by Edward Everett, a renowned orator of the day. He required more than two hours for his speech. He gave a thorough description of the events which had occurred during the battle of Gettysburg.

There was disappointment among some observers that the President spoke for only a few minutes. Members of the audience of fifteen thousand had barely settled down to listen by the time he finished his remarks. Afterward, the speech was reprinted in the newspapers. As time passed, it became obvious that the speech was an elaboration of the high ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the need to establish freedom and equality among all the citizens of the country.

In the following decades, many a grade school student memorized the Gettysburg Address. Those ten sentences sum up the meaning of the United State of America.

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### **Another Poet?**

On Saturday, November 19, 1898, *The Galesburg Evening Mail* published a poem written by John H. Finley. The writing of poems was a hobby of many people during the nineteenth century. We won't comment on the quality, but it was timely.

#### *A Prairie Corn Song*

Give thanks, Oh people of the plains

To him who gave the corn,  
Who planted first its yellow grains  
In ground by plough untorn.

We reap today what other hands  
Have sown in ages gone.  
We pluck at eve from harrowed lands  
The planting of the dawn.

But He who gives the raven's food  
He has the increase sent;  
We but turn o'er our little rood,  
His bounty's never spent.

Give thanks, Oh brothers of the plains,  
That Autum's plenteous horn  
Has filled our barns. The groaning wains  
Have garnered in the corn.

John Huston Finley was born near Grand Ridge, LaSalle County, Illinois, October 19, 1863, the son of James and Lydia Finley. He was the descendant of Michael Finley, a Scot, who came to these shores in 1734.

He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Knox College. He was valedictorian of his class and an outstanding orator in college level contests. As a post graduate student at Johns Hopkins University, he studied history and politics. Finley became president of Knox College in 1892 as well as professor of practical economics and social ethics. He was 29 years old.

During his tenure, Finley helped connect the reputation of Knox College and the occurrence of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate which had taken place on the campus in 1858. He even organized a special celebration on October 7, 1896. Carl Sandburg was one of the spectators who listened to Robert Todd Lincoln and others speak. The event received national attention at the time.

He left Knox in 1899 to become editor of *Harper's Weekly*. The following year, he became a professor of politics at Princeton University at the invitation

of Woodrow Wilson who was then president of that institution.

After three years of teaching, he became president of the College of the City of New York and remained there for ten years. The College expanded its campus and student body greatly during the decade of Finley's service.

Prior to World War I, Finley was the Education Commissioner of the State of New York as well as being president of the State University. During the war he was appointed a member of the American Expeditionary Force Educational Commission by General John J. Pershing. After the war, he served as chairman of the American Red Cross in Palestine and the Near East.

He became associate editor of *The New York Times* in 1921 and editor in 1937, retiring to the post of editor emeritus in 1938 after a very serious illness.

John Finley was a great walker. He called himself a pedestrian, wore a pedometer and kept a record of all his steps. While living in New York City he would walk around the entire edge of Manhattan, a distance of thirty miles. He delighted in telling others about the things and people he had observed along the way.

The Illinois State Historical Society erected a new historical marker honoring the life and achievements of John H. Finley on October 15, 2004. It is located on a wall of the Grand Ridge Grade School overlooking a garden.

Carl Sandburg wrote that John Finley had a face "you could say was both handsome and homely." As a young milk delivery boy Sandburg was responsible for the "rattling and banging" that woke up the college president every morning, according to Mrs. Finley.

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## Make a Joyful Noise

Christmas carols have been in and out of fashion over the centuries. Sometimes religious groups such as the Puritans thought singing holiday music was frivolous. At other times, it was thought the activity was related to idolatry and shouldn't be allowed.

Today we have a great mixture of old and new Christmas songs. Most people enjoy all of them and may join together in a public hall just for the purpose of singing carols.

"The First Noel" is one of the oldest Christmas carols. It was written as part of a religious play in the 1500s in England, even though we think of it as a French carol. It was first published in 1833. In the 1700s, when the singing of carols again became popular, "Joy to the World" and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" were added to the repertoire.

The nineteenth century was probably the most productive period for the writing of Christmas carols. "Silent Night" was written in 1816 by Joseph Mohr, an Austrian Catholic priest. An Anglican priest, Dr. John M. Neale, wrote "Good King Wenceslas" and "Good Christian Men, Rejoice" and translated "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" from a twelfth century Latin carol.

In the twentieth century, most of the Christmas songs have commercial subjects; "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," "White Christmas," "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Frosty, the Snowman." There is a developing movement among evangelicals to compose contemporary songs which are more religious in their themes.

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## Wrinklings and Wild Things

(This rootabaga story is one of a trilogy on how the letter X came to be. It has a nice wintry chill to it, and can be found on page 152 of *Rootabaga Stories*, part two—available in our Museum Store.)

Steve Holden

Many years ago when pigs climbed chimneys and chased cats up into trees, away back, so they say, there was a lumber king who lived in a river city with many wildcats in the timbers near by.

And the lumber king said, "I am losing my hair and my teeth and I am tired of many things; my only joy is a daughter who is a dancing shaft of light on the ax handles of morning."

She was quick and wild, the lumber king's daughter. She had never kissed. Not her mother nor father nor any sweetheart ever had a love print from her lips. Proud she was. They called her Kiss Me.

She didn't like the name, Kiss Me. They never called her that when she was listening. If she happened to be listening they called her Find Me, Lose Me, Get me. They never mentioned kisses because they knew she would run away and be what her father called her, "a dancing shaft of light on the ax handles of morning."

But—when she was not listening they asked, "Where is Kiss Me today?" Or they would say, "Every morning Kiss Me gets more beautiful—I wonder if she will ever in her young life get a kiss from a man good enough to kiss her."

One day Kiss Me was lost. She went out on a horse with a gun to hunt wildcats in the timbers near by. Since the day before, she was gone. All night she was out in a snowstorm with a horse and a gun hunting wildcats. And the storm of the blowing snow was coming worse on the second

day.

It was then the lumber king called in a lone, loose, young man with a leather face and hay in his hair. And the king said, "Flax Eyes, you are the laziest careless man in the river lumber country—go out in the snowstorm now, among the wildcats, where Kiss Me is fighting for her life—and save her."

"I am the hero, I am the man who knows how. I am the man who has been waiting for this chance," said Flax Eyes.

On a horse, with a gun, out into the snowstorm Flax Eyes rode that day. Far, far away he rode to where Kiss Me, the quick wild Kiss Me, was standing with her back against a big rock fighting off the wildcats.

In that country the snowstorms make the wildcats wilder—and Kiss Me was tired of shooting wildcats, tired of fighting in the snow, nearly ready to give up and let the wildcats have her.

Then Flax Eyes came. The wildcats jumped at him, and he threw them off. More wildcats came, jumping straight at his face. He took hold of those wildcats by the necks and threw them over the big rock, up into the trees, away into the snow and the wind.

At last he took all the wildcats one by one and threw them so far they couldn't come back. He put Kiss Me on her horse, rode back to the lumber king and said lazy and careless, "This is us."

The lumber king saw the face of Flax Eyes was all covered with cross marks like the letter X. And the lumber king saw the wildcats had torn the shirt off Flax Eyes and on the skin of his chest, shoulders, arms, there the cross marks of the wildcats' claws, cross marks like the letter X.

So the king went to the men who change the alphabets and they put the cross marks of the wildcats' claws, for a new letter, the letter X, near

the end of the alphabet. And at the wedding of Kiss Me and Flax Eyes, the men who change the alphabets came with wildcat claws crossed like the letter X.

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### **Christmas Cookies**

Are you one of those who make lots of Christmas cookies? Most families have several kinds they enjoy eating every year. Spritz cookies are popular in the Scandinavian and European countries. The word comes from the German meaning "to spray." The dough is pushed through a cookie press to make different designs. They can be decorated with colored sugar or candied fruit or left plain so the design will show. Spritz cookies come in many flavors. They are easy to make and store well in a tightly closed container.

#### **Swedish Spritz**

1 cup butter, at room temperature  
2/3 cup granulated sugar  
1 egg  
2 cups all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon almond extract

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy; add the egg and mix thoroughly. Add flour and baking powder and mix well. Add almond extract and mix well. Put through a cookie press onto ungreased baking sheets. Cookies can be decorated with candied cherries or colored sugar. Bake 8 to 10 minutes until set. Do not brown.

Makes about 6 dozen cookies

Here are other versions of Spritz cookies for the chocolate and caramel lovers.

#### **Chocolate Spritz**

½ cup butter, at room temperature  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 egg  
2 tablespoons milk  
2 cups sifted cake flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled

Cream butter; add sugar and cream thoroughly. Mix in egg. Alternately add milk and flour sifted with the salt. Mix in the chocolate. Fill cookie press and form cookies on ungreased baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 375 degrees F. Oven for 8 to 10 minutes.

Makes about 3 ½ dozen cookies

#### **Caramel Spritz**

2 1/4 cups sifted all purpose flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup butter, at room temperature  
½ cup firmly packed brown sugar  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or maple flavoring

Sift together flour and salt. Cream butter, gradually adding brown sugar. Blend in egg and vanilla. Beat well. Gradually add flour mixed with salt; mix thoroughly. Press dough through a cookie press onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 375 degrees F. oven 7 to 10 minutes.

Makes 8 dozen cookies

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### **The Museum Store**

The Museum Store is located in the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

A variety of books by and about Carl Sandburg and related subjects are for sale. They make lovely gifts. Also available are T-shirts, refrigerator magnets, mugs, postcards, etc. Please consider doing some shopping with us. If you can't visit in person, the Site can be contacted at [www.sandburg.org](http://www.sandburg.org). Major credit cards are now accepted.

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### Letters to Santa

Writing a letter to Santa Claus is a time-honored tradition. It behooves every young person to be good and make sure Santa is aware of that fact. This cartoon appeared on the children's page of *The Daily Republican-Register* in 1905. Some things are so appealing that we make a tradition of them from generation to generation.

### Happy Holidays to All



How old Santa knows when Christmas draws nigh.

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