

# 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

Summer, 2007

## Annual Meeting

In accordance with Article II of the By-Laws of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, the annual meeting of the organization will be held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 10, 2007, in the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

At that time, officers and directors of the Association will be elected for the ensuing 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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## Songbag on Vacation

The Songbag Concert Series has completed another successful year. The performers were exceptional and audiences enjoyed their music very much.

John Heasley is already planning next year's programs. He has lined up "Bovee and Heil" for the September 20<sup>th</sup> concert. Since 1980 Bob and Gail have traveled the country bringing old time music to audiences of all ages. They specialize in the music played in homes and at public gatherings in days gone by.

The performers haven't visited the Site before, but they promise to provide a wide variety of songs,

ballads, dance tunes and cowboy songs along with a few stories and folklore.

Remember, the Songbag Concerts take place in the Barn on the Site at 7:00 p.m. in a smoke-free and alcohol-free atmosphere. Refreshments are served and a \$2 donation is appreciated.

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## Outta Site

CARL SANDBURG LIVES!

Last August I was contacted by Peter Louis Van Dijk. He is a composer from South Africa who had been commissioned by the Chicago Children's Choir to write a choral work in honor of that group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (I also learned from him that he was here in Galesburg several years ago for a performance of his "San Gloria" by the Knox-Galesburg Symphony.) His inquiry was regarding Sandburg's "Chicago" poem, and what connection it had with Native Americans.

My reply to him was that the poem had no specific relevance to Native Americans, and that he would be better off to look up "The Windy City" which takes the city back to "Early the red men gave a name to a river, the place of the skunk, the river of the wild onion smell, Shee-caw-go." I strongly urged Peter to use this poem because the big-shouldered "Chicago" has really become overburdened by its overuse. And, beside that, I had a recording of Sandburg himself reading the

other piece, which I thought could be very effectively utilized in his composition.

Anyway, I sent the tape to him and, to my amazement, he used not only the poem, but the tape in the final number of his seven Sandburg settings. "The Windy City" not only gives the composition its title, "Windy City Songs," but it also is the only poem he used which is not from Sandburg's collection, "Chicago Poems."

I was very pleased to attend the premiere of Van Dijk's work on June 2, 2007, at the Chicago Civic Opera. The program, which offered many internationally commissioned works, lasted about three hours. It was enthusiastically received by the packed house, with standing ovations for all performers and composers involved. Admittedly biased, I especially enjoyed Peter Van Dijk's "Windy City Songs." I am ending with listing the titles of poems in the setting performed by the Chicago Children's Concert Choir, its Alumni Ensemble, members of the Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Choir. Could Galesburg make an effort at a repeat performance?

- I. Lost
- II. Skyscraper/The Windy City
- III. To a Dead Man
- IV. Pals
- V. The Junk Man
- VI. Back Yard
- VII. The Windy City (Finale)

CARL SANDBURG LIVES!

– Steve Holden  
Site Superintendent

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### **Sandburg Days Has Appeal**

The combination of the Sandburg Days Festival

and the Big Read was a great success this past spring. Carl Sandburg and John Steinbeck were contemporaries and their contributions to the literature of the United States encouraged many readers, poets and photographers to participate in the activities.

An audience of 600 viewed the film, "The Grapes of Wrath" in the Orpheum Theater. More than 250 copies of Steinbeck's novel of the same name were purchased, read and discussed. Several hundred people attended lectures by Robert DeMott, an authority on Steinbeck's writings. The Poetry Slam was a very popular event with more than a hundred in the audience.

The Carl Sandburg State Historic Site was actively involved in the festivities. On Saturday afternoon, a group of young people gave a demonstration of Swedish folk dancing. An appreciative audience of grandparents and others enjoyed the exhibition. Below is a photograph of the dancers in action.



Music of the Depression was performed at several locations in Galesburg during the Festival.

Exhibits depicting life in the 1930s were also available.

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### **Tomas Junglander's Personal Exhibit**

Between May 5th and June 2<sup>nd</sup> this year our international member, Tomas Junglander, displayed his personal collection of materials about Carl Sandburg, "the poet of the people," at the Swedish Emigrant Institute, Vaexjo, Sweden.

At the opening of the exhibit, Tomas used a multimedia presentation to acquaint the visitors with Carl Sandburg as poet, historian, biographer, journalist, author of children's stories, guitar player, folk singer and social reformer. They also learned about Sandburg's visit to Sweden in 1959 and listened to him talking about his dreams for America.

The Swedish Emigrant Institute is an archive, library, museum and research center. One of the permanent exhibits titled "The Dream of America" describes the causes and results of Swedish emigration to America. There are also seasonal exhibits about famous Americans of Swedish descent and historic events connecting Sweden and the United States.

In 2006 Mr. Junglander's exhibit made its first appearance in the town of Asbo, the birthplace of August Sandburg.

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### **Looking for Lincoln**

A new historical marker has been erected on the Knox College campus overlooking the east side of Old Main. The marker is part of a project,

"Looking for Lincoln," affiliated with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

The aim of the project is to design and display exhibits to increase public knowledge of sites in Illinois related to Abraham Lincoln. Galesburg is significant because of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate held in 1858 and being the birthplace of Carl Sandburg.

Families and individuals can explore a number of locations in central Illinois where Lincoln spoke at debates, practiced law, gave speeches and spent the night. Each city in the network is listed on the internet—just type "Looking for Lincoln" into a search engine such as Google. Heritage travel has become more popular in recent years and Galesburg has plenty to offer in that line.

The cities currently listed on the internet are Bloomington, Charleston, Decatur and Springfield. Each one is a hub from which travelers can visit locations in the area for one to three days. The internet site has maps and itineraries which can be used to plan trips to the various locations.

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### **Bickerdyke Rededication Ceremony**

The Mother Bickerdyke monument on the north lawn of the Knox County Courthouse was under cover on Saturday, May 12th. The Knox County Board and the Cottage Hospital School of Nursing Historical Committee conducted a rededication ceremony after the restoration of the statue last summer.

The original dedication of the bronze and granite monument took place on May 22, 1906, when 8,000 people came to Galesburg to be present at

the event. The statue depicts Mary Ann Ball Bickerdyke, a Civil War nurse, ministering to a wounded soldier. Mrs. Bickerdyke lived in Galesburg at the beginning of the Civil War.

Blue sky and a comfortable temperature greeted the nurses and their guests. The program opened with a quartet singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Alan Pickrel, Chairman of the Knox County Board, welcomed the visitors and pledged to keep the promise of 1906 to protect the statue. He also recognized Sheriff Jim Thompson who is the public official responsible for maintaining the property. Mr. Thompson had made the decision to renovate the monument when local residents approached him about its condition.

Reverend Katherine Rust, Pastor of the Congregational Church, gave the invocation. Mrs. Bickerdyke had been a member of the church when efforts were being made to help the sick and wounded soldiers in 1861.



Judge Harry Bulkeley, dressed as an ordinary Civil War soldier, described his attire and pointed out that the soldier depicted in the monument was dressed exactly the same. He gave credit to Theo Ruggles Kitson for the accuracy of her sculpture.

Pamela Ciromotich, B.S.N., and Joan Larson,

R.N., unveiled the restored monument. It was the second such unveiling in 101 years. Pamela Johnson portrayed Mother Bickerdyke and circulated through the crowd handing out program.



Recognition should also go to Anna Sophia Johnson and Mona Turlentes for their research into the restoration of bronze monuments and firms capable of doing such work. They helped save a unique remembrance of a heroic woman and times past.

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### Sanitary Report

On June 12, 1894, *The Galesburg Daily Mail* published the annual reports of the Board of Health and the City Physician. Dr. A.G. Humphrey, Director of the Board of Health, reported the department had been active and the city was in fairly good sanitary condition.

During the year 157 privy vaults had been cleaned, disinfected and deodorized. A total of 37 privies had been condemned. Over 1600 wagon loads of garbage had been removed from streets

and alleys as well as businesses. Thirty-nine dead horses plus five other large animals had been removed. Of dead dogs and cats removed, there were 36.

The City Physician reported 1029 persons had benefitted from his services. Fractures, burns, lacerations and amputations were the result of accidents to nineteen residents of the city during the year. There were two deaths from consumption (tuberculosis).

He also reported the nativity of the individuals he had treated: 158 were born in the United States, 23 in Sweden, 23 in Ireland, 4 in Germany, 2 in England and one each in Russia, Italy and Switzerland.

City Physician Bradley also made a comment at the end of his report admonishing all local physicians to report every birth and death they attended. Proper reporting would give the city needed information on the population and possible health problems.

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### **On a More Personal Note**

During Carl Sandburg's youth, indoor toilets were a rarity in Galesburg. Most families, whether well-off or poor, had "backhouses" or "privies." As a newspaper delivery boy, and later as a milkman, Sandburg was given the opportunity to see all styles of privies. Most were equipped with paper cut from newspapers and catalogs. A very few had a softer variety which did not have printing on it.

The architectural style of the outhouses was fairly uniform. Some might be ornamented with latticework, but mostly they looked alike, differing only in size and condition.

During a rain storm or the colder days of winter, a trip to the privy was an unforgettable experience. If its roof leaked, or its walls were not tight, one was even less inclined to tarry more than one otherwise might be.

From time to time, the vaults beneath the privies had to be emptied. The one belonging to the Sandburgs' backhouse was cleaned each year by a black man known as Elsey. He did his work at night. He would arrive with his wagon and be gone before dawn.

Sandburg was curious about the word "privy." He looked it up in the dictionary and discovered it meant "private" or "secret." Its original purpose had not been to identify backhouses, but Sandburg decided it was a fairly accurate description.

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### **A Swedish Botanist**

Anyone who has ever studied botany has had to become familiar with the classification of plants. The person who developed the original system was a Swede. His name was Carolus Linnaeus and he was born May 23, 1707, in Rashult, Almhult, in southern Sweden. He died January 10, 1778, in Uppsala, Sweden.

In those days, few Swedes had surnames. They might be called after the place where they lived or their father's given name with an added "son" on the end. Carolus' father became a Lutheran clergyman and adopted the surname of Linnaeus (after the linden tree) when he attended university. The son used the same surname when he enrolled in the University of Lund. The Latinized version of names was common as that was the language of the church and the educated classes.

Carolus first studied to be a clergyman like his

father, but his interest in plants led to research of plant propagation. He went to Lapland and collected examples of plants which grew there. He then went to the Netherlands, earned his medical degree and published several books about his research. He also went to England to study and publish his writings.

In 1738 he returned to Sweden and practiced medicine and in 1741 became a professor at Uppsala University. In the university's botanical garden, he arranged plants according to a system he had devised. His students traveled the world and sent plants to be studied and added to the gardens. Writing his results and publishing them gave the general public and academic experts the benefit of his findings.

Linnaeus gave the world a system to classify many natural things on the earth at a time when knowledge of the natural world was expanding. He established a hierarchy of Kingdoms, Classes, Orders, Genera and Species which helped explain relationships as well as differences in plants. These were based on observed physical characteristics. The same techniques were later applied to animals and minerals.

In modern times, the classifications have changed, but the original idea is still there. Lennaeus also designed the thermometer scale which we use in our every day lives. He was also responsible for introducing rhubarb to Sweden. A good many people who enjoy eating it should be grateful to him. He tried transplanting other flora in Sweden, but wasn't successful.

During his lifetime Linnaeus classified more than 8,000 plants and 4,000 animals. The simplicity and logic of his system made natural history more accessible to amateurs and experts alike. He liked to say "God created, Linnaeus organized."

After his death, the family sold his collection. It is housed in the Linnaen Society in London. His

books, written in Latin, can be viewed on the internet. The Swedish Museum of Natural History preserves some of Linnaeus' original plant specimens. The family home and garden at Hamarby can be visited. It is maintained by Uppsala University.

Each year the citizens of Uppsala celebrate the birthday anniversary of Carolus Linnaeus on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, one of their most illustrious citizens.

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### *Wrinklings & Wild Things*

(In case I didn't pique your curiosity with the "Outta Site" article, I'm printing out the second, third and fourth stanzas of the first section from "The Windy City"—page 271 of Sandburg's *Complete Poems*.—Steve Holden)

The hands of men took hold and tugged  
And the breaths of men went into the junk  
And the junk stood up into skyscrapers and asked:  
Who am I? Am I a city? And if I am what is my  
name?

And once while the time whistles blew and blew  
again

The men answered: Long ago we gave you a  
name,

Long ago we laughed and said: You? Your name  
is Chicago.

Early the red men gave a name to a river,  
the place of the skunk,  
the river of the wild onion smell,  
Shee-caw-go.

Out of the payday songs of steam shovels,  
Out of the wages of structural iron rivets,  
The living lighted skyscrapers tell it now as a  
name,

Tell it across miles of sea blue water, gray blue

land:  
I am Chicago, I am a name given out by the  
breaths of working men, laughing men, a  
child, a belonging.

Carl Sandburg—"Slabs of the Sunburnt West"

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### Knox-Galesburg Centennial



Galesburg and Knox College celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays in June, 1937. A six-day-long series of events were carried out to honor the historic beginnings.

On Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company opened the observance with a parade of railroad employees marching from Standish Park to the C.B. & Q. Depot on South Seminary Street. The Zephyr, the Burlington's sleek new train arrived at 7:25. Ralph Budd, the president of the company, and other railroad officials arrived on the train and were welcomed to the city by Mayor Joe E. Anderson. A collection of old railroad equipment was on display near the depot.

The next day, one of the largest parades ever held in Galesburg marched along Main Street. There were five divisions composed of military and governmental units, businesses, patriotic and fraternal organizations, children riding their bicycles and ponies and the railroad unions. In the evening there was a balloon ascension and parachute drop along with puppet shows, a Ferris wheel and a merry go round.

A special pageant depicting Galesburg's history was presented at Lake Storey on Friday evening and again on Monday and Tuesday evenings. Characters from the past such as George Washington Gale, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, Jonathan Blanchard and Mother Bickerdyke each had a part. A fireworks display climaxed the pageant.

Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> was designated "Old Main Day." The ringing of the bell at 3 o'clock in the afternoon signaled the beginning of the rededication ceremonies.

Old Main had been restored inside and out. Mrs. Philip Sidney Post, a graduate and trustee of the college, had led the campaign to update the building. More classroom and office space had been created in the reconstruction. Thousands of people had toured the building since it was reopened two days before. Very favorable comments had been received about the work.

Prior to the program, distinguished visitors and members of the faculty, attired in academic regalia, marched through Old Main to the east side of the building where the speakers' stand had been erected. It had been the site of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate in 1858.

Carl Sandburg was the first speaker. He titled his talk, "Youth and Pioneers: An Ode." He commented on the 75 years of existence of Old Main and how much history had transpired during that amount of time.

He closed with the thought that Old Main, if it was a living thing might say "One thing I know deep out of my time: Youth when lighted and alive and given a sporting chance is strong for struggle and not afraid of any toils or punishments or dangers or deaths."

The next speaker was Governor Henry Horner who spoke of the significance of the Lincoln-Douglas Debate. He also said Old Main held precious memories and preserving it was the right thing to do. He expressed the hope that the college would continue as a great center of learning.

John H. Finley, former president of Knox College and currently editor of *The New York Times*, was among other speakers of the afternoon.

Commencement was held the next day and a new president of the college, Carter Davidson, was inaugurated. Many alums and other visitors had come to Galesburg for the celebration and reminiscing. More than 4,000 visitors had

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registered at the college. There was no way to know how many others had visited the city during the festivities.

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### **Sandburg: A Good Example**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 250 students received their associate degrees or certificates at the 39<sup>th</sup> commencement of Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg.

Robin Metz gave the commencement address. He is professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Knox College. He said "Sandburg's life, like yours and mine, began in the context of hard work." Metz declared Sandburg's ability to temper hard work with imagination made him a successful writer and that should be an inspiration to all the graduates.

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