

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

Fall, 2007

The Officers and Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association 2007-2008

On July 10, 2007, the annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association was held in the Visitors' Center.

At that time, the following officers and directors of the Association were elected for the coming year:

President—Norm Winick
Vice President—Margaret Krueger
Secretary—Bert McElroy
Treasurer—John Heasley

Directors

Charles Bednar Jr.
Julie Bondi
Rex Cherrington
Mike Hobbs
Christian Schock
Megan Scott
E. Kathaleen Stout
Mary E. Strawn
Brian Tibbetts
Steve Holden, ex officio

Newsletter Editor—Barbara Schock

The Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street. All members are welcome to attend the Board meetings.

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Fall Songbag Concerts

John Heasley has arranged a wonderful series of Songbag Concerts for the fall. For those who enjoy live music, these programs will be a pleasure. The schedule is as follows:

September 20th—Bob Bovee and Gail Heil

Based in Minnesota and traveling the country since 1980, Bob and Gail have taken their old-time music to audiences of all ages at festivals, concerts, radio and television programs. Along with a repertoire including dance tunes, ballads, cowboy songs, blues and rags, they spice their shows with stories, history and folklore.

October 18th—Doug and Bonnie Miller

From the Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, Doug and Bonnie perform with a true love and understanding of traditional American folk music and song.

November 15th—Dave Moore

From Iowa City, this singer-songwriter's music reflects 20 years of interest in the various roots of American music. Moore is a frequent guest on American Public Radio's *A Prairie Home Companion* and records for Minneapolis-based Red House Records.

All of the concerts will begin at 7 p.m. in the Barn at the Site. The admission is free, but a \$2 donation is appreciated. Light refreshments are served after the concert. No smoking is allowed in the Barn.

Outta Site

On the afternoon of Thursday, August 23rd, Bert McElroy and I were, almost literally, "outta site!" It all began with darkening skies, then whirling sheets of rain and extremely strong winds. As I finished closing my car windows, the car began to rock, and neighbors' garbage cans, lawn chairs, limbs and debris were flying by. As soon as I thought it was clear enough to run back to the Visitors' Center, I was nearly blown off the front porch. I had experienced hurricanes in Florida, and this certainly seemed to be a similar event.

From inside the Visitors' Center we could see the tree between us and the cottage being broken in half, landing on the cottage roof and totally blocking the front door. The locust tree next to the deck was snapped in half. Parts of the white pine, maple and oak trees to the west of the Center were snapped and topped, landing on the exhibit hall roof and picket fence.

After the storm had subsided, our investigation revealed major limbs from the sycamore had fallen, doing damage to other trees around it and to the wooden fence to the east. I don't believe there was a single tree that went unscathed. I take that back. One of the four "pointed cedars" surrounding Remembrance Rock remained upright. On that side of the grounds another major limb fell on one of the four stone benches, breaking it in half. The tops of other white pines to the north fell into the neighbor's yard, taking a section of board fence with it.

I began calling tree service people shortly after viewing the devastation which had occurred, and luckily snagged John Howard from Dahinda. He and his crew arrived the next morning and took care of the trees on the rooftops. Fortunately there was not drastic damage to either roof. At the time he was working mainly on an emergency basis, and agreed to come back another time to do the major "high in the sky" pruning, as well as stump

removal.

Needless to say, I closed the Site to the public out of concern for their safety. Besides that, we had lost power, and were without power until Saturday evening.

I contacted Paula Cross, Superintendent of Historic Sites (my boss) about the situation. She called the Bishop Hill and Black Hawk State Historic Sites. This resulted in two work crews coming and working two days to clean up the mess. I can't thank them enough for their very hard labor. Thanks to them and Bert, plus Jerry Brodine (a total stranger who called to volunteer his help), the grounds are cleaned up. Most of the debris is piled on the west terrace (it looks like a major beaver dam), awaiting the city cleanup crews. There also are piles of branches on the south terrace, greatly limiting parking space.

At any rate, we were able to reopen on Saturday, September 1. We are far from being healed, but we are on the way. The eerily naked appearance of the grounds bothers me, especially the absence of the four cedar trees (the fourth had to be removed in order to match them all). Fortunately, Chuck Bednar, a new Sandburg Association board member (but a long time friend of the Site), has donated funds earmarked for the replacement of those trees. I think this is most appropriate, since his mother, Juanita Kelly Bednar, was the coordinating spirit that established Remembrance Rock Park in 1966. Anyone who knew or has heard of Juanita knows that her work went well beyond that event. Chuck, I promise you a fine rededication program in the future, and I personally thank you.

"We are all wisps, and the winds of chance blow in many directions."—George Ade

—Steve Holden
Site Superintendent

Storm Goes Through with a Vengeance

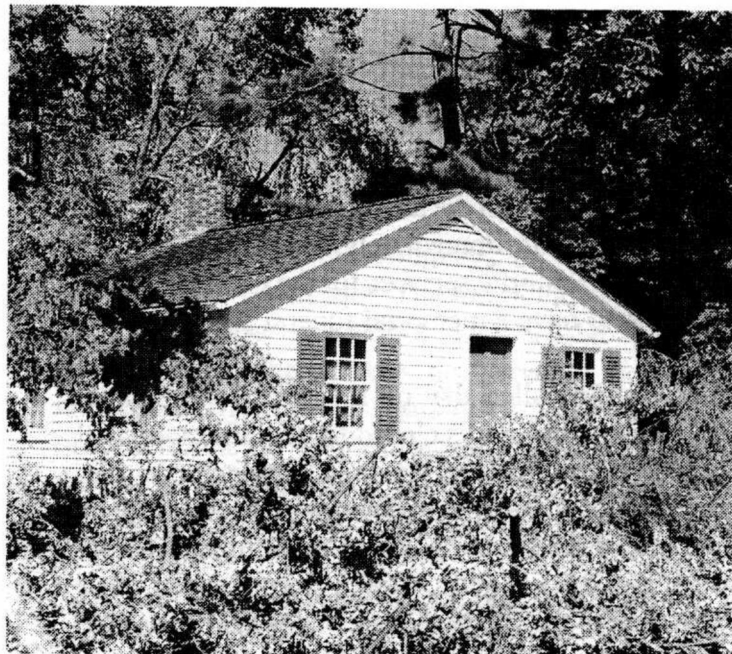
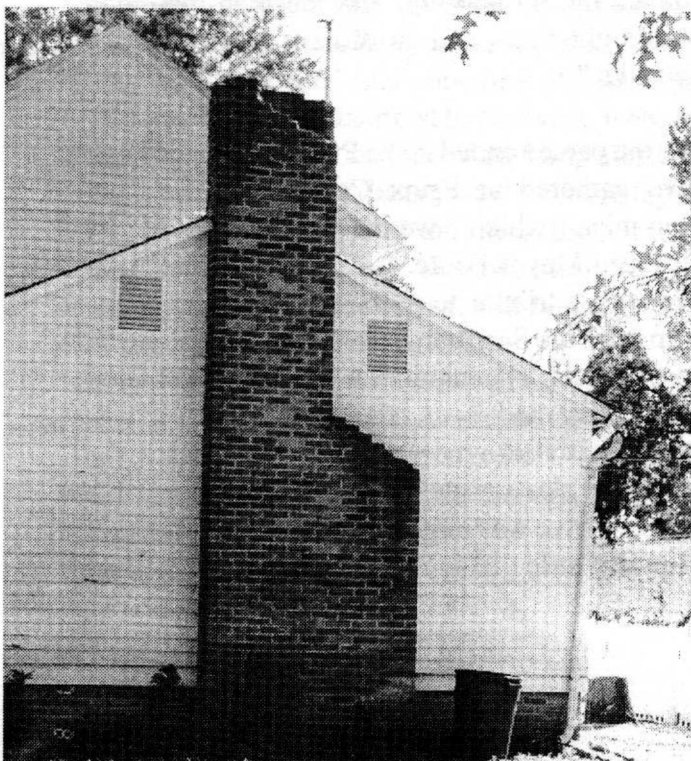
The experts said it wasn't a tornado, but the straight line winds blew about seventy miles an hour. In just five minutes on the afternoon of August 23rd, a great deal of damage was done to the Carl Sandburg Historic Site on the southeast side of Galesburg. It will be some time before the grounds of the Site return to their former lushness and beauty.

As Steve Holden has detailed in his report, many trees were lost or damaged. The shrubs around Remembrance Rock were lost. The Rock held firm in the wind. Beneath it are buried the ashes of Carl Sandburg, his wife and two of his daughters.

Falling limbs took out parts of the fences surrounding the property. Bricks were broken off the top of the fireplace chimney of the Visitors' Center. A small branch was driven through one of the walls.

Volunteers from State Historic Sites in Rock Island and Bishop Hill helped with the cleanup. The Site was closed for several days, but is again welcoming visitors.

Below are several pictures of the storm damage.



Young Sandburg at the General's Memorial Parade

(Mike Hobbs, a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, has kindly given us a condensed version of the article he wrote about the memorial parade held in Galesburg in 1885. The parade, arranged by the James T. Shields Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, was in honor of Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War general and former President of the United States.)

In his autobiography *Always the Young Strangers* Carl Sandburg wrote about attending the memorial funeral parade in Galesburg for General U.S. Grant. Although he was only seven and a half years old at the time, he understood "that it was a day that meant something." He wrote, "I remember how hard I tried to think about what the war was and what General Grant did that made him the greatest general of all. I heard the he had been the President....And now since he was dead...he would never come back to be a great general in a war again and he would never be President and head man of the government in Washington again."

The news of General Grant's death at the age of 63 on July 23, 1885, hit many Galesburg citizens hard. *The Republican-Register* reported that the announcement "was a great shock and a solemn hush seemed to fill the air." The city's J.T. Shields G.A.R. Post 45 immediately began to formulate plans for memorial services for the General. It was decided to have a memorial funeral parade.

Sandburg recalled that on the day of the parade, "...Main Street stores closed for the afternoon and the Q. shops and the Brown Cornplanter Works and Frost's foundry shut down for the afternoon. A parade began at the Q. depot on Seminary Street and moved to Main Street, turned west, and marched to the Public Square. They said it was the longest parade Galesburg had ever seen." He wrote that on that hot July afternoon the "five blocks of Main Street sidewalks from Seminary to the Square, on both sides of the street, were crowded with people."

According to *The Republican-Register*, "A general view of Main street depicted with even more eloquence than words the feelings of the heart. Especially imposing was the arch erected across Main street half way between Kellogg street and the Public Square...On the east side of the arch [which was draped in black] there appeared in white the feeling words: 'His First and Last Surrender,' while as the procession passed slowly by the arch there came to their view on the other side the pathetic expression 'Farewell'."

Spectators from Galesburg and surrounding towns arrived early to find places to view the parade. Sandburg and his father, August, jostled through the crowd to a place three or four feet from the curb in front of O.T. Johnson's store. He wrote that he was glad his parents had made him wear shoes that day to prevent getting his bare feet stepped on, but there was a problem. The boy couldn't see over the taller adults who stood in front of him so his father put him on his shoulders with his legs straddling his father's neck. The stern August

Sandburg rarely displayed warmth toward his son, but this time Sandburg wrote, "My father kept his hands on my feet and legs and I think the only smile I saw while the parade was passing was once when my father turned his face up toward me and felt good over the way he had fixed it so I could see the parade."

A marshal on a sorrell horse led the parade followed by a squad of policemen. Then came a fife and drum corps, members of Company C, 6th Regiment, Illinois National Guard (which Sandburg would later serve with during the Spanish-American War), G.A.R. Post 45 and visiting G.A.R. posts, Mexican War veterans, the Galva band and the Negro Silver Cornet Band, Knights of Pythias, Order of Odd Fellows, Ancient Order of Woodmen of America, Robert Darrah Masonic Lodge, Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, Ancient Order of Hibernians, and representatives of the railroad engineer, fireman, conductor and brakeman unions. Of the Civil War veterans in the parade Sandburg wrote that "I heard that some of these men had seen General Grant and had been in the war with him and could tell how he looked on a horse and what made him a great general." He had seen circus parades and political parades in Galesburg when people had laughed and hollered, "but in this General Grant funeral parade there was no laughing, no hooting, and the men marching had straight faces and so did the people on the sidewalks."

After the parade ended at the Public Square, a large crowd gathered at Knox College for the final ceremonies which were presided over by Galesburg Mayor Foote. Col. Clark E. Carr gave an eloquent tribute to General Grant. After the ceremonies the Sandburgs walked to their home on Berrien Street. The inquisitive boy had understood that the day had been significant and he was determined to learn more about General Grant, the Civil War, slavery and the government, but his serious resolve was interrupted by the recollection of a pretty little girl in a pink dress whom he had

spied along the curb in front of his perch on his father's shoulders that day at O.T. Johnson's. Once when she had glanced up at him, he had made a face at her. When he went to bed that night "...the face of the pretty girl...came back to me for half a minute [and] I gave her an ugly look. Later her face came back again and she gave me an ugly look. And I was so tired I went to sleep without making any kind of face back at her."

—Mike Hobbs

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Kerosene Lamps

As the days begin to shorten in the fall, we must turn on more lights in our home in order to see. It is so easy to flip a switch and have light for working, eating and reading.

In the days when Carl Sandburg was growing up, there were other forms of lighting which weren't nearly so easy to use. Candles had open flames which had to be watched and handled very carefully.

The kerosene lamp was invented in 1853 by a Polish inventor named Izacy Lukesiewicz. A wick made of cotton rested in a container of kerosene. As the kerosene was absorbed by the wick, it could be lighted. A knob on the side of the lamp allowed the height of the wick to be adjusted for more light. If the height was increased too much the burning wick would smoke. Some skill was required in adjusting the lamp for efficiency in both lighting and use of fuel.

A glass globe or chimney was set over the flame to prevent it from blowing out in a draft. The glass also helped direct the flow of air through the lamp which produced a brighter light.

Some lamps were simply made and inexpensive to buy. There were lamps with decorated globes and fancy metalwork which are now considered antiques and are very collectable.

With frequent use the chimneys on the lamps became coated with soot. The job of cleaning the glass chimneys or globes had to be done frequently. If there were no servants in the household, the job was usually assigned to the older children. It was one of those household tasks that nobody liked to do.

Good Order Is Kept

(This article appeared in *The Galesburg Evening Mail*, November 1, 1900. Apparently, the boys and young men of Galesburg were on their good behavior that year. Three items have faded from the scene in today's Galesburg: hitching posts, wooden sidewalks and streetcar tracks. By this time Carl Sandburg was 22 years old so he wasn't doing boyish pranks anymore.)

"All Hallowe'en has been here and is gone, leaving in its wake a few overturned stone steps, some culverts torn up, and some fading memories of small boys, of fun which they did not have. Last night was the night for revel, but the Galesburg small boy confined his wickedness in a small area, both as to time and place. It was one of the quietest times in the history of the town, so far as deviltry is concerned, and no arrests were made.

"In some parts of the town the pranks were more widespread than in others. Out in the southwest part of the city a number of culverts were torn up, horse blocks were overturned, hitching-posts upset, [wooden] sidewalks and gates removed and various other small offenses committed.

"All over the city the best game appeared to be with the new poles which are being put up for the new electric light wires. Many of these were

dragged to the center of the street and thrown across the track. This morning the motormen and street car conductors spent considerable time in laying them aside so that the cars could run.

“Chief of Police Hinman and his staff of officers were out in force, and probably prevented a lot of trouble. They were clothed as citizens, and walked over town instead of riding. Small gangs of boys were captured by the officers and their names taken. They were then told to hie for home, and if they were needed in police court this morning they would be notified. The boys generally hied, and their services were dispensed with, so far as the police court was concerned.

“As a general thing in the past few years there has been some destroying of property on the part of the boys, but this year the amusements were not carried very far. The boys were warned beforehand to keep ‘in the clear,’ and they obeyed to a gratifying extent.”

This illustration for the holiday appeared on the front page of the newspaper. “The Spirit of Halloween” has a resemblance to a young Elizabeth Taylor of acting fame much later in the 20th century.



THE SPIRIT OF HALLOWE'EN.

The Home Front During the Civil War

On July 17, 2007, Margaret Krueger, vice president of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, made a presentation to the Civil War Study Group in Galesburg. One of her great-grandfathers, John Christian Heller, was in Company C, First Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers. He was captured in July, 1864, and spent ten months in the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia. Because of her lifelong interest in her family history and collecting antiques, Mrs. Krueger has become quite an expert on the customs and artifacts of the Civil War era. Here are a few excerpts from her presentation.

Mrs. Krueger spoke of the contrast between the houses of the well-to-do, which had polished wood floors, patterned rugs, fine china, feather ticks and down comforters on the beds. Many homes in the country were log cabins or frame construction buildings which were fairly primitive. Some even had dirt floors. Handmade braided rugs often covered the floors. The dishes on which food was served might be of wood or tin. Perhaps rural mothers and children left at home by the citizen soldier slept on cornhusk mattresses covered by a hand made quilt or comforter.

Even though the home front would be a sad and dreary place, the ladies still liked to have pretty things. A ceramic hair pin holder might have been a gift to a girl from her parents when she became sixteen. The receptacle held the many hair pins used to keep her hair up.

In addition to all the chores and work that had to be done by those left at home, a favorite pastime was reading. Families read the Bible and prayer books together. They read poetry by popular writers of the time such as William Shakespeare, William Cullen Bryant, James Russell Lowell, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and others. The reading of poems could transport one to another more pleasant realm.

Oliver Wendell Holmes invented the stereoscope in 1859 and the viewing of photographs with the devices was popular family entertainment for the next sixty years. Carl Sandburg sold views and viewers early in the twentieth century.

A variety of wooden toys and dolls, whether purchased or handmade, entertained the children in those days.

Of course, there were many rallies and fundraisers in every community to support the war effort. The ladies of Knox County made bandages, sewed shirts and knitted socks in enormous numbers. They preserved foods and made blackberry cordial to send to the soldiers. The churches and members of the community looked after families who were destitute without the support of the breadwinner who had gone off to be a soldier for his country.

The years between 1861-1865 were filled with hope and sadness. They were never to be forgotten by those who lived through them.

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Wrinklings & Wild Things

(I figured this Rootabaga Story from Part One was appropriate, considering what the Site has undergone lately. The speaker is Wing Tip the Spick, who is answering questions posed by her four uncles.—Steve Holden)

How They Bring Back the Village of Cream Puffs When the Wind Blows It Away

“I come from the Village of Cream Puffs, a little light village on the upland corn prairie. From a long ways off it looks like a little hat you could wear on the end of your thumb to keep the rain off your thumb.

“It is a light little village on the upland corn prairie many miles past the sunset in the west. It is light the same as a cream puff is light. It sits all by itself on the big long prairie where the prairie goes up in a slope. There on the slope the winds play around the village. They sing it wind songs, summer wind songs in summer, winter wind songs in winter.

“Now the people in the village all understand the winds with their wind songs in summer and winter. And they understand the rough wind who comes sometimes and picks up the village and blows it away off high in the sky all by itself.

“It you go to the public square in the middle of the village you will see a big roundhouse. If you take the top off the roundhouse you will see a big spool with a long string winding up around the spool.

“Now whenever the rough wind comes and picks up the village and blows it away off high in the sky all by itself then the string winds loose off the spool, because the village is fastened to the string. So the rough wind blows and blows and the string on the spool winds looser and looser the farther the village goes blowing away off into the sky all by itself.

“Then at last when the rough wind, so forgetful, so careless, has had all the fun it wants, then the people of the village all come together and begin to wind up the spool and bring back the village where it was before.

“And sometimes when you come to the village to see your little relation, your niece who has four such sweet uncles, maybe she will lead you through the middle of the city to the public square and show you the roundhouse. They call it the Roundhouse of the Big Spool. And they are proud because it was thought up and is there to show when visitors come.”

* * *

Birthplace Dedication

From 1941 to 1945 the Second World War was being fought across several continents and involving many millions of people. During that period there was a Galesburg native by the name of Adda George who decided that the birthplace of Carl Sandburg should be preserved. She had only a vague notion of the location of the little house. It wasn't long before she had cajoled one of the Sandburg siblings to show her the actual cottage. There was an elderly woman living in the house and it wasn't for sale yet.

Eventually, the little house was purchased and work was begun. Some said the building would have fallen down in a good puff of wind. Work started on the foundation and the tiny three-room house was brought back to life.

Mrs. George, a determined 71-year-old, stayed up late many nights writing letters soliciting funds for the reconstruction. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, sent \$25.

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Marshall Field III of Chicago sent a \$500 check that came at a fortunate time, and many others, young and not so young, sent donations for the commemoration of Carl Sandburg's place of birth.

In March, 1945, an Association was officially incorporated to care for the cottage on East Third Street. There were some delays in completing the reconstruction because of wartime shortages of materials.

At 4 o'clock on October 7, 1946, the official dedication of the Carl Sandburg Birthplace took place. From the front steps, Mrs. George welcomed a large number of children and adults. Other speakers were the superintendent of Galesburg schools, a representative of the Trades and Labor Assembly which had given a generous donation to the project, Professor Quincy Wright who was the son of Carl's early mentor and publisher, and John L. Conger, professor emeritus of history of Knox College. Then everyone was invited to sign the guest book.