

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

Winter, 2008

The name *Inklings and Idlings* comes from the title of Carl Sandburg's first column, printed in the *Galesburg Evening Mail* under the pseudonym "Crimson," in 1904.

The newsletter welcomes articles, particularly about Carl Sandburg, Galesburg and Knox County. Space limitations may require that they be edited. The articles should be sent to:

Inklings and Idlings
Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, IL 61401

– Barbara Schock
Editor

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The Songbag Opens Again

Once again you can watch and hear real music being made at the Songbag Concerts sponsored by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. John Heasley has arranged the following schedule for the coming months:

February 21–Dan Zahn and Kate Moritte who perform great folk and original material with a healthy dose of swing and jazz tunes from the 30s and 40s.

March 20–Pete Norman and Dave "DK" Kolars are excellent with old time country blues.

April 17–Diane Ippel plays autoharp and guitar along with her vocals.

May 15–Hammer and Pick (Jon Wagner, Jan Sams and John Heasley) play hammer dulcimer, banjo, guitar and bass for great old time folk music and vocal harmonies.

The Concerts take place in the salubrious atmosphere of the Barn at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois. They begin at 7 pm. A \$2 donation is appreciated but not required. Refreshments are served.

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Outta Site

During these cold winter months with unpredictable weather and extremely slow visitor attendance, I have often thought that things are just fine. Plenty of time to catch up on projects and paperwork. Plenty of time to develop new ideas for the Site. Plenty of time to enlarge the scope of outreach. Plenty of time to begin the annual inventory. Then BLAM! It's already April and the business of greeting the public has begun all over again. So much for the cold, quiet days of winter planning.

This year the Sandburg Days “Festival for the Mind” will be held from Thursday, April 24 through Saturday, April 26. Leading up to the festival will be the separately sponsored 2008 “Big Read.” The book selection is Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*. There will be a screening of the 1932 film on Friday, April 4th at 7 pm in the Orpheum Theater. If all goes well, the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association will have the exhibit “Picturing Hemingway” on view at the Site. The exhibit was mounted by the Ernest Hemingway Foundation in 1999 honoring the centennial year of his birth. Keep your fingers crossed that we can accomplish the display of this wonderful exhibit.

In conjunction with the Festival, Marc Smith (a star from last year’s Festival) will be hosting another Poetry Slam on Friday, April 25th at the Cherry Street Brewing Company. Anyone who heard Smith perform or who attended last year’s Slam knows what an exciting experience it was.

The Kickoff for the Festival will again be held at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site on Thursday, April 24th, at 7 pm. The details are yet to be completed, but I’m certain the event will be well worth your time.

Well, that’s about all I have to say for now. Keep warm and watch out for those blizzards and that sneaky April that comes up on you all of a sudden.

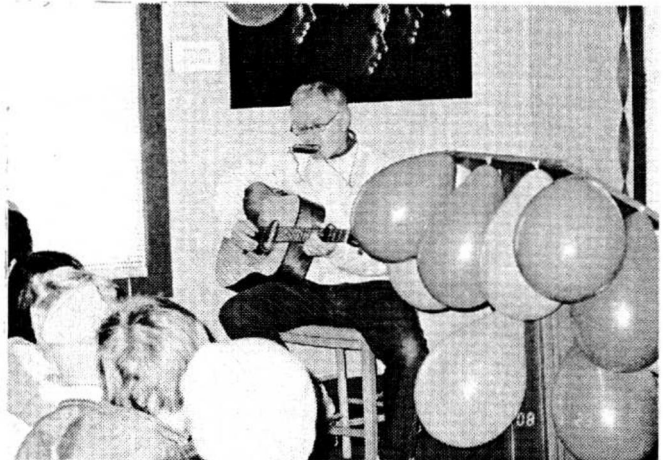
–Steve Holden
Site Superintendent

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Penny Parade Report

Our 2008 Penny Parade contributions surpassed

2007, perhaps by a thousand dollars. Carl’s 130th Birthday celebration brought in more than \$3,000. The students were told the past Penny Parade funds have helped pay for brick sidewalks, landscaping and landscape lighting, as well as a sound system in the Barn, used for the Songbag Concerts and special events. The commonality of the penny was duly noted, as well as its collective usefulness to the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.



John Heasley, a member of the Association Board, entertained children and their teachers at the Penny Parade.

Site Superintendent Steve Holden accepted pennies and checks.



The festivities included quotations from Carl Sandburg about Abraham Lincoln's 100th birthday being commemorated with the issuance of the Lincoln penny and the 100th anniversary of its introduction February 12, 2009. The 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth will bring about the penny's redesign, with at least four designs currently under consideration.

John Heasley performed a set of appropriate songs. Ice cream cake from Dairy Queen and cupcakes from Econo Foods were greatly appreciated by the more than 35 students in attendance from four schools. Another school was scheduled to visit the Site and bring their pennies the following week.

Our more thorough outreach and pre-media release did wonders along with the interpretive and tutorial sharing of various scholastic activities. The student participation and generosity surely reflected well on the Site and the future endeavors of the Association.

—Bert McElroy
Assistant Site Superintendent

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Sandburg's 130th Birthday

On January 6, 1878, the second child of August and Clara Sandburg was born in a tiny house located at 331 East Third Street, Galesburg, Illinois. This little bundle of energy and hope was named Carl August Sandburg.

It took a number of years, much hardship and a lot of hard work for this little boy to find his way in the world. But when he did, it was a real spectacle. He became world famous for his poetry and other writings; not the least of which was his six volume biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Seventy five years later, at a birthday fete in the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, Sandburg said "...at 75 you become a trifle mellow and learn to go along with what true friends consider just homage. Nevertheless, I can't permit myself to be too much impressed because I feel that my productive years are not at an end...."

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Uncle Sam's Cats

On Wednesday, January 4, 1893, *The Daily Republican-Register* published an article about the feline employees of the federal government. More than 300 cats were ensconced in fifty post offices in larger cities to protect mail from the rats who chewed through mail sacks as well as the mail.

The article continued "Each city postmaster is allowed from eight to twenty dollars a year for the keep of his feline staff, sending his estimate for "cat meat" to Washington at the beginning of each quarter. Care is taken not to feed the animals too "high," in order that their appetite for live game may be keen. It is laid down as a rule that no meat shall be given when there is a mouse or rat to be caught."

The article also described the use of cats in the state, war and navy departments in Washington to protect important papers. Rats were known to chew through electrical wires causing fires so the felines provided a safety measure against that hazard as well.

Cats were also kept in the Capitol building and the White House. During cold winter nights an unknown number of feral cats sought shelter in the Capitol. They were said to race through the halls at night. Their vocals echoed through Statuary Hall. The White House kept a black and

white female in the kitchen and a black tom in the stable.

We don't know if the Galesburg Post Office kept a cat, but we are sure Carl Sandburg could have made a good story of it if that had been the case.

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Pennies for Dred Scott

Most of us learned about Dred Scott in grade school. He was born a slave in Virginia in 1799. During his lifetime he was owned by several different individuals. One of them was Dr. John Emerson who was a physician for the U.S. Army. Dr. Emerson took Scott along on several of his postings in territories which didn't recognize slavery.

In 1846 Scott filed a suit in the Missouri Circuit Court seeking his freedom based on the fact he had lived in a free state and should therefore be a free man. He lost the case. Several years later, at a new trial, the jury decided for Scott. Later, Dr. Emerson's widow took the case to the Missouri Supreme Court which struck down the lower court's ruling.

With the aid of new attorneys, Dred Scott sued in federal court and lost again. The case was then appealed to the United States Supreme Court. In 1857 Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote the majority opinion that slaves were not citizens and previous laws passed by Congress could not confer freedom or citizenship in territorial sections of the country.

Mrs. Emerson remarried and her new husband opposed slavery. Dred Scott and his family were returned to the original owners. The family then

gave Dred Scott his freedom. A little over eight months later, he died of tuberculosis. He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis.

Five years after Scott's death, President Abraham Lincoln promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation. Today, the Lincoln penny has become associated with Dred Scott. Many visitors to his grave leave pennies, Lincoln side up, on the marker.

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Tramps, Tramps, Tramps

The economy of the United States was beginning to go into decline in the winter of 1893 and the slump would last for most of the decade. It was later called the Panic of 1893. Many workers lost their jobs. Some of them looked for work in other locations, but there were few jobs in those places. This article in *The Daily Republican-Register* of February 22, 1893, provides some insight into the situation. The hotel d'Coakley mentioned in the report is a reference to the chief of police, Isaac Coakley.

"The police station gave up no interesting item this morning, and yet the cells were all occupied. Tramps! tramps! tramps! The boys are begging. On a chilly evening the average tramp has a choice of two expedients to get a sleep and keep warm. One of these is to hunt the windward side of a haystack some place in the suburbs, and the other is to apply at the police station to be locked-up over night. In nine cases out of ten they prefer the latter. They don't have to walk so far, and they frequently make business arrangements with new pals whom they meet in the cells of the city lock up. Some of the fellows lodged at hotel d'Coakley are good looking fellows but more have faces on them resembling pictured sin. Some are bad, some

are worse in their intentions. All of them get the bounce promptly at 7:30. Unfortunately, the officers have not the time to keep up the bounce act until the last bounce carries them outside the city's limits.

“When these vagrants leave the calaboose they commence to beg as soon as they are out of the officers' sight. One of the rascals this morning had the nerve to ask a prominent citizen for the loan of \$1.40 (approximately \$32 in 2007 dollars). He was tolerably well dressed and said the reason he had to ask a loan was because it was Washington's birthday and he couldn't cash his check. No book agent could discount his check either, he might have added. When the city has a work house this condition of affairs will cease and the tramps and thieves who now make Galesburg a point on their route will give the city a wide berth. Hurry it along! Meanwhile don't blame the police because the tramps are so plenty.”

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Lincoln's First Case

In *The Prairie Years*, Carl Sandburg wrote about the first time Abraham Lincoln was engaged as a lawyer in October, 1836. He had been admitted to the Illinois bar on September 9, 1836.

“His first case was one he had helped work on during the previous year, defending David Wooldridge, in a suit brought by James P. Hawthorn. Hawthorn claimed Wooldridge was to furnish him two yoke of oxen to break up twenty acres of prairie sod-ground; also he claimed Wooldridge was to allow him to raise a crop of corn or wheat on a certain piece of ground; and Wooldridge had failed him in both cases. Furthermore, Hawthorn claimed damages because

Wooldridge struck, beat, bruised, and knocked him (Hawthorn) down; plucked, pulled and tore large quantities of hair from his head. Also because of with stick and his fists he struck Hawthorn many violent blows and strokes on or about the face, head, breast, back, shoulders, hips, legs, and divers other parts of the body, and because he had with violence forced, pushed, thrust, and gouged his fingers into Hawthorn's eyes.

“Such were the allegations on assumpsit and trespass vi et armis, including also replevin actions demanding return of a black and white yoke of steers, one black cow and calf, and one prairie plow. Lincoln's first move was to bring up a board bill for eight months which Hawthorn owed Wooldridge, amounting to \$1.50 a week to \$45.75. Also, for the same eight months, he had used a wagon and team for which he should pay \$90.00 besides a cash bonus of \$100.00. The case never came to trial. Peacemakers settled it out of court. The plaintiff and defendant divided the court costs. In the record Lincoln spelled wagon “waggon” and prairie “prairy.”

The client David Woldridge was born August 10, 1801, in Green County, Kentucky. He married Margaret Hawthorn in the same place October 13, 1830. They had seven children. They moved to Menard County, Illinois, in 1835 or 1836. David and Margaret were buried on their farm when they died in 1857. Their descendants lived on the farm for many years afterward.

Sometime in the 1960s the grave markers were bulldozed into a wooded ravine and the land was planted in corn. There were about twenty graves in the plot of members of the Woldridge and Hawthorn and allied families.

Jeanie Lowe, in the Summer, 2007, issue of the *Illinois State Genealogical Society Quarterly*,

reported on the search for the missing cemetery by members of the Menard County Genealogical Society. Fifth generation descendants of the Woldridge family were happy to learn about the discovery of the old tombstones. But, they were appalled that anyone would be so callous as to plough up sacred ground for a bit more corn crop.

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The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

The Wonderful World of Oz has been called the first American fairytale. It was written by L. Frank Baum and illustrated by W.W. Denslow. The book was published in 1900. The story has been translated into more than forty languages. You can read the complete book at the Gutenberg Project on the internet as it has been out of copyright since 1956.

Baum wrote thirteen volumes as sequels to the original story. He and Denslow produced the stage play in 1902 in Chicago. It played there for six months and moved to New York for a year. A touring company of the musical traveled across the country for another decade.

The songs in the play didn't have much to do with the plot, but several of them became popular with the public. Sheet music of "Sammy" and "When You Love, Love, Love" sold well and allowed the public to enjoy singing songs from the play.

"The Wizard of Oz" came to Galesburg on Tuesday, February 2, 1904. *The Daily Republican-Register* described it as "a gay, graceful and gorgeous extravaganza" at the Auditorium. The play was presented in three acts with nine scenes. About a hundred people were employed in the production of the musical. A former Galesburg resident, L.J. Wyckoff, appeared in the play as "Imogine," the capering cow.

The prices of the tickets were fifty cents to \$1.50. Box seats cost \$2 (approximately \$11, \$35 and \$45 respectively in 2007 dollars). The house was packed for the performance and it was thought three hundred people had been turned away.

The favorite characters in the play were the scarecrow who was looking for some brains and the tin woodman who was searching for a heart.



The 1939 movie, with which most of us are familiar, was quite different from the play viewed in Galesburg in 1904. The lyrics of the songs were written by E.Y. Harberg, a well-known graduate of Knox College and a friend of Carl Sandburg.

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Wrinklings & Wild Things

(Today—January 29—the weather prognosticator is calling for blizzard conditions. To keep in step with this chilling thought, I am quoting from Sandburg's *Rootabaga Story*, "How the Five Rusty Rats Helped Find a New Village." —Steve Holden)

Many years ago, long before the snow birds began to wear funny little slip-on hats and funny little slip-on shoes, and away back long before the snow birds learned how to slip off their slip-on hats and how to slip off their slip-on shoes, long ago in the faraway Village of Liver-and-Onions, the people who ate cream puffs came together and met in the streets and picked up their baggage and put their belongings on their shoulders and marched out of the Village of Liver-and-Onions saying, "We shall find a new place for a village and the name of it shall be the Village of Cream Puffs."

They marched out on the prairie with their baggage and belongings in sacks on their shoulders. And a blizzard came up. Snow filled the sky. The wind blew and blew and made a noise like heavy wagon axles grinding and crying.

The snow came on. The wind twisted all day and all night and all the next day. The wind changed black and twisted and spit icicles in their faces. They got lost in the blizzard. They expected to die and be buried in the snow for the wolves to come and eat them.

Then the five lucky rats came, the five rusty rats, rust on their skin and hair, rust on their feet and noses, rust all over, and especially, most especially of all, rust on their long curved tails. They dug their noses down into the snow and their long curved tails stuck up far above the snow where the people who were lost in the blizzard could take hold of the tails like handles.

And so, while the wind and the snow blew and the blizzard beat its icicles in their faces, they held on to the long curved tails of the rusty rats till they came to the place where the Village of the Cream Puffs now stands. It was the rusty rats who saved their lives and showed them where to put their new village. That is why this statue now stands in

the public square, this statue of the shapes of the five rusty rats, the five lucky rats with their noses down in the snow and their long curved tails lifted high out of the snow.

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Governor Stevenson's Inauguration

At noon, on January 10, 1949, Adlai E. Stevenson was sworn in as the 31st governor of Illinois. It was a gala affair in the State Armory in Springfield. A joint session of the 66th General Assembly was convened for the swearing-in. Six thousand people were crowded into the building to witness the ceremony. There was a cold drizzle outside but that didn't dampen the spirits inside the building. A gala ball for 15,000 was scheduled for the evening.

Through a mutual friend, historian Lloyd Lewis, Stevenson had asked Carl Sandburg to speak at the event. It was the first time a poet had been invited to speak at a gubernatorial inauguration. The Governor wanted Sandburg as a part of the program because he represented the people of Illinois through his poetry. Illinois was the prairie state and Sandburg had interpreted its characteristics in a significant way. Sandburg had also written a massive biography of Abraham Lincoln, the most well-known citizen of the state.

Sandburg's speech emphasized the human qualities of Abraham Lincoln which connected him to all mankind—the "Family of Man" as Sandburg described it.

Sandburg was invited to stay overnight in the Executive Mansion. His room was located on the third floor of the 93-year-old building.

The morning after the inauguration, the youngest son of the new governor, John Fell Stevenson, and

his friend, Edison Dick, decided to ride the elevator up to the third floor to see Carl Sandburg sleeping. The elevator malfunctioned and the boys were stuck in it for an hour. The poet knew nothing of these activities.

Afterward, "Eddie" Dick wrote a thank you letter to Governor Stevenson for "the most Historical event I have ever witnessed." The Governor responded by inviting young Dick and his parents to visit the Mansion again. He pointed out there were many historic sites to be visited in Springfield. He added, "The elevator is running very well and we could have some good rides together."

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Folksongs of Illinois

The "Folksongs of Illinois" is a new set of three compact discs prepared by the Illinois Humanities Council and distributed by the University of

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

Illinois Press. Each disc is \$12.99 and can be ordered online from the University of Illinois Press (www.press.uillinois.edu)

Illinois has a rich musical history which doesn't get much attention. Chicago blues and jazz may be well known, but folk songs, fiddle tunes, gospel songs and traditional ethnic music are also part of the state's musical heritage.

Volume 1 features folk music including songs by Carl Sandburg. Volume 2 covers fiddle music, historic and contemporary. Volume 3 includes Burl Ives, Mahalia Jackson, Big Bill Broonzy and many other Illinois artists.

Three thousand copies have been given to Illinois schools along with teaching materials. Surely the use of the CDs will create interest in Illinois' musical heritage among its youngest citizens..

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