

# 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, 2009

## 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 14, 2009, 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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## Expanded Hours

The Carl Sandburg State Historic Site is now open Thursday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 a.m. Visitors can learn about the cottage where Carl Sandburg was born and enjoy the beautiful Sandburg Park surrounding it.

In the Visitors' Center, a museum documenting Sandburg's life has many artifacts and photographs on display. Videos of Sandburg's life and writings are also available for viewing in the Center.

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## Songbag Takes a Vacation

The popular Songbag Concerts are on vacation, but they will begin again on Saturday, August 22, 2009. Our impresario, John Heasley, is preparing an excellent series of programs for the fall season. Be sure to reserve the fourth Saturday night to ear live music in the Barn at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.

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## Remembrance Rock

Carl Sandburg's birthplace was close to the railroad tracks. It still is—you can hear the screeching wheels and feel the vibrations of the multi-ton cars as they pass by. The park behind the tiny house is a lovely green space, but the noise of the trains is frequently present.

A large boulder, "Remembrance Rock," protects the ashes of Sandburg, his wife and two of their three daughters. It is surrounded by evergreens and step-stones with quotations from his poems etched into the surface.

"Remembrance Rock" was the title of the only novel Sandburg wrote. It was published in 1948. The book received few favorable reviews. Today it is listed eighteenth on the list of the world's longest novels, just after *War and Peace*. The book contains more than 532,000 words.

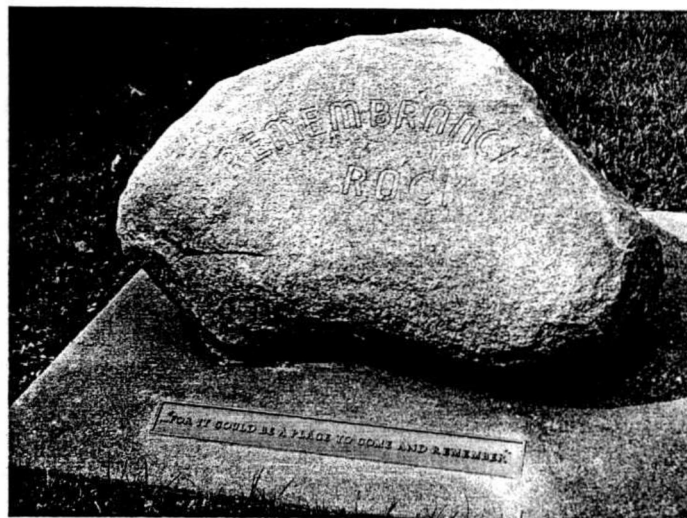
On July 22, 1967, Carl Sandburg died at his North Carolina home, Connemara. He was 89 years of age. His death was front-page news across the nation. His best-known poems were quoted; his biography of Abraham Lincoln was praised; his songs and *The American Songbag* were remembered; his Pulitzer Prizes and other honors were noted; and his feeling about the land and the people of America were described.

Sandburg had written a poem, "Finish," many years before his death in which he suggested "John Brown's Body" and "Shout All Over God's Heaven" would be good songs for a funeral. The 15-minute memorial service in the Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness near his home included the playing by the organist of those two songs. Other Sandburg poems were read and a Unitarian minister gave a tribute to him.

On September 17, 1967, a tribute to Sandburg was conducted at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. About 5,600 people attended the evening service. President Lyndon B. Johnson spoke along with other dignitaries and friends of Sandburg. Charles Byrd played "Barbara Allen" and "Where, O Where Is Old Elijah" on the guitar. The Air Force Singing Sergeants and mezzo-soprano Jessye Norman sang a closing number. The State of Illinois was represented by Senator Charles Percy and former Senator Paul Douglas.

Mrs. John Sutor of Knoxville donated the granite boulder that became Remembrance Rock. It was dedicated June 4, 1966, with five hundred people present for the ceremony.

At sunset on the evening of September 30, 1967, Lilian Sandburg placed the ashes of her husband under Remembrance Rock. It was a lovely fall evening which can happen only on the open prairie lands of Knox County, Illinois.



Galesburg's tribute to the life of Carl Sandburg was held October 1<sup>st</sup> in Sandburg Park. Governor Otto Kerner presided, the American Legion Post presented the colors and Mayor Dr. Robert Cabeen opened and closed the program with appropriate remarks. The Galesburg High School Choirs directed by Roland O. Hegg sang "Shout All Over God's Heaven" and "John Brown's Body." More than 3,000 people attended the service.

The birth of a Swedish boy in 1878 barely registered on the calendar of important events. His passing was noted around the world. Now, the poet, singer, biographer and much more was back to the prairie soil he so often described.

Mrs. Sandburg died February 18, 1977, in Asheville, North Carolina. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth, the ashes were joined with those of her husband. Memorial services were held in the Kresge Recital Hall on the Knox College campus.

Connemara, the Sandburg family home, was

acquired by the National Park Service as an historic site. Thousands of people visit it every year. Many of the books and family possessions still fill the home. A herd of goats is also maintained on the farm just as Mrs. Sandburg would have done.

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### **The Toast of Television**

Ed Sullivan was an early television variety show host from 1948 through 1971. His program was originally titled "The Toast of the Town." It was later renamed "The Ed Sullivan Show." Each Sunday evening millions of people turned their television sets to CBS to watch the hour of entertainment.

Sullivan began his career as a newspaper sportswriter and later wrote a theater and gossip column for *The New York Daily News*. CBS hired him to host a program which would bring together popular singers, dancers, comedians and magicians of the time. He was somewhat stiff in manner and had a decided New York accent. Those characteristics seemed to compliment the presentation. Sullivan always insisted there should be a "drop of culture" in each program.

On February 12, 1956, Sullivan arranged a special program honoring Abraham Lincoln's birthday. This ninth season program was full of culture and history. The guests included Pearl Bailey, Marlon Brando, Doris Day, Hal Holbrook, Shirley Jones, Andre Kostelanetz, Sam Levenson, Clayton Moore and Carl Sandburg.

With orchestral accompaniment, Sandburg read the narration portion of "A Lincoln Portrait" by Aaron Copeland. He delivered its lines, largely consisting of Lincoln's words, in his usual

sonorous manner. He was paid \$5,000 (equal to \$37,750 in today's money) for the appearance. He later said, "Fifteen minutes on TV are just as remunerative as and far less wearing than lecture programs all over the country." At the age of 78, Sandburg was beginning to slow down. He became a frequent guest on national television and vastly increased his exposure to the American public.

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### **Lady Liberty**

The Statue of Liberty is one of the enduring symbols of the United States. It was dedicated October 28, 1886. The statue was sculpted by Frederic Auguste Bartoldi and was meant as a gift of friendship between France and the United States.

The statue is made of pure copper shaped over a steel framework. It stands 151 feet tall. The pedestal and foundation underneath add another 154 feet to the height. The foundation is in the shape of an 11-point star with a rectangular stonework pedestal on top of it. More than 4 million visitors a year go to Liberty Island in New York harbor to see the great monument.

The statue has become a symbol of freedom and democracy to American citizens as well as the rest of the world. Every detail of Lady Liberty has a connection to the ideal of freedom and enlightenment; from the torch in her uplifted hand to the broken shackles under her left foot. The tablet in her right hand represents knowledge. The date July 4, 1776, is inscribed on it.

The idea for the statue began more than fifteen years before the dedication. The original intention had been to commemorate the signing of the

Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. A small scale version of the first statue now stands in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. It was created in 1870.

There was money to be raised on both sides of the Atlantic for the construction of the monument. Engineers had to design the support system inside the statue and craftsmen had to be found to fashion the copper sheets. The U.S. Congress authorized use of the site on Bedloe's Island which had been previously used as a military fort.

It had been agreed that the foundation and pedestal would be paid for by the Americans. In 1883, Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of *The World* newspaper in New York, lent his support to the project and encouraged his readers to contribute to the fund. That effort was not as successful as it should have been. In 1885, Pulitzer appealed to the school children of the country who were encouraged to contribute their pennies to the building fund. The necessary \$100,000 (equal to \$280 million in today's money) needed for completing the platform for Miss Liberty was then accomplished.

The 350 pieces of the statue arrived in New York on June 17, 1885, several months before all the money for building the foundation had been collected. Construction was completed on April 22, 1886. The workmen put the silver coins from their pockets in the mortar between the last stones which completed the pedestal.

The Statue of Liberty served as a light house for maritime traffic from 1886-1902. It was the first electric light house in the nation. The light could be seen 24 miles away.

There are no surviving Galesburg newspapers to tell us whether the local community contributed to the creation of the Statue of Liberty. Surely, there

were contributions from Galesburg's school children for such a heroic lady.

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### **Sandburg, the Troubador**

In 1910 Carl Sandburg bought his first guitar. Over a period of years he perfected his playing and the singing of American songs. He discovered that audiences enjoyed hearing his poems recited as well as hearing him sing folk songs accompanied by the guitar.

In the nineteenth century, singing was a popular pastime. Some wrote their own songs. Many traditional songs had been brought to this country by immigrants. There were sentimental and patriotic tunes which had been popular during the Civil War. Hymns written for different denominations became popular across the land.

As Sandburg traveled around the country he collected more and more songs. His repertoire swelled to 300 songs. In 1927, he published *The American Songbag* which contained 255 of the tunes. The book became a standard item in households with a piano or other musical instruments. Today it is a treasury of American's musical heritage.

There is nothing quite like sitting around a campfire on a summer evening and singing the songs we learned as children. We never forget them; they are embroidered on our brains. Perhaps this summer would be a good time to teach your children or grandchildren about their musical heritage.

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## Another Troubador

Burl Ives was born June 14, 1909, in Hunt City, Illinois. He was one of seven children of Levi and Cordelia White Ives. He began singing at an early age with his mother. His uncle asked him to sing at the reunion of the Civil War veterans of Jasper County. He sang the folk song "Barbara Allen" and everyone enjoyed it.

Ives attended Eastern Illinois State Teachers College (now known as Eastern Illinois University) from 1927 to 1929. He left the school and traveled around the country as an itinerant singer accompanying himself on the banjo. He got a job with a radio station in Terre Haute, Indiana. In 1940 he began his own radio show titled "The Wayfaring Stranger" which became very popular.

In the 1950s Ives appeared in a number of motion pictures: "East of Eden," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "The Big Country." In 1964 his voice was heard as Sam the Snowman in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." He also appeared in a number of Broadway plays. Over the years Ives made many recordings of folk songs and ballads. He also published many books about America's musical heritage.

There was some rivalry between Carl Sandburg and Burl Ives. They competed in music and writing and performing, but each man had his own style.

When the Centenary of Carl Sandburg's birth was celebrated in Galesburg in January, 1978, Burl Ives appeared in a program titled "Burl Ives Remembers Carl Sandburg." The Carl Sandburg College gymnasium was filled to capacity.

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## The Great and Near Great in Galesburg

As a boy, Carl Sandburg observed many of the prominent residents of Galesburg. They were not really aware that they were under his scrutiny; nor in all likelihood, would they have cared. However, they might have been surprised by his conclusions about them.

John Van Ness Standish was a professor at Lombard College. Sandburg had mixed feelings about him. On the one hand, Professor Standish was fond of trees. He caused great numbers of them to be planted on the Lombard campus. Later, as City Forester, he expanded his activities to all of Galesburg. A city park next to the Knox County Courthouse was named for him.

On the other hand, Professor Standish was a man who nursed his grievances. After forty-one years as a member of the faculty of Lombard, he was elected its president. Three years later, in a dispute with the college's board of trustees, he resigned.

Professor Standish had come into a considerable sum of money several years earlier. It enabled him and his wife to travel around the world three times. He was also able to acquire a handsome house with extensive adjacent grounds. Even after those expenditures, there was still a considerable amount left over.

On his death, the extent of Professor Standish's unhappiness with Lombard College was revealed. He left his house and one hundred thousand dollars to its crosstown rival, Knox College.

A young Carl Sandburg delivered the *Daily Republican-Register* to the home of Clark E. Carr on North Prairie Street. Colonel Carr, as he liked to be called, was a leader of the Republican Party. He held many appointive positions over the years, but the office he most wanted eluded him.

For twenty-four years, he was the postmaster of Galesburg. He was placed in that position by a succession of Republican presidents. For several of those years he also edited the *Galesburg Daily Republican*.

In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison named him Minister to Denmark. There Colonel Carr remained until 1894, when his successor was designated by President Grover Cleveland. Ironically, it had been Cleveland who terminated Carr's service as postmaster.

The office Carr most wanted was that of United States Representative. When he sought it, he had the misfortune of being opposed by Philip Sidney Post. General Post had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his valor during the Civil War. Colonel Carr had been a military aide to Governor Richard Yates. However, the shot and shell of armed conflict had come nowhere near him. It was a time when past service on an actual battlefield was indispensable for anyone seeking high political office. Lacking that, Colonel Carr's aspirations could not be realized.

More than a few graduates of Knox College have gone on to establish national reputations. One of them was John H. Finley.

After receiving his degree, Finley had gone east where he entered the field of economics. He became renowned as a teacher, lecturer, and author in that discipline. Many were the honors and accolades heaped upon him.

Consequently, when Knox College was seeking a new president, he was tendered the position. At the time, he was only twenty-nine years old. When he took office in 1892, he was easily the youngest college president in the nation. As president, Finley revised and extended the curriculum, but

his greatest achievement was giving the college prestige.

While in the east, he had developed a wide acquaintanceship among many of the great and famous men of those years. He was able to entice them to come to Galesburg to speak at the school. Over time, their visits made the college as well known as eastern schools such as Amherst, Williams, Oberlin and Dartmouth.

Carl Sandburg remarked that while Finley brought national fame to Knox College, he also made a big name for himself. As a result, he was offered and accepted the chair of politics at Princeton University. It was not his last career move. A few years later, he joined *The New York Times*. When he died, he was its editor-in-chief.

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### **The Day Book**

In an almost desperate attempt to increase revenue, a number of newspapers have taken to selling space on their front pages. There is nothing new about the practice; a hundred and twenty-five years ago most newspaper front pages were almost wholly devoted to advertising. In time, whether out of embarrassment or some hitherto unexpressed aesthetic sense, the front pages were finally devoted to reports of the events of the day. However, advertisements abounded in the rest of the newspaper. The difference between profit and loss was often determined by the amount of advertising a newspaper managed to sell. The most constant and lucrative advertising was that placed by the major department stores. In Chicago, those included Marshall Field, Carson Pirie Scott, Mandel Brothers, the Boston Store and the Fair Store. Without their patronage, a newspaper was doomed to fail. Or so it seemed.

A publishing mogul named E. W. Scripps believed otherwise. He was fairly confident a newspaper could subsist on subscriptions and newsstand sales alone. He decided to determine if his beliefs were correct. His experiment is described in the book, *Freedom from Advertising: E.W. Scripps's Chicago Experiment*, by Duane C.S. Stoltzfus (University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago)

Edward Wyllis Scripps was the last of thirteen children sired by James Moog Scripps with three successive wives. He was born on the family farm near Rushville, the seat of Schuyler County, Illinois. The farm had been purchased by his grandfather who lived in London, as a place his son James might be sent. The son had twice failed as a bookbinder, and showed even less talent for publishing, in which most of the Scripps family was engaged. Accompanying him to Schuyler County were six children and a really fine library. The elder Scripps quickly found a wife, and with her had seven more children.

E.W.'s half sister, Ellen Browning Scripps, who was eighteen years older than he, became his protector and mentor. She helped him to learn to read at age five, and introduced him to the finer volumes in the family library. She had graduated from Knox College and had taught school for several years. Later, she would invest in the newspapers her brother acquired, and became quite wealthy. Perhaps because she was not involved in the establishment of the advertisement-free newspaper, the book gives her short shrift.

With the help of Negley Cochran, one of the editors of another of his newspapers, Scripps launched his adless newspaper, *The Day Book*, in September, 1911. As he had done with all of the newspapers he established, he obtained fairly nondescript quarters for it, and purchased a second-hand press on which it was to be printed.

Whether he had actually visited the newspaper is unclear. He spent most of his time at Miramar, his California ranch. Although he received a copy of each edition, he did not involve himself in its editing. That was left to Negley Cochran.

Unfortunately, Cochran was often absent, returning frequently to the Toledo *News-Bee*, of which he was a part owner. He left the *Day Book* in the hands of his son Harold, who displayed few journalistic skills.

Even so, when he was present, Negley Cochran assembled a remarkably able editorial staff. Most of them were crusaders for social justice, like himself, and Chicago abounded in causes to be championed.

One of the many was the low wages paid to department store employees, most of them female, and the sometimes hazardous conditions under which they worked. The *Day Book*, unencumbered by the need for department store advertising, could detail the abuses of store workers. The other newspapers, even the mightiest among them, were too dependent on the stores' favor to risk offending them.

Into this milieu came Carl Sandburg, from Milwaukee. He had been an organizer for the Social Democratic party in Wisconsin, and had been a secretary to the Socialist Mayor of Milwaukee. He was also an aspiring writer, with some newspaper experience. Cochran concluded he had the qualifications for the *Day Book*.

He was hired at a weekly salary of \$25, which was about five times what he had been paid as an organizer, but was still a modest salary for the time. Unquestionably, he earned his pay. Stoltzfus gives much space to Sandburg's investigative reporting, and some fairly confrontational opinion pieces. Additionally, his travels about the town in

pursuit of the news gave him time to compose poems in his mind. He jotted them down, later refining them for eventual publication. Certainly there were more than a few of them. His first volume, *Chicago Poems*, contained many works first jotted down in his little notebook. One of them, *Fog*, is perhaps his best known work.

When he was in town, Cochran would provide instruction on journalistic practices to the members of the staff who were prepared to accept it. Among those was Sandburg, who is quoted several times as having written to his editor to thank him for what he had learned.

The *Day Book* lost money every month of its existence but one. Although its losses were diminishing, Scripps tired of underwriting the newspaper, and "Pulled the plug" in July, 1917. Cochran went to Washington to aid in the war effort, and the staff, including Sandburg, managed to find employment elsewhere.

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It is unlikely they found their jobs as satisfying as those on the *Day Book*.

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### **A Fond Farewell**

For the past ten and three-fifth years I have been editor of *Inklings and Idlings*. My original intent was to describe the life of Carl Sandburg and his work as well as the town of Galesburg in the nineteenth century. More than once the editorial ideas leapt over into the twentieth century. That was alright because Sandburg was still involved in the articles one way or another.

It has been an educational experience and my favorite poet is still Carl Sandburg. I'm also happy that I learned more about Galesburg's history.

—Barbara Schock