

INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361

Holidays 2002

We Can Never Have Too Many

A new name has been added to the roster of members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. It is a pleasure to welcome:

Catherine Cohen

If you have joined the Association recently, and your name is not listed above, please notify **Inklings** and **Idlings** of the omission so it may be rectified.

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The Songbag Is Closed

The 2002 autumn Songbag Concert Series has come to an end. The Songbag will take a winter hiatus over the months of December and January, and it will resume in February, 2003.

The final concert was performed on November 21st. The artists were Sunshine Lawnsdale, Mike Terry and John Heasley, who comprise the group known as Morning Star. They provided a variety of selections on banjo, guitar, harmonica and mandolin.

John Heasley coordinates the Songbag Concerts, which are held in the smoke and alcohol free atmosphere of the Barn on the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.

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The Prairie Town Activity Book

With the Holiday edition of **Inklings** and **Idlings**, the members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

have been sent a copy of the **Prairie Town Activity Book**. It is the Association's most recent publication.

The preparation of the book required almost a year of work. Carol Nelson and Steve Holden of the Site, Laurie Reed of Reed Studios and a committee of teachers of District 205 worked on the project. The committee of teachers included Joyce Behrens, Mary and Tom Cerkez, Connie Kerber and Andrea Vitale.

All the aforementioned prepared articles, photographs, puzzles, writing exercises, maps and chronologies of Carl Sandburg's youth in Galesburg.

The aim of the materials is to interest grade school children in the history of their town and in the life of one of its foremost citizens.

The book will be used in classrooms throughout Knox County. Parents can use it with their children as well.

The Association hopes you will enjoy the **Prairie Town Activity Book**. You may have children or grandchildren who would enjoy it as well.

Copies may be purchased at the Museum Store in the Visitors' Center of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. The price is \$3.95.

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From the Acting Site Manager

Well, I'm still here, despite state cutbacks. The recent state site

managers' meeting in Charleston (November 12-14) was a first for me, and a real eye-opener. I had met most of the site managers many years ago when the meeting was held in Galesburg. That was when the audio/visual room was only bare insulation showing between the wall studs, and rough plywood flooring underfoot. And a few years before the exhibit hall was transferred from the cottage to the Visitors' Center. But we showed 'em a good time didn't we, Carol?

Most of the faces I saw at the meeting were familiar but older. Some were entirely new. I was boggled by face-name connection for the first day, but it got a whole lot easier after that. The site managers are a good bunch. I'm proud to act among them. Tom Vance, the site manager at Lincoln Log Cabin, and host for the meeting did a fantastic job all the way 'round. His staff and volunteers did a four****star production for us. If you have the chance to visit Lincoln Log Cabin, please do--you will enjoy it.

An extra bonus: I stopped by the site's gift shop and found an item which, I think, will be a great give-away/prize for our Penny Parade participants this January. It is an oversize (3" diameter) "copper" 1909 Lincoln-head (wheat-tail) PENNY. I located the source and ordered 1 1/2 gross for our use. We'll probably need more.

The bumner news came the second night of the meeting. In the newspapers Governor George Ryan announced deeper cutbacks in the state budget. The next morning Bob Coomer, Historic Sites Superintendent, stated that the Agency would oblige by pulling any unspent Permanent Improvement Funds from all sites.

What THAT means is "so long," for

the time being, to state funding for our barn walk and landscaping project. Maybe the Association can do some "phased" work, perhaps starting with the brick walk.

Times change, economics and politics, priorities, attitudes. Editorial styles for sure.

I'm looking forward to BIG DOINGS at our Historic Site in 2003: Carl Sandburg's 125th Birth Anniversary. I hope the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association Board and any interested members will let me know of ideas they have for special happenings in the coming year. Not only let me know, but let me know how they are willing to participate in accomplishing them.

IF YOU HAVE HOLIDAY GIFTS TO BUY, please don't forget what your museum store has to offer. You certainly won't want to forget the 10% discount your membership provides you. *We have the best selection of Sandburg and Sandburg-related items in the circumambient area.* Sorry, we just sold out of Wizard Oil.

Happy Holidays, whichever ones they might be.

- Steve Holden

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Good For Man and Beast

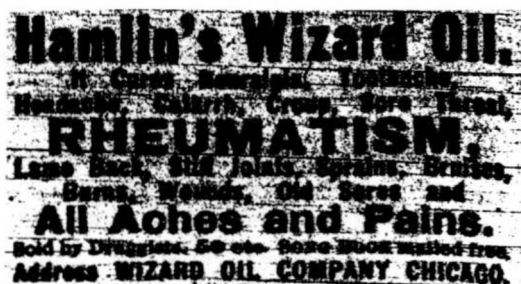
In his report which precedes this article, Steve Holden declared the Site's museum store is sold out of Wizard Oil. That is not surprising. Although it was once a popular product, the liniment is no longer in most households.

In Carl Sandburg's boyhood, it might well have been used by his father, August, to soothe his aching muscles after a hard day's work in the shops of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. It might also have

been applied to the family horse, Dolly.

Hamlin's Wizard Oil was long advertised as being "good for man and beast." The company proclaimed its product was composed of 65 per cent alcohol, and high grade, non-harmful drugs." It was available in the 25 cent and 50 cent size "at all druggists."

Wizard Oil was intended for external use only. However, for those with other problems, such as constipation, the company offered Hamlin's Wizard Liver Whips.



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Sandburg Days - 2003

Next year the Sandburg Days Festival, which has been held in April for several years, will take place in May, on the 8th, 9th, 10th and possibly the 11th. It is hoped the weather in May will be more clement than that usually experienced in April.

As has been true for some time, the opening event of the Festival will be a Thursday evening Songbag Concert at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. The Site will be open during its usual hours for tours each day of the Festival.

Once again the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association will sponsor a memoir writing contest. The rules for entering it will be

printed in the next issue of **Inklings and Idlings**. Prizes will be awarded.

One of the features of the Festival will be a downtown celebration of Carl Sandburg's 125th birthday, only a few months after the actual day. To be sure, as Steve Holden noted in his report, the Site will commemorate Sandburg's natal day all through the year.

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Mini-Memories

(In this issue's reminiscences, Dr. Richard Sandburg recalls something of the life he, his mother and his late brother enjoyed in his grandmother's house some eighty years ago.)

There are two mini-memories on which I frequently dwell.

My father, mother and I lived at 38 North Farnham Street, a modest bungalow in Galesburg, Illinois.

In July, 1919, two policemen called early at our home with the shocking news that my father had been crushed to death by a freight train while he was working between the coal car and the engine in the C.B. & Q. Railroad yards.

A month later, my mother gave birth to my brother, who was named Charles, for Carl (Charles) Sandburg.

Eventually, my mother, Charles and I moved in with my grandmother, Clara Sandburg, mother of Carl, at 1586 East Main Street.

She cared for Charles and me while my mother worked at a small grocery store owned by Augie Ring. This store was kitty corner from our home on the northeast corner of Farnham and East Main Streets.

In those days, the grocery clerk waited on the customer, trudging throughout the store for the goods. She weighed, counted and wrapped the merchandise, then served as cashier, frequently carrying the parcels to a waiting car.

Augie was a friendly, capable grocer and butcher, but not unlike many others with home-owned stores, he was lenient with credit, frequently was not paid, and finally had to close his doors.

Last June, a former classmate at Galesburg High School, Dr. James Harvey Young, returned for a reunion at Knox College. I drove down from Rockford to visit with him, and squired him around the town.

One evening we had dinner with his brother-in-law at the Four Star Restaurant, which is located at the site of Augie Ring's ill-fated grocery.

We enjoyed a delicious, succulent meal, and I found myself reminiscing about the days when my mother worked in the store.

Harvey is the Charles Howard Candler Professor Emeritus of American Social History at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and has written several books and articles about quackery in medicine, as well as other subjects.

His father, the Reverend James Harvey Young, was the minister at the East Main Street Congregational Church in Galesburg, and was one of Adda George's principal aides in revamping the Carl Sandburg Birthplace.

When we received our dinner check, I was amused to find that the amount, \$18, was twice what my mother was paid for a week's work at the grocery store in the twenties.

While living at our grandmother's home, my brother and I spent many happy hours reading, conversing and studying in a cozy sunroom on the east side of the house. Even on cool days, the sun had a warming effect so that heat wasn't required.

On one occasion, my wife, Janet, and I had lunch at a Kentucky Fried Chicken establishment. This was directly east across Farnham Street, and it was joyous to sip our coffee and fondly gaze at the room where my late brother and I spent so many memorable days.

It is a joy to revel in the golden days when my brother and I spent countless treasured moments in our cherished sunroom.

- Dr. Richard Sandburg

* * *

1888

In 1888 Carl Sandburg was in the tenth year of his life. His sister Esther was born that year. He was in the fourth grade at the Seventh Ward School. His teacher, Miss Marian Nelson, was a very competent person and Carl made good grades under her guidance.

The old opera house had burned down in 1887 and a new one was planned. Fred Seacord, the owner, had been to Chicago and visited several "prominent places of amusement" according to the Galesburg Republican-Register. George O. Gurnsey, architect of the Peoria Opera House, whom Seacord consulted, was proposing that a superior facility be built in Galesburg.

The building was to be 140 by 65 feet with a taller roof at the rear for raising scenery. The main floor would have space for a restaurant, cigar store, manager's office and ladies rest room. There would be a

40 by 60 foot ballroom on the second floor which would be heated by steam and have electric lighting. It would be the best dancing floor available.

The new auditorium would seat 800 with room for several hundred temporary chairs. A capacity of 1000 seats was more than the Peoria Opera House could accommodate. The parquet, dress circle and gallery would be furnished with plush opera chairs. There would also be several boxes appropriately furnished for the more well-to-do patrons. The newspaper reported: "Besides this, there is to be a second gallery for boys and hoodlums." That's where Sandburg sat after he had earned his free ticket by helping move scenery back stage.

It was emphasized the steam heat would be produced in a separate building so the danger of fire would be minimized. Four exit doors would allow safe passage for the patrons.

Mr. Seacord said he would use as many Galesburg contractors as were qualified to do the work. He expected construction to begin within the next week.

Also in 1888, there was a long strike by the engineers who worked for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. Carl's sympathy was with the workers. He was familiar with the long hours his father put in as a blacksmith for the railroad and he knew the other employees worked just as long and hard for the little pay they received.

Carl thought the men would have had a much more pleasant life if the working day was two hours shorter. They would have had more time to spend with their families and they would have had more time for rest. They would have had more time to do things they enjoyed.

August Sandburg didn't see it that

way. He thought hard work was the purpose of life. When Carl talked to his mother about it, she told him to keep his thoughts to himself. In later years, Carl Sandburg shared those thoughts with a wide audience through his writings.

* * *

Christmas Eve Smorgasbord

Many families have holiday food traditions which they enjoy every year. Those who have Swedish ancestors may well celebrate with a Christmas Eve Smorgasbord. Others may want to adopt it for themselves, as is often done in American families. It can be enjoyed even without a holiday to justify it.

Many different dishes are put on the Smorgasbord table. The cold foods are placed at one end and the hot foods at the other. To suit the tastes of your family members, you can include some "Americanized" dishes as well.

Here are some mouth-watering suggestions:

Pickled Herring
Smoked Oysters
Assorted Cheeses
Assorted Cold Cuts
Liver Paste and Crackers
Radishes, Cherry Tomatoes, Olives
Fresh Pickled Cucumber Slices
Pickled Beets
Shrimp Cocktail
Lingonberry or Cranberry Sauce
Swedish Meatballs
Baked Ham
Brown Beans
Stuffed Eggs
Potato Salad
Swedish Rye Bread
Swedish Tea Ring
Fruit Soup
Rice Pudding
Assorted Cookies and Beverages

(Continued on page 7)

Wrinklings and Wild Things

Carl Sandburg and Archibald MacLeish, simultaneously friends and poets, felt the sting of the 1940's "witch-hunts" aimed at those with left-wing tendencies. This poem is Sandburg's reaction to his friend's interrogation at that time.

ON A FLIMMERING FLOOM YOU SHALL RIDE

Summary and footnote of and on the testimony of the poet MacLeish under appointment as Assistant Secretary of State, under oath before a Congressional examining committee pressing him to divulge the portents and meanings of his poems.

Nobody noogers the shaff of a sloo.
Nobody slimbers a wench with a winch
Nor higgles armed each with a niggles
and each the flimdrat of a smee,
each the inbiddy hum of a smoo.

Then slong me dorst with the flagdarsh.
Then creep me deep with the crawbright.
Let idle winds ploodaddle the dorshes.
And you in the gold of the gloaming
You shall be sloam with the hoolriffs.

On a flimmering floom you shall ride.
They shall tell you bedish and desist:
On a flimmering floom you shall ride.

[Poetry]

From "*The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*," page 629.

These foods can be arranged attractively on a buffet or table. Be sure to keep the cold foods cold. With plenty of dinner plates, the guests can go to the table several times to serve themselves. They may eat the foods in any combination they wish.

The usual custom is to start with the herring and other cold dishes. The hot foods are eaten next and the sweets follow. Bread and butter fit with all of the dishes. A variety of hot and cold beverages should be available to suit the tastes of young and old family members.

If you check newspaper advertisements at this time of year, you will observe that retailers offer traditional Scandinavian preparations. But a number of the foods on the menu above are easily found in the deli section of the supermarket.

Of course greenery, candles and other decorations can add to the appearance of the display and help create a festive atmosphere.

Here is a recipe for a dessert to include on your Smorgasbord.

Swedish Soft Spice Cake
(Pepparkaka)

1/2 cup butter
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1 3/4 cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2/3 cup dairy sour cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a 9 inch fancy tube pan or Swedish spice cake pan and dust with vanilla wafer crumbs or zwieback crumbs. In the large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar until smooth; add the eggs and

spices and beat until light and fluffy. Mix in the flour, baking soda and sour cream with a wooden spoon until the batter is smooth. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 20 to 30 minutes or until the cake tests done. Cool 5 minutes in the pan. Turn out onto a rack and cool completely.

Makes 12 servings

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The Reporter Sees Santa

(This advertisement for the 99 Cent Store, disguised as a news article, was copied directly from The Galesburg Republican-Register of December 15, 1888, p. 5. We are accustomed to seeing and hearing countless advertisements during the holiday season. We may not be aware the same amount of promotion was used in years gone by. There is no end to the imagination that can go into an advertisement for the Christmas shopping season. That was as true in 1888 as it is today.)

*A Little Girl Inveigles
Him into a Beautiful
Emporium of Christmas
Gifts, and He Sees Santa
and Buys the Girls
Presents.*

Santa Claus came to town Saturday, and a little girl says she thinks it an awful shame because we did not notice the genial old chap, whom children love so much. We asked her where she saw the reindeer driver. Why, she saw him in the window of the 99-Cent Store. He was just the cutest, kindest old man imaginable. She said that he was all dressed in fur, that he held a long tin trumpet in his hand, and that his eyes were as blue as the sky and as bright as the evening star.

Look here, Sis, we said, sposin' we go up there and you show the old

chappie to me. Well, children, we went, and bless my old eyes, it would have done all of your hearts good to have been there too. Yes, there was the genuine, the only real authentic Santa Claus in the window, and he bowed and winked at me and wondered if I remembered the time when he got stuck in the chimney at our house trying to bring a toboggan slide down. Well, I recalled it and laughed over it, and old Chris Kringle shook his sides and his furs and gewgaws and little gifts, so hearty was his laughter. And we told him that we remembered how we used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning to see if he had filled the stockings.

But my little maid is tugging at my coat tails. My, what a crowd! There's Deacon Jones and Elder Brown from clear down the Spoon river way; and Aunt Jane and Grandma Jenks, from Rio; and Billy Funk and his best girl from Oneida, and James Shucks and his bride from Abingdon. My charming little attendant says that every boy and girl in the county is here, and if I don't hurry up there won't be anything to buy. Sly puss! She wants me to see Santa Claus.

But what shall I buy? I never saw such a display of toys, ranging from beautiful souvenirs, dainty favors, to the string dancing jack and the rattle box. Having no use for the last, we turn our attention to building blocks, wagons, toy animals, and we know not what else, until, with the crowding and the looking, we don't know what we want, but we get interested and buy this, that and the other thing--a big doll for the girl, an album for Sarah, a rocking-horse for Frankie, opera glasses for Hattie, building blocks for Jimmie, portfolio for Lizzie, and like favors for the numerous other girls we know, and a tool-box for ourself.

Well, we came out strapped but happy, and hired a boy to take the things home in a wheelbarrow. Mr. Snyder said that he was just cram full of business and didn't have time to eat hardly, and the little girl invited him up to dinner. The rest of the children are all going to the 99 Cent Store, No. 111 Main street.

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An Old Soap

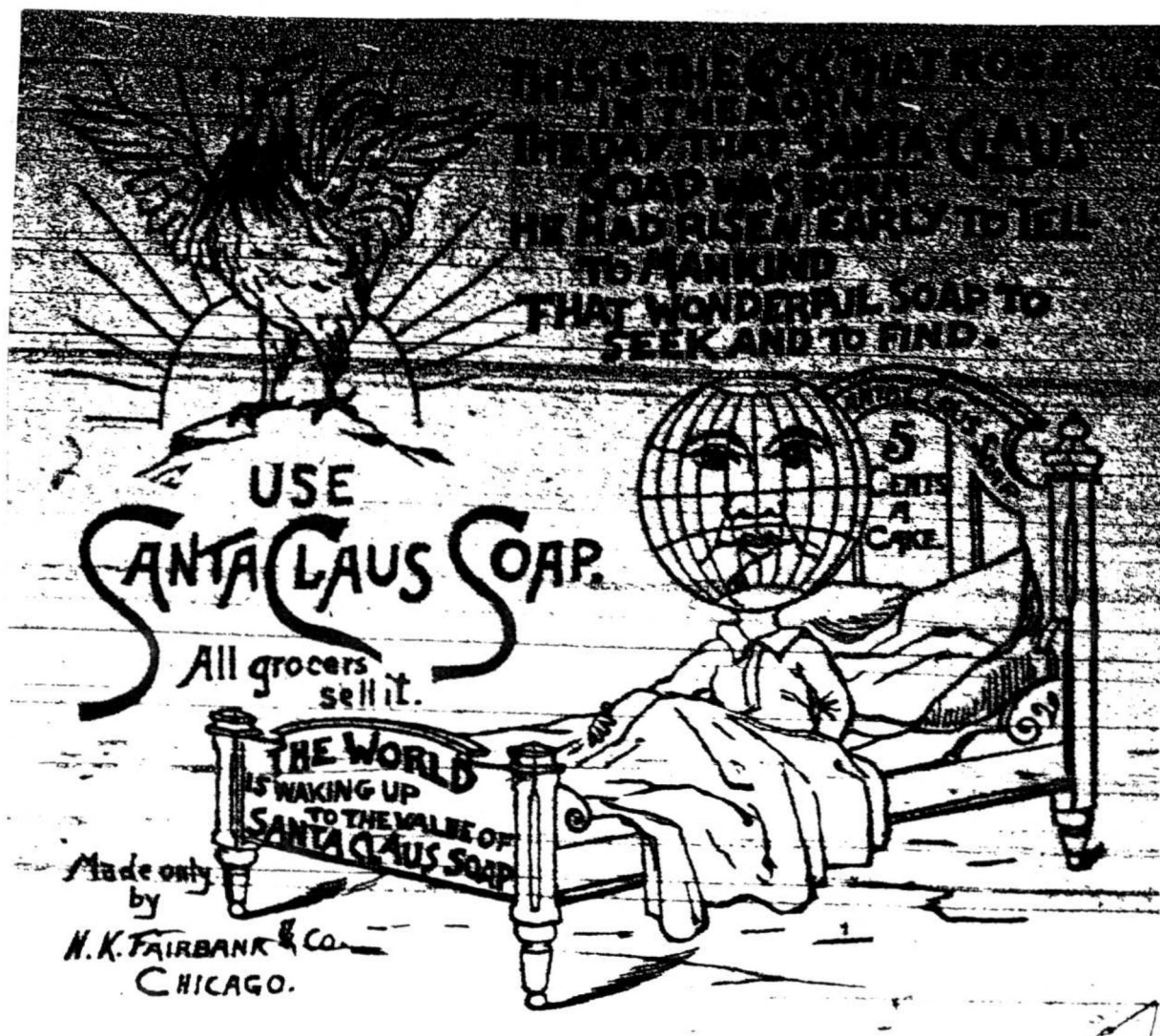
Viewing the microfilm copies of old Galesburg newspapers provides examples of the kinds of advertisements prevalent in days gone by. Many local merchants advertised their stocks of clothing, shoes and household items.

N.K. Fairbank & Company advertised weekly in the Galesburg newspapers. Each ad was hand-drawn and showed a different subject. The company was located in Chicago with offices in New York and St. Louis. Its factories produced several kinds of soap as well as lard. Fairy Soap was advertised as being the best for children. Santa Claus Soap cost five cents a bar which put it in the "expensive" category. It is doubtful this soap was used in the Sandburg household.

Items, such as trade cards and product wrappings, related to Santa Claus Soap are now very collectible. They are listed on several Internet auction sites.

We are indebted to the reference librarians at the Galesburg Public Library for the information about Santa Claus Soap. If any of our readers have more information about it and N.K. Fairbank, we would be very happy to publish another article in a future issue of *Inklings and Idlings*.

(The ad appears on page 9)



The Closing Day

Delightful Scenes in the City Schools

(This description of the Christmas activities in the Galesburg schools appeared in the weekly edition of *The Galesburg Republican-Register* on Saturday, December 24, 1883. The new high school building had recently opened and the students and teachers were delighted to have more space and up-to-date facilities. The high school students organized an entertainment on the previous Wednesday evening which played to a full house in the Study Hall of the

new building. Sixty dollars was cleared and would be used for items the school needed. Below are the parts of the article describing the holiday doings of the lower grade students. Although Carl Sandburg's name is not mentioned, it is likely he was present at one of the celebrations.)

Closing entertainments of the city schools occurred on Wednesday afternoon, and in nearly every room could be heard exercises creditable to pupils and teachers, and generally commemorative of Christmas.

In the hall of the Grammar school a large crowd of boys and girls were seen gathered around some barrels and boxes. All of the new comers carried bundles. The reporter soon observed that the barrels contained apples and potatoes, gifts from the scholars for the poor. A barrel of apples and two barrels of potatoes were thus collected in a short time. In Miss Goldsmith's room a table was covered with garments, which she said were gifts from the children for the needy. Every room in the big building contributed its share to this worthy object.

In Miss Goldsmith's room a veritable Santa Claus distributed little gifts to the children. In Miss Carrie Boutelle's room there was a Santa Claus and a distribution of little favors; also an entertaining programme. In Mrs. Lemon's room there was an entertaining Longfellow exercise. In Miss Lizzie Slattery's room there was an enjoyable spell-down. The pupils of Miss Tubb's room were treated to a magic lantern exhibition, and enjoyed it hugely. In the other rooms the exercises were simple.

The pupils did not forget their kind teachers, so faithful to their best interests. Mrs. M.E. Gettemy received an elegant vase, and Miss Somers, of the High School, was the recipient of a beautifully illustrated volume; Miss S.L. Becker was presented with an elegant copy of Dante's INFERNO, Christmas cards and other favors; Miss Slattery was given by class A a lovely edition of Gray's ELEGY and a plush jewelry case, and by class B a dainty gold watch chain and fob; Miss Kittie Clark was surprised by the gift of a bottle of perfumery and a beautiful celluloid toilet set. There were other gifts, but in the hasty tour, the names were not gleaned.

The pupils of Miss Horton's room of the Third Ward school were

entertained Wednesday afternoon pleasantly by the contents of a Christmas box.

In Miss Carrie Boutelle's room, in the Grammar building, there were pleasant exercises consisting of recitations, music and a dialogue, the programme being closed by the appearance of Santa Claus, who distributed presents. One class presented their teacher with a fine handkerchief, prefumery, and a Christmas card; while another class gave her a beautiful picture and frame.

At the Fifth ward the four rooms held their exercises together in the upper rooms, which, being separated by folding doors, are easily thrown together. The exercises were pleasantly appropriate. Those worthy of especial notice were the recitations by Jessie Norris, Maud Sheridan, Edna Albaugh, George Phillips and Blanche Cunningham, and songs by Lela and Dinnie Mercer, the duet by Albertha and Maud Finney, also a song by eight pupils from room C. One pleasant feature of the afternoon was a marching song by little girls carrying dolls. A number of finger plays were recited by the primary children, the one entitled "Santa Claus" being given with special enthusiasm.

* * *

Bringing Home the Tree

The picture of Santa Claus on the following page appeared on the front page of The Galesburg Evening Mail in December 1900. The children seem to be happy to be helping their favorite Christmas character bring in the freshly cut Christmas tree. It appears to be quite a large tree and the group seems to be nearing the front porch of a house. We hope the tree did fit into the house and the children decorated it with their handmade ornaments.

Color Me, If You Please



Candy and Fruit

At this time of year, it sometimes seems children measure the success of a holiday by the number of presents they receive. That was not true in August Sandburg's household. When Carl Sandburg was a boy, Christmas gifts were not lavish. Money was needed for too many other things.

August Sandburg would give each of his children a five cent bag of candy, a large five cent orange and a simple gift, such as a pocketknife or a modest toy.

During hard times, August would give each a five cent bag of candy, a five cent orange and a sad look. The children were a bit disappointed, but they were all too aware there was no money for anything more. They demonstrated their appreciation by eating all of the candy and consuming the oranges in their

entirety, both pulp and peelings.

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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:

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-Barbara Schock
Editor

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