

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, 2006

The Songbag Concert

The Songbag Concert Series will begin its run on February 16th in the Barn at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street in Galesburg. At the first concert, "Any Old Tyme" will appear. This lively string band from Peoria plays pre-Civil War, Celtic and medieval music on traditional acoustic instruments. Perhaps you will hear some of the tunes you sang as a child in school.

As will be the case with all future Concerts, this one takes place on the third Thursday of the month, and will begin at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served in a smoke-free atmosphere. Admission is free, but a two dollar contribution would be appreciated.

The Concerts are co-ordinated by John Heasley.

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Outta Site

Well, here we are in another calendar year. With the weather being what it has been lately, you wonder whether spring is far behind. Do January showers bring February flowers? We normally DO have February flowers on the Witch Hazel trees (or are they bushes?) which grow inside the north wood fence, behind the two stone benches. I can't say their blossoms are anything to crow about, but they ARE blossoms. About the next ones to show up are the Hellebores, a bit to the west of the Witch Hazels. Again, not terribly impressive critters, but they are a gladsome thing during this cold season. Almost cockle warmers.

Speaking of seasons, this year nearly all State Historic Sites (including this one) will be open seven days a week from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The remainder of the year we will be back on our five day schedule (Wednesday through Sunday). Just try to clearly explain all that to the public in twenty-five words or less. Thankfully, there is a good chance of having two seasonal workers during that "seven-day stint."

Our new brochure, published through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, is still in the works. The size will be similar to our present "green" brochure, but will include a revised text and full-color images. Does anyone know of a good COLOR image of Carl Sandburg? They are few and far between—but it would be great if his likeness were in color as well. Also, does anyone have a current photo of the Barn?

As I am writing this column, it is a chilly, wet January day. It makes me wish for May's warmth and sunshine (excuse me, but I am TRYING to execute a smooth segue here.) and the Annual Sandburg Days Festival, May 11 to 13. The Kick-off will be Thursday, May 11th, at 7 p.m. in the Barn. Our entertainment will be the Mike and Amy Finders Band. Mike and Amy appeared here once before as a part of the Songbag Concert Series, but this is the first time for their larger group. They are top-notch Bluegrass folks, and have a very enthusiastic following. The evening will be further enhanced by "home-made" pie (a la mode?) and lots of good java. The Kick-off is being sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.

Good grief, I just checked out back and three of the four Witches were blooming.

— Steve Holden
Site Manager

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New Winter Lecture Series

Nearly sixty people crowded into the Visitors' Center to hear Owen Muelder on the afternoon of January 22nd. Mr. Muelder is director of the Underground Railroad Freedom Center at Knox College.

He spoke on "Slavery, Abolitionism and the Underground Railroad." He declared that slavery has been an aspect of human history since ancient times. The practice grew as exploration of the earth's surface increased in the 14th and 15th centuries. Development in the western hemisphere required the work of many hands and many backs. Consequently, there was money to be made in the slave trade.



Owen Muelder, shown here with a portrait of James G. Wright, a leader in the Underground Railroad Movement, whom he admires very much.

Mr. Muelder also described the growth of abolitionism in the United States. It was part of the "Great Awakening"—a religious movement which spread across the country in the 1830s and 1840s.

Many of the early settlers of Knox County, who were Congregationalists and Presbyterians from the Northeastern States, supported the abolition of slavery. A number of them became involved in the Underground Railroad helping runaway slaves to find their way to freedom. Federal fugitive slave laws punished severely those who helped the runaways. Of necessity, the work was secret which makes it difficult to study today.

One of the important Underground Railroad trails started in Quincy, passed through Galesburg and Princeton, on to Chicago. There were three other trails which passed through the western half of Illinois. There are no known networks in the eastern part of Illinois because more slavery sympathizers lived in those sections.

The audience gave Mr. Muelder their complete attention and the room was quiet during his entire presentation. Megan Scott, coordinator for the lecture series, deserves credit for arranging such an interesting program.

The next lecture will be Sunday, February 26th at 2 p.m. at the Site. Chris Vallillo will present "Abraham Lincoln's Music." Anyone interested in history and/or music will surely enjoy this program. Refreshments will be served.

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A Member Honored

Donald P. Verene, a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, has been elected a Fellow of the Italian National Academy of Arts and Sciences in Rome. The Academy was established in 1603.

Dr. Verene is a professor of philosophy at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He is the author of seven books and more than 200 published articles. Several years ago he wrote an article about Carl Sandburg and the Nobel Prize which was published in *Inklings and Idlings*. We hope he will honor us with another one.

Dr. Verene graduated from Silas Willard Elementary School, Galesburg High School and Knox College. In 1990, he received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Knox College.

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The Lincoln Penny—A Little History

The 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth will occur in 2009. The U.S. Congress has approved four new designs for the reverse side of the Lincoln penny. The designs will show his birth and childhood in Kentucky, youth in Indiana, professional life in Illinois and his presidency in Washington, D.C.

After 2009, the design on the back side of the penny will be permanently changed to one illustrating Lincoln's preservation of the United States as a single nation.

The Lincoln penny we use today was adopted in 1909. The original design on the reverse side of the coin showed two stalks of wheat. Since 1958, it has depicted the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. If you use a magnifying glass, you can see the statue of Lincoln inside.

The U.S. Mint produces 13 billion pennies a year. The coins are 97.5 percent zinc and 2.5 percent copper. It costs 9/10th of a cent to produce each one, so the government makes a little profit. There are more than 130 billion of the one-cent pieces in circulation (or in dresser drawers) across the nation.

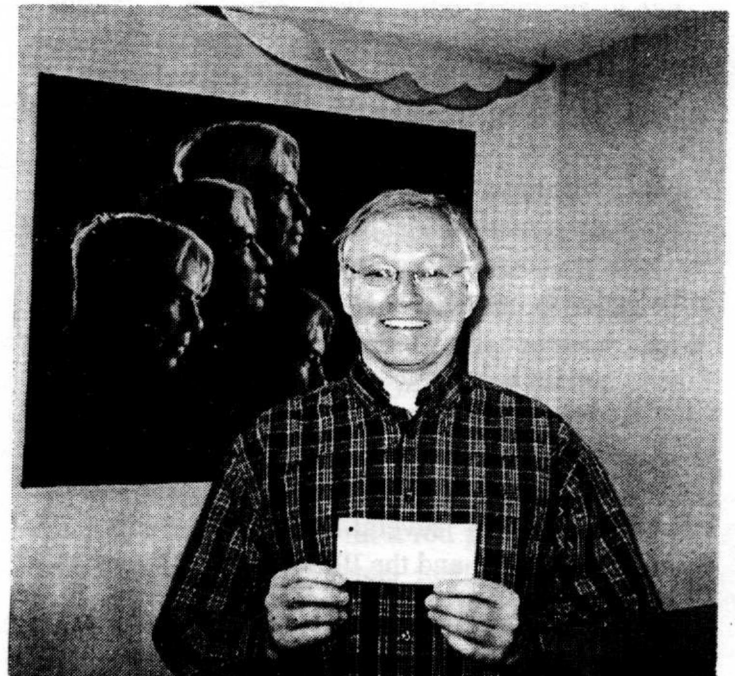
A good many of those coppery coins find their way to the Penny Parade at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. Accumulations of the little coins have been used to make many improvements to the Site over the years.

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The 2006 Penny Parade

On Friday, January 27th, the Penny Parade was held at the Site. The grade school students and their teachers were entertained by storyteller Amanda German. She told an exciting story about how the chipmunk got his stripes and another amusing story about all the ways a child with long hair can wear a ponytail.

The festivities concluded with the serving of snowflake-shaped sugar cookies and organic soft drinks. Each person attending also received a super-size Lincoln penny and a copy of *Carl Sandburg Prairie Town Activity Book*. Each school participating in the Parade received a book of their choice written by Carl Sandburg for the school library.



King School was the star of the Penny Parade. The students contributed more than \$700. Their generosity is much appreciated. John Heasley, Treasurer of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, is shown on the preceding page with the check and a super sized smile. John is also glad he didn't have to carry \$700-worth of pennies to the bank.

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Galesburg Pictures on the Internet

For those of our readers who are on the Internet, there is something new to see about Galesburg. The site is www.umvphotoarchive.org.

Patty Mosher, Archivist at the Galesburg Public Library, has been working for the past several years to digitize old photographs of Galesburg and add them to the web site. More than 300 pictures have been included so far. Some of the photographs were made from glass plate negatives by the Osgood Photo Studio. Other photos were donated by residents of Galesburg. The earliest photograph was taken in 1857.

Ms. Mosher and several volunteers research the background of each photograph and the information is included on the web site.

Anyone wishing a copy of a particular picture can order it via e-mail to Ms. Mosher. There is a fee for each photograph ordered. All the necessary information is on the web site.

The project includes cities along both sides of the Mississippi River between Dubuque and Burlington in Iowa and Rock Island and Galesburg on the Illinois side. Funding for the effort came from several sources including Augustana College and the Illinois State Library.

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Fred Jelliff, Newspaperman

When Carl Sandburg was a newspaper delivery boy he observed Fred Jelliff visit the various businesses on Main Street each morning. Fred carried a small notepad that fitted into his jacket pocket and a pencil. He would ask each businessman if there were any happenings that day. After making notes on the pad, he would go back to *The Galesburg Republican-Register* and write up the stories on a piece of newsprint. They were called "Personals" and described the comings and goings of Galesburg's leading citizens.

Then, the typesetter would fit the letters of the words into his stick, line by line. The set type would be fitted into a frame ready for printing later that day. When the paper was printed, it was the task of Carl Sandburg and the other newsboys to carry the newspapers to the homes of the people mentioned in that day's paper as well as the dwellings of the many people not mentioned in the issue.

Fred R. Jelliff was the editor of *The Galesburg Republican-Register*, and its successor, *The Galesburg Register-Mail* for more than fifty years. He began as a reporter in 1881 and later, was the city editor. After the death of the owner, Zaccheus Beatty in 1896, Mr. Jelliff became editor and part owner.

Fred Jelliff was born in Whitesboro, New York, on September 25, 1854. His family moved to Oneida, Illinois, where he received his early education. He graduated from Knox College in 1878 as valedictorian of his class. He taught at Galesburg High School for three years and then became a reporter for the local newspaper.

Mr. Jelliff was a Republican and a temperance man, true to his New England roots. Through his articles and editorials in the newspaper, he had an influential voice in Galesburg. He supported the

establishment of Cottage Hospital and served on its board of directors. He was a deacon and trustee of Central Congregational Church for many years. He also served on the Board of the Galesburg Public Library.

The history and geology of Knox County were of special interest to Mr. Jelliff. He wrote numerous articles and collected examples of both.

Hundreds attended Fred Jelliff's funeral on Sunday afternoon, September 20, 1936, in the Central Congregational Church. In his eulogy, Reverend Niel E. Hansen, estimated Fred had written about 3,000 miles of words during his lifetime. Reverend Hansen praised Mr. Jelliff for his strong beliefs and dedication to improving the community. The late editor was buried in Linwood Cemetery.

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A Winter Dish

This season of the year is a good time to serve a warm dish which sticks to the ribs. Creamed potatoes aren't fancy, but they have a warming quality to them. Moreover, the ingredients are inexpensive.

Creamed Potatoes

1 large onion, chopped
1/4 cup bacon drippings or shortening
4 cups cubed raw potatoes (about 4 medium)
1 cup milk
3/4 to 1 cup light cream
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Saute onion in 2 tablespoons of the fat until soft; remove from skillet and set aside. Add remaining fat and potatoes; cook until golden brown. Stir in onion and milk; cook a few minutes more to see

how much liquid is absorbed before adding cream. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and stir until blended. Cover skillet and cook potatoes over low heat until tender (about 15 minutes). Place in serving dish and sprinkle with parsley.

Makes 4 servings

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Wrinklings & Wild Things

(Since I seem to have a weather thing going in this issue, I felt it appropriate to include this opening bit of "The Hat Dancers Who Came the Year Summer Never Came," from *More Rootabagas*. --Steve Holden.)

It was the year summer never came. The bringers of summer sent runners ahead. "We are coming, summer soon will be here," they kept on saying, the runners did. And so it went on, the bringers of summer promising and promising and no summer ever coming until all of the sudden--spiff! Just like that autumn was right among 'em, autumn with her streaks of red and her slashes of purple, autumn was come. And all the promises of the bringers of summer were no use at all because no summer ever came that year. And the people remembered it and talked about it as the year summer never came.

It was a hard year for some people. It was hard for men and women who had promised each other, "Next summer we will get married." Because if you are going to get married in the summer and summer never comes, then you never get married.

It was a hard year for children. If your father says to you, "Next summer I will surely get you a new wagon, a big wagon with a red painted box and big yellow painted wheels--next summer," and then summer never comes.

Well, that was what happened that year in the

Village of Liver-and-Onions. Summer was promised—and lots of other things. Then the spring months dragged out—and spring kept hanging on—and spiff! it was autumn.

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Demise of the O.T. Johnson Building

In 1862, Orson Thomas Johnson opened a dry goods store in Galesburg. To distinguish himself from the many other Johnsons who lived in the town, he used his initials to better identify his store.

O.T. Johnson had learned the retail business as an employee of other stores. He knew one had to have many customers to prosper. Therefore, his store never catered exclusively to Galesburg's bon ton.

It is likely that Carl Sandburg's mother was at least an occasional purchaser of O.T. Johnson's wares. However, it is unlikely the young Sandburg made many visits to the establishment.

In time, the store became a major emporium. That growth came largely after O.T. Johnson had departed for California, where he made a fortune by shrewd investments in land in the Los Angeles area.

Those who managed the store thereafter were perceptive retailers. The building which the store occupied after 1904 contained an arcade with specialty shops on each side. The upper floors provided a selection of home furnishings, books and traditional dry goods. Eventually, the store boasted what was called a lunch room which consisted of a long soda fountain and a grouping of tables. It was a much-used meeting place.

There was also an elevator which gave many the feeling it was a big city store. Better yet, the elevator had an operator.

In 1953, Carl Sandburg came to O.T. Johnson's to sign copies of his newly published autobiography, *Always the Young Strangers*. He delivered a few remarks and reminiscences on that occasion.

It is reported he had other book signings in the store, but the visit connected with the publication of the autobiography, filled with his recollections of Galesburg, received the greatest attention.

The O.T. Johnson store had ceased to be a locally-owned business in the 1930s. Its golden years probably were from the late 30's to the very early 70's. Then, like so many stores located in city business districts, it fell victim to competition from a shopping mall. There is a certain irony that the mall carried the name of "Sandburg."

In subsequent years, the old department store and a five-story annex connected to it fell on hard times. Although several small businesses occupied the first floor from time to time, the marks of age were on it. Its last owners planned to have an antique store on the first floor, and were already using the upper stories as storage places for their stock.

In the early hours of January 23, 2006, the Galesburg Fire Department responded to a report of a fire in the O.T. Johnson building. Some relatively inconsequential blazes are described as conflagrations, or even spectacular conflagrations. The O.T. Johnson fire fully merited the title.

Fire departments had to be summoned from the cities of Abingdon, Monmouth and Knoxville to assist the local fire fighters.

At its height, the blaze was marked with flames which leaped several hundred feet into the air. When the inevitable collapse of the buildings took place, falling walls damaged adjacent structures; some so badly that their future use is uncertain.

One statistic which gives an indication of the

intensity of the fire was provided by the water department, which estimated 2.2 million gallons of water were used to eventually extinguish it. All in all, O.T. Johnson had finally left the city in an unmistakable way.

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Lincoln's 150th Birthday

Across the nation, on February 12, 1959, ceremonies, conferences and banquets were held and speeches given to honor the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States.

In Springfield, Illinois, a special program with ambassadors from thirty countries attending, was held. Willy Brandt, the Mayor of West Berlin, Germany, was the speaker. It was emphasized that Lincoln was a treasure to the whole world. Governor A.B. Chandler of Kentucky hung a wreath on the door of the cabin where Lincoln was born. The NBC television network broadcast a special program of photographs and drawings of President Lincoln during the Civil War. A new one-cent stamp with Lincoln's image on it was issued by the Postal Service.

A committee of four Senators and four Representatives had been appointed to plan a Joint Session of Congress to honor the Sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth. The committee chose to invite Carl Sandburg, a noted Lincoln historian, to speak.

Carl Sandburg was one of the few private citizens in the world to speak before a Joint Session of Congress. Those invited to attend included members of Congress, Supreme Court Justices, Cabinet members, the diplomatic corps, past Presidents and Vice Presidents and other dignitaries.

The Session began at 11:00 a.m. in the House Chamber. The Coast Guard Cadet Choir sang a

medley of Civil War songs. Actor Fredric March read the "Gettysburg Address." Then, Carl Sandburg, age 81, spoke.

"Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as a rock and soft as a drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect," Sandburg began.

Then he went on to describe the agonies endured and the burdens borne by Lincoln during the Civil War. At the end of his address, he asked how Lincoln would want to be remembered. He recalled what the martyred president had said about a monument for Representative Owen Lovejoy of Illinois. "Let him have the marble monument along with the well-assured and more enduring one in the hearts of those who love liberty, unselfishly for all men."

Sandburg concluded by observing that those words described Lincoln's true memorial. Not marble, but invisible, "today, tomorrow, and for a long time yet to come in the hearts of lovers of liberty...."

Russell Baker, describing the scene for *The New York Times*, wrote:

"The Lincoln biographer, whose identification with his subject has become so thorough that he often seems to be speaking from a sense of private communion with Abe, went stiffly to the rostrum and peered out from under the thatch of white hair falling lank over his temples.

"His face was criss-crossed with the lines of age. His voice was quiet, occasionally hoarse and quivering with feeling, often vanishing to a murmur.

"When he finished and stood looking out over the House, the emotion he had aroused broke in a

thunder of applause. Moving with great dignity, he stepped down from the dais and moved across the wall of the House to leave.

"Then, in his only gesture of enthusiastic warmth, he paused at the foot of the aisle and vigorously shook the hand of Chief Justice Earl Warren."

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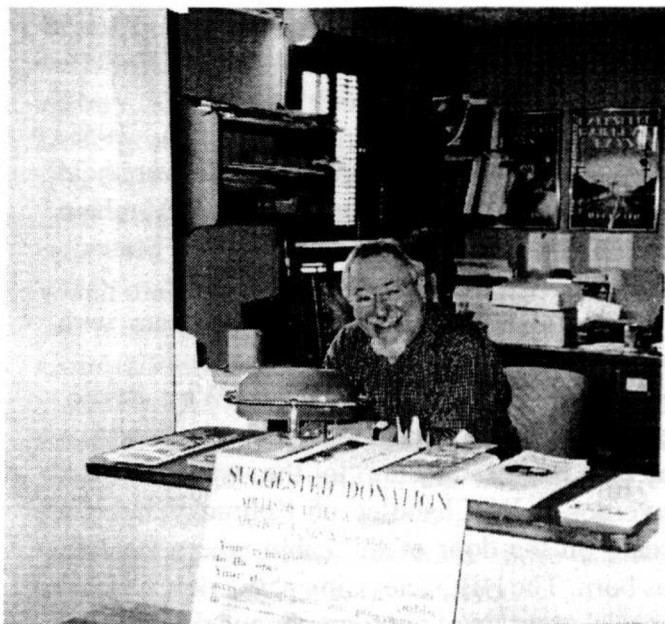
Good News for Steve Holden

Paula Cross, Director of Historic Sites in Illinois, has notified Steve Holden he is now the full-fledged Manager of the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site as of February 1, 2006. We congratulate Steve on his elevation and wish him continued success.

Steve started working at the Sandburg Site in 1990. His main job was to create exhibits which fitted well with his artistic talents. He had been

acting manager since the retirement of the late Carol Nelson.

Below he is pictured at his desk in the Visitors' Center ready to greet everyone who comes to learn about Carl Sandburg.



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