

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, 2008

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 8, 2008, 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.

Plans for the Songbag Concerts

There will be a new schedule for the Songbag Concerts at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site this fall. The concerts will occur on the fourth Saturday evening of the month, beginning in August and continuing through November. The addition of the concert in August will increase to four the number of performances folksong lovers can enjoy.

The Songbag Concerts will continue to be conducted in the Barn at 7:00 p.m. with light refreshments served. John Heasley is working on securing outstanding performers for the fall series.

Walkommen

Pride of the Family has become a member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. It is part of VASA, a Swedish fraternal organization headquartered in Bishop Hill, Illinois. The order was founded more than a century ago to help Swedish-born men become acclimated to the United States. It now welcomes into membership men and women over 14 years of age.

Language and dance classes are conducted for young people so they can learn about their Swedish heritage. Holidays such as Luciafest, Midsummer and Leif Ericksson Day are observed by members at events to which the public is invited to learn about Swedish customs and music.

We welcome the group and encourage them to participate in all the activities at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.

Outta Site

As the Fiscal Year 2008 ends (June 30th), things at our site are being accomplished through the Historic Preservation Agency's Permanent Improvements Funds. The Visitors' Center is getting a new coat of paint and the Birthplace Cottage will receive a new wood shingle roof. Because of their poor condition and appearance, we've had to remove the exterior shutters from the Visitors' Center. Due to a lack of funds, replacing them and also re-roofing the Center will have to wait for next year's budget. Even though the funding is slow, we'll try to keep priorities in order.

The dwarf day lilies planted along the walk to the Barn last fall have popped up and are looking healthy. It will be a while until they fill, but fill in they will. The flowering crabapples planted on our Kellogg Street terrace this spring are also looking healthy. They will be an attractive addition to the landscape by the time they mature.

In spite of the lessening of state funding, the Sandburg Historic Site continues to be a major attraction in Galesburg, and a draw throughout Illinois and far beyond. The coming months of this season will find us providing lectures, readings, meeting and performance space for young actors, community leadership groups and even a wedding reception. I am quite happy to have the community realize what a wonderful resource there is available here on East Third Street!

—Steve Holden
Site Superintendent

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We Are Sorry

Spring, 2008, has been a sad time for the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association as it lost two long-standing members and a former Board Member.

William Brady was a member of the faculty of Knox College from 1962 to 1995, teaching all branches of literature. He and his wife, Sydney, traveled extensively and enjoyed the cultural life of Galesburg. He served on the Board of the Association for a number of years.

James R. Creighton was a loyal supporter of the Association from its earliest days. He was a teacher for many years in Moline and the Armed

Forces Schools overseas. He was the former editor of *The Galesburg Post* which his mother, Mary A. Creighton had established in the 1920s.

Earl G. Park was employed by the telephone company in Galesburg for many years. After his retirement, he taught "Rules of the Road" classes to senior drivers. He was active in many community groups of a musical nature.

These three men were participants in World War II. They are among the one hundred veterans who die every day in this country. The loss of each one closes another chapter of the history of that tumultuous time.

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Local History

At the time Carl Sandburg was born in January, 1878, the City of Galesburg was a little over forty-one years old.

On June 2nd, 1836, the first group of twenty-two colonists arrived at the site later known as Log City. The family names of West, Conger, Allen and Ferris still identify streets in Galesburg.

George Washington Gale led the colonists in their quest for a new life in the West. He had raised a subscription fund of more than \$21,000, equal to \$431,000 in 2007, which was used to purchase about 10,000 acres of land in seventeen sections of Knox County. The land was part of the Military Tract set aside by Congress for veterans of the War of 1812. It was located between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

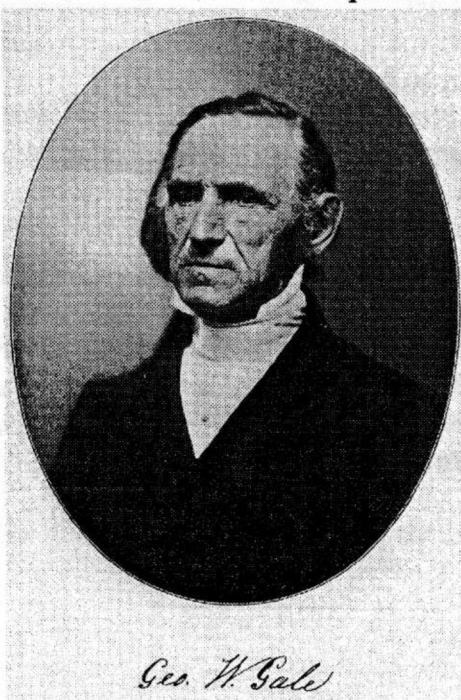
In 1835, the population of the State of Illinois was 272,427. It had nearly doubled in the previous five years. The sale of public land was increasing just as rapidly. The Federal Land Office at Quincy had sold 367,337 acres of public land during the year.

The explosion in population and the increase in land

sales resulted from more convenient forms of transportation on the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes as well as the opening of the Erie Canal. Speculators, who had purchased bounty lands from veterans years before, were dumping large blocks of land onto the market. Several guide books had been published which extolled the richness of the prairies. The played-out soil on the East Coast wasn't providing a decent living for their owners. All of these factors led to what has been called the "Illinois fever."

Religion also contributed to the western movement. More than one man had a vision of establishing a town with a school to train clergymen. Some were successfully established and others became what were called "Paper towns." Illinois has many colleges today which began with the idea of training young men for a life of preaching.

After their arrival, the colonists laid out the town of Galesburg on 560 acres. The boundaries correspond to North and South Streets and Seminary and Academy on the east and west. The colonists honored the Reverend Gale by naming the town after him. Even before they left their homes in Oneida County, New York, they decided there should be no log cabins in the town and the houses would be painted white.



Land was set aside for a public square, a cemetery, a college and a church. The public square is more of a traffic circle now because the business sections of the town tended to develop mostly to the east of it. The cemetery was called Hope and contains some 10,000 graves today. The college eventually was named Knox College and it maintains an excellent reputation among liberal arts institutions. The church, located on the southwest corner of the public square, is known as Central Congregational Church. The current edifice was built in the 1890s of handsome stone and is ornamented with beautiful stained glass windows.

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Moons and Junes

Carl Sandburg had no intention of telling his family he had found a girl who was his equal in every way, except she couldn't write poetry. But, he did invite his sisters, Esther and Mary, to attend the Social-Democrat's state convention in Milwaukee June 13-15, 1908.

When the Sandburg sisters learned Carl was planning to be married in a few days, they insisted on being present for the ceremony. The prospective bride was Lilian Steichen, the daughter of immigrants, as were the Sandburg siblings. Her parents had emigrated to Wisconsin from Luxembourg in 1880. Their oldest child, Edward, was 18 months old when they made the trip. Just like her husband-to-be, Lilian grew up in a household where two languages were spoken. Eventually, she graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in philosophy. She also received honors in English and Latin and a Phi Beta Kappa key.

The license was secured and Carl was married to Lilian in the home of Carl D. Thompson, who officiated, on June 15, 1908, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There had been discussions between the bride and groom about a ring being used in the ceremony. After the ceremony, there was no sign of a ring. The Sandburg marriage was untraditional in more than one way.

A honeymoon in Green Bay had been planned, but the press of Socialist politics and the presidential campaign of Eugene V. Debs intervened. Carl traveled the state giving speeches and writing newspaper articles. Lilian spent the summer on her parents' farm. They wrote many, many letters to one another and he visited the farm from time to time to rest and work on his poetry. Lilian tried to help him as much as possible, but she was lonely and disappointed.

In the fall they set up housekeeping in a three-room apartment in Appleton, Wisconsin. Since they had little money Mrs. Sandburg made curtains of cheesecloth and scrounged an apple box for a typewriter stand. She built shelves and other furniture from scrap lumber. She called herself "the carpenter of Appleton."

In the spring of 1909, she moved to Beaver Dam to be nearer her parents. Carl promised they would have a more pleasant place to live soon.

They moved to Wauwatosa next. Paula, as Carl called her, began to raise chickens according to the latest scientific methods in order to earn some money. She complained that the streetcar passing near their abode had killed several of the chickens which decreased the amount of income.

In the spring of 1910, Carl became private secretary to Mayor Emil Seidel of Milwaukee, the first socialist mayor elected in a major city.

Carl and Lilian had known one another for six months before they were married. They had carried on their romance by letter and actually met only twice during those months. He later wrote a love poem in which he stated: "When I saw you, I knew you as you knew me." The poem was not published during his lifetime.

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Wrinklings & Wildthings

(Even though we are approaching the start of Summer, the weather here is really more spring-like this year. It was in the spring of 1908 that Carl and Lilian were planning their wedding. This letter is from Lilian ("Paula") to Carl ("Cully") in April, 1908.—Steve Holden)

I feel like a wild thing—what with the spring day without and the buoyant health within me! What a day it is—sweet and brooding and throbbing too! Oh, love, I want to play in the woods with you—to run up hills and down, hand in hand—then stand together and look and listen.—And I want to rest my head on your breast and feel your arms folding me, Cully, Heart!—And I must cover your hair and your sweet eyes with kisses—Love! You are so good! So good!

I'm off for the woods—to play that you are with me! It will be part make-believe (for I won't really hear your beautiful resonant voice—nor feel the touch of your fingers clasping mine!) But mostly it will be the very truth. Your Presence, you! Breath of my breath!

I'm off now—the wind shall tumble my hair (the dear gossoon helping!)—for it's a wild day in spring!. Something throbs and throbs in my heart—something throbs and throbs without, in the warm sweet air and in the song of birds!

Something throbs and throbs.

Heart—we are off now—into this sun-bathed World of Spring!

*A lovely letter, one of many contained in **The Poet and the Dream Girl—The Love Letters of Lilian Steichen and Carl Sandburg**, edited by Margaret Sandburg and available in the Museum Store at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. The book costs \$16.95 in the paperback edition.*

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Street Cars and Summer

The body of water now known as Gale Lake in East Galesburg was originally constructed in the 1870s by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to provide water for steam engines. It was later owned by the Galesburg Railway, Lighting and Power Company.

By 1917, the Power Company had developed many attractions on the property which was called Highland Park. It could be reached by taking the streetcar for just 5 cents (equal to 94 cents today). The Highland line went out East Knox Street past Lombard College.

There was swimming for both ladies and gentlemen with bathing suits of all sizes and towels available for hire. Areas were set off with wires for those unable to swim and for beginners. The deepest area, at 12 feet, had a diving board. An attendant was present on Sunday, the busiest day, to assure the safety of the swimmers. A rowboat was anchored nearby in case of an emergency.

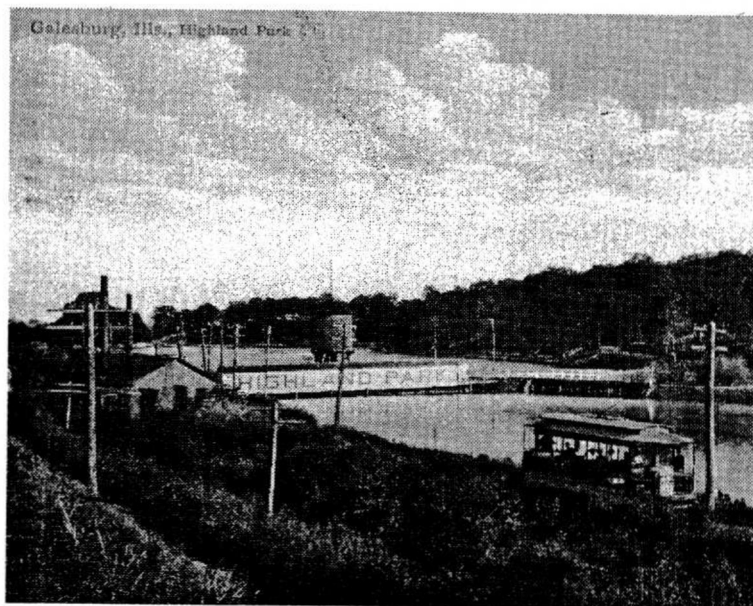
New concrete water fountains had been built for the public's use. An orchestra performed on Sundays and holidays during the summer. The Chautauqua programs were also held at the park.

Various businesses in Galesburg held annual picnics for their employees during the summer. Knox and Lombard Colleges had regattas annually on the lake. Many revivals were conducted on the grounds over the years.

In the fall, many people went to the park to harvest nuts. During the winter, the hardest residents of the city found ways to enjoy the outdoors in Highland Park.

By the middle of the 20th century, the property was owned by Gale Products for the testing of

outboard motors. The company also arranged picnics for employees by the lake. Today it is owned by the Village of East Galesburg.



In its day, Highland Park was a popular attraction for the residents of Galesburg. Compared to the facilities of our time, it sounds fairly rustic. But, it was much better than the pond where Carl Sandburg and his buddies went skinny dipping.

(Special thanks to Rex Cherrington for providing important information for this article and the Galesburg Public Library for the photograph.)

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After the Speeders

In the early days of "motoring," as driving an automobile was called, cities like Galesburg adopted ordinances regulating the registration of vehicles and the manner in which they were operated.

On Sunday morning, May 26, 1908, young Fred Weidenhamer was arrested because he was speeding on East Main Street. *The Republican-Register* didn't report how fast he was traveling. At the time, the maximum

speed allowed was eight miles per hour.

The next morning, Fred appeared with his father before Justice of the Peace J.F. Hamilton. Alderman J. Fred Temple made a complaint that the speedster had endangered the lives of women and children coming from church at that hour.

A fine of \$25, equivalent to \$549.68 in 2007, was assessed and paid. There was no record of how the Weidenhamers dealt with their son after the incident..

City officials, it was noted by the newspaper, would be enforcing the regulations rigidly as there had been many complaints.

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Chris Vallilo's Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln and his life will be receiving a great deal of attention in 2009 as it is the bicentennial of his birth. Many national and local events will be arranged to honor him and to remind us of his importance in our times.

The Lincoln family lived in Kentucky at the time of his birth, moved to Indiana for a number of years and then came to Illinois. The span of Lincoln's life covered the opening of the West to settlement, significant inventions, great arguments about human slavery and the parting of the states during the Civil War.

Much of this history has been captured in music. Chris Vallilo, of Macomb, Illinois, is a singer-songwriter who has appeared at the Songbag Concerts. He has created an album, "Abraham Lincoln in Song," now available on compact disc. It includes Civil War songs which Vallilo performed in a one-man show using period

music. The acoustic music is created with instruments including the guitar, fiddle, mandolin and harmonica.

Some of the songs included are "Dixie," which Lincoln liked very much; "Battle Cry of Freedom" written by George F. Root; "Aura Lee" written in the 1860s and used by Elvis Presley for "Love Me Tender" and "Hard Times Come Again No More" by Stephen Foster.

There are eleven songs on the CD. It is available from amazon.com.

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"Dust and Dreams"

"Dust and Dreams" by Paul Libman and Dave Hudson is based on "Cornhuskers," a collection of poems by Carl Sandburg. The collection won the Pulitzer Prize in 1919.

The Prairie Players Civic Theater has received permission to perform the world premiere of the musical work on August 8, 9 and 10, 2008, in Galesburg.

The play tells the story of the people of the prairie using Sandburg's words and incorporating the images into the music. There are references to Galesburg and the railroad in the production.

"Dust and Dreams" will be performed August 8 and 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Orpheum Theater. There will be a matinee at 2:00 p.m. on August 10th. Tickets are available from the Orpheum box office.

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Galesburg's Fourth

On April 27, 1900, the *Republican-Register* reported

plans for celebrating the Fourth of July at the Galesburg Driving Park on Grand Avenue were being prepared. There would be a full card of running, pacing and trotting horses as well as bicycle races. In addition, there would be "guideless races" in which the horses ran without drivers or riders.

On the Fourth, the day's program started at 12:30 with a horse show including "all sorts of stallions, standard bred two-year-old horses, coachers, draft horses, thoroughbreds, saddle horses, road teams, single drivers and draft teams."

There was also an exhibition of horses and an elk diving from a platform into a pool of water. A platform forty feet high had been erected and a hole eleven feet deep had been dug and filled with water. The diving horses were named Powderface and Cupid. They walked up a ramp to the platform and jumped off at the word of their owner. As soon as they were out of the water, the horses nuzzled their trainer for some sugar which they knew was due them.

Old Charley, the elk, wasn't so eager to jump off the platform which caused much laughter in the audience. He eventually made the dive after much coaxing.

The track was formerly known as the Williams Track. On July 4th, 1900, it was formally rededicated as the speedway of the Galesburg Driving Association. The races were very good and fast and some of the finishes were close so the crowd enjoyed itself immensely. It was estimated two thousand people were in attendance.

The day was hot, but there was a cooling breeze at the racetrack. Lemonade and popcorn sellers did a good business.

Of course, there was noise. It started early on the

morning of the Fourth and didn't end until the following morning. Pistols, firecrackers and miniature cannons kept up a constant racket.

As usual, there were a number of accidents in the city resulting from the use of fireworks and gun powder. There were burns to faces and hands as well as pellets to be picked out of human flesh by a doctor. Several of the incidents were due to poorly manufactured fireworks, but others were due to careless handling of explosive materials.

The C.B. & Q. Railroad announced it had carried more than two thousand passengers to and from Galesburg on the Fourth. There were celebrations in neighboring towns as well. Individuals and families traveled to and from Galesburg to visit and enjoy the holiday. It was a good business day for the railroad.

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History and Your Family

Many of the people who read *Inklings and Idlings* have an interest in history as well as Carl Sandburg. Lifelong residents of Galesburg can recall their own experiences which are related to articles in the newsletter. We invite them write an article of their reminiscences for publication.

It is said there are only six degrees of separation between all the individuals on the earth. In other words, we are all related, one or more times.

In a recent article in the *Illinois State Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Margaret M. Kapustiak wrote of her experience re-reading Carl Sandburg's biography of Abraham Lincoln—*The Prairie Years* and *The War Years*. She was amazed at the number of dates, names and places in the books. As a genealogist, she knew those things are the most important ingredients of a family history. She wrote "I wished I had family who were in those areas in those time periods, so I could

hope that they had met Abraham Lincoln.”

Sandburg had traveled the country collecting historical material, talking to people and visiting the places where Lincoln lived and worked. Names, places and incidents were used to create the biographical record.

Every person has a lifetime recording of the same kinds of names, places and incidents. They often connect with major national and world events, such as World War II, the energy crisis of the 1970s or, even getting a speeding ticket when they first began to drive an automobile.

Re-reading Sandburg's biography could be an interesting experience because it would provide you with some ideas about the way your grandparents or great grandparents lived. It might also reveal a connection to another branch of your family.

A Summertime Dessert

Lingonberry Rice

2/3 cup uncooked long grain rice
4 cups boiling water
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
3/4 cup whipping cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup lingonberry preserves

Cook the rice in the boiling water 25 to 30 minutes. Drain and allow to cool. Mix the sugar and lemon peel into the rice. Whip the cream until stiff and stir in the vanilla. Add to the rice and stir to blend. Spread half of the rice mixture in a clear glass serving dish. Add a layer of lingonberries and the rest of the rice. Chill thoroughly before serving

Makes 4 to 6 servings

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