

---

# 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](http://www.sandburg.org)

---

Autumn, 2009

---

## NEW OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

At the annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association on July 14, 2009 the following officers and directors were elected for the 2009-2010 term: President Norm Winick, Vice-President Rex Cherrington, Secretary Bert McElroy, Treasurer John Heasley, and Directors Chuck Bednar, Patty Christianson, Tom Foley, Mike Hobbs, Karen Lynch, Laurie Muelder, Rick Sayre, Christian Schock, and Stan Shover. Site Director Martha Downey is ex officio Director. 2008-2009. Directors Patty Moshier, John Pulliam, Megan Scott, and Brian Tibbets did not seek re-election. We thank them for their service.

## BARBARA SCHOCK RETIRES AS EDITOR OF INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

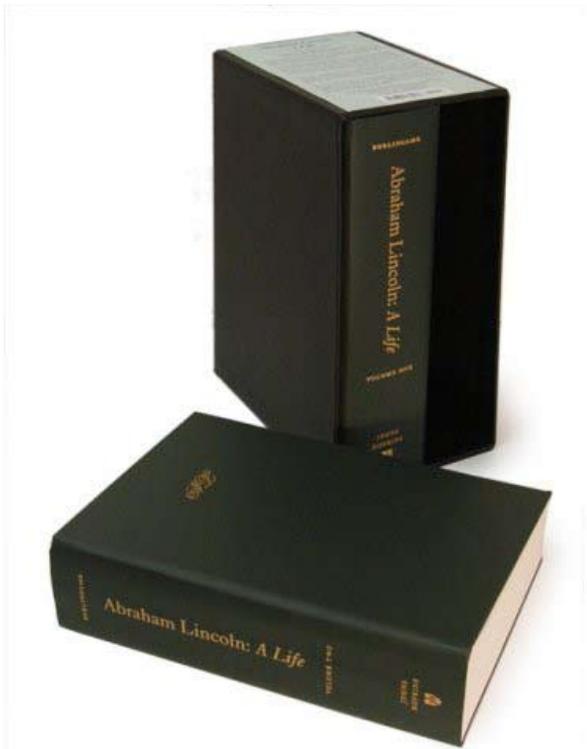
The Summer, 2009 edition of *Inklings and Idlings* was Barbara Schock's last as editor. She has retired after filling this position for over ten years. At the July 14 annual meeting of the CSHSA one of the board members commented that reading *Inklings and Idlings* was one of the highlights of membership in the Association. Barbara invested a lot of time, effort, and research in the newsletters. She covered a wide range of topics regarding the life and times of Carl Sandburg and presented them in a way that reflected her admiration for the man. Thank you Barbara for a job well done. Mike Hobbs volunteered to fill the editor position. This is his first issue.

## THE SONGBAG CONCERT SERIES

The Songbag Concert Series resumed on August 29th with a performance by folk singer Mark Dvorak. The next performance will be on Saturday, September 26th at 7 pm in the Barn by Bovee and Heil. Since 1980 they have traveled the country together taking old time music to audiences of all ages at festivals, fairs, concerts, dances, schools, libraries, music camps, radio, and TV programs. Along with a repertoire including dance tunes, ballads, cowboy songs, humorous and sentimental numbers, blues, and rags, they spice their shows with stories, history, and folklore. They both sing and play fiddle, banjo, guitar, and harmonica. The concerts are free and open to the public, but a \$3.00 donation is appreciated. To check on later Songbag concerts go to the web site [johnheasley.com](http://johnheasley.com).

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A LIFE

Michael Burlingame's two-volume *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* published in 2008 is expected to be the standard Lincoln biography for years to come. In his *Author's Note* at the beginning of Volume I Burlingame states that his biography "offers new interpretations, connecting Lincoln's private and public lives, and incorporates the findings of countless excellent scholarly works on nineteenth-century America published since the appearance of the only comparable multi-volume biography, Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (two volumes, 1926), and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (four volumes, 1939)." In further reference to



Sandburg Burlingame writes, “The year after Carl Sandburg’s *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* appeared, he penned a letter that resonates with me. In response to a critic who faulted those volumes for their analytical shallowness, use of dubious sources, lack of documentation, and many factual errors, he wrote of his amazement ‘that the book got born, considering that many days when completely exhausted I despaired of ever bringing it through in accordance with the original design.’ By the time he finished, he said, he had spent some \$11,000 on the project, ‘was near a physical wreck, and believed the book would only slowly and across a long future make its way to the audience for whom it was intended.’ While I can identify with the sentiments expressed in Sandburg’s letter, my approach to Lincoln differs from his. Sandburg was a poet, I am a scholar. Our treatment of the famous letter of condolence to the Widow Bixby, written in 1864, vividly illustrates the difference between those two sensibilities. With a striking command of language, Sandburg described the document thus: ‘[T]hese were blood-color syllables of a sacred music.’ I could never craft such a memorable sentence. As a scholar, I was more interested in a question Sandburg skipped over: Did Lincoln actually write the Bixby letter?” Sandburg’s biography is long on elegant touches

but short on research in unpublished sources. . . . This biography relies on many sources simply unavailable to Sandburg and others, including The Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, which were first opened to public inspection in 1947.” Traditional information about Lincoln combined with recent findings made writing a new biography tenable, according to Burlingame, and “senior historians” such as James M. McPherson, Don E. Fehrenacher, Allen C. Guelzo, Philip Shaw Paludan, and Gabor S. Boritt might have taken on this endeavor. Among the “senior historians” that Burlingame lists is Douglas L. Wilson of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College. The original unedited version of *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* can be seen on the website of the Lincoln Studies Center <[www.knox.edu/lincolnstudies](http://www.knox.edu/lincolnstudies)>

## THE LETTERS OF CARL SANDBURG

Included In the book *The Letters of Carl Sandburg* edited by Herbert Mitgang is a letter dated May 1, 1898 from twenty year old private Sandburg, Co. C, 6th. Regiment, Illinois National Guard, from training camp in Springfield, Illinois to his parents: “Dear folks:-I don’t feel much like writing a letter, as I may be with you again in a week, because [Gov. John R.] Tanner has ordered that no one who has enlisted since the 15th will be admitted to examination for the U.S. Army, though it may come out all right yet. There is many a young fellow here learning to appreciate home. The first day I was here Andy Tanning [Sandburg’s tent mate] & I went through the Capitol building & enjoyed the fine view from the dome. As far as my health is concerned, don’t you worry. I can pick out lots of boys here whose only ailment is homesickness. . . . Geo. Martin of Knox College is also writing for the Mail, so I am going to write only once in a while. That letter Thursday was almost all from me, but there is no earthly use of 2 reporters in one co. & if I write once a week to Home, Mary [sister], Vic [Sjodin], John {Sjodin} and N. Henderson St., I will be kept busy. Yesterday, we marched 5 mi. & some of the boys were pretty tired. . . . Well, m give Martha

[sister] and Esther [sister] my kisses & love to all. C.S. P.S:-Send this letter to Mary [Mary taught at Bishop Hill] & tell her I will write Mon. or Tuesday. C.S” Mitgang notes that Sandburg occasionally contributed to the Galesburg *Evening Mail*, and that he kept a diary. A July 25 entry in the diary: “Sight Porto Rico . . . threw shells around vicinity.” According to Mitgang, “By September 21, 1898, Sandburg was home from the war.”

## **PAULA SANDBURG’S CHIKAMING GOAT HERD**

In her book *Paula Sandburg’s Chikaming Goat Herd* author Kathleen Byrne writes, “Paula’s life and the impression she made on others reveal an exceptional personality and the ability to succeed at anything she attempted. It may then seem somewhat puzzling that she chose to raise dairy goats as a career. However, there are several reasons for the rise of the Chikaming herd. Dairy goats were not just a hobby for Paula. She had a keen interest in breeding and genetics that was probably inherited from the Steichen family. Her father was a farmer and gardener, and her brother Ed raised hybrid delphiniums. . . . On a trip to Edward Steichen’s Connecticut farm in 1940, Paula wrote that she enjoyed seeing his experiments in cross breeding and hybridizing plants. Fortunately for the dairy goat industry, Paula’s interest in genetics was accompanied by a scientific mind that enabled her to translate her interest into accomplishment.” Byrne shows the following chronology of Mrs. Sandburg’s Chikaming Goat Herd:

1935- Bought first goats, including first purebred Toggenburg.

1935- Family chooses herd name Chikaming.

1936- Bought first Nubian.

1937- Chikaming herd put on official test for milk production.

1938-1941- Big show wins at Ohio and Illinois State Fairs.

1945- Chikaming herd moves from Chikaming Goat Farm, Harbert, Michigan to Connemara Farm, Flat Rock, North Carolina.

1946- Helga Sandburg Toman, Chikaming herd partner. Grade A Dairy started. Bought first Saanens.

1950’s-Numerous show wins at Western Carolinas Dairy Goat Association Show.

1952- Helga Sandburg Golby leaves North Carolina. Chikaming herd at its largest.

1960- Jennifer II, Chikaming Toggenburg doe, sets world record for milk production with 5,750 lbs. of milk in ten months.

1964- Paula Sandburg receives award for outstanding service to the dairy goat industry.

1967- Chikaming herd dispersed.

## **SANDBURG MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Carl Sandburg passed away on July 22, 1967 at the age of eighty-nine. On the following October 1, three thousand people gathered on the grounds behind his birthplace on East Third Street in Galesburg for his memorial service. Among those in attendance for the service were Sandburg’s widow Paula, daughter Margaret, sister Esther, nephews Martin Sandburg and Dr. Richard Sandburg, boyhood friend Oscar Larson, two Spanish-American War veterans and 100 wounded Vietnam War veterans from the Great Lakes Naval hospital. CSHSA Board Member Stan Shover also attended. Here is his recollection of the service and his comments on Sandburg’s legacy.

“As the picturesque autumn season arrives at our land of bronzed corn, colorful trees, and spirited weather, I am reminded of the fact that I was one of the fortunate 3,000 people who attended the memorial service which celebrated the life of Carl Sandburg at Sandburg Park on October 1, 1967. Mr. Sandburg’s widow had placed the ashes of her husband under



***Paula Sandburg & Gov. Otto Kerner  
prior to Memorial Service***

Remembrance Rock at sunset the day before. Governor Kerner was present at the tribute, and I will never forget the music "Shout All Over God's Heaven" and "John Brown's Body" that enhanced the absolutely awesome scene that day. I had celebrated my 40th birthday in September, and I distinctly remember thoughts in my mind concerning this tribute honoring a Galesburg author who had spent his early years in this peaceful rural area of America. One of those thoughts was my decision that (even though I could not be buried there) I would some day have a birthday in this setting. Forty years later in September, 2007, I did just that! It was my 80th, and over 200 people greeted me and listened to the music of John Heasley and friends. A storm had not been kind to the area on the day before, but the effort of Bert McElroy to restore much of the beauty of the park in such a short time was unbelievable! The forty year interval between the two events described above were filled with teaching children who were being parented with values and an environment that Carl Sandburg respected and loved. No child left my classes unaware that Mr. Sandburg was an artist of the world and one that should make us special

and proud. For several years I have helped sponsor a Young Artist project in the Abingdon elementary school. We accompany the winners to the Birthplace, sit in the garden to visit, and "step the steps" of Quotation Walk. The young authors read each quotation as they journey around the Rock. It is an inspiration to hear his words being read and interpreted by elementary students. As a member of the Historic Site Board please consider this a special invitation to "do" the walk! Even if you have previously visited the cottage and/or the museum, take the time to walk the walk again. The literary genius of this man is evidenced in each stepping stone message."

## **A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP: CARL SANDBURG & JUANITA KELLY BEDNAR**

This is CSHSABoard Member Chuck Bednar's account of his mother's friendship with Sandburg and her involvement with the Birthplace:

"When Mike Hobbs asked me to submit a story for the newsletter about my mother Juanita Kelly Bednar, I was reluctant to write a first-hand account of her friendship with Carl Sandburg. This is because many of my recollections are formed by osmosis of the early memories as a child at the Sandburg activities that swirled around our home. In the formative years with my younger brother Rick we were gifted with the experience of witnessing the extraordinary dedication my parents had for the Sandburg "cause". She was always supported by my father Charles, Sr. as he patiently fulfilled her weekend "to do" list of necessary errands that he performed on behalf of the Carl Sandburg Association. In their marriage my father was the unsung hero. For Rick and me it was in the later years of our maturity that we put Sandburg's influence on our lives in historic perspective. This sketch is about a facet of her multi-faceted life and insights into Juanita's friendship with Sandburg. It may provide a viewpoint of Juanita's participation, but it is intertwined with the often reported story about how the birthplace was found and restored.

Indeed, credit is due to a hearty band of dedicated community volunteers who dreamed big dreams and made them come true.

Juanita was totally dedicated to Adda George, the consummate Sandburg buff whose leadership led to the discovery and restoration of the Sandburg birthplace. Juanita and Chuck both believed Adda in the chart she set for the acquisition and preservation of the birthplace. Adda was demanding and a perfectionist for her vision of the future of this historic place. At times her goals were very challenging, but she and other committed members of the Association were dedicated to achieving them. Adda set the tone. Juanita did her very best to follow her clarion call.

Adda Gentry George was born in Ottawa, Illinois in 1873. Her family moved to Galesburg. She graduated from Galesburg Senior High School and from Knox College (1895). Early in her teaching career she married John George. He was a learned scholar who received acceptance to Harvard and later studied in England. Soon after the birth of their daughter Margaret, Mr. George died leaving Adda a widow at the age of 31. She continued her teaching career in English and relocated to Milwaukee. At this time she first learned about Carl Sandburg who was establishing a promising reputation as an orator and writer on social issues for a Milwaukee newspaper. They shared common political interests.

Closing out her teaching career at Galesburg High School it was after her retirement that through Mary Sandburg, Carl's sister, Adda learned about the location of the modest birthplace near the CB&Q tracks on the south side of town. She had been encouraged in the early 1940's by Paul Angle, a well known historian, Lincoln scholar and Sandburg friend to establish a memorial in Galesburg for this famous author. After locating the birthplace site in 1944, it quickly became her target for restoration. As the spark plug Adda called for other community-minded people to join her ranks. Because of her early interest in Sandburg through her Lombard College days,

Juanita was an easy pick to join Adda's growing cadre of volunteers.

Early on the Carl Sandburg Association was formed. Juanita is remembered for her service to the Association through her loyalty to Adda and her can-do visionary contributions to the development of the site until her death in 1968. What were the motivating factors that caused her admiration for Sandburg, the literary giant?

Juanita shared a common bond with Sandburg. Graduating from Lombard in 1929, as a student she was associate editor of the annual *Stroller* as well as editor of the *Lombard Review*. Active in journalism, she wrote an article about Sandburg for the college newspaper. Influenced by her English teacher Frederic Fadner, Juanita learned from Fadner about Sandburg's early life as a student at Lombard thirty years before. She heard tales about his association with his friend and mentor Philip Green Wright. At this time Sandburg's early career as a writer and lecturer was blossoming. Juanita followed his publications such as *Cornhuskers* and *Smoke and Steel*. Like many other young people as Sandburg's popularity grew, she admired and was influenced by his emerging literary career. Juanita was smitten by his homegrown talents which emerged from Lombard College and served him well as he established his reputation.

Her first communication with Sandburg began on June 13, 1934 when she was prompted to write him in Harbert, Michigan in response to his broadcast on NBC and her appreciation for his program. She related their Lombard connections and her efforts to write an article about him. She stated that she had read several of his poems in her local talks, closing by describing herself as a "Sandburg gospel spreader". The opportunity to continue her dialogue with him returned when she was given the responsibility of organizing a display of Lombard College memorabilia for the Knox 1937 Centennial Celebration. Since Lombard had met its demise in 1932, Knox College reached out to the alumni members of the defunct college to join their affiliation with Knox. Gathering material for a display of Lombard



**Carl Sandburg & Juanita Bednar**

***taken at MGM Studios, Los Angeles by Rick Bednar***

memorabilia nurtured a lifelong correspondence with Sandburg. In reply to her request for any Lombard memorabilia that he might provide for the display, on May 28, 1937 Sandburg wrote that he had not found a "piece or a group that would be worthy of anybody's momentary gaze, if my methods were anything like what people might expect, or could give them a pleasant surprise it might be worth while. Then too there is a kind of monkeywork by a living author in connection with his manuscripts and his foottracks and what he deems his 'career' that has no result except to hinder him in getting his best work done." In

closing he stated "...I have my own memorabilia difficulties in connection with what may be worth saying into a mike for a large multitude June 15." Sandburg was a featured speaker at the centennial ceremonies held on June 15, 1937.

Juanita completed the exhibit with an array of Lombard mementos, photos and early Sandburg publications through the Asgard Press as well as material about Philip Green Wright. In a request to Elizabeth Q. Wright, Wright's widow living in St. Paul, Minnesota, Mrs. Wright furnished memorabilia for the display.

Ever true to her allegiance to Lombard College, she was instrumental in realizing the dedication of a Lombard Bell Tower the previous homecoming on October 24, 1936. Located between Old Main and Alumni Hall the tower represented a symbol of union between Knox College and the Lombard Alumni. As former president of the Lombard Alumni Association Juanita had presented the bell to Knox at the previous homecoming. It was at this time that Juanita wrote an article entitled "A Story of Carl Sandburg" for the *Knox Alumnus*, January-February issue, 1937. Having read the article Sandburg replied to her February 23, 1937, critiquing it by saying "Tradition and fact skirted around a dividing line in that sketch of yours. [E]nnyhoo it gave a light touch to an otherwise heavy periodical. Please send me five or ten copies—for collector friends who seek and store 'items'". Juanita replied to his request by saying she could only provide seven copies of the issue because the college had exhausted their supply over an unusual demand. She stated that his critique describing "tradition and fact" should mention "fiction" in connection with those two words, describing herself as a "prejudiced appreciator of the Sandburg gospel".

At the time of the centennial celebration Juanita's friendship with Sandburg was solidified in a memorable walk with him through his Lombard haunts while he was attending a luncheon in his honor at the Galesburg Club. She reintroduced herself to him at the gathering. True to his reputation Sandburg was ever mindful of attractive young ladies. He quickly excused

himself from the admiring throng, choosing to escort Juanita on an afternoon walk. Arm in arm he recalled his early college years under the canopy of the beautiful campus elms while they strolled the college grounds for over three hours.

This early friendship was helpful to the Carl Sandburg Association when they began their planning efforts to acquire and restore the birthplace in the mid-1940's. Adda, after acquiring the property by securing an agreement with the owner with \$10 from her pocket, secured a local bank loan for \$1200 to complete the transaction. It didn't take long for the Association to get into high gear for restoring the cottage. With a new brick foundation the structure was ready for the dedication ceremonies on October 7, 1946. It was a gala affair attended by a vast range of public admirers who came to honor Sandburg for his literary achievements. Sandburg, ever modest, did not attend the dedication preferring to return to the restored cottage on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, January 6, 1948. It was at this time that Ned Landon of the *Register-Mail* took the famous picture of Sandburg as he was entering the birthplace surrounded by his friends in the front yard. During this historic first visit it is said that when he saw the indoor toilet in the cottage, he declared it was an "anachronism". In the early years the cottage was painted brown instead of the original white. Brown was chosen because the Association believed the maintenance would be reduced by choosing a color that showed less dirt and grime created within the atmosphere because of the nearby railroad yards.

The Carl Sandburg Association maintained a vigorous growth, enlisting members as dedicated volunteers to promote the cottage and encourage visitors through an active public relations program. Dues to join the Association was one dollar. Their ambitious plans included the addition of a "Lincoln Room" off the rear of the house. Dedicated on memorial Day in 1949 it was completed through a \$6000 grant by the State of Illinois sponsored by Galesburg Senator Richard Larson (Lombard '09). In this room exhibits were set up displaying Sandburg books,

family memorabilia and Lincoln-related material which enhanced Sandburg's major works *The Prairie Years* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The War Years*. The Association received a number of generous donations including a signed Lincoln request for more volunteer troops, Sandburg's original typewriter from the 1920's and a large original portrait of Lincoln by the famous artist N.C. Wyeth. This drawing hung prominently over the fireplace in the Lincoln Room. The Sandburg family gifted original furnishings for the birthplace as well as early autograph letters of Carl to his sister Mary. A unique antique walnut dresser was donated to the cottage by the Charlie Krans family in 1965. Charlie and Carl were second cousins, often playing in the Krans' old pine barn located on their farm just outside Galesburg as children. Later, Sandburg relived this childhood memory by creating a poem about the barn first published in *The People, Yes*.

Sandburg's return to his hometown on January 9 and 10, 1953 was a fitting kick-off for the publication of his first autobiography entitled *Always the Young Strangers*. It became one of his most memorable works featuring stories about his early life growing up in Galesburg. A feature article by *LIFE Magazine* entitled "I Went Back to Galesburg" was published in the February 23, 1953 issue. Sandburg was followed by a gang of photographers and reporters as he revisited many of the places that had been important to him as a young boy. Throngs jammed the Central Congregational Church the evening of January 9 where Sandburg received the accolades of the community. He entertained the audience with songs, poetry readings and anecdotes. Juanita presented him with a scrapbook of antique Galesburg photographs on behalf of the Carl Sandburg Association. But the highlight was the warm greeting from and for Adda George. Sandburg in-kind responded with an autographed copy of his new book *Always the Young Strangers*. (This book was recently gifted to the birthplace on behalf of JKB).

To be continued . . . .

# WASHINGTON MONUMENT BY NIGHT

Carl Sandburg, 1922

The stone goes straight.  
A lean swimmer dives into night sky,  
Into half-moon mist.

Two trees are coal black.  
This is a great white ghost between.  
It is cool to look at.  
Strong men, strong women, come here.

Eight years is a long time  
To be fighting all the time.

The republic is a dream.  
Nothing happens unless first a dream.

The wind bit hard at Valley Forge one  
Christmas.  
Soldiers tied rags on their feet.

Red footprints wrote on the snow...  
...and stone shoots into stars here  
...into half-moon mist to-night.

Tongues wrangled dark at a man.  
He buttoned his overcoat and stood alone.  
In a snowstorm, red hollyberries, thoughts,  
he stood alone.

Women said: He is lonely  
...fighting ...fighting ...eight years...  
The name of an iron man goes over the  
world.  
It takes a long time to forget an iron man.

... ..  
... ..

Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association  
P.O. Box 108  
Galesburg, IL 61402-0108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED