

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

Holidays, 2007

The Songbag Concerts

The Songbag Concerts are on their regular winter hiatus. The continuing series will begin again on February 20, 2008. John Heasley, our impresario, is working on the schedule now. In the next issue of *Inklings and Idlings* a complete list of the artists will appear.

Those who enjoy folk music can look forward to a pleasurable time in the Barn at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site in the spring.

A Valuable Board Member

Margaret Krueger has been a member and officer of the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association since 1993. She has served as president and vice president at different times as well as chairing the nominating and other committees. Mrs. Krueger resigned from the Board in November for personal reasons.

Norm Winick, President of the Association, stated the Board had regretfully accepted the resignation of Mrs. Krueger and thanked her for her years of tireless service. "She has been an inspiration to all of us and we wish her nothing but happiness as she enters a new phase in her life."

In honor and appreciation of her many contributions to the work of the Association, the Board voted to confer a life membership upon her.

Rex Cherrington, a member of the Board, was

named to replace Mrs. Krueger as vice president.

From the Site

In recent conversations with Bert McElroy, Assistant Manager of the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site, we learned that more than 140 bulbs of multi-colored dwarf day lilies have been planted this fall. They were placed along the brick walk which connects the Visitors' Center and the Barn. The flowers will surely add a lot of color to the Site next summer.

The four cedar trees around Remembrance Rock which were destroyed last summer have been replaced. A generous contribution by Charles Bednar made the restoration possible. The appearance of the grounds is greatly enhanced by the placement of the cedars.

Remembrance Rock marks the last resting place of the ashes of Carl Sandburg, his wife Lilian and two of his daughters.

Removal of stumps of other trees destroyed by the wind storm has been accomplished and the areas seeded. Plans are being made to replace a number of the trees next year.

Bert also reported an unusually large number of visitors came to the Site during October. Most of them were from out of town. If you have not visited the Site recently, you should come by and bring a few friends.

Galesburg in 1907

By 1907 Carl Sandburg had departed from Galesburg to seek his fortunes elsewhere. Therefore he did not witness the events of that year as they transpired in the city. Doubtless he learned of them through family correspondence and occasional visits.

A look back at Galesburg a hundred years ago may enlighten our readers in regard to the way life was being lived then and the people who lived it.

WILLIAM "BILLY" SUNDAY

Billy Sunday, the evangelist, converted about 2,400 people during his three-week campaign in October and November. *The Galesburg Weekly Mail* pronounced the series of meetings a "glorious success."

During his stay Mr. Sunday admitted he had been afraid of Galesburg. He said the community prided itself on its cultural and environmental advantages and the people had become self-satisfied and resistant to changing their ways.

The preaching got off to a slow start, but gathered momentum as more and more men and women became involved. Contributions were sought from the local residents to help fund Mr. Sunday's conversion work. He left town on the train with \$7,000 in his pocket. In 2006 dollars, that would be more than \$150,000.

Colonel Clark E. Carr gave \$100 (equivalent to more than \$2,100 in 2006) as did the S.H. Olson and Brother grocery store and the ministerial association. The Knox College and Conservatory faculties gave \$50 along with smaller amounts from various church-affiliated groups and individuals.

A temporary tabernacle was constructed on West Simmons Street near the corner of Cedar Street. It

measured 120 by 140 feet and had enough seats for 4,500. The building cost almost \$3,000 to build (equal to more than \$62,000 in today's money). The dirt floor was covered with shavings so the ladies wouldn't soil the skirts of their dresses. There was a choir loft and space for an orchestra as well as two pianos. The facility was equipped with electric lighting.

On his last day in Galesburg, Sunday preached to the workers in the Purington Brick yard during their lunch hour. Four hundred workers were permitted a longer lunch break by the company so they could hear the evangelist. Newspaper accounts didn't mention any conversions amongst the brick makers.

When Sunday left town on the train for Muscatine, Iowa, an estimated 5,000 people were at the depot to see him off. He shook hands with many of those near the platform.

Billy Sunday was born in 1862, near Ames, Iowa. He spent some time in an orphanage during his childhood. While there he learned good habits and received a basic education. He also became aware of his athletic abilities.

In 1883 he was signed by the Chicago White Stockings baseball team which later became the Chicago Cubs. He was quick on the bases but poor at batting. He played in the major leagues for eight years.

In the 1880s, Sunday converted to evangelical Christianity and became a preacher. By the time he visited Galesburg in 1907, he was the best-known evangelist in the country. During his career he made a great deal of money and may have converted as many as a million persons.

PICKING CORN

Corn husking was a major activity during the fall months. The full mechanization of farming hadn't

begun so there was much hand labor which went into the harvest.

The sons of Frank E. Nelson in Elba Township were deemed the champions of Knox County. Warren was sixteen and Russell was fourteen years of age.

Working for a neighbor the boys had shucked 1,447 bushels of corn in seven and a half days. The going rate of pay at the time was five cents for each bushel (that is \$1.08 in 2006 dollars). The boys had earned a nice nest egg and developed a lot of muscle.

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL

The semi-centennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates would be celebrated in 1908. The Honorable Clark E. Carr was general chairman of the committee established by the Illinois State Historical Society to make arrangements. He was about to visit Charleston, Jonesboro, Alton and Quincy to meet with local arrangements committeemen.

The following week in November, 1907, Carr was to visit Ottawa and Freeport to discuss plans with local committees in those cities. The aforementioned towns were the other sites of the Debates. The Galesburg committee was headed by Judge P.S. Post, son of the Civil War general of the same name.

KING OSCAR II

On December 8, 1907, Galesburgers received the news of the death of King Oscar II of Sweden. He was born January 21, 1829, and ruled Norway from 1872 until 1905 and Sweden from 1872 until his death.

At the age of eleven he entered the Swedish Navy. Later he had a distinguished record in mathematics at Uppsala University. On June 6,

1857, he married Princess Sophia. They had four sons.

When he became King of Norway, King Oscar learned the Norwegian language. After the two countries separated in 1905, he contributed to the successful change with his tact and patience.

King Oscar was also a distinguished writer and musician. His great grandson, Harald V is now King of Norway.

If you buy sardines on occasion, you may have noticed the label says King Oscar. His name and portrait have been used by the processing company, Goteborgs Kex AB, for decades.

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Carl Sandburg in 1907

In the spring of 1907 Carl Sandburg was thinking about his second book of poetry and reading a lot about socialism. He was also preparing two lectures which he hoped would awaken his listeners to the social problems of the time. In addition, he had a new job at *The Lyceumite* as assistant editor and advertising manager. The publication covered the lecture and entertainment circuits in the Midwest.

It was about this time that Sandburg began to see his main subject as "the common man." His own father was one of the many who worked diligently day after day, received little pay and no recognition. The life of ordinary people was a subject Carl Sandburg knew well and he could use words in his own way to describe them.

By summer *The Lyceumite* had been sold and Sandburg was out of a job. He was offered an opportunity to lecture at Roycroft in East Aurora, New York, in July. While preparing the lectures he sold stereoscopic views in parts of Illinois. He sold just enough of the pictures to make the \$4 a

day he needed to live. The balance of his time was spent on writing.

He gave two lectures at Roycroft which were received enthusiastically. But, only two offers for lectures elsewhere were received by Sandburg. He went to Homer, Michigan, for about a month where he worked in a buggy factory owned by the father of one of his friends and continued polishing his lectures.

By the end of August he was back in Chicago working as an editor for a new publication, *The Opera House Guide*. The job lasted less than a month.

In September Sandburg gave the material for his second book, *Incidentals*, to Philip Green Wright in Galesburg, for printing.

The same month Sandburg attended the International Lyceum Association convention in Joliet, Illinois. Billy Sunday's agent offered him thirty lectures at \$50 per session. Several months later, Sandburg concluded the agent's business practices were less than honest and broke off from him.

On October 26, 1907, he gave a speech in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The local newspaper was sponsoring a series of lectures meant for working people. Sandburg was billed as "An American Vagabond" and his lecture was about Walt Whitman. Both men had experience in traveling in the open spaces of America.

Sandburg wrote his own review in the newspaper and later used it as promotional material for his orations.

The editor of the newspaper, Chester Wright, was a socialist and he befriended Sandburg. The lecture was a huge success and Sandburg became acquainted with the socialism of the time as practiced in Wisconsin. It was a life-changing

experience for him.

By November Sandburg had a thousand copies of *Incidentals* printed and expected to sell them at his lectures. He considered himself an experienced orator and writer and had confidence in his ability.

Late in November, the Social-Democratic Party of Wisconsin hired Charles Sandburg as an organizer for the Lake Shore and Fox River Valley district in the area of Lake Winnebago. He would be paid \$3 a day plus expenses. He chose to live in Oshkosh.

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Jingle Bells 150 Years Old

We have heard "Jingle Bells" sung so many times that we can't count them. The song was originally titled "One Horse Open Sleigh." James Pierpont received the copyright to the song in 1857. He was the organist for the Unitarian Church in Savannah, Georgia, at the time.

He had written the song for a Thanksgiving service about ten years previously. The song was meant to celebrate youthful fun in the wintertime. Mr. Pierpont moved between Massachusetts and Georgia several times so it is impossible to know where he actually composed the piece. It's likely that snow and sleigh-riding were more common in Massachusetts than in Georgia.

The melody is simple and can be learned quickly. The words have been parodied for decades in cartoons, rock music and children's songs. On December 16, 1965, the astronauts on the Gemini 6 spacecraft, played "Jingle Bells" on a harmonica as they circled the moon. There are more than 1,500 recorded versions of the song going back to 1898.

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Time Standardization

Some people can be very possessive about their time. Not just the way they choose to use it, but the time of day or night in the place where they live. Before 1883, every local community kept its own time based on the sun. This local mean time caused a great deal of confusion for anyone traveling from place to place, especially the railroads and their passengers.

In 1879, Sir Sandford Fleming, a Canadian civil engineer, proposed dividing the world into 24 time zones. Each zone would cover exactly 15 degrees of longitude. The clocks in each time zone would be set the same. There would be one hour of difference in each time zone and that would account for the daily rotation of the earth. The Royal Greenwich Observatory in Greenwich, England, was chosen as the prime meridian on which the system was based. Most of the charts and maps of the period had been using it as the prime meridian or starting point.

On November 18, 1883, American and Canadian railroads began using five standard time zones in North America. The day was referred to as "The Day of Two Noons" by newspapers. That was the hour when the changes went into effect. The railroad companies adopted the system for their own convenience and profit. They expected their customers to follow suit. A few individuals and communities refused to conform, but they were overruled by common usage and court decisions.

The United States government didn't make any laws regarding time until March 19, 1918, when the entire country was placed on daylight saving time as part of an effort "to preserve daylight" during World War I. It was very unpopular and Congress repealed the law in 1919.

Galesburg, a town dominated by the railroads, surely must have been aware of the problems concerning the telling of time.

This past fall we witnessed a change in the length of the period of Daylight Savings Time was to be observed. It was extended one week in order to provide more daylight for the safety of children "Trick or Treating" on Halloween, October 31st. The bill had been lobbied through Congress by the manufacturers of candy.

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Salted Tea

Ella Park Lawrence was a prominent women in Galesburg during the first quarter of the twentieth century. She had inherited a considerable fortune and was married to George A. Lawrence, an attorney. They built the large stone house at the corner of North Prairie and East Losey streets in the 1890s. She was active in the Presbyterian Church, the Free Kindergarten and various patriotic organizations.

Mrs. Lawrence was a charter member of the Rebecca Parke Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. During the years she was regent, the chapter gave American flags to schools and churches when the children had memorized the national hymns.

In 1911 Mrs. Lawrence was elected State Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. While in the office she dedicated herself to the passage of legislation to designate a flag for the State of Illinois. The flag was adopted and as a result she is known as the Mother of the Illinois flag.

The Boston Tea Party occurred on December 16, 1773, and our readers will surely remember learning about the event in elementary school. Here is how Mrs. Lawrence told the story to the children of the East Main Congregational Church in 1908 during the ceremony to honor their patriotic achievement of learning the words to "America" and "The Star Spangled Banner."

“Towards the last of November, 1773, several ships laden with tea were nearing their destination at American ports. Committees were hastily called to discuss the situation. They unanimously resolved that on no account should the tea be landed. The Tories sent word to give up life and all that makes life dear, rather than submit like slaves to this great wrong. The men of Philadelphia sent word to the men of Boston, ‘Our only fear is lest you may shrink. May God give you virtue enough to save the liberties of your country.’ As the tea ships rode into Boston harbor the Committee of Correspondence met and forbade their captains to enter their ships at the custom house, and told them it was at their peril if any tea was landed. Resolutions having been passed forbidding the bringing of any tea from Great Britain, so long as the act imposing a duty on it remained unrepealed. Whoever disregarded this injunction would be treated as an enemy to his country, his ships prevented from landing, and his tea sent back to whence it came.

“Watchers were kept at the wharf day and night; sentinels were placed in the church belfry; booted post-riders, with their horses saddled and bridled, were ready to give the word to neighboring towns, and any attempt to land the tea forcibly would have been the signal for instant uprising throughout the neighboring countries.

“Now it was necessary in accordance with the laws for entry and clearance of shipping at the custom house that every ship should land its cargo within in 20 days after its arrival. If this was not done, the revenue officers were authorized to seize the ship and land its cargo themselves.

“The captains had not done as requested and the committee summoned them for explanation and accompanied them to the custom house, but clearance was refused unless the tea be landed.

“The morning of December 16, 1773, dawned. Conditions had not been met. Quickly more than

700 people gathered in and about the Old South Meeting house. This was to be one of the most momentous days in the history of the world. Among the subjects considered by these thoroughly aroused citizens was what was to be done in case the captains of these tea ships should be refused their ship’s passes by the governor? A certain John Rowe spoke out, ‘Who knows how tea will mingle with salt water?’ and great applause followed his suggestion.

“But, there were those who had devised a plan. The day was slipping by, as December days do and the sun was far down in the West...the crowd remained. They still voted, come what would, the tea should not be landed. The candles dimly lighted the old church, the air was chilling; still these fathers of our fathers staid, determined not to act until the last legal method of relief should have been tried and found wanting. But listen, here come the captains, they come without the passes. Then, amid a stillness profound, Samuel Adams arose, and in an earnest voice said: ‘This meeting can do nothing more to save the country.’ It was a declaration of war; the law had shown itself unequal to the occasion, and nothing now remained but a direct appeal to force—to the laws of self preservation. Hark! What is the strange sound they hear? A war whoop? Yes, children, a war whoop, and 50 men in the guise of Mohawk Indians rushed by the entrance of Old South church, ran to Griffin’s wharf. Before the bell rang out the hour of 9, three hundred and forty-two chests of tea upon the ships at anchor in Boston Harbor, had been cut open, and their contents thrown into the sea. Not a person harmed; no other property injured.

“Along Dorchester beach the following morning lay in long rows salted tea, driven there by wind and wave; and Paul Revere was riding fast to tell the glorious news to Philadelphia men that Boston had at last thrown down the gauntlet for England’s king to pick up.

“Boys and girls, the heroic annals of Greece and Rome can show you no greater sublimity of reasonable but dauntless moral purpose than that scene which the Old South meeting house witnessed the day the tea was destroyed.”

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It's Lasted 150 Years

In many communities founded on the Illinois prairie in the pioneer times, colleges were established. Galesburg was no exception with its Knox College. Often the schools consisted of just one building. It was not unusual for students to live and attend classes in the same structure.

Many of the schools were unsuccessful and faded from memory. Of those that survived, their original buildings were frequently called “Old Main.”

Knox College is fortunate that its Old Main has survived weather, carelessness, pranks and daily use for 150 years. The building has become a symbol of the college, welcoming students, visitors and speechmakers. It has served a variety of purposes over the years and is still in daily use.

The Old Main in Galesburg has a special distinction because it is the only location of the series of debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas still in existence. The building was only a year old when the debate took place. It is listed as a National Historic Site.

Carl Sandburg frequently crossed the campus and would pause to read the words of a plaque which had been attached to a wall to commemorate the Lincoln-Douglas Debate. It may have helped inspire him to write his monumental history of Abraham Lincoln.

The bell tower on the building has a history of its own. Student pranks have caused the bell and

clapper to disappear at different times or at the same time and more than once. The bell has cracked and been recast more than once. In 2002 the tower and bell were refurbished again and rededicated anew.

For many years the south facade of Old Main has served as a backdrop for commencement exercises and the annual “Concert on the Lawn.” Both events attract thousands of visitors to the campus.

In October, Knox College had a special celebration of Old Main’s 150th anniversary. It is to be hoped it will endure another hundred and fifty years and continue to be a center of learning and inspiration.

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A Hearty Soup for Cold Days

Three hundred years ago King Gustav III, who lived between 1742 and 1792, decreed that his people should eat pea soup every Thursday. The people of Sweden still eat pea soup and pancakes on Thursday, but they have created a variety of ways to prepare the soup.

Pea Soup

2 tablespoons butter
1 pound smoked ham, cut into small pieces
1 leek, thinly sliced
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 carrots, finely chopped
1 rutabaga or turnip, finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt or to your taste
1/4 teaspoon pepper or to your taste
1 bay leaf
10 cups water
1 pound dried peas
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into small pieces

Melt the butter in a Dutch oven and brown the

meat in it. Add the leek and onion and cook until softened. Add the carrots and rutabaga along with the seasonings and water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 25 minutes. Add the peas and potatoes and simmer for another 20 to 30 minutes.

Makes 8 to 10 servings

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Christmas

This illustration appeared in *The Galesburg Republican-Register* in 1907. It depicts the things of Christmas many of us enjoy: children, Santa Claus, toys and a warm fireside.

Remember the Museum Store in the Visitors' Center has books and other items which make very nice gifts for the holidays.

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Happy Holidays to All