

INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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Summer 2015

FROM SITE SUP'T. MARTHA DOWNEY CARL SANDBURG FESTIVAL: A SUCCESS

The 2015 Carl Sandburg Festival featured remarkable people and events. A U.S. Poet Laureate, creator of the Poetry Slam, a popular young adult author, dedication of two Sandburg busts, a memorial service, the Penny Parade, and more. The Site hosted a number of events and looked wonderful thanks to the Knox County Master Gardeners and Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association volunteers. Those two groups spent two days spring cleaning the Site's grounds.



Volunteers Prepare Site for Carl Sandburg Festival. Front Row l. to r. Martha Downey, Diana Riley. Middle Row l. to r. Janet Cummings, Rona Mastin, Jamie Yemm, Rex Cherrington. Back row l. to r. Mary Scanlon, Sylviane Stites, Kathy Lotz, Kathy Breeden. Aside from Martha & Rex these individuals are Master Gardeners. Volunteers not pictured—Mike & Mary Panther, Pat Kane, Gary Wagle, & Tede Verner.

The Festival's most emotional evening was the lovely memorial service held at Carl Sandburg College for Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven. That evening memories of Penny were shared. Her daughter Jennifer Niven attended so was able to hear expressed the community's deep appreciation of her mother's enthusiasm for Sandburg and affection for Galesburg.

This service was followed by the presentation of a Sandburg bust in memory of Penelope Niven to

Carl Sandburg College by the sculptor Lonnie E. Stewart. A genuinely surprised Stewart stood by as CSC President Dr. Lori Sundberg announced the College's art gallery would now be the Lonnie Eugene Stewart Art Gallery.

Penelope Niven's daughter Jennifer Niven made appearances at Carl Sandburg College, Knox College, Galesburg High School, and the Galesburg Public Library speaking about writing and her first book for young adults *All the Bright Places*. Over 100 students heard her speak at the high school.

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association's annual Penny Parade, held for the first time during the Carl Sandburg Festival, brought \$2,303.30 into the Association's treasury. Once again Hedding Elementary School in Abingdon led the way with collecting \$994.04.

The final day of the Festival April 25 was a big day at the Site as 163 people came to attend one or more of the activities. The morning began with activities planned for Girl Scouts, Gale Scholars, and other young people. They learned about Sandburg from Pat Kane, and Patti Christianson taught them some traditional Swedish folk dances. From the Site those young people headed out on a three or five mile hike passing a number of important historical spots related to Sandburg. I might add it was raining.

Following the youth activities the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site was dedicated as a National Literary Landmark. This Literary Landmark™ was made possible through the generosity of the Illinois Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and a programming arm of the Illinois State Library, an office of the Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian, Jesse White. Literary Landmarks™ is a trade mark of United for Libraries.

In conjunction with that dedication was the presentation and dedication of another bust of Carl

Sandburg sculpted by Lonnie E. Stewart and given to the Site by Chuck and Marilyn Bednar. This lovely bronze bust now resides at a spot looking toward Remembrance Rock. The granite pillar upon which the bust is mounted lists those first Galesburg citizens who were responsible for saving Sandburg's Birthplace.

Later, Jennifer Niven led a writers' workshop at the Site's Barn. She was so pleased to visit the Site, a place her mother had spoken to her about. On her Facebook page Jennifer posted that the Site is one of her "bright places."

The Site's Festival activities concluded that evening with Bob and Kristy Black performing at the Songbag Concert. Following the concert it was off to the Poetry Slam led by Marc K. Smith. He is the creator/founder of the International Poetry Slam movement. Galesburg is so very fortunate that he is willing to return annually to lead the Festival's Poetry Slam. It was a fun and entertaining way to close a successful Carl Sandburg Festival.

SITE OPEN

Matt Swanson is now working at the Site. He and the Master Gardener volunteers have the Site looking better than it has in years. Beginning May 1 the Site is now open Thursdays-Sundays 9 am to 5 pm through June 30. It is hoped that with the beginning of the State of Illinois' new fiscal year July 1 that Matt Swanson's contract will be renewed. Plan to stop by the Site to see the Literary Landmark plaque, the new Sandburg bust, and meet Matt.

THE SANDBURG FAMILY REMEMBERED AT LINWOOD CEMETERY IN GALESBURG

By Rex Cherrington

The lives of August and Clara Sandburg, their children, and their children's spouses are all memorialized in Galesburg. We know, of course, that Carl Sandburg, his wife, Lillian, whom he affectionately called "Paula," and daughters Margaret and Janet's remains are at or around Remembrance Rock behind 331 E. Third Street, Carl's birthplace. Others in the family are memorialized, whether buried or cremated, at Linwood Cemetery at the west edge of Galesburg. Due to the difficulty giving direction to a specific location in Linwood Cemetery the GPS coordinates

of latitude and longitude have been given to one thousandth of a minute which should put one within a few feet of the spot if they possess a handheld GPS instrument.



Emil & Frederick Sandburg

Emil and Fred were the first two of the Sandburg family to pass from this world. Two small boys, they were fondly remembered by brother Carl in *Always the Young Strangers*. The monument has the spelling of the family name as Sandberg. As we learn from this autobiography of Carl's early years, he, his sister Mary, and brother Mart held a meeting when they were grade school students and decided that they wanted to go by Sandburg rather than Sandberg. This may have been about the time Carl decided to use the name Charles and went by Charles Sandburg until his beloved Paula assured him that Carl was a fine name. As for Sandberg vs. Sandburg, it seems a non-issue since August Sandburg's real name was August Danielson, further that the name was spelled Sandburg on Clara and August's marriage certificate. I am learning from my own research on my Norburg's that spellings didn't mean a great deal to the Swedes, and new family names could be rather freely chosen. It is not clear at what point, nor with what degree, that the parents finally accepted the children's decision with respect to the family name. City directory entries for August Sandburg variously use each of the spellings.

It was October 1892, and the sore throat was going around. Carl was down for two days and Mart for four. A quarantine sign was posted by authorities, and that sign read "DIPHTHERIA." Carl's brothers, Fred aged two and Emil aged seven, were hit the worst and laid low hanging to life by a thread. The thread was not strong enough, and the two boys died within thirty minutes of each other. The Sandburgs had the funeral at home, and the two

boys were the first of the Sandburg's to be buried at Linwood, The location is at 40 degrees, 56.757 minutes North and 90 degrees, 24.196 minutes West.



August & Clara Sandburg

Sandburg's parents Clara and August Sandburg have a remarkable monument. According to George Swank, who quoted Juanita Bednar and Martin G. Sandburg Jr., this stone weighs eight tons, and it was Carl's idea to have a rough, uncut boulder from Illinois as a fitting monument to his parents. The boulder reportedly came from the vicinity of Gladstone, Illinois. It is somewhat difficult to read and even more difficult to photograph in such a way that the writing on this unpolished stone can be read. It reads "August and Clara Sandburg, Pioneers of the Prairies."

At the time of the father's death Sandburg was heavily involved in the campaign for Emil Siedel's election for Mayor of Milwaukee, and he was unable to attend the funeral at the Berrien Street home. Carl wrote that his father died from complications due to a fall from a tree that he was trimming. August Sandburg was sixty-six years old at the time of his death in March 1910. He had been retired from the railroad five or six years and worked at various odd jobs purportedly earning more in this freelancing work than he had earned at the railroad.

Clara lived a useful and active life for another sixteen years until she experienced an illness that lasted ten days. Toward the end of her life she helped her widowed daughter Martha raise her two sons. She passed from this life in December 1926. The monument is relatively central in the cemetery. The GPS coordinates are 40 degrees, 56.757 minutes North and 90 degrees, 24.197 minutes

West, just a few feet north and west of the monument for Emil and Fred.



Martha Sandburg Goldstone

When thirty-nine year old Martha Sandburg Goldstone died on January 2, 1931, she left behind two orphan sons, fourteen year old Richard and twelve year old Charles. The father of these boys, Roy Goldstone, had died while working as a yardmaster for the Burlington Railroad in 1919. Charles was killed in action in World War II during fighting in France. Many of us fondly remember Richard who in the Swedish tradition chose the last name by which he wanted to be known. Dr. Richard Sandburg was a charming and engaging conversationalist. The GPS coordinates are 40 degrees 56.823 minutes North and 90 degrees 24.175 West. This is generally in the northeast part of the cemetery, just slightly west and to the south of the sexton's building in the northeast corner.



Martin & Kate Sandburg

Of Sandburg's siblings he was closest in age to Mary and Martin. With Carl's busy career he found little time to see his family, but through correspondence he kept in touch with Mart and Mary more than the younger siblings. Mart lived his

whole life in Galesburg, and for most of his working life he was in charge of a meat packing plant. Their burials are toward the west side of Linwood and in the north part. The GPS coordinates are 40 degrees 56.790 minutes North and 90 degrees 24.287 minutes West.



Allie and Mary Sandburg Johnson

Mary was always Carl's closest tie in the family. They were such kindred spirits that he could confide in her when pondering a decision and had no need to provide a great deal of background. Mary taught at Dahinda's two-room school and stayed at the Sargeant Hotel where Carl visited her upon his return from the Spanish-American War. She later taught at Bishop Hill where she was often visited by Carl. Following her teaching career she became a nurse and an anesthetist. In 1916 she married Allie Johnson, a handsome man fifteen years younger than she. Mary moved to California in 1946 and died in 1958 at age eighty-three. Her obituary mentioned a son, Eric, and we know she lived in Los Angeles at the time of her death. These burials are close to those of Mart and Kate, just a couple of rows east. The GPS coordinates are 40 degrees 56.791 minutes North and 90 degrees 24.278 minutes West.



Arthur & Esther Sandburg Wachs

Esther was musically talented and attended Lombard College. Carl had encouraged her and hoped she would pursue a career as a musical performer. She married Arthur Wachs who was a salesman employed in various retail stores in

Galesburg until an opportunity arose to own a retail business in Gibson City, Illinois. The Wachs moved to Gibson City in 1921 and operated a store there until they retired in 1968 at which time they moved to Chatsworth, California. Esther died in 1974 at age eighty-five. She had outlived her siblings. Her husband died in 1980 shortly before his 90th birthday. Their monuments are centrally located in the north part of the south half of the cemetery. The GPS coordinates for the memorials are 40 degrees 56.672 minutes North and 90 degrees 24.263 minutes West.

(Editor's Note: All photos in this story courtesy of Rex Cherrington.)

WHAT APPEALS TO ME ABOUT SANDBURG By Bert McElroy

(Editor's Note: This is the second part of CSHSA Vice-President Bert McElroy's story about why he is drawn to Sandburg.)

However, this time I had a greater awareness of Carl Sandburg and his interpretation of the American experience and the values that had inspired his literature with socio-political and economic aspects of the plight of the common man, as well as those of the highest of government officials. He had published his Lincoln narrative that began as he so tediously researched a biographical version for children that culminated with his six-volume biography for adults. This thirty year project earned him his first Pulitzer Prize in 1940. He had assembled his vast collection of Lincoln biographical information sources from a combination of micro-thoughts and observations that he had crib-sheeted. He had kept track of the people, thoughts, and places throughout the world. He formed his thoughts with unique journalistic instincts while working various jobs, such as a "supe" [super numerary] in Galesburg's vaudeville Auditorium Theatre, as a newspaper boy, milk deliverer, pottery worker, soldier, fireman, student, and writer. While touring the country as a transient with hobos and later as a salesman, political activist, journalist, and lecturer, he collected folk music that he used to compile his *The American Songbag* and its sequel.

He compiled his vast inventory of pigeon-holed paper clippings, notes and perceptions, political activism, poetry, prose, journalism, biography, children's stories, movie reviews, and stereoscopic imagery that he had pedaled that earned him Blei notoriety and coin, the collaboration with historian Fredrick Hill Meserve and the opportunity to write the introduction of *The Photographs of Abraham*

Lincoln, two Pulitzer Prizes, and the Congressional Medal of Freedom. In Galesburg after his death a community college would be named for him as well as a shopping mall on Carl Sandburg Drive. In 2011 he was inducted into the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame. He was a plain, caring, family man who had courted Lillian Steichen with love letters, nicknamed his wife and their children, wrote stories for them, and a poem for each. He had endured hard times, been jailed for hoboing, visited presidents, smuggled a note to American Socialists from Lenin, all the while witnessing and documenting man's inhumanity to man, strikes, the Pinkerton's, labor abuses and many grievances, that ushered in progressive reforms, such as the evolution of the five-day work week, pensions, workers' compensation, paid overtime, child labor protections, and civil rights for women and minorities, that are still issues today. Only he could write a book of verse, *The People, Yes*.

Donna's father Otha Porter was the 1958 Lincoln re-enactor during Galesburg's Centennial Commemoration of the famous Senatorial Lincoln-Douglas Debate. He was a fellow church deacon, friend, and volunteer with Lauren Goff, the president of the original Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association and then curator for the State of Illinois. Carl Sandburg was still often mentioned in conversation and gossip during my early years around Galesburg, like Lincoln, the Civil War, and Reconstruction had been mentioned amongst Sandburg's acquaintances when he was a young man.

Conversations that I had with the late Mr. Porter, who helped lay the brick walk from the Birthplace Cottage to Remembrance Rock, John and Raleigh Barnstead's involvement in various carpentry projects, and Harry Tillman who erected the Kellogg Street trellis, amongst many others that donated their skills free of charge, inspired me. These Sandburg enthusiasts led me to admire the commitment and need of volunteers for the preservation of the property and to memorialize numerous tangible reminders of the Sandburg family. I have much admiration for all state historic site staffs, their support groups, especially the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association's Board of Directors, that I often coordinated lectures and events for at the Site, and the Sandburg Days Festival Committee that I was pleased to aid on occasion. I am proud to have worked with Charles Bednar, Jr. to assemble the National Portrait Gallery's Hemingway Exhibit in the Site's Barn, the

Sandburg exhibit currently displayed at the Galesburg Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and his founding of the Galesburg Public Art Commission which arranged for the nine-foot bronze statue of the "accomplished Sandburg."

Over the years of immersion in Sandburg I've visited the Rare Book and Manuscript Collection at the University of Illinois with Site Superintendent Holden and CSHSA board members. I was impressed that the Sandburg family used the adjacent "Swedish house," a guesthouse behind the Connemara home, to store his excess books and the modern climate-controlled facilities that the National Park Service built to preserve the vast inventory of archives. I had the opportunity to host Carl Sandburg's daughter, Helga Sandburg Crile (who befriended me during visits and with Christmas cards), a State Poet Laureate, Carl Sandburg's biographer Penelope Niven and witnessed many researchers creating plays, major theatre productions, and the premiere of the documentary, *The Day Carl Sandburg Died*. Though each person may be drawn to a particular poem, subject, landscape, or time period, Sandburg's journalism on race relations, social treatises, Civil War events, his Lincoln biographies, and autobiographies convince me he was the "Peoples Poet" who truly understood how important journalism is to democracy. All the genealogical and archival aspects of this towering writer appeal to me as does the fact that near the end of his life he requested that his ashes be returned to Galesburg to lie beneath Remembrance Rock behind the humble workingman's cottage of his birth.

CARL SANDBURG & THE EARLY POETRY AUDIO ARCHIVE

By Chris Mustazza, University of Pennsylvania

(Editor's Note: Recently we have received a number of interesting inquiries about Sandburg on our CSHSA website sandburg.org. Webmaster and CSHSA Treasurer Rick Sayre has graciously answered these inquiries. The author of this story, Chris Mustazza, inquired in May about getting permission to use Sandburg recordings for a University of Pennsylvania project Penn Sound, an online archive of downloadable free sound files of poets' readings.)

One of the first poetry audio archives (if not the first) was started in 1931 at Columbia University when Barnard Professor of Speech W. Cabell Greet used equipment in his speech lab to record nearly five hours of Vachel Lindsay's poetry. Greet went on to partner with his colleague, Professor George W.

Hibbitt, to create a series of poetry recordings that included eminent poets like Gertrude Stein, Robert Frost, James Weldon Johnson, Harriet Monroe, and Carl Sandburg. Some of the records, which were originally made from a device that cut aluminum records (see illustration), came to be distributed to schools on a subscription basis, produced by the National Council of Teachers of English and intended for “students and other lovers of literature.” This series was known as The Contemporary Poets Series. A parallel collection of recordings intended for use by scholars on-site at Columbia University was also made. The Sandburg recordings, which took place in 1935, may have been made for this latter series, as I’m currently not aware of a distribution release of these recordings (though Sandburg’s correspondence with Columbia shows that they intended to make recordings to be distributed through the CPS). During what seems to be a fairly brief recording session, Sandburg read a segment of section 86 from his epic poem, *The People, Yes*, in addition to performing the songs “When Cockle Shells Turn Silver Bells” and “Cold Rainy Day,” the lyrics for the latter he credits to Zora Neale Hurston.

There are many fascinating vectors of approach to considering the context of Sandburg’s recordings in this collection. The first is through the lens of the dialect recordings, which were the primary products of the Speech Lab. Greet and Hibbitt studied the emergence of new dialects, and would bring in subjects to be recorded for later study. What does it mean for Sandburg’s work, which was so focused on capturing a populist aesthetic/performing kind of ethnography, to be recorded and stored alongside numerous samples of demotic speech? Secondly, as I write about in my essay on the series in *Jacket2* magazine, the engineer who recorded Sandburg at Columbia, Walter C. Garwick, also invented the portable recording device used by John A. Lomax in his famous field recordings of African-American spirituals and cowboy songs. Sandburg was fascinated by both genres, and released a record with Decca Records in which Side A is dedicated to cowboy songs and Side B to the spirituals. In fact, the liner notes for that record were written by Alan Lomax. Indeed, much of Sandburg’s work seems to me an aesthetic variation (musical connotation intended) on the ethnographic work of John A. Lomax; the songs that Sandburg played and the poem that he read for this series all work as cultural preservations and representations. That is, much like the work of other poets recorded in this series,

perhaps especially Vachel Lindsay and James Weldon Johnson, Sandburg’s works seek to preserve culture through an aesthetic refraction.



Aluminum record exactly like the Sandburg master recording.
Photo courtesy of Chris Mustazza.

The next step for these recordings will be to see if it is possible to obtain permission to add them to the PennSound archive <<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound>>, the world’s largest archive of free, downloadable poetry recordings. For the time being, I hope that you will visit the archive and listen to other recordings from this series, including those of Vachel Lindsay, Gertrude Stein, James Weldon Johnson, and Harriet Monroe. There is certainly much more to be said about these Sandburg recordings, and I hope to publish a more detailed essay in the near future. For now, my aim is to show Sandburg’s role in the creation of the poetry audio archive, a tradition that has led to the development of archives like PennSound and to the fortunately widespread opportunities to hear poetry as performed by its composers.

RHYTHMS OF THE RAILROAD

By Barbara Schock

(With the 2015 Galesburg Railroad Days coming up it is appropriate that we run this railroad story by Barbara Schock. It is part of the series of over 100 “Sandburg’s Hometown” stories that she has written. All her stories, which are fine histories of Sandburg and Galesburg, appear on our CSHSA website sandburg.org.)

When Carl Sandburg was born on January 6, 1878, his parents lived within two blocks of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad tracks. As a babe in arms he may have felt the vibration and heard the noise of the passing trains.

His father August was in the railroad's Blacksmith Shop when the CB&Q steam whistle blew at 7 am, starting the work day. At noon the whistle sounded for the main meal of the day. Most people called it dinner rather than lunch. August Sandburg walked home to eat his meal and walked back to the shop to resume his work at 1 pm. At 6 pm the whistle blew again ending the day's manual labor all over town. The stores on Main Street remained open until a later hour.

More than just the railroad workers were accustomed to the regular pattern of the CB&Q steam whistle. It told other citizens of Galesburg to get up, eat meals, and finish work for the day.

The whistle in the railroad yard, as well as those of other factories, were used on other occasions. When World War I ended on November 11, 1918, the whistles started blowing about 4 am and blasted away for hours in celebration. There was no more sleeping for anybody that day.

As a boy Sandburg went to the railroad depot to watch people coming and going. He became acquainted with hoboes and tramps who frequented the rail yard. He learned the difference between hoboes, tramps, and bums.

When the circus had advertised that it was coming to perform in Galesburg, Carl was up at the crack of dawn. He would watch the animals and wagons being unloaded from the rail cars. Often he would help carry water for the elephants or boards for the viewing stands in the big tent in order to earn a free ticket to the show.

At the age of sixteen Sandburg was allowed to use his father's railroad pass. He went to Peoria, all of fifty miles away. He was able to see the Illinois State Fair and the steamboats on the Illinois River. It inspired in him a desire to travel even farther.

All his life Carl Sandburg preferred trains to other forms of travel. He grew up with trains, and he knew they could take one to interesting and exciting places.

2015 GALESBURG RAILROAD DAYS

By Mike Hobbs

I think Sandburg would be happy to know that Galesburg celebrates its railroad heritage with its annual Railroad Days festival. The railroad influenced his life. He saw his father August walk to the nearby CB&Q Blacksmith Shop to work ten-hour shifts six days a week with no vacations. In *Always the Young Strangers* Sandburg wrote about his father, "His hands thick with calluses, he was strictly 'a horny-handed son of toil.'" He saw him return home from work tired and grease-stained, saw him work hard around successive family residences in what free time he had to make them nicer for his wife and children, saw him buy a quarter section of land in Kansas in the hope of providing a brighter, more secure future for his family. He saw his father's life consumed by work, work, work. He saw the hump of muscle grow on August Sandburg's right shoulder from swinging a heavy maul at the CB&Q Blacksmith Shop.

Aware of his father's intense work ethic at the railroad and at home, Sandburg came to realize that he could not, would not follow in his footsteps. Carl Sandburg was not a lazy man. He worked hard jobs in his youth. He was just different from his father. Different personality. Different life circumstances and opportunities.

Sandburg discovered that the railroad was a means of seeing the world beyond Galesburg, and he hungered for that. His passenger trip as a teenager on his father's pass introduced him to Chicago. His hobo trips opened up other parts of the country to him. As Barbara Schock wrote in the previous story, "All his life Carl Sandburg preferred trains to other forms of travel." Knowing of his father's hard railroad job at meager pay and experiencing himself the bitterly divisive Burlington Railroad Strike of 1888 influenced Sandburg for the rest of his life. It led him to activism as a young man with the Social-Democratic Party in its struggle for the eight-hour day, prohibition of child labor, protection of rights of women in the labor force, workmen's compensation, workplace safety, and pensions.

Visit the 38th Annual Galesburg Railroad Days. It will feature things that should interest you and promises to draw the largest crowd in some time. Here is a partial listing of events.

38th Annual Railroad Days – Selected Events

June 25—“The Lincoln Experience,” “Meet the Press,” 5-5:45 pm, free. “Visiting with the Lincoln’s,” 6:30 pm, Knox College Seymour Hall, Lincoln Room, \$20.

June 26, 27, & 28—The National Railroad Hall of Fame’s “Trunks Through Time” exhibits, 3-5 pm, The Box, 306 E. Simmons St. One exhibit has to do with a fictional Mexican-American boxcar camp resident who is inspired by Sandburg to become a writer.

June 27 & 28—Visit the replicas of the Lincoln Funeral Car and the locomotive that pulled it from Washington, DC to Springfield in 1865, display track just east of the Galesburg Railroad Museum, \$5 admission for adults. While you’re in the vicinity drop into the Railroad Museum which has tools from August Sandburg’s time at the CB&Q Blacksmith Shop among many other local railroading displays.

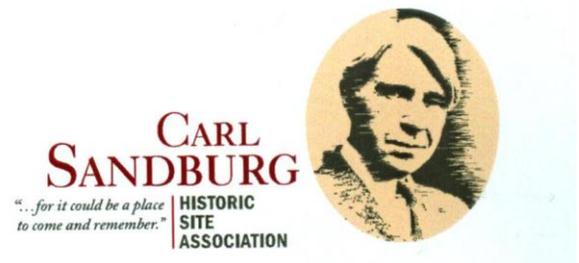
June 28—A special Railroad Days Songbag Concert, “Parallel Paths: The Poetry of Carl Sandburg, the Music of Chris Vallillo,” featuring Illinois’ preeminent prairie-poet-singer-songwriter Chris Vallillo, 2 pm, Park Plaza, E. Main St., free.

38th Annual Galesburg Railroad Days Website

<http://www.galesburgrailroaddays.org/>



Replica of Lincoln Funeral Car that will appear on display track east of Galesburg Railroad Museum during 2015 Galesburg Railroad Days



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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