

# INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • P.O. Box 585 • Galesburg, Illinois 61402 • (309) 342-2361 • www.sandburg.org

Spring 2018

## FROM SITE SUPERINTENDENT MARTHA DOWNEY CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

February 27 was that first truly warm day that came in late winter, giving us all a reason to take off gloves, hats, and coats. It was a beautiful day to explore Illinois' history. The Peoria Riverfront Museum's Celebrate Illinois: 200 Years in the Land of Lincoln highlights Illinois' influential people, places, creations, and innovations, allowing visitors the chance to discover Illinois remarkable history. For this exhibit the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site loaned *Lincoln: The Prairie Years* and *Cornhuskers* along with a framed manuscript of Sandburg poems.

Galesburg is mentioned a number of times in the exhibition. In addition to Sandburg, George W. Ferris is one of the Illinoisans whose story is told, along with George W. Brown and Robert Avery. Among the 240 plus artifacts exhibited is an 1860 George Brown corn planter. Not far from it is John Deere's 1838 steel plow. The desk and chair that President Abraham Lincoln purportedly used while writing the Emancipation Proclamation is there, as is a Frank Lloyd Wright chair and Everett Dirksen's typewriter. Owen W. Muelder's West Central Illinois Underground Railroad Map is part of the interpretive labels leading to the Civil War.

Seymour Library at Knox College, the Galesburg Historical Society, and the Site loaned items for this exhibit. The exhibit runs through June 3. The Museum's website is <http://www.peoriariverfrontmuseum.org>. I encourage you to use this Bicentennial year to explore Galesburg's history as it has a proud place in Illinois' story.



THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

## FROM SSSIRC CAST MEMBERS

(Ed. Note: The following story was written by "Spink, Skabootch, and Swipes in Rootabaga Country" cast member Maya Gomez, a sophomore at Galesburg High School.)

As a high school student, I have heard of Carl Sandburg before. Growing up, I would drive by Carl Sandburg College, see his statue downtown, and read some of his poems in elementary school at Silas Willard. However, that was the extent of my knowledge of him. Later in life, I found out his house is still standing here in Galesburg, and little did I know, I would begin performing in his backyard when I began high school!

Our cast of six people, directed by Tim Holmes, has built incredible memories together that I will never forget. In the beginning, when I was first asked to act in the show, I wasn't sure what to expect. The last time I had heard Sandburg's poetry was in the third grade, and all I could remember was that the poem was about a ragdoll and a broom handle. When I first saw the script, I saw many crazy sentences, such as "Where the babboons take care of the babies and the black cats come and go in orange and gold stockings!" These lines were unlike any I've ever had to say in a play. When we started rehearsing, the stories began to make more sense. Now I could see the underlying details of what Sandburg was writing, and the deep questions he was highlighting. This surprised me, since the only story I knew of his was about two inanimate objects. Through the show I learned that he wrote about poverty, women's suffrage, and the world wars. I also learned that he wrote these stories for his daughters. Not only that, but three characters in the show (Spink, Skabootch, and Swipes) are based on his daughters. Since I have a three year old brother, this fatherly side of Carl Sandburg resonated with me. I love making up stories for my brother Adrix and hearing him laugh at my tales. Knowing that the stories were meant for his daughters gave me a new perspective when I performed.

Having performed with SSSIRC for a year now has changed my life in multiple ways. It has brought forth a new side of my community into my life, and I am immensely grateful. Being able to perform alongside my friends for an important cause is an amazing opportunity that I am very fortunate to have. I would like to thank everyone in the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association for the opportunity to be involved in and share Sandburg's story.

(Ed. Note: The following photographs were taken by SSIRC cast member Mary Helen Burdick, a sophomore, home-schooled, on a snowy February day at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.)



### 2018 PENNY PARADE

(Ed. Note: The 2018 Penny Parade festivities were held at the Site on February 12, Lincoln's birthday. Hedding Grade School (Abingdon), Galesburg Christian School, Gale, King, Nielson, Silas Willard, and Steele elementary schools participated. CSHSA board member Mike Panther served as emcee for the festivities. Students gave presentations about Sandburg inspired by the study guides developed and given to their schools by CSHSA board members Pat Kane and Pam Fox. Musician Erin Glasnovich sang *American Songbag* songs. CSHSA Treasurer Rick Sayre led the group in singing Happy Birthday to President Lincoln in Swedish. Hedding Grade School brought in the most money. The following stories were written by Hedding fourth graders about the Penny Parade.)

By Avery Stegall, Mrs. Anderson's Class, 4A



Avery Stegall

This year for the 2018 Penny Parade Hedding Grade School collected money. Each grade brought money for Carl Sandburg, and the fourth grade classes went around and collected the money, then counted how much each class brought, and the teachers typed it into a chart to see who had the most at the end. The class which brought the most money got a donut party as reward. The class that brought the most money was 4A, Mrs. Anderson's class. We totaled it all up at the end, then took it to the bank to double check. Our school collected \$1,194.53 total.

By Lilyana Terwilliger, Mrs. Knuth's Class, 4C



Lilyana Terwilliger

The Penny Parade is very important because the money that we raise goes to the Carl Sandburg buildings to make sure that the buildings stay strong and do not collapse. First, when Cabe [Courson] and I went to the historic site, we started to talk about some of the things that they have done with the place while using the money that we raised. Two of the things that they did was build a new fence that looked just like the old one, and they also put on a roof that looked just like the old one also. Next, I helped the birthplace by bringing in five dollars, and Cabe also helped by bringing in twenty dollars. Our school earned a lot of money, and a lot of money is \$1,194.53.

Carl Sandburg was a pretty awesome man in my opinion, and I think that having buildings to represent him is a good way to show that he was important. One reason why I think Carl Sandburg is an important man is because he wrote many famous poems. Lastly, If you brought in pennies, you should think about the ways that your money is helping the buildings. Clearly, after going to the Sandburg buildings I have realized that we help him a lot by bringing in pennies even though he isn't alive, because we help keep the buildings up so he will still be known.

By Cabe Courson, Mrs. Knuth's Class, 4C



Cabe Courson

These are a couple reasons I liked being involved in the Penny Parade. First, I like being involved in the Penny Parade because when I bring the money in, I know that it's helping the Carl Sandburg birthplace get new things and keep the buildings standing. Second, my school raised a lot of money. My school raised a total of \$1,194.53. I like Carl Sandburg because of his poetry. I really like his poems. My favorite is "Fog." In conclusion, I like Carl Sandburg and being in the Penny Parade.

### SOME PENNY PARADE HISTORY

By Mike Hobbs

In the January 6, 1962 issue of *331 Memo*, the newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association, which preceded the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, is a recap of the first Penny Parade held on January 6, 1961. \$433.35 was donated by Galesburg District 205 and parochial schools. From civic groups, downtown canisters, and other groups came \$103.99. Total donations \$537.34.

According to the *331 Memo* story:

*An avalanche of Lincoln pennies rolled into 331 East Third Street [Sandburg's Birthplace Cottage] on January 6, 1961, and pleasantly overwhelmed the Carl Sandburg Association. The results of the first annual Penny Parade were heartwarming to workers on the project.*

*Every bowl, pitcher and pail was overflowing with pennies when school children of Galesburg brought their offerings in honor of Carl Sandburg's 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday.*

The treasurer of the Association and his helpers had not reckoned with the possible weight of 43,335 pennies, and a police car was dispatched to take the collection to the bank. Pillow cases and baskets were solicited from neighbors, and L.W. Goff, treasurer of the Association, his son, Rodney Goff, and Officer Richard Jones of the Police Department banked the pennies.

...Since Carl Sandburg is an American Legion member, the Galesburg Post has taken considerable interest in the Sandburg project in Galesburg. To add their support and approval to the first Penny Parade, the Legion gave \$13.88, a penny per member. This gift was announced early on Penny Parade Day and gave great momentum to the drive.

Two out-of-town school groups voluntarily joined the Parade. They were: the London Mills 4<sup>th</sup> grade under the supervision of Mrs. Harvey Ouder Kirk, teacher, and the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of Roseville with their principal, Gene Tinker.

The Galesburg alumnae of Alpha Xi Delta sorority, founded on the Lombard College campus, gave a penny for each inch of members' height, and \$12.42 in pennies was collected in this interesting manner.

Committees of children were chosen to represent their schools at the birthday party held at 331E Third St. on the afternoon of Penny Parade Day. Children chosen by Silas Willard School also had birthdays on January 6. Representatives to the party enjoyed a beautiful cake lighted by 83 candles. It had been baked as a gift for the occasion by John Ankersen of Scandia Bakery. He will also furnish the 1962 birthday cake.

...Other organizations participating were: Clio Club, Mosaic Club, Cosmo Club, Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Chapter, Junior Chamber of Commerce and the following men's luncheon clubs: Lions, Cosmopolitan, and Rotary. Canisters in downtown stores also helped in the collection.

Books by Mr. Sandburg, chosen by the winning schools for their libraries, were given by the Sandburg Association. Appropriate salutations, printed in gold by Mr. and Mrs. Ted Stewart as a gift to the Penny Parade, appeared in the front of each gift book.

Schools giving the largest number of pennies per capita according to enrollment were winners of books. They were: Corpus Christi High School, Lombard Junior High, and Wataga, Coldbrook, Rose Hoben Welch, Farnham, Nellie Swanson and Bateman Grade Schools.

## CARL SANDBURG'S "ELMER GANTRY" POEM

By Rich Hanson

"Elmer Gantry" was Sinclair Lewis' scandalous send up of a revivalist huckster. His "Sister Sharon" was loosely patterned on Aimee Semple McPherson. Some of you might remember the movie that starred Burt Lancaster and Jean Simmons. What is less known is that Carl Sandburg produced a work attacking an evangelist as well, perhaps the best known of his time, Billy Sunday.

Sandburg, an outspoken journalist with a strong affinity for the working man, and just as strong an antipathy for his oppressors, viewed Billy Sunday, the former baseball player who found religion and took to the hellfire and brimstone circuit, as one of the latter. Sunday's theatrics, which included busting up furniture and jumping around the stage as though possessed by the devil himself, struck Sandburg as absurd. The angry young newspaperman pokes fun at Sunday immediately in the first stanza of the twenty-one stanza poem:

*You come along...tearing your shirt  
yelling about Jesus.  
I want to know...what the hell...you  
Know about Jesus.*

After sharing his concept of whom he believed Jesus to be, a soft talker and friend to all but the bankers and con men of Jerusalem, a man who helped the sick and gave the people hope, he lit into Sunday again:

*You come along squirting words at us, shaking  
our fist and calling us damn fools so fierce the  
froth of your own spit slobbers over your lips—  
always babbling we're all going to hell straight  
off and you know all about it.*



**Billy Sunday**

Sandburg contrasts the positive effect that the carpenter from Galilee had on people:

*...He threw out something fresh  
And beautiful from the skin of his body and the  
Touch of his hands wherever he passed along.*

Then he returns to vilifying Sunday in three scathing stanzas:

*You, Billy Sunday, put a smut on every human blossom that comes within reach of your rotten breath belching about hell-fire and hiccupping about this man who lived a clean life in Galilee.*

*Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to Smash a whole wagon load of furniture at every performance.*

*Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. If it wasn't for the way you scare women and kids, I'd feel sorry for you and pass the hat.*

*I like a man that's got guts and can pull off a great original performance, but you—hell, you're only a bughouse peddler of second hand gospel—you're only shoving out a phony imitation of the goods this Jesus guy told us ought to be free As air and sunlight.*

Sandburg goes on to lampoon the promise of mansions in the sky after death for those who live in shanties now, the promise of Sunday's Jesus making things right for shopgirls living on \$6 a week and men who have seen their bodies broken by decades of hard work, that Sunday's Jesus will help them when their check can't meet the bills or when they're out looking for work that just isn't there. Empty promises and false hope. Little help to those suffering, but of great help to Sunday's pocketbook. Then he lights into Sunday again with another flurry of punches:

*I'm telling you this Jesus guy wouldn't stand for The stuff you're handing out. Jesus played it different. The bankers and the corporate lawyers of Jerusalem got their sluggers and murderers to go after Jesus just because Jesus wouldn't play their game. He didn't sit in with the big thieves. I don't want a lot of gab from the bunkshooter in my religion.*

*I won't take my religion from a man who never works except with his mouth and never cherishes a memory except the face of the woman on the American silver dollar.*

It is clear that Sandburg held Billy Sunday in utter contempt. What was clear to Albert Harcourt, his publisher, was that the title "Billy Sunday" had to be jettisoned. He no doubt feared a libel suit. In the standard edition of Sandburg's *Complete Poems* the title became "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter." That it became, with no reference to Billy Sunday in the text or in the title, until 1993, when *Billy Sunday and Other Poems* was compiled and edited by George Hendrick, a professor at the University of Illinois, and Willene Hendrick, a literary historian. They had access to the Sandburg papers that are housed at the University library at Champaign-

Urbana, and in putting together this edition, chose to give the poem the title originally intended for it.

Regrettably, hellfire and brimstone Bible-thumpers, prosperity preachers, and church leaders who meddle in politics are still with us, preaching a "pie in the sky after you die" theology, and condemning those to eternal torment who don't accept their particular brand of salvation. Revivals have evolved from canvas tents or wooden tabernacles to the use of radio, television, megachurches, or stadiums to fish for a flock to fleece. One has to wonder what the young socialist journalist from Galesburg would have to say about today's holy bunkshooters

## SPRING

By Barbara Schock

[Ed. Note: Sandburg wrote eloquently about the prairie. As a twelve-year old boy he had delivered the *Republican-Register* newspaper to Clark E. Carr at his home which still stands on North Prairie Street in Galesburg. Sandburg wrote about Carr in *Always the Young Strangers* saying that he had heard Lincoln tell stories that "could make a cat laugh." Carr wrote eloquently about the prairie too.]

Clark E. Carr was born on May 20, 1838 in Erie County, New York. In the spring of 1850 his family came across the Great Lakes to Chicago. There they purchased wagons and horses to travel to Cambridge in Henry County.

Mr. Carr became an attorney, was involved in politics and gave speeches for the Whig, later the Republican, Party. He became well acquainted with politicians and officeholders of the time in Illinois and the nation.

In his retirement years he began to write books about experiences in his life. In 1904 he wrote a novel entitled *The Illini: A Story of the Prairies*. The book was reprinted five times. It is a somewhat romanticized version of his life until the time of his marriage.

This is how he describes the prairie in the days before there were roads, towns and farms.

*The broad expanse upon which we found ourselves, so far as we could see had no beginning and no end except as bounded by the horizon.*

*Where fires had come and swept away the decayed vegetation of the preceding year, fresh grass of emerald green had sprung up in the midst of the vast area of that which was dead and dry and withered, whose deep brown surrounding and fringing the green made brilliant tapestries of a thousand hues, which constantly irradiated and illuminated and modified by successive sunshine and shadow and humidity and drought, presented more variegated and beautiful tints than any that have been attained by the handiwork of the Orient. The carpet spread out upon the prairies have never been equalled in beauty by the deft fingers of the looms of Turkey or Persia.*

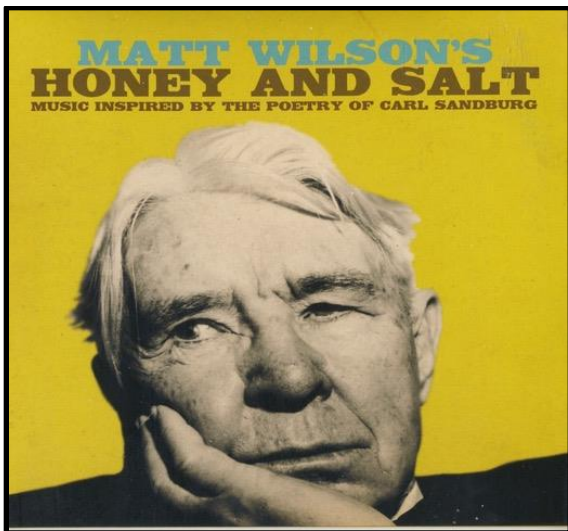
*There was no sound save the rumbling of our own wheels; and when they ceased to revolve, one realized the sublimity of silence. The vast expanse, extending as far as the eye could reach was bounded by the horizon, which, rising into the firmament and arching the heavens formed "a magical roof fretted with golden fire," a mighty dome canopying all beneath, and constituting what seemed a vast pavilion of which the prairies were the floor. This expanse of prairie was relieved here and there by a stream of water, and at intervals by groves of trees, whose cool and refreshing shade seemed always to beckon the wayfarer to approach and enjoy their sweetness and repose. As the season advanced, flowers bloomed more freely, delighting the eye and filling the air with fragrance. Song birds made melody. The prairie chicken and bobwhite, still unconscious of the wiles of the sportsman, hummed and whistled; while in the distance the graceful doe and the stately buck, unconscious of danger, lifted their heads high in air to gape with wistful and curious eyes at the passerby.*

*It is the custom to speak with rapture of the grandeur of mountain scenery, of high altitude and great gorges. Illinoisans who have ascended the Himalayas, climbed Mont Blanc, traversed the defiles of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado and of the Yosemite, still declare that none of the works of the Divine Architect are quite so majestic and sublime as were our prairies in their pristine beauty.*

## **MATT WILSON'S SANDBURG CONCERT APRIL 25**

By Tom Foley

To kick off the 23rd Annual, 2018 Carl Sandburg Festival, the world famous New York City jazz drummer, Matt Wilson [a former Knoxville, IL resident], is coming back to the Orpheum Theatre. On Wednesday, April 25 Matt Wilson with his band of four professional jazz musicians will play a free concert from his latest CD "Honey and Salt". The whole CD is based on poems by Carl Sandburg.



## **JESSE PECK, SANDBURG ASSN. BOARD MEMBER**

By Mike Hobbs

In the January 6, 1962 331 *Memo*, cited above in connection with the first Penny Parade, is a notation that Jesse R. Peck was on the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association. Some of you may remember him as Knox County Superintendent of Schools. He was Superintendent from 1935 to 1958. His son Robert D. Peck succeeded him and served as Superintendent from 1958 to 1986.



**Jesse R. Peck, 1942**

Courtesy of his grandchildren Sally Peck Lundeen & Jim Peck.

An Editorial entitled "Intangible Values" written by Mr. Jesse R. Peck appeared in this 331 *Memo* issue. It follows:

*We Americans are constantly measuring value. Perhaps too many times we measure these values only in terms of dollars and cents. We ask, "How much will it cost? or "What good will it do me?" Too often we forget that our lives may be changed by many intangible influences which have no saleable value but do have a tremendous effect upon our way of thinking, our actions and our attitudes.*

*What is the value of the Sandburg Cottage to you and to the City of Galesburg? As real estate not a large sum, but as a testimonial its value may be great and to those who visit the home it may have immeasurable value. It is the birthplace of a man whose ambition and efforts carried him above his environment to become one of America's great poets and historians.*

*A visit to the Sandburg Cottage is a privilege that you may have and enjoy. A visitor will receive an educational value and he may also receive an inspirational value by having stood in the small room where was born a poor Swedish boy, CARL SANDBURG, who by sheer grit and determination rose to undreamed-of heights and became one of this century's famous Americans.*

***These are intangible values which may be yours.***

## MORE FROM 1962 331 MEMO

Here are some more entries from the January 6, 1962 331 Memo. Thank you to former CSHSA President Chuck Bednar for making this issue available.

### **Give Special Assistance**

*Because of extensive painting and repairs being made on the birthplace during 1961 generous checks have been received from Mrs. Donna Workman of Chicago, Mart Sandburg Jr. of Galesburg, Dr. Richard Sandburg of Belvidere, Illinois, and Eric Johnson, Los Angeles, California. Since Penny Parade funds did not cover expenses incurred this year on renovation of [the] cottage, these gifts were received with great appreciation.*

### **Gifts to Kennedys**

*Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy's [Rose] personal Christmas gifts this year to her seven children [including President John F. Kennedy] were specially autographed copies of the [six] volumes of "The Prairie and War Years" [sic] by Carl Sandburg.*

### **New Book Received**

*Received as "331 Memo" went to press was "To Turn The Tide" by President John F. Kennedy. The foreword was written by Carl Sandburg.*

### **Sculptured Piece is Given**

*The Sandburg Association recently received a bronze head of Mr. Sandburg done by Joseph Konzal, a New York artist. It was the gift of Austin Products, art dealers, also of New York. The work is part of an "American Heritage" series of "portrait heads of five Americans whose contributions toward founding, extending and illuminating an American expression has been outstanding.*

*The five so honored are: Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, Frank Lloyd Wright and Martha Graham. All are the avatars of Whitman's "solemn oath that America means smething and is going somewhere—having purpose, destiny, banners and beacon-fires."*

*This is a beautiful piece of sculpturing and the Sandburg Association will have it on display at the Public Library where many Galesburg citizens may enjoy it.*

## SPRING CLEANUP

Spring cleanup at the Sandburg Site will be on Wednesday, March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Rain date is Friday, March 30. Come join the Master Gardeners in spiffing up the Site. Bring gloves and garden tools.

## SANDBURG AT BLOOMINGTON'S VILLAGE INN

By Mike Hobbs

Site Superintendent Martha Downey sent a link to a story written by Bill Kemp that appeared in the February 25 issue of *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL) about Cotton's Village Inn, a popular restaurant on Route 66 when it ran through downtown Bloomington. Many stories are associated with this distinctive, "one-of-a-kind" eatery, including one about Sandburg getting stuck in the restaurant's men's restroom and missing his train.



Cotton's Village Inn, Bloomington, IL.

Martha says that the Village Inn was still operating when she was a student at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. She "was charmed by its location, its nooks that now I know were coal bins, and the Statz art work." According to Kemp, "Local high school student Jack Statz began painting Bavarian or Elizabethan-themed murals on the restaurant's plastered, whitewashed walls in the 1950's. He continued this work as an Illinois State Normal University student and public school art teacher." Martha's family had dinner at the Village Inn after her graduation from IWU.

Does anyone have any more information about the story of Sandburg getting stuck in the Village Inn's men's restroom?

### **GOT A STORY FOR INKLINGS AND IDLINGS?**

We'd like to publish your Sandburg stories in *Inklings and Idlings*. Email your story to Editor Mike Hobbs at [mhobbs@grics.net](mailto:mhobbs@grics.net).

### **VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE**

.Go to [www.sandburg.org](http://www.sandburg.org) to visit our CSHSA website. On it you will find information about our hours, membership, Songbag Concerts, gift shop items, "Sandburg's Hometown" stories written by Barbara Schock, past issues of *Inklings and Idlings*, and more.

2018 MEMBERSHIP FORM

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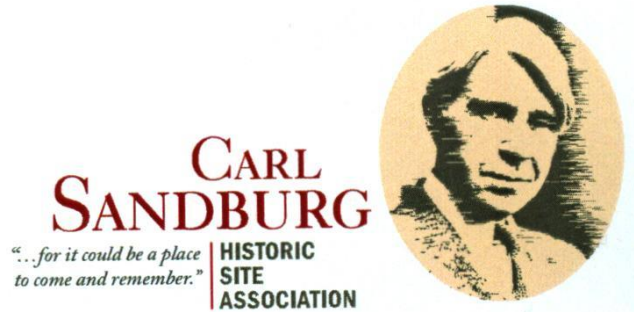
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