

INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • Galesburg, Illinois 61401 • (309) 342-2361

Autumn 2001

Welcome to New Members

Inklings and Idlings has many continuing features. One that gives us great pleasure is the welcome to new members. Those who have joined since the last issue of the newsletter are:

Sherry Berg
Judge and Mrs. Harry Bulkeley
Michael Hobbs
Karen Murphy

If you have joined the Association recently, and your name is not listed above, please notify Inklings and Idlings so the omission may be rectified in the next issue.

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The Songbag Is Open Again

The Songbag Concert Series will resume at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, Galesburg, on the third Thursdays in September, October and November. They are coordinated by John Heasley.

The fall folk music concert series will begin on Thursday, September 20th at 7:00 p.m. with a concert by Carol Montag, a well known guitarist and singer from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This will be the first concert in the Site's newly remodeled barn.

Ms. Montag writes many of her own songs and has a beautiful voice. Some compare her to Bonnie Koloc or Joan Baez. This should be a most enjoyable concert in the comfortable facilities of the barn.

On October 18th, Lee Murdock will give a free concert as the second event of the Songbag Series. He focuses on folk music of the Great Lakes, including work songs of lumberjacks and the men who sailed in wooden schooners. He has researched and recorded nine CDs of music documenting the lives of those who lived on or near the Great Lakes.

John Heasley, Mike Terry and Sunshine Lawnsdale will be featured at the November 18th concert.

There is a full schedule of folk music for you to enjoy at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site this fall. We hope you will come and enjoy every evening of music.

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From the Site Superintendent

July 1st marked the beginning of the new fiscal year for the State of Illinois. That is when distribution of permanent improvement funds occurs and we were fortunate enough to get money to complete the barn at the rear of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. However, there are no frills. The bathroom wall tile, sidewalk and gate and exterior landscaping will have to wait until next year. The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association has provided funds for carpeting and for ceramic tile in the entry and bathrooms.

The barn should seat about 60 people. The space will serve nicely

for the Songbag Concerts as well as exhibits.

Another use for the building will be to conduct school programs. We have formed a committee headed by Joyce Behrens, a Galesburg teacher, to develop an activities book and school curriculum that can be used in the schools and at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. There will be a Galesburg history section as well. It would be great if every student in Galesburg could visit the birthplace of Carl Sandburg at least once.

The Rootabaga Jammers were unable to play for a concert at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site last summer, but they will give us a fall concert on Sunday, September 23rd at 3:00 p.m. in the yard, weather permitting. Bring a lawn chair and be our guest.

For more information about events, a list of items available in the museum store and the wonderful writings of the people who entered our memoir-writing contest last spring, as well as other information about the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, check our web site at www.sandburg.org. Inquiries can be sent by e-mail to carl@sandburg.org.

-- Carol Nelson

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Wrinklings and Wild Things

*You get a line and I'll get a pole,
honey, honey.
You get a line and I'll get a pole,
babe, babe.
You get a line and I'll get a pole
We'll go down to the crawdad hole,
Honey, oh, baby, mine.*

The second Wednesday in August has recently become a national festival

in Sweden (especially in the southern regions). The date marks the start of the *Krafts Premiere*, the Premiere of the Crawfish.

Homes and restaurants are festooned with paper lanterns painted with sun and moon faces. Revelers wear party hats and the necessary bib, as crawfish consumption can be a messy affair, especially if accompanied, as is tradition, by beer and aquavit (with a drinking song to greet each serving.)

The backward-swimming shellfish are prepared by boiling in heavily salted water laden with heads of dill and allowed to cool to room temperature. They are served with toast, butter and cheese.

In the past Sweden has suffered from overharvesting and diseases of the crawfish, which has led to fresh frozen imports from the southern United States. The little crustacean is making a comeback in the streams of Scandinavia, much to the delight of the Swedes who relish the Crawfish Party as a celebration of the end of summer.

In the book *More Rootabaga*, not published until 1993, Carl Sandburg wrote a wonderful story somewhat related to the crustacean about which I've been writing. It is titled "The Story of How Dippy the Wisp and Ax Me No Questions Learned about the Village of Pickups." It is a touching story dealing with bigotry and intolerance, and about the creature that is half bird and half crawfish. A small section follows:

"Far back I remember I was somewhere, either deep down in the mud or high up in the blue, I can't remember which. And a crawfish and a bird were fighting over whether I should be a crawfish and live with crawfish or whether I should be a bird and live with the birds. Oh!

they were fighting! The crawfish had cut in the air with his claws till the eye of the bird was bleeding. And the bird had ripped the eye of the crawfish till it was bleeding. I cried: Let me be a bird and a crawfish both--and it was fixed that way. I love the mud and the crawfishes now, for the mud is nice and warm to sleep in, if you are a crawfish. And the high blue sky up over I love too, for it's grand to fly in if you are a bird among birds with wings. So here I am with claws and feathers and I asked to have it so. I shall live and die a crawfish bird. It is fixed that way."

Unfortunately, **More Rootabagas** is no longer in print. You will find it in the Galesburg Public Library, among others. If I get the setup going in our barn, you'll definitely see the crawfish story in puppet theater form.

--Steve Holden

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The Bus Boy and the Actress

(Dr. Richard Sandburg has written another of his reminiscences which contribute to our understanding of Carl Sandburg. The article originally appeared in **The Rockford Review**.)

After completing high school during the Depression, I worked for the Rath Packing Company in Galesburg, as a truck driver and a salesman. Hours, 5 a.m. to 4 p.m., six days a week for \$19.20, minus 30 cents for Unemployment Compensation. During my three-year stint there, my back gave out from lifting 100 pound boxes and quarters of beef heavier than I.

In 1936, I enrolled at a chiropody-podiatry college in Chicago and, as an orphan, was compelled to support myself including the tuition and all other expenses.

My part-time occupations included those as a bus boy, waiter, room waiter, bar boy, bartender and shoe and glove salesman.

After acquiring experience in food service, it occurred to me to seek a more lucrative job such as a waiter in a night club. This would also permit me to attend classes during the morning and clinics in the afternoon.

One night I caught a radio show from a night spot named the Yacht Club on the glittering Gold Coast, only two blocks from my room. The manager gave me a try, assigning me to work from 8 p.m. to 2 in the morning, serving the owner and his guests plus the entertainers, so he could judge my ability.

Surprisingly, my first customer was a gorgeous young lady who was the main attraction in the floor show. She was Lita Grey Chaplin, and I was told she was a movie star, having played in "The Kid," which featured the great Charlie Chaplin and child-star Jackie Coogan. It was one of the most outstanding movies of all time. She and Chaplin were later married and divorced, and she embarked on a singing career, enhanced by the Chaplin name.

The manager introduced me to Lita Grey, telling her I was a full-time student, and working at the Yacht Club at night.

She appeared impressed, complimented me and asked my name. When I told her, she blinked her soulful eyes and asked, "Would you be related to Carl Sandburg, the poet?"

At my answer, she sat upright in her chair and said, "Mr. Sandburg was a very dear friend of my husband, Charlie Chaplin, and he was a guest in our home many times."

Later, she added, "Mr. Sandburg said

my husband was 'the greatest of all Charlies,' and wrote a poem about him as well as several columns in the Chicago Daily News."

The following night, as I was serving her dinner, she remarked, "Both my husband and Mr. Sandburg were accused of being pro-communist, and this is farthest from the truth."

She insisted, "Mr. Chaplin was always for the underdog and despised the autocrats who wanted everything for themselves. His main fault was that he was often too expressive in his views."

I told her that I was aware of their friendship and that Carl Sandburg and his father had worked long hours for a pittance in order to support a family of seven.

We visited again the following night, but the hours were too long for me and I had to quit. She held my hand for a long time when I told her I was leaving. She wished me the best of luck and asked to be remembered to Carl.

Not long ago, a book accused Carl Sandburg of being a communist sympathizer in the early days. When I read it my thoughts flashed back sixty years to my rendezvous with Lita Grey Chaplin and her comments.

Mrs. Chaplin never made it to the top as an entertainer, but she impressed me greatly with her strong feelings about Carl and her husband.

As for communism, Carl has frequently been quoted as saying, "I have read Karl Marx and Lenin, I am familiar with their principles, but their communist philosophy is not for me."

Visiting with Lita Grey Chaplin, and discussing one of the greatest actors of all time, as well as a

Pulitzer Prize winning poet and historian, was a unique experience. I was never happy in podiatry, but experienced many tastes and brushes with literary history and fame while acquiring an education.

--Richard Sandburg

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Swedish Names

For centuries the Swedish people had what seems to us to be a strange way of taking a surname. Carl Sandburg's family is a perfect example. His great-grandfather was Gustaf Johnsson, his grandfather was Daniel Gustafsson and his father was August Danielsson who later added the name Sandburg because there were too many Danielssons working for the railroad which employed him and he once got a paycheck intended for someone else.

Why did the Swedes change surnames every generation?

For a clear understanding of this system [called patronymic] I looked up Swedish Names on the internet and found a wonderful explanation by Dr. Nils William Olsson, the leading name in Swedish genealogy for the past fifty years (nwolsson@mpinet.net). He is a person I knew many years ago in Bishop Hill. I e-mailed him to see if I could use excerpts from his article "Some Notes on Swedish Names" and he graciously gave his permission. He mentioned that he would like to revisit the Carl Sandburg Historic Site but he is 93 years old and also said that he was happy that we now have a newsletter. The rest of this article quotes from Dr. Olsson.

"In the beginning every person had but one name, the given name. If you look at the Bible and study the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew or the third chapter of the

Gospel of St. Luke you will find that the genealogy of Jesus consists of single male names, with an occasional mention of a female. As time went on it became necessary to differentiate between two persons with the same given name, thus we find *John, the Baptist* and *John, the Evangelist*.

"In most cultures where confusion might exist between two persons with the same given name, the father's name was used to separate the two individuals. The Latin name for son, *filius*, thus becomes *fils* in French, *fitz* in Norman French, and *vich*, *witz* in the Slavic languages. In Ireland, the prefix *O'* signifies the son of, as *Mac* or *Mc* in Scottish names. In northern Europe the patronymic was indicated by adding the father's given name to *-son* or *-dotter* in Sweden. The extra *s* in Swedish patronymics denotes the possessive case, thus Anders'son, Johan's son, Carl's daughter, etc., the extra *s* being sloughed off when the immigrant arrived in the U.S.

"Even though the Scandinavian cultures show many similarities, there are some distinct differences. In Norway, in addition to the patronymic, the Norwegians often added the name of the farm or village where he resided as his surname. Often several families, not related, would assume the same surname, based upon their domiciles.

"It is quite recently that Swedish families have followed suit, in taking the name of the family farmstead as a surname.

"The use of patronumics in Sweden was so common that it was not until approximately a century ago that the practice was dropped and the patronymic stabilized into a surname. Important as patronumics were in Swedish social history, particularly in the rural areas, the system began to break down with the

emergence of social classes--nobility, clergy, the military, the influx of foreigners, the development of town guilds and the advent of the industrial age.

"Many lads of rural background left the farm to enter some kind of trade. Usually they started out as apprentices, then became journeymen, ending up as masters in some Swedish town. In the change from farm life to city life they also assumed a surname. These names were usually linked to some form of nature name or topographic locality."

When Carl Sandburg's father, August, changed his name from Danielsson to Sandburg (sandy mountain) he was following the Swedish tradition of using topographic syllables to create a new name in the new world of Galesburg, Illinois.

--Carol Nelson

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From A Swedish Perspective

(Tomas Junglander has sent us this description of his continuing efforts to enhance knowledge of Carl Sandburg in Sweden.)

On August 18, 2001, I visited Aasbo where Carl Sandburg's father, August Danielsson was born on September 28, 1843. Residents of the village had invited me and we spent the morning visiting the property of Boetinge. August Danielsson was born in a cottage called Kaellan (The Spring) on that property.

It is difficult to reach the place now as it is located in the middle of a forest. The house was knocked down long ago. A number of people participated in the raising of a sign giving the historic background of the site.

In Sweden a common law called



"Allemansraett" (Everyman's Right) permits people to roam in the countryside at will, even to wander around on other people's private property if they wish, providing they do not litter, pollute, cause fire or other damage to flora or fauna or invade other people's privacy such as pitching a tent in front of someone's house.

This makes it easy for you to follow in Carl Sandburg's footsteps when you visit Sweden.

I concluded my visit to Aasbo by giving a lecture about Carl Sandburg's family. Here is a summary of my remarks.

August Danielsson worked as a farmhand on several farms in this area from 1858 to 1870 when he emigrated to Galesburg.

Between 1870 and 1904, August Sandburg, who changed his name from Danielsson to Sandburg, worked on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy

Railroad. He worked six days a week, ten hours a day. The first job he had on the "Q" railroad was with a construction gang at a dollar a day. He later became a blacksmith's helper.

When he retired from the long years of work on the railroad, he became a handyman, making more money freelancing his skills, than he had ever earned as a railroad laborer.

Working on different farms in Sweden had given him the necessary skills to be a good worker on the Illinois prairie.

Like his father, Carl Sandburg loved to work. Through his life he kept his father's Swedish hammer, being a symbol of work, hope and pride.

August Sandburg died of heart failure on March 22, 1910. He was buried in Galesburg's Linwood Cemetery. By the way, the stone marking the burial site was cleaned last spring in connection with the

Sandburg Days Festival.

The village of Aasbo plans to recognize Carl Sandburg's connection to the community on a special day every year.

If you visit Sweden, we hope to see you in Aasbo as well as in Appuna where Carl Sandburg's mother was born on July 20, 1850. The distance between Aasbo and Appuna is approximately 11 miles.

--Tomas Junglander

(In the summer issue of *Inklings and Idlings* we promised to provide pictures and descriptions of the farms where Carl Sandburg's parents worked before coming to America. They will appear in the Holiday issue to be published in November.)

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Jelke Good Luck Margarine

On a recent trip to Nauvoo, Illinois, I visited an antique mall and discovered a "Recipe" booklet published by Jelke Good Luck Margarine in 1926. The condensery of the John F. Jelke Company was located in Huntley, Illinois.

The booklet described a new method of numbering the steps in preparation of each recipe which would assure success. Today's homemakers are quite familiar with this method of writing the directions for preparing a recipe.

The booklet says "Rolled cookies are much better and can be more easily rolled out if dough is thoroughly chilled. Dough can be kept, carefully wrapped, in the ice-box for some days, and baked as directed." Some of our readers surely can remember the insulated boxes which were kept cool by a large block ice delivered to the home from wagons.

Swedish Cookies

3/4 cup Jelke Good Luck Margarine
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 tablespoons minced almonds
1 teaspoon grated orange rind
2 teaspoons baking powder
3 cups flour

1. Cream margarine and sugar; add beaten egg, almonds and orange rind.
2. Sift 1 cup flour and baking powder; add to first mixture.
3. Add enough more flour to make stiff dough.
4. Roll out, cut in desired shape, and bake in a hot oven (425 degrees F.).

Recipe makes 6 dozen.

--Barbara Schock

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A Correction

Charles Burdick, an Association member who lives in North Carolina, has corrected a reference which appeared in the Summer 2001 newsletter. It said Penelope Niven "spent more than a year at Sandburg's last home in Connemara, North Carolina." Actually, Carl Sandburg's home is located at Flat Rock, North Carolina, and is named Connemara.

The original owner was Christopher Memminger of Charleston, South Carolina. He had the home built as a summer place around 1838. He was later Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederacy. After his death the home passed to the Gregg family and then to Captain Ellison Smythe who named the site Connemara to honor his Irish ancestry. Connemara is an area in County Galway in Ireland.

The Sandburgs acquired the property in the 1940s as a place to write and think. Carl Sandburg lived there some 22 years.

Mr. Burdick's mother, a writer, was a great admirer and student of Carl Sandburg and volunteered as a docent at the Site in the early 1950s. At the time, she worked for The Register-Mail and The Galesburg Post. She and Mr. Burdick visited Connemara in 1968 and had tea with Mrs. Sandburg, who took them on an extensive tour of the farm.

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**The Officers and Directors
of the Carl Sandburg
Historic Site Association
2001-2002**

On July 10th, the annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association was held at the Site.

At that time, the officers and directors of the Association were elected for the following year.

**Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, Illinois 61401**

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Vice President - Margaret Krueger
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Treasurer - Patricia Reyburn

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