

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

Fall, 2008

The Officers and Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association 2008-2009

On July 8, 2008, the annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association was held in the Visitors' Center.

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

President—Norm Winick
Vice President—Rex Cherrington
Secretary—Bert McElroy
Treasurer—John Heasley

Directors

Charles Bednar, Jr.
Patty Christianson
Tom Foley
Mike Hobbs
Karen Lynch
Patty Mosher
John Pulliam
Christian Schock
Megan Scott
Stanford Shover
Brian Tibbetts
Steve Holden, ex officio

Newsletter Editor—Barbara Schock

Two directors have retired—Kay Stout and Mary

Strawn. They served on the board for a number of years and contributed a great deal to the successful programs carried out. Their interest and support was greatly prized. The Board approved a Resolution of Appreciation to recognize their service. Thank you, Ladies!

The Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street. All members are welcome to attend the Board meetings.

Songbag Concerts Continue

In August the first Songbag Concert to be held on a Saturday night was a success with more than forty music appreciators present. The concerts will continue through November, providing live music on the fourth Saturday.

The concerts always take place in the Barn at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 331 East Third Street at 7 o'clock in the evening. Refreshments are served. A \$3 donation is requested, but not required.

Site in the Balance

Since the middle of July the threat of cuts in the State Budget have kept the Carl Sandburg Historic Site in the news. The Site, as well as several

others in West Central Illinois, may be closed if the Illinois Legislature doesn't appropriate sufficient funds for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency which administers all the historic sites in Illinois.

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association Board has been encouraging members of the public to write to their State Representative and State Senator. It is important that the members of the Legislature are aware of the value of keeping all of the Historic Sites open. More than 8,000 people visit the Sandburg Site each year. Many of them are children who have come to love the Rootabaga Stories and the short, funny poems that appeal to their sense of humor.

Many adults visit the Sandburg Site to enjoy the Songbag Concerts as well as the lovely grounds. Tourists from all over the world come to learn about the life of Carl Sandburg. The Site is a valuable asset to the City of Galesburg.

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Stanford Shover

(The Editor asked Stanford Shover to write some of his thoughts about the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. His enthusiasm hasn't diminished a bit since his 80th birthday. He still does substitute teaching in the Abingdon schools and is an inspiration to all who know him.—Barbara Schock)

What an honor it is to me to be one of the new members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association Board. After my first two meetings I am impressed with the interest, knowledge and concern of this dedicated group.

These are troubling times for state historic sites

who have been warned to "not plan anything after October." What a loss for the Galesburg community if that becomes more than a temporary problem.

My interest in Carl Sandburg, the man I consider a literary genius, dates to the beginning of my 62 years in the educational systems of Knox County. I have always respected the literary culture of our young nation, and I have encouraged every class at all levels to become acquainted with several Sandburg poems and the interesting, unique biography of this Galesburg native. I have accompanied a "countless number" of my students to visit the birthplace and museum.

I sponsor a Young Authors program at Hedding Elementary School in Abingdon. The winners are treated to a lunch and are given a book and a few writing materials. We then visit this historic site and often sit in the beautiful outdoor park setting where the young authors read a few passages from their newly acquired book. They are excited to "take the walk" on the stepping stones surrounding Remembrance Rock.

Years ago I was fortunate to attend the memorial service on October 1, 1967, as Mr. Sandburg's ashes were interred. The afternoon was a typical colorful autumn one with the Galesburg High School a capella choir treating those in attendance with music that could only be matched with a later performance at the New York World's Fair (which Chuck Bednar's father and I served as chaperones).

All these memories were collected in a collage for the celebration of my 80th birthday on September 9, 2007, which was held on the quaint and peaceful lawn of the Site where nearly 200 friends shared the afternoon with the barn, the museum and the birthplace in the background. John Heasley and his talented trio, Hammer and Pick, provided

music and Steve Holden and Bert McElroy were helpful in planning the outdoor stage in a setting that I have grown to love, and one that encompassed Carl's love of the rural peoples and cornfields of the Midwest.

Only the citizens of Knox County can help save this Galesburg Gem, and I am certain that they will contact their state representatives. Everyone should make a special visit to the Site before November, and they should encourage their friends and family to do the same. The schools in the county should encourage their students to read not only Sandburg's writings but also read of his varied life experiences. I have many times suggested that every student of our area be encouraged to appreciate the story of a man who represents the middle of America and a man who announced to the world that Galesburg was his hometown.

I have teaching suggestions that I would be willing to share with any teacher in this area. No more than a couple of hours in a class often creates a student interest in Sandburg. We must remember that an early exposure to the literary works of this man is important, and our younger generation can help us to save a cultural asset that was given to us.

—Stanford Shover

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Outtasite

(Just one simple poem for my column now, for these times.—Steve Holden)

BRONZES

They ask me to handle bronzes
Kept by children in China
Three thousand years
Since their fathers
Took fire and molds and hammers
And made these.

The Ming, the Chou
And other dynasties,
Out, gone, reckoned in ciphers,
Dynasties dressed up
In old gold and old yellow—
They saw these.

Let the wheels
Of three thousand years
Turn, turn, turn on.

Let one poet then
(One will be enough)
Handle these bronzes
And mention the dynasties
And pass them along.)

Carl Sandburg, from *Smoke and Steel*

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A Happy 90th Birthday

In 1918, Carl Sandburg lived in Maywood, Illinois, and he was the father of two daughters with another child on the way. He was preparing his second book of poetry, *Cornhuskers*, for publication.

At the same time, the world was involved in a great war which was supposed to bring lasting peace. Carl kept abreast of the war news and supported the efforts of President Woodrow Wilson to bring about a safer world. At the same

time, he wanted to be closer to the action and to see things with his own eyes.

In July, he was offered a job by the Newspaper Enterprise Association as a correspondent to report from Stockholm, Sweden. Sandburg had to apply for a passport in order to travel overseas. There were several delays—he had to get an affidavit from his mother regarding the date of his birth as he had no birth certificate and the required approval from his local draft board indicating that it didn't need a 40-year-old man.

Several months passed before Sandburg was able to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to Sweden. The weather during the voyage wasn't very pleasant. He wrote in one of his letters to his wife, Lilian, "Fog on fog and never a star,/what is a man, a child, a woman,/ to the green and grinding sea."

Sandburg and his wife were convinced their third child would be a boy. They even named the anticipated child John Edward. On November 24, 1918, the baby was born and it was decidedly female. Lilian called her Mary Ellen after a girl who lived across the street from the Sandburg home.

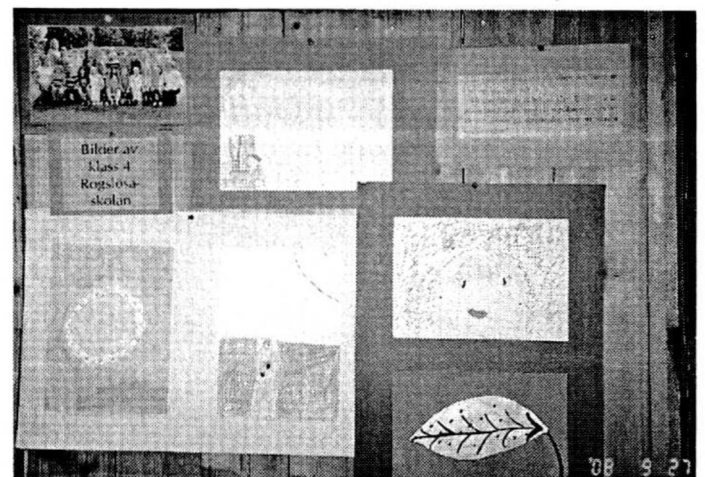
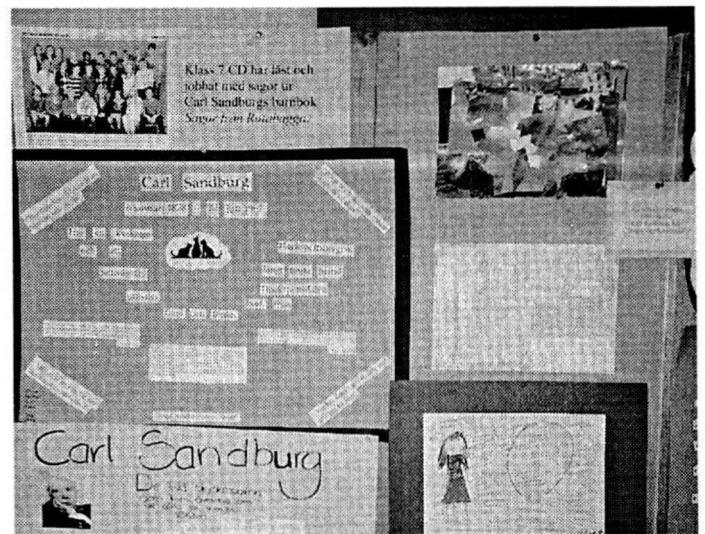
More than a month passed before Sandburg arrived back in the United States. He didn't see his new little girl until January, 1919. The parents had differing ideas as to the baby's name. Carl suggested she could be named Mary Illinois Alix. That last part commemorated a famous race horse. Needless to say, the idea didn't go over very well. Some Swedish heritage may have rubbed off and they began to call her Helga.

Helga will be 90 years old on November 24th and we send our very best wishes for a Happy Birthday.

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The Swedish Sandburg Supporter

Our Swedish member, Tomas Junglander, has loaned some of the artwork created by school children in Vadstena, Sweden. The works were done by a class of 11-year-olds and another of 14-year-olds after they had read some of the Rootabaga Stories. The schools are located near the birthplace villages of August and Clara Sandburg, the parents of Carl. Below are several photographs of the display now in the Barn.



Junglander has concluded a series of ten displays of his Sandburg collection over the past two years. He calls it "My Personal Exhibit About Carl Sandburg." We are grateful that Tomas gives his time and effort to encourage interest in Carl Sandburg and his poetry and prose.

Recently, Tomas acquired two letters written by Clara Sandburg to her brother Johan in Sweden. In an 1874 letter she wrote about her marriage to August Sandburg. In the other letter of 1879 she wrote that she and August were planning to buy a farm because working as a blacksmith's helper for the railroad was too dirty and dangerous. That was a plan which was never realized.

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Assessments

Every taxing body is required to publish in a local newspaper the list of property owners each year. The "Assessment List" published in July, 1915 has some interesting names in it.

One of the wealthiest individuals in Galesburg was George A. Lawrence. He was an attorney and land dealer who was married to Ella Park Lawrence, known as the "Mother of the Illinois State Flag." They lived in the large stone house on the southwest corner of Prairie and Losey Streets. The Lawrence properties were assessed at \$3333 (equal to \$68,214.59 in 2007).

Clark E. Carr, a former postmaster of Galesburg and neighbor of the Lawrences, was assessed at \$1448 (equal to \$29, 635.38 in 2007).

A not well-known widow by the name of Clara Sandburg was assessed \$58 for her property. That is equal to \$1187.05 in 2007. She lived in a small

bungalow at 1586 East Main Street.

Since 2008 is the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the Model T by Henry Ford, it is interesting to note that there were 460 automobiles in Galesburg in 1915. Each one was valued at \$372 (2007 equivalent to \$7,613.51). The 1,052 horses in the city were each valued at \$61.42 (or \$1,257.05 in 2007). This was an indication that the automobile was beginning to have an effect on travel and work.

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Do You Know the Location of Uniontown?

In the 1830s, when Illinois was being settled by the Yankees from New England and the migrants from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia were moving to the state, many towns were being established. The men who laid out the towns were optimistic that they would develop into mercantile centers for the surrounding farms. The means of transportation, mainly horses and oxen, limited the distance that farm produce could be hauled in a day. Many of those towns didn't survive with the building of the railroads.

This article from the *Galesburg Weekly Mail* of August 6, 1897, describes one such "paper town," located in Section 19, Salem Township, in southeastern Knox County. The village of Summit was also located in the same township. Yates City, a few miles to the east, is the only community to survive to the present day.

"We give the readers this week a brief history of Uniontown. The place was laid out in June, 1839, by George A. Charles, county surveyor. It contained 28 blocks and three important streets,

namely: Main, running through the square; Washington, on the east, and Franklin, on the west, all in a north and south direction and eight streets going east and west, from First to Eighth streets. It grew from birth and became a flourishing town, containing one grocery store, one wagon shop erected by Moses Shinn, the smith, who continued in business until about 1856. From 1853 to 1856 there was a marked improvement in the village. Several new residences were built, also two general stores, each carrying a \$5,000 stock of merchandise; two saloons, a wagon and blacksmith shop combined, erected by Shinn & Booth....The construction of the Peoria & Oquawka railroad, now the C.B.&Q., and the location of a town called Summit, now Douglas, rapidly drew the business away. From that time on it went down, and now, July, 1897, it only contains eight dwelling houses, one blacksmith shop and the old brick school house, erected in 1853, and has the reputation of being the most thoroughly equipped country school in Salem township."

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Wrinklings & Wildthings

JOY

Let a joy keep you.
Reach out your hands
And take it when it runs by,
As the Apache dancer
Clutches his woman.
I have seen them
Live long and laugh loud,
Sent on singing, singing,
Smashed to the heart
Under the ribs
With a terrible love.

Joy always,
Joy everywhere—
Let joy kill you!
Keep away from the little deaths.

Carl Sandburg, from *Chicago Poems*

(Did Ed Sullivan know what the Apache [pronounced A-PAHSH] Dance was the several times he presented performances of it on his "Toast of the Town," and later, "The Ed Sullivan Show"? As a young boy, I'm certain I had no clue about what Ed and I called the Apache [as in Native American] Dance. I do remember [in black-and-white, pre-color TV] how the guy with pencil-thin mustache and beret danced with his voluptuous partner. He seemingly beat the heck out of her. I mean, he would slap her, knock her to the floor, and drag her across the floor by her hair. Talk about politically incorrect!

Anyway, for some time I've known the Carl Sandburg poem "Joy" in which he mentions Apache Dancers. I figured it was about time I found out about `em. So I "Googled" and this is what I came up with. The Apache Dance originated in the Parisian lower classes, first reported as a domestic street fight in the Montmart section of Paris, in front of a night club that was indirectly responsible for the name "Apache." A local journalist reported that "The fury of a riotous incident [a fight] between two men and a woman [the "john," the pimp and his "girl"] rose to the ferocity of savage Apache Indians in battle." Other street folk, proud of this reported deed, formed street gangs that became known as "les Apaches." There were no real steps or routine patterns, but rather a pantomime performed to waltz or tango music. The pimp accosts his "girl," demanding her earnings. She refuses, and he beats her—slaps her—throws her around—drags her by her hair—whirls her in a circle and dumps her in a heap in the corner. She

crawls back to him begging his forgiveness, professing her love. In some cases, the woman does get revenge, by knife or other means.

I guess it really does not matter whether Mr. Sullivan or I knew what was going on in these dances. I think Mr. Sandburg did. I think it comes down to one word: PASSION.)

—Steve Holden

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Lincoln and Douglas Debated

This year is the sesquicentennial of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates in Illinois. Many activities are being planned in the communities where the original debates were held. Galesburg is one of those places.

In the nineteenth century, debates were a common way to discuss important questions of the day. People would travel great distances to hear public figures give their reasons for supporting or opposing a particular issue. In the 1850s the most controversial question of the day was whether or not slavery should be extended to territories seeking admission to the Union.

Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln were running for a seat in the United States Senate in 1858. Lincoln challenged Douglas to debate and Douglas set the terms of the debates. There would be seven debates (2 in August, 2 in September and 3 in October). They would be held in parts of the state where neither man had previously spoken. Each man spoke for an hour, then the first speaker had half an hour for rebuttal.

Nine thousand people attended the first debate in

Ottawa. As many as 15,000 may have attended the fifth debate in Galesburg. It was a cold and windy day, but that didn't stop those who wanted to hear Lincoln and Douglas speak.

The words of the two men were carried in newspapers across the country. The new method of fast writing, called stenography, and the telegraph enabled the speakers' words to be spread quickly. The public interest in the debates was intense. Douglas was well-known as he had been in the Senate in the previous term and he was a leader of the national Democratic Party. Lincoln became much better known across the country because of his reasoned and eloquent responses during the debates.

Douglas made the same arguments at each of the debates, emphasizing that the people in new states should be able to decide whether slavery would be allowed or not. Lincoln tried various tactics in order to put Douglas on the defensive. He also emphasized that slaves were not property, but human beings.

That sentiment struck a chord with people across the country. It contributed to Lincoln's nomination by the Republican Party in 1860, and his subsequent election that year as the sixteenth President of the United States.

We still have debates on college campuses and during the presidential elections. They still serve to acquaint the public with the candidates and the important issues of the day. We have the advantage of watching them on television in the comfort of our homes.

During the month of October there will be a number of events commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates in Galesburg. You can check the newspapers and the internet for a schedule.

Highland Park—Part 2

In the summer issue of *Inklings and Idlings* there was an article about Highland Park located east of Galesburg. It was a popular spot for picnics and other outdoor activities in the early part of the twentieth century. Here are a few more details about the property.

The Gale Products Division of the Outboard Marine Corporation bought the lake and surrounding land in 1945 to use as a testing facility. In 1982, the company gave the property to the Village of East Galesburg for \$1.

The Village Trustees decided the property was too expensive to maintain for public use in 1998. They had it appraised and it was sold for a bid of

\$95,750 from Robert S. Wedell of Galesburg. The parcel also included Gale Lake and a little more than 35 acres of land.

Originally, the lake was 20 feet deep, but silt has built up so the depth is now less than ten feet. The Illinois Department of Conservation has estimated the cost to dredge the lake could exceed a half million dollars. The shallow water also promotes growth of aquatic vegetation and inhibits the fish population.

Perhaps, someday the lake might be improved and a lovely camp ground could be built there or a wildlife and nature area could be developed.

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