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# INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

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The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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## Winter-Spring 2016

### FROM SITE SUPT. MARTHA DOWNEY

"Sandburg—A Little Known Giant" was one of the class offerings at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Bradley University. CSHSA board members Mike Hobbs, Rex Cherrington, and Barry Swanson along with myself presented four 1-hour classes this past October highlighting Sandburg's life and work.

"The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute is an organization at Bradley University whose members, age 50 and older, want to keep learning and stay active as they reach and enjoy retirement." Year-round programs are offered with the only pre-requisite that participants enjoy learning. There are nearly 1,100 Peoria-area members who participate. OLLI offered an impressive number of educational programs during its fall season including learning trips, lectures, cinema, study groups, and classes.

The catalog described the Sandburg class this way, "Upon the death of Carl Sandburg, President Lyndon Johnson said, 'Carl Sandburg was more than the voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America.' Few are aware of this common man, a diversified writer, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes and a Grammy. Through film, lecture, and discussion, participants will learn more about Sandburg, his early years in Galesburg, life in Chicago and later years on his farm in North Carolina."

For the first of the four sessions, the documentary, "The Day Carl Sandburg Died" was shown. This provided the introduction to Sandburg's life to the over 50 people attending the class.

The following week Rex Cherrington discussed the Galesburg of Sandburg's youth, and the influences it exerted on the young Carl. In addition to telling of Carl's immediate family, Rex described the numerous part-time jobs Sandburg held that brought him into contact with people throughout Galesburg, the affluent to the working class. The importance to Sandburg of Lombard College and Phillip Green Wright were part of the presentation. *Always the Young Strangers* was praised by Rex as a remarkable biography, and he read passages from the work.

"Carl Sandburg & Abraham Lincoln" was the title of

Mike Hobbs' talk. Mike discussed Sandburg's Lincoln biographies, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*; *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*; and the one-volume *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years*. As part of this presentation Mike talked about how Sandburg's admiration for Lincoln made him willing to devote so much time and effort to researching and writing the biographies. In addition, Mike highlighted the many awards Sandburg received during his life.

The final class was taught by Barry Swanson. He focused on Sandburg's years living in North Carolina and his poetry. As a writer himself, Barry discussed the influence Sandburg has had on his own writing. He read some of Sandburg's best known poems, "Fog" and "Chicago." He also made sure they heard poems not as well known, but ones that demonstrated Sandburg's activism and faith in the people, "War," "Grass," and "Happiness."

The "students" in the Sandburg classes were interested and enthusiastic about Galesburg's native son. The OLLI organizers were very helpful and friendly. It was a wonderful opportunity to expand the Association's audience and spread the word about Carl Sandburg. In fact, we are discussing the possibility of offering a similar course at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site in the future.

### NATIVE SON, NATIONAL TREASURE

By Bill Morris

With all of the challenges facing museums and historic sites in Illinois it is time to redouble our efforts to protect the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site and the legacy of our native son and national treasure. To accomplish this goal, the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association (CSHSA) has been chosen by the Galesburg Community Foundation (GCF) to participate in an Endowment Match Program. If the CSHSA can raise \$10,000 toward an endowment to support the Historic Site, the GCF will match it. We have until June 30, 2016 to accomplish the task.

Carl Sandburg, world-renowned poet, Lincoln biographer, twice Pulitzer Prize winner, journalist, folk music historian, and American literary hero was born in

Galesburg, Illinois in 1878. With exceptional efforts by a few Galesburg citizens, his birthplace was preserved and restored and today is administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. A trip to the site offers a tour of the birthplace cottage, a visitor center that houses valuable Sandburg artifacts, and an opportunity to stroll in the lovely grounds where Sandburg's ashes are interred under Remembrance Rock. A picturesque treasure located in an Illinois prairie city, the Carl Sandburg Birthplace attracts visitors and scholars from across the nation and around the world.

To accomplish our goal the CSHSA is launching a campaign to strengthen the legacy of our "Native Son, National Treasure" Carl Sandburg. Our initial goal is to raise \$10,000, and receive the matching \$10,000 from the GCF. Our long-term goal is much more ambitious.

We want to continue to grow our endowment to assist in staffing the Historic Site year-round. Having the site open all year will bring more visitors, more educational opportunities, and the ability to better maintain the assets associated with the Historic Site. In addition to being an Illinois State Historic Site, Sandburg's Birthplace and grounds were added to the United for Libraries Literary Landmark Registry in April, 2015.

What is significant about the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association? We are an organization dedicated to preserving the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site as it pertains to the legacy of Carl Sandburg for our community and our nation. As a native son, Carl learned the value of hard work and the significance of the common man and woman in Galesburg.

The Sandburg birthplace site is an integral part of the future economic growth and development of tourism to Western Illinois. Easily accessed by major interstate highways and Amtrak, the location is centrally located to over 40 colleges, schools, and libraries within a 50 mile radius. The Galesburg Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and city officials are dedicated to coordinating and generating an exciting economic and marketing plan in collaboration with the Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce. We propose this as an open-ended plan, working with the Sandburg Site Superintendent and the State of Illinois.

## 1. Foundation and Endowment

With the assistance of the Galesburg Community Foundation's Grant Match Program we wish to establish an endowment for the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. The interest from the endowment would be used to assist in managing the State Historic Site. Through an ongoing fundraising campaign, the foundation can set goals and manage a campaign well beyond the initial \$20,000 endowment.

## 2. Attendance. Open all Year.

Having the Birthplace Site and its facilities open all year will significantly increase its value and use to the public. Fully utilized, the site will allow for the design and development of educational and cultural activities to encourage attendance. The additional revenues donated by visitors will partially offset the Site's operational costs.

## 3. Educational Value

With extended operating hours an educational outreach plan will be developed to increase the use and value of the Site. Implemented by the Site Superintendent and local support groups, the plan will outreach to major academic resources available from local colleges. Through liaisons with these institutions a consistent educational campaign can be developed, entitled, and promoted as a "learning lab." Because of Sandburg's appeal to young and old readers the program will be designed for a wide range of ages. It is proposed to establish scholarships and writing labs funded by local support groups. It is proposed to coordinate with the staff and programs offered by the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, Flat Rock, NC as well as the Carl Sandburg collection of manuscripts and documents administered at the University of Illinois. A major collection of Sandburg memorabilia, it represents a primary source for research.

## 4. Community Relations/Economic Value

Carl Sandburg's world-wide recognition is a contributing asset that attracts visitors to Galesburg. A community focal point, the site is a historical and cultural place to visit. The Galesburg Area Convention & Visitors Bureau will be a primary source for creating public awareness and promoting the birthplace.

## 5. Maintenance of Grounds and Buildings

As the Endowment grows, the CSHSA will be better equipped to provide assistance in maintaining the grounds, cottage, visitors center, and Barn. The CSHSA wishes to keep the Historic Site in excellent condition. A well maintained site is a tremendous asset to the community and State of Illinois.

## DEAR HELEN, ...LOVINGLY, MARY

By Cheryl Dowell

*[Ed. Note: This article was written by Bishop Hill Heritage Association (BHHA) Archivist and CSHSA member Cheryl Dowell about letters regarding Mary Sandburg, Carl's oldest sister, which were discovered in the Jacobson family archives. Mary taught at Bishop Hill from 1899 to 1902. Jacob Jacobson was one of Bishop Hill's early settlers. At the conclusion of her article Cheryl describes the letters as a "true treasure" to the BHHA for providing "an insight into the person who once inspired our Bishop Hill students," "a pleasure to share with the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site." Cheryl, we appreciate your sharing them. Thank you.]*

The "Helen" in this article's title refers to Helen Jacobson of Bishop Hill, Illinois. Her grandfather was Jacob Jacobson Sr., one of the Swedish communal settlement's early settlers. Jacobson's job for the Colony was to train the Ox-Boys to work and be responsible for the necessary work animals, the large oxen. Jacob Sr. became a trustee of the Colony after the leader, Eric Janson, was murdered. Jacobson's son, Jacob Jr., was well known in the village of Bishop Hill as a civic leader.



Helen Jacobson. Courtesy Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

The other lady in the title is Mary Sandburg, Carl Sandburg's sister. From 1899 to 1902 Mary taught school in the historic Colony School in Bishop Hill. At that time the Jacobson children, Helen, Margaret, and Robert attended that school. Helen wrote a letter in September, 1901 to her parents who were on vacation. Mary Sandburg was mentioned,

*We have seen Miss Sandburg's book of pressed flowers. She has harebells and flowers from the Garden of the God's and some things from Porto Rico (sic).*



Mary Sandburg in center of Bishop Hill School group photo to right of man with jacket & tie. Courtesy Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

When Mary left Bishop Hill, moving to Indiana, she kept in touch with the Jacobson sisters by writing letters.

Jacobson family descendants donated approximately 30 boxes of archival items to the Bishop Hill Heritage Association (BHHA) in 2013. It appeared that all letters, invoices, etc. were kept by the family. At the time of the disposal of their original Bishop Hill home in 1993, these items had been taken by one of the remaining descendants and placed in storage in the state of Georgia. Every paper in the donated archival collection to the BHHA was tediously read. Many treasures were found for the BHHA archives. A few letters from Mary Sandburg to Helen Jacobson were among them.

Mary wrote friendly letters to Helen, telling about activities of her job in Indiana. As friends communicated, all subjects were covered,

*Rockville, Ind., March 15, 1902*

*I have worked a little harder than usual of late. On Friday evening the Glee Club gave a musical for the benefit of the Athletic Association. We cleared \$50 and made a very fine impression on the people who really were astonished with the showing they made.... I was nervous before the event and for an hour fairly shook in my boots.*

The Jacobson girls were attending Knox College at the time of the letter exchanges. They were home on vacation in Bishop Hill when this letter arrived from Mary who was in Detroit,

*June 16, 1902*

*Many churches are located on Woodward Avenue, the principal (sic) street here. Most of them have a great deal of ivy on their walls. In fact residences have much of it, too and the effect is one of coolness as well as beauty. The school is on that street, too, so I have a pleasant ride on my wheel [bicycle] along a boulevard with a park running thru it then to Woodward Avenue. I am happily located in a nice room with gas and electric light.... The air here is as fresh with a smell of water in it. I was across the river one day to Windsor, Canada...so you see I like Detroit. People at home said I would. My work is very pleasant.... I am in the advanced class. I wish you could hear some of the chorus work. ...[W]hen the new class comes in about the first of July, I shall have to stand on the little platform and wave the baton....*

Another letter from Mary while in Detroit dated August 25, 1902,

*I go home next Saturday and the next week leave for Rockville, Indiana, where I have a position as supervisor of music at \$57 per month. ...I thought when I came that I would not be here so long, but there is so much to learn in this music, really there is no end.*

The holidays in 1902 are approaching as Mary writes on November 18,

*And it is almost Thanksgiving again! Doesn't time fly? And Christmas will be here before we can say "Jack Robinson". ...Last Thursday I attended a party at the home of one of the High School girls. We had great fun playing wink. Our team was defeated a week ago at Bloomingdale. There was a lively color scrimmage after the game. My brother [Carl] is near Indianapolis with his [stereoscopic] views. I shall meet him at Christmas or before and then go on home.*

Mary went home to Galesburg for Christmas and returned to Rockville on January 1, 1903 when she wrote this communication, somewhat of a thank you note for Christmas "remembrances,"

January 6, 1903,

*How lovely of you to so kindly remember me with your little remembrances and the letters especially. I was so fortunate in receiving many letters during my stay at home. The best treat I had was a trip to Chicago where I heard the opera "Il Trovatore." This was my first night of grand opera and I fully realized my anticipations. Such voices, such acting and expression, it was all superb. On Tuesday morning I skated at Lincoln Park. This was enjoyable also.*

The winter months brought another letter to Helen dated February 16, 1904 from Rockville,

Dear Helen,

*I am going to write you the first letter on my new paper, a valentine from one of my senior girls. I received a primrose plant from another one. Of course the good Saint made his round in Bishop Hill. ...We have had some fine skating this winter. The exercise is exhilarating. There have also been sleighing parties. We gave a musical one evening. The double quartette of boys was well received and encored. Have you had any entertainments? I often think of that Lantern Drill and how your father and Mr. Myrtengren took precautions so that you would not catch on fire....*

The last letter from Mary in the Jacobson collection is dated October 5, 1904, with the return address of Albany, Indiana. It is assumed that she is now teaching at a school that she describes in this letter after she inquires about the Jacobson sisters' situation at Knox College,

*By this time you are becoming familiar with your new surroundings. Are you pleasantly located and how do you like it all? Surely, the natural scenery is all that one wants for inspiration. I think the park and streets leading from it, make the beauty spot of Galesburg. ...Where do you attend church? ...I should think you would enjoy the Central Church with its chorus choir and devotion director. What studies do you take? I am interested in what teachers you have. Beda Hansen wrote me a long letter-so like her cheery manner. She is a sweet girl, always so sunny. My work here is very pleasant. The music is certainly fine. I wish you could hear some of the two and three part work. The sixth grade sings October's Bright Blue Weather at present. ...I had such a treat in seeing "As You Like It"*

*given in the park this summer. If one has few such pleasures, he surely appreciates them the more. When I attended High School, the catalpa and birch trees were my chief delight. I used to visit my eighth grade teacher, Miss Hogue [Hague?] still at the Churchill School where she stayed at the Hall. We always had good times there. ...This town is small, has no interesting points. The people are mostly laborers who work in the oil fields. That sounds odd, doesn't it, as a "sucker" [nickname for an Illinois resident]. But this is the great oil region and just now there is a boom. Every house is taken. Some even have located in vacant store rooms. There are two schools. All the rooms have every seat filled. So there is enough to do, you see. The Methodist church is the only one having regular services. I am in the choir, as usual. Have you ever seen me when I wasn't? Do you know I often think of that nice class of girls I had at Bishop Hill! They were so good to me and very faithful indeed.*

While attending Knox College, the Jacobson sisters had the pleasant surprise of a few visits from Mary. Mary's visit in May to Whiting Hall was described in a letter to the Jacobson parents in Bishop Hill,

May 19, 1905

*It was lovely to see her and we asked her up to our room where we could visit undisturbed. She just got back here last week and has had to pitch in to the housework at once because her mother is suffering with rheumatism in her hand. She is well although she has been working pretty hard during the past weeks especially. ...She wants to spend an evening with us so we expect to see her some more.*

Another visit by Miss Sandburg occurred in the fall of 1905, again included as news in a letter to the Jacobson parents,

October 27, 1905

*Bessie came up announcing that we had a caller down stairs. It turned out to be Miss Sandburg and we brought her up here and had a nice though short visit with her. It may interest you to know that her little nephew who was born last June died a couple of weeks ago. Miss Sandburg is now doing nursing and seems very well indeed herself. She and her sister-in-law are going up to Chicago for a visit soon and Miss Sandburg is perhaps going to stop off in Galva then and may even go down for a little trip to Bishop Hill.*

In conclusion to this wonderful sketch of friendship between the Jacobson sisters and Mary Sandburg, it is deemed as a true treasure to the Bishop Hill Heritage Association's collection and a pleasure to share with the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site.

Dear Mary,

*Thank you for the words to give us an insight into the person who once inspired our Bishop Hill students.*

Lovingly,  
Bishop Hill Heritage Association

## SANDBURG DISCOVERED

By Sarah Pawlicki

When considering where I wanted to attend college, location wasn't a huge consideration; thus, I am extremely lucky I ended up in a fascinating town with a rich history, our own Galesburg, Illinois.



Sarah Pawlicki

I learned Carl Sandburg grew up in Galesburg after accepting my offer of admission to Knox College. I knew little about Sandburg then. I had once written a research paper about Eugene V. Debs, and while visiting Debs' home in Terre Haute, Indiana, I noticed a picture of Debs with one of Carl Sandburg's daughters, and then a picture of Debs with Sandburg himself. On the basis of Sandburg's friendship with Debs, I concluded Sandburg was likely a person worth studying, but I hadn't done so until deciding to enroll at Knox. The first poem of Sandburg's I read was "Chicago," which blew me away. The way Sandburg captured the zeitgeist of the times in Chicago was incredible, proving his ability not only as a poet, but as a historian. When I began to read more about Sandburg's politics, I was fascinated. How wonderful it is when an individual isn't just exceptionally talented, but a decent, courageous, fair-minded person as well!

I was very kindly given a copy of *Always the Young Strangers* when I began volunteering at the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site. This book has transformed my time in Galesburg as walking Galesburg's streets and remembering the colorful tales Sandburg told about those streets is a delightful pastime. Walking by the office building at 161 S. Cherry Street, which used to be the Galesburg City Hall behind which stood the City Jail, took on a new perspective when I remembered the story Sandburg told about his brief imprisonment there with several members of the "Dirty Dozen" after hijinks at a swimming hole. Sandburg tells of Ulysses Grant's funeral procession in Galesburg, saying the five blocks between Seminary Street and Galesburg's square were full of mourners. It is a tremendous gift to walk down those same streets today and think of what Sandburg tells us came before. Of course, the Site is a gift to everyone in

Galesburg, as well as everyone who is familiar with Sandburg's great work. It preserves a slice of history, which, in the end, is a slice of a wonderful story Carl Sandburg tells.

History is a terrific discipline to enjoy, because there's a never-ending supply of it. Every small town has a complex history. However, Galesburg is unique, as not every small town is fortunate enough to have an incredible writer like Carl Sandburg as its unofficial chronicler. Every evening when I'm at school, when I'm talking on the phone with my parents and walking around town, I walk back to Knox's campus and think of all the times Sandburg walked past Old Main on his way to and from work. Sandburg, more than any author I have ever read, makes history come alive. I am so fortunate to have landed in Galesburg, where Sandburg's words illuminate every street corner, every block, and every street name. Sandburg makes Galesburg's past come alive.

## GETTING TO KNOW THE AMERICAN SONGBAG

By Phil Passen

[Ed. Note: Musician Phil Passen performed at the September 26, 2015 Songbag Concert.]

My copy of Sandburg's *American Songbag* sat on a shelf in my office for five years before I opened it. I bought it when I started learning songs to perform with my hammered dulcimer and didn't open it until I decided I might be able to do a program of songs from the book.

The first thing I did when I cracked the book open was to skim the Table of Contents to see whether it contained songs I knew or wanted to learn. The skim quickly became a thorough perusal when I saw the breadth of songs listed. The titles of the twenty-four sections include "Dramas and Portraits," "Frankie and Her Man," "The Lincolns and the Hankses," "Hobo Songs," "The Big, Brutal City," "Prison and Jail Songs," "Mexican Border Songs," "Railroad and Work Gangs," "Sailorman," "Five Wars," and "The Road to Heaven."

The sections and the songs themselves reflect the deep love and respect for the masses of working Americans that I had always associated with Carl Sandburg. And this admiration for the masses is reflected in Sandburg's introduction to the book, which I read immediately after perusing the table of contents.

In the introduction, Sandburg wrote, "There is a human stir throughout the book with the heights and depths to be found in Shakespeare. A wide human procession marches through these pages. The rich and the poor; robbers, murderers, hangmen; fathers and wild boys; mothers with soft words for their babies; workmen on railroads, steamboats, ships; wanderers and lovers of homes, tell what life has done to them. Love and hate in many patterns and designs, heart cries of high and low pitch, are in these verses and tunes. There are low-keyed lyrics, brief as the life of a rose; there are biographies of

voyagers that epitomize long novels and thick log-books. This is precisely the sort of material out of which there may come the great native American grand opera. It is so intensely and vitally American that some who have seen the book have suggested that it should be collateral material with the study of history and geography in schools, colleges, and universities; the pupils or students might sing their answers at examination time.”

In his introduction to the 1990 edition of the *Songbag* (the version I have), Garrison Keillor refers to the “fulsome” writing in the introduction and song notes as “faintly embarrassing to us old [Sandburg] admirers,” and Sandburg’s writing is indeed quite overblown throughout. But I think Sandburg was trying to illustrate that there is grandeur and nobility in both the lives and struggles of the masses and the music that arises from those lives and struggles. I also think he reveled in getting away with writing he could never have gotten away with in any other context.

Probably the most often disparaged element of the *Songbag* resulted from Sandburg’s effort to gussy up the songs. All the songs are presented in the book with arrangements and harmonizations written for piano by classical composers, some of whom were quite well known and successful. In most cases, Sandburg performed the songs with his guitar for the composer, who then wrote the arrangement. Yet I doubt that anyone—certainly any “folk” musician, or Sandburg himself—has ever actually performed one of these songs using an arrangement from the *Songbag*.

While I was working on the *Songbag* program I read lots of Sandburg’s poetry and several biographical works about him. What interested me most were the impulses he had to collect folk songs and to perform them at his poetry readings. I read about the love he had of performing, which had led him to tour much of the country giving inspirational speeches on Eugene V. Debs and Walt Whitman.

I read about his leaving school at the age of thirteen and working on a milk route, where the milkman taught him “The Farmer is the Man,” which appears in the “Great Open Spaces” section of the *Songbag*.

When he was nineteen Sandburg hoboed on trains for five months to the Kansas wheat fields and back to Galesburg. At twenty-nine he rode the trains as an organizer for the Wisconsin Social-Democratic Party. These latter travels exposed him to Wobbly songs like “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum!,” which appears in the “Hobo Songs” section of the book, and “The Preacher and the Slave,” which appears in the “Prison and Jail Songs” section (because Sandburg associated it with the Wobblies jailed all over the country for their organizing and free speech activities).

I learned that when asked why there is a section of

Spanish language songs in the book, Sandburg replied: “Mexico is in North America just like the U.S. is and more people in Kalamazoo, Michigan know ‘Cielito Lindo’ and ‘La Cucaracha’ than they do ‘The Colorado Trail’ or ‘The Erie Canal.’”

After I scoured the *Songbag* table of contents, and while I was reading about Sandburg, I looked at every song in the book and read Sandburg’s notes on it. I was amazed at the number of songs with which I was familiar and which are part of the traditional folk repertoire in the United States. The first section alone contains “I Ride An Old Paint,” “Oh, Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie,” “Careless Love,” “John Henry,” and “Midnight Special.” Of the 286 songs in the book I had heard 81. At least one, “The John B. Sails,” had become a rock and roll hit. Another, “The Ship That Never Returned,” had become a big hit during the folk revival as “Charlie on the MTA.” And another, “The Son of a Gambolier,” had become a famous college fight song.

In putting together a program of songs from the *Songbag* I chose songs I knew would be familiar to most audiences, songs whose evolution I felt audiences would be interested in, and songs which allowed me to relate something about Sandburg or U.S. history, or in some other way had an interesting story. I am always gratified by the look of joy on faces of audience members who recognize a song or are fascinated by a song’s history.

Diving into the *American Songbag* opened for me a world of music, history, and appreciation for Carl Sandburg that would have been otherwise closed. I encourage all *Inklings and Idlings* readers to explore that world.

## **GALESBURG, DECEMBER 1893: A SNAPSHOT** By Barbara Schock

Four years of deep depression began on June 27, 1893. The New York Stock Market crashed. Historically, the event was known as the Panic of 1893. In advance of the crash several British banking houses had failed. They had been heavily invested in American railroads, few of which were capitalized adequately. The Philadelphia & Reading Railroad went into bankruptcy with \$125 million (equal to more than \$3 billion in today’s money) in debts. The U.S. government was losing its gold reserves because of a law requiring the purchase of all silver mined in the country.

On December 8 the snow was very deep in Galesburg, and those who could afford to maintain a sleigh and a team of horses were out in force. A reporter from the *Daily Mail* had been assigned by the managing editor to go out to take notes on the best and fastest rigs in town. A front page article listed a large number of drivers enjoying the good sleighing.

Henry Gardt, owner of the Union Hotel, brought out a sorrel gelding and a Portland cutter. John Barry, the liveryman, had a beautiful mare named "Josey Barry." Andy Dow was driving "Oscar Wilde" which had won several matinee races at the Driving Park on Farnham Street the previous summer. Chief of Police I.N. Coakley was out making sure the sleighs weren't moving too fast. The reporter was willing to wager that the Chief might let his bay mare go a little faster when nobody was looking.

The good news arrived on December 14 that the CB&Q Railroad was calling back twenty men to work in the car shop. There was a backlog of cars to be repaired. That was a very small dent in the eight hundred men in the city who had been out of work for the past two months.

A special city-wide meeting was called for December 19 in the Circuit Court room of the Knox County Courthouse. Its purpose was to take some action that would give aid to the deserving poor. Only the Dorcas Society, the Free Kindergarten, and the Rebekahs had been helping needy families. Some of those who spoke at the meeting were concerned about the worthiness or unworthiness of the recipients. One clergyman felt there was no more want than had occurred in previous years. Presumably, the clergyman thought there was an acceptable level of want in any given year; and no special effort need be made to reduce it below that level.

The next evening Mayor Forrest F. Cooke called a special meeting of the City Council to determine how much suffering there was in the city. The aldermen of the First Ward said they could soon ascertain the few suffering people in their ward. They did express the opinion that there would be larger numbers within the next two or three months.

The council decided to hire two men per ward to canvass the city. Each person was to be paid \$2 (equal to \$51.90 in today's money) for the day of work. They reported fifteen or twenty names in the First and Second Wards. In the Sixth Ward, it was reported a black man wanted clothing for his daughter, so she could go to school. Most of the people surveyed just wanted jobs, so they could support themselves.

Many of the people of Galesburg, perhaps inspired by the newspaper stories and the spirit of giving of the season contributed food and clothing for the poor. By December 22 the City Engineer's office was piled high with clothing and provisions. The Third Ward School collected a wagon-load of goods which was delivered to the office. More charitable groups joined the effort to help the poor.

The Palace of Trade, a general merchandise store, had offered to sell pastel pictures for fifty cents each. The money received from the paintings would go to buy five hundred pounds of poultry to be given to needy families.

Mrs. George A. Lawrence gave the largest amount of \$5.00 (equal to \$129.75). She lived in the stone mansion which stands on the southwest corner of Losey and Prairie Streets.

The work of delivering all the donated goods was begun on the morning of December 23. Baskets were filled with potatoes, squash, and a chicken or turkey. The women's organizations of the city had filled the baskets. The Poormaster, W.F. Haines, and volunteers drove to the various wards with the makings of a pleasant holiday for those in need.

August Sandburg was still employed by the CB&Q, but his wages had been cut by twenty-five percent. His family was forced to cut back on food purchases. Lard was substituted for butter on bread. The children hunted along the railroad tracks for small pieces of coal to be used in the kitchen stove. The only Christmas gift received by each of the children was an orange from their father.

The day after Christmas it was announced in Little Rock, Arkansas, that the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and St. Louis and San Francisco Railroads and branches had been placed in the hands of three receivers. The total liability was \$3 million or \$7.8 million in today's dollars.

It would be many years before better days would come for the majority of families in Galesburg.

## **2016 CSHSA MEMBERSHIP DUES**

By Gayle Stewart, Membership Committee Chair

We appreciate your on-going interest in the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Your dues help preserve the historical and literary legacy of Carl Sandburg and his birthplace in Galesburg, Illinois. Check our updated and evolving website ([www.sandburg.org](http://www.sandburg.org)) and our Facebook page for full access to publications, links, and upcoming special events and concerts. We thank you for your past support and look forward to your membership renewal.

## **PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CARL SANDBURG HISTORIC SITE ASSOCIATION BY MARCH 1, 2016**

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association promotes awareness of the historical and cultural significance of Carl Sandburg and the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site in Galesburg. We support a variety of educational programs and the collection, preservation, and display of materials which demonstrate the life, times, and achievements of Carl Sandburg

**2016 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

<b>Membership Categories</b> <i>(Check one)</i>	
<b>\$10.00</b>	<b>Student / Senior (62+)</b>
<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>Individual</b>
<b>\$40.00</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>Donor</b>
<b>\$250.00</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>
<b>\$500.00</b>	<b>Patron</b>
<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>Benefactor</b>
<b>Gift Membership</b>	

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_

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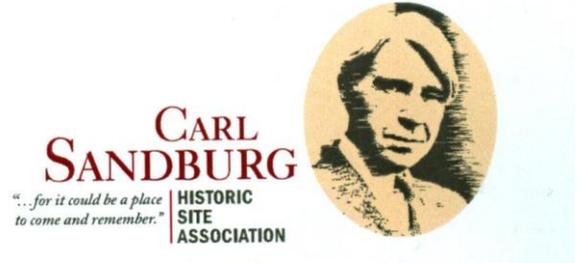
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