
INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Winter, 1999

Last of the Autumn Concerts

The final Songbag Concert of the season will be presented by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association at 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 18th. The concert will be given by John, Mike & Amy.

The three artists who make up the group will play American and Celtic folk songs and tunes. The instruments they will employ include the guitar, mandolin, bass, flute and banjo.

Like all of the concerts, this one will take place in the Visitors' Center, next door to the Sandburg birthplace. The setting is intimate, smoke-free and alcohol-free.

The Songbag Concerts will take a hiatus during the heart of the winter. However, John Heasley, who has co-ordinated the events from their beginning, is planning the series which will be offered early next year. Details of the programs will appear in *Inklings and Idlings*.

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Ever More Members

The ranks of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association have been increased by three new members. They are:

Mark Dvorak
Deborah Moldenhauer
Ryan Roberts

If you have joined the Association recently, and your name is not

listed above, please notify *Inklings and Idlings* of the omission so it may be rectified in the next issue.

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Some Suggestions for Holiday Giving

It is that time of year when gifts are exchanged. You might consider shopping at the museum store of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site when it is time to make your holiday purchases.

In a very real way, the value of a gift from the store is doubled. Not only will the recipient be delighted with your unique gift, the proceeds go toward improving the Sandburg Site, or to developing Sandburg programs for the community and its schools.

Some of the many items and their prices are as follows:

Just off the press is *The Huckabuck Family and How They Raised Popcorn in Nebraska and Quit and Came Back*. It is illustrated by the award-winning artist David Small.

In reviewing it on October 17th, the *Chicago Tribune* said "Who but Carl Sandburg could have assembled this family, whose members have the same name twice in the front (Pony-Pony Huckabuck), and whose agricultural disaster is a fire in the popcorn barn?"

"The family waits in Paducah, Peoria and Walla Walla for all the popcorn to blow away and for a sign they should return to farming, which

The name, **Inklings and Idlings**, comes from the title of Carl Sandburg's first column, printed in the **Galesburg Evening Mail** under the pseudonym "Crimson", in 1904.

The newsletter welcomes articles, particularly about Carl Sandburg, Galesburg and Knox County. Space limitations may require that they be edited. The articles should be sent to:

Inklings and Idlings
Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association
313 East Third Street
Galesburg, IL 61401

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Holiday Giving (continued)

comes in the form of a silver slipper buckle."

The book is intended for children between the ages of 7 and 10. Its price is \$16.

A Sandburg compact disc **The Great Carl Sandburg**, is new this year. On it, Carl Sandburg sings his favorite folk songs. The CD is available for \$12.99. A cassette tape version costs \$9.98.

Galesburg carpenter John Barnstead creates charming birdhouses that are a replica of the Sandburg Cottage, complete with cedar-shingled roof. They are a bargain at \$30 each.

There are also a number of stocking stuffers in the store. They include refrigerator magnets priced from \$2.50 to \$4.50; key chains at \$4.95; and book marks at \$4.50. All have a genuine 1978 commemorative Sandburg postage stamp, encased in plastic.

If you order by mail, please add 15% for shipping and handling. Illinois residents should also add 7% sales tax.

Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association members receive a 10% discount.

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Additions to the Board

Two persons have been added to the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. They are John Heasley and Ryan Roberts.

Mr. Heasley is largely responsible for the success of the Songbag Concert Series. Mr. Roberts has an extensive knowledge of Carl Sandburg's life and works. Both men are expected to make substantial contributions to the work of the Association.

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From The Superintendent

We have had a busy fall here at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site.

The Songbag Concerts have been a great success. The one presented on October 21st featured Mark Dvorak. He is on the faculty of the Old Town School of Folk Music, and is considered as an expert on the guitar and banjo. He entertained a delighted audience at the Visitors' Center with stories and music.

Our first annual yard clean-up day was held on October 24th. The response to a call for volunteers was wonderful. About 14 Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association members and their families spent a beautiful fall afternoon raking, pulling dead flowers and eating hot dogs. Everyone who participated deserves a heartfelt thank you.

The grand opening of Galesburg's new Welcome Center on East Main Street took place on September 29th. It contains an excellent exhibit of color photographs of the Site and its garden. The display was created

by Steve Holden, the Site Interpreter. We hope it will entice travelers to visit us.

A group of actors in Chicago has created their version of "The People, Yes", featuring Sandburg's poetry and a musical background. It played in Evanston and received excellent reviews from the Chicago Sun-Times and The Reader. The Association hopes to bring the group to Galesburg in the spring for a special performance. More details about the event will be given in the next issue of Inklings and Idlings.

One of the dreams Steve Holden and I have for the Sandburg neighborhood and Galesburg is an historic railroad corridor. It would run from the Seminary Street commercial district downtown to the Site on East Third Street.

We hope it would include replicas of railroad workers' cottages, a railroad-themed gift shop, a Swedish bakery, a Civil War book shop and possibly replicas of toy, linen, quilt, leather goods and similar shops of an earlier era.

The corridor would celebrate Galesburg's Swedish heritage, as well as its railroading tradition. Both would have a direct connection to Carl Sandburg, whose parents were Swedish immigrants, and whose father worked for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy.

Realization of our vision is some distance in the future, and its details are subject to addition, alteration and modification. We hope you will join in bringing it into being, whatever its final form.

-Carol Nelson

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Wrinklings and Wild Things

In de vinter, in de vinter-time,

Ven de vin' blows on de vindow-pane,
An' de vimmen, in de vaud'vil
Ride de veloc'pede in de vestibule,
Ah, vimmens! Ah, mens!

(This is sung by superincumbent cucumbers in Iowa and elsewhere.)

From: The American Songbag by Carl Sandburg.

THE FIVE MARVELOUS PRETZELS

Five nights before Christmas, five pretzels sit looking out of a grocery window lighted by five candles. And outside they see snow falling, big white snowflakes coming down cool and quiet. And they see a man come along and stop in front of the window and he looks in while they look out. They see his right hand brush off snow from his left shoulder and his left hand brush off snow from his right shoulder. And they see him shake off snow from his hat and put his hat back on his head. But they don't hear the man saying, "Well, well, here are five pretzels. And how many children is it I have at home running around upstairs and downstairs, in and out of corners? One, two, three, four, five, one for each pretzel."

Now early that afternoon they decide they will go with a circus and be trapeze actors. On billboards everywhere people will see in big letters THE FIVE MARVELOUS PRETZELS. And just before they run out of their dressin rooms in pink tights and bow to the audience and throw kisses to the audience, one kiss with the right hand and the other kiss with the left hand, a man with a big musical megaphone calls to the audience, "THE FIVE MARVELOUS PRETZELS!" Then up in the air they go and two of them hang by their knees and throw the other three pretzels back and forth in the air, in the empty and circumambient air.

So far, so good. Then comes the argument, the fuss, the dispute.

Which two shall hang by their knees and which three shall be thrown back and forth in the empty and circumambient air? All five want to be the two that hang by their knees. None of them wants to be one of the three thrown back and forth. So they say, "let's forget it."

Now they decide instead they will ride on the heads of the first five elephants in the vast mammoth stupendous parade of the elephants. On billboards people will see five elephants and on the head of each mammoth stupendous elephant rides one dazzling glittering little pretzel, in pink tights, bowing and throwing kisses to the audience, one kiss with the right hand and the other kiss with the left hand. Yes, so they decide. And they will have it fixed that just before the first elephant comes out leading the parade a man with a big musical megaphone calls to the audience "THE FIVE MARVELOUS PRETZELS!"

So far, so good. Then comes the argument. Who should ride on the head of the first elephant? Who should be the first one to come out bowing and throwing kisses to the audience? They argue, they fuss, they dispute, they wrangle. And at last they decide that whoever rides the first elephant today rides the last elephant tomorrow.

Then they see the man who stands looking in where they are looking out, brushing snow off his right shoulder with his left hand, brushing snow off his left shoulder with his right hand, shaking snow off his hat and putting it back on his head. And the man walks into the store, pays ten cents and comes out with the five pretzels in a paper sack and walks along the street in the falling snow, big white snowflakes coming down cool and quiet on his shoulders, on his hat.

And does he know as he walks along in the falling snow what happened

that afternoon and evening? No. Does he know he has in a paper sack THE FIVE MARVELOUS PRETZELS? No. Does he know they decide to go with a circus and be trapeze actors and then change their minds? No. Does he know they decide instead they will ride on the heads of five elephants and bow and throw kisses to the audience while thousands of people laugh and cheer and cry, "Look, look, look, here comes the five marvelous pretzels"? No.

Then what does the man know about what the five pretzels want to be? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Which shows how ignorant people are!

(The Five Marvelous Pretzels was first published in 1957 under "New Stories" in The Sandburg Range. This book will soon be available in our CSHSA bookstore, after years of being out of print.)

-Steve Holden

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Christmas Treats

Cookies are enjoyed the year around, but they are especially prized at Christmastime. Here are two recipes which are Scandinavian in origin, but have become popular in many European countries, as well as the United States.

Spritz Ring Cookies

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 egg yolks
1 teaspoon almond extract
2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks and almond extract. Sift together the flour and salt and add it a third at a time to the

creamed mixture, beating well after each addition. Place the dough in a cookie press and force onto an ungreased baking sheet in the shape of circles about 2 inches in diameter. Bake in a preheated 400 degrees F. oven for 10 to 12 minutes or until the cookies are a light golden color. The cookies will keep several weeks in an airtight container. Makes 6 dozen cookies.

Cinnamon Cookies

1/2 pound unsalted butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons molasses
3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add molasses and spices. Beat egg lightly and combine with mixture. Sift flour with baking soda and stir into butter mixture. Knead dough on a board and refrigerate a few hours or overnight to make dough easier to handle. Roll out quite thin and cut with cookie cutter into desired shape. Brush tops of cookies with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle with sugar and finely chopped almonds. Bake until light brown, about 10 minutes, in preheated 400 degrees F. oven. The dough may be shaped with a cookie press as well. The topping may be omitted if desired. Makes about 125 cookies.

-Barbara Schock

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Mary Sandburg Johnson
The Compleat Nurse, Teacher
and Family Icon

(Editor's Note: In this article, Dr. Richard Sandburg writes about a beloved aunt, and her influence on her son.)

Mary Sandburg Johnson was the eldest

of the Sandburg siblings and frequently served as "assistant parent" for her mother.



Mary, or "Sandy," as she was often called, provided emotional support for her family when her two youngest brothers, Emil and Freddy, passed away from diphtheria within hours of each other in 1892.

August Sandburg, her father, was employed as an assistant blacksmith at the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad in Galesburg. He was paid \$1.47 a day, working 16 to 18 hours a day. It was scarcely a bountiful living for a large family.

Ultimately, Carl, the eldest son, left school at the age of 13 to help provide support for the family, and permit Mary to finish high school. He delivered milk door-to-door for \$12 a month and worked as a porter in the Union-Broadview Hotel on the Galesburg Public Square. The latter job involved mopping floors, cleaning and polishing cuspidors, and shining shoes. He was paid \$3 a week, plus shoe shine money and tips. Rumor has it that at one time a sign was affixed to a wall, "Carl Sandburg Swept Here."

Mary and Carl were always devoted to each other. Years later, when Carl was struggling as a reporter for the **Chicago Daily News** and other papers for \$25 a week, and eventu-

a compilation of articles from the **Chicago Daily News**. It was entitled **Done in a Day**.

In a preface, the publisher of the newspaper, Marshall Field IV, declared, "We are delighted to present this collection of articles that have appeared in the **Chicago Daily News** in its century of existence as one of the world's most distinguished newspapers.

"The stories published here weren't chosen because they tell history as seen through the eyes of reporters, but rather to demonstrate fine newspaper writing as it is practiced by the staff of the **Daily News**. Some of the articles are 10, 50 or 80 years old, but they are as alive today as when they were first inked in newsprint."

There is a certain irony in reading Field's words of praise. A few years after writing them, he closed down the newspaper.

The journalists whose work is printed in the book are renowned in their field. Some of them are still writing today. The names of the women and men whose words appear include George Ade, Ray Stannard Baker, Finley Peter Dunne, Eugene Field, Georgie Anne Geyer, John Gunther, Ben Hecht, Lloyd Lewis, Peter Lisagor, Carl Rowan, Mike Royko, Nicolas Von Hoffman, Lois Wille and Carl Sandburg.

Sandburg was hired in 1917 by Henry Justin Smith, one of the newspaper's greatest editors, on the recommendation of Ben Hecht, who was later to achieve fame as the author of plays such as "The Front Page."

At first Smith was hesitant about adding another reporter to the staff, which he thought was too large. However, Hecht declared Sandburg wrote good poetry. Smith was passionate about literature, so he asked what kind of poetry Sandb-

urg wrote.

"The new kind, wonderful stuff. Like Walt Whitman," Hecht replied. After an interview, Sandburg was hired. He was turned over to the city editor, who was ordered not to bother the new man with minor tasks like covering the day's news.

Sandburg stayed with the **Daily News** for ten years. During that time he covered the labor movement, wrote hundreds of motion picture reviews, and was assigned to cover Chicago's race riot of 1919. By chance, he had written a series on the problems of the blacks just two weeks before the riot.

It was from that series that the editors of **Done in a Day** took the piece representing his work. The first few paragraphs are especially powerful.

"Chicago is a receiving station that connects with every town or city where the people conduct a lynching.

"Every time a lynching takes place in a community down South, you can depend on it that colored people will arrive in Chicago inside of two weeks," says secretary Arnold Hill of the Chicago Urban League, 3032 South Wabash Avenue.

"We have seen it happen so often that now whenever we read newspaper dispatches of a public hanging or burning in Texas or a Mississippi town, we get ready to extend greetings to people from the immediate vicinity of the scene of the lynching.

"If it is Arkansas or Georgia where a series of lynchings is going on this week, then you may reckon with certainty that there will be large representations from those states among the colored folks getting off the trains at the Illinois Central station two or three weeks from today."

Much of the remainder of the article was composed of quotations from letters written by African-Americans who had come to Chicago, and by their lights, had prospered. Many of them were skilled tradesmen whose skin color had deprived them of the opportunity to use their abilities in the South, or who had been obliged to work for wages far smaller than those of their white counterparts. Life in Chicago was less afflicted with prejudice and discrimination.

So they thought. A few weeks after Sandburg's article appeared, the south side of the city was torn by bloody conflict. It had begun when a black swimmer strayed into a "white" area of Lake Michigan. Clearly, some of the customs and traditions of the South were also practiced in the North.

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Hard Times and Holidays

In Carl Sandburg's youth, Christmas presents were never lavish. August Sandburg, his father, would give each of his children a five cent bag of candy, a large five-cent orange, and a simple gift such as a toy, or a pocketknife.

During hard times, August would give each a five cent bag of candy, a large five-cent orange, and a sad look. The children were somewhat disappointed, but they understood there was no money for anything more. They demonstrated their appreciation by eating all of the candy, and consumed the oranges in their entirety; both pulp and peelings.

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