
INKLINGS and IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

Summer, 1999

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

-Barbara Schock
Editor

* * *

A Resignation

It was with deep regret that the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association accepted the resignation of Mary Fran Crist as the organization's treasurer.

Time constraints and other commitments caused Mrs. Crist to conclude she could not continue to serve, as she had so ably done.

Patricia Reyburn, who has held the office in past years, was appointed to fill out the balance of Mrs. Crist's term.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 13th, at the Visitors' Center, 313 East Third Street, in Galesburg.

At that time, officers and directors of the Association will be elected for the coming year, and such other business as may properly come before the Association will be transacted.

All members of the Association are encouraged to attend.

* * *

More Have Joined

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association is glad to welcome the following new members:

Harold C. Bern
Mr. and Mrs. Walter (Mary) Curtis
Mr. and Mrs. John (Roscha) Folger
Enid Hanks
Mr. and Mrs. John (Patricia) Hattery
Eva Henley
Phyllis J. Krueger
Ann Mueller
Patricia Seaburg

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.

From the Manager

The summer tourist flow has begun at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. However, that should not deter you from stopping by, as we can accommodate many visitors.

Helping us out this season is Katie McGunnigal. She was a valued player on the Galesburg High School girls basketball team which took second place in the state tournament. More significantly, she was a member of the National Honor Society. Even more important, from our point of view, she has outstanding computer skills which have been quite helpful to us.

In the autumn, Katie will matriculate at Cedarville College, in Cedarville, Ohio. There she expects to pursue a business major.

Our first garden festival, held on April 17th, was a huge success. More than 350 people attended and purchased plants and garden accessories from the ten vendors who exhibited their wares.

Carl Sandburg's daughter, Helga, gave a reading of her father's works. Penny Niven, the leading Sandburg biographer, talked about the poet and his love of nature.

George Hendrick, of the University of Illinois at Urbana, and a compiler of Sandburg's poetry, was on hand to sign autographs and talk about his two new releases of Sandburg's works. They are entitled *Poetry for Children Nowhere Near Old Enough to Vote* and *Poetry for the People*.

Another special visitor was Gene Rinkel, chief archivist of the University of Illinois at Urbana, and curator of the extensive Sandburg collection there. He had a good time chatting with Rodney Davis, the Lincoln expert and author from Knox College.

Also in April was the last of our four Songbag folk concerts for the spring season. It served as one of the kick-off events of the Sandburg Festival. The average attendance for each of the concerts was 70, which almost filled the Visitors' Center.

Much credit for the success of the musical sessions is due to the hard work of John Heasley, who put them together. In addition to the outstanding performances, the evenings were made enjoyable by fine refreshments donated by Uncle Billy's Bakery.

The annual open house for Association members was held in conjunction with the Midsummer Concert on June 20th. From 5 until 7 approximately 65 members ate refreshments and examined the changes which have taken place at the Site during the last year. Afterward, they joined 85 others in the yard to listen to the Rutabaga Jammers Big Band.

On a sad note, it must be reported two deaths have occurred in the Sandburg extended family. Shirley Sandburg, the wife of Carl's nephew Martin, passed away in April. She was instrumental in starting the Sandburg Association in the 1940's, which began the renovation of the Sandburg birthplace and supported it for many years.

Eric Johnson, son of Carl's sister Mary, died in California this spring. He was a Galesburg native, and had visited here for the Sandburg Festival in 1997.

Our new garden is flourishing. We continue to add plants, and those placed last year have begun to develop nicely. Many of the visitors to the Site have complimented its appearance.

Steve Holden, the Site Interpreter, has created a new brochure about the quotation stepping stones in the

garden, and the Sandburg works from which they were taken.

If you have out-of-town visitors this summer, please bring them to the Site. We can almost guarantee they will have a pleasurable time.

-Carol Nelson

* * *

Wrinklings & Wild Things

*"See the U.-s.-a
in your CHEV-ro-let!"*

--Dinah Shore--

"So far? So early? So Soon?"

--The Ticket Agent--

....The train ran on and on. It came to the place where the railroad tracks run off into the blue sky. And it ran on and on chick chick-a-chick chick-a-chick chick-a-chick.

Sometimes the engineer hooted and tooted the whistle. Sometimes the fireman rang the bell. Sometimes the open-and-shut of the steam hog's nose choked and spit pfisty-pfoost, pfisty-pfoost, pfisty-pfoost. But no matter what happened to the whistle and the bell and the steam hog, the train ran on and on to where the railroad tracks run off into the blue sky. And then it ran on and on more and more.

....Then something happened. They met another train running on the same track. One train was going one way. The other was going the other way. They met. They passed each other.

"What was it--what happened?"

"One train went over, the other train went under. This is the Over and Under Country. Nobody gets out of the way of

anybody else. They either go over or under."

Next they came to the country of the balloon pickers. Hanging down from the sky strung on strings so fine the eye could not see them at first, was the balloon crop of that summer. The sky was thick with balloons. Red, blue, yellow balloons, white, purple and orange balloons--peach, watermelon and potato balloons--rye loaf and wheat loaf balloons--link sausage and pork chop balloons--they floated and filled the sky.

The balloon pickers were walking on high stilts picking balloons. Each picker had his own stilts, long or short.

The train was running on and on. The engineer hooted and tooted the whistle when he felt like it. The fireman rang the bell when he felt that way. And sometimes the open-and-shut of the steam hog had to go pfisty-pfoost, pfisty-pfoost.

"Next is the country where the circus clowns come from. Keep your eyes open."

They did keep their eyes open. They saw cities with ovens, long and short ovens, fat stubby ovens, lean lank ovens, all for baking either long or short clowns, or fat and stubby or lean and lank clowns.

After each clown was baked in the oven it was taken out into the sunshine and put up to stand like a big white doll with a red mouth leaning against the fence.

Two men came along to each baked clown standing still like a doll. One man threw a bucket of white fire over it. The second man pumped with a living red wind through the red mouth.

The clown rubbed his eyes, opened his mouth, twisted his neck, wiggled

his ears, wriggled his toes, jumped away from the fence and began turning handsprings, cartwheels, somersaults and flipflops in the sawdust ring near the fence.

"The next we come to is the Rootabaga Country where the big city is the Village of Liver-and-Onions."

....The train ran on and on till it stopped running straight and began running in zigzags like one letter Z put next to another Z and the next and the next.

"It seems like we go half way and then back up"

"Look out of the window and see if the pigs have bibs on. If the pigs are wearing bibs then this is the Rootabaga Country."

And they looked out of the zigzagging cars and the first pigs they saw had bibs on. And the next pigs and the next pigs they saw all had bibs on.

The checker pigs had checker bibs on, the striped pigs had striped bibs on. And the polka dot pigs had polka dot bibs on....

For the complete itinerary, see "How They Broke Away to Go to the Rootabaga Country," from Rootabaga Stories, Part One.

-Steve Holden

* * *

Kaldolmar

In all likelihood, one of the dishes Carl Sandburg's mother prepared for her family was kaldolmar, or cabbage rolls. It is a food popular today, and it appears on the menus of restaurants which emphasize Swedish cuisine.

The following recipe for kaldolmar appears in *From the Kitchens of Covenant Women*, which was compiled in 1962 by the Covenant Women's Circles of the Covenant Church, located at Dayton and Jefferson Streets, in Galesburg.

The recipe was submitted for inclusion in the cookbook by Mrs. Phoebe Nystrom.

Kaldolmar

1 large head cabbage
2 pounds beef and pork, ground together
1 small onion, chopped
1 cup cooked rice
1 beef boullion cube
1 cup hot water

Mix rice with meat and onion, salt and pepper to taste. Steam cabbage in kettle of hot water so that leaves are easily separated. Form meat into balls and wrap a cabbage leaf around each ball. Put in baking dish. Bake in 350 degrees F. oven about 1 1/4 hours basting often with broth made of the boullion cube dissolved in hot water.

-Barbara Schock

* * *

He Could Be Brusque

(Editor's Note: The following two articles were written by Dr. Richard Sandburg, a nephew of the poet. The second article first appeared in the *Rockford Review*.

We hope Dr. Sandburg will favor *Inklings and Idlings* with other stories about his Uncle Carl and his own life in Galesburg.)

One of my most vivid memories of Carl Sandburg was when a Swedish exchange student was in Belvidere, Illinois, and I invited her to visit the Erlander Swedish Home in nearby Rockford. This contained numerous

pictures and artifacts of Sandburg and, during our visit, the thought occurred to me to call and wish him a happy birthday.

He was pleased at my call but when I asked him to chat with my Swedish friend, he remonstrated with, "Hey, Dick, I'm not running for office and I don't wish to develop laryngitis from jabbering over the phone!"

I apologized, wished him a great day, and softly hung up.

Several months later, a mammoth celebration was held for him in Galesburg in conjunction with a Lincoln-Douglas Debate Centennial.

The Lincoln Room was crowded with college presidents, writers and other dignitaries. Carl finally arrived, accompanied by numerous escorts. He paused briefly, glanced around the room, and headed for me with his regal stride.

He gave me a bear hug, a big grin, and said, "Glad you could make it, Dick."

Many onlookers wondered what was going on, but it made my day complete: that he would acknowledge me first, and, seemingly wish to atone for his blustery remarks over the phone.

My only regret was that our Swedish friend wasn't able to visit with Carl; she returned to Sweden, and died of a brain tumor shortly afterward.

Carl Sandburg Visits His Swedish Brethren

Life in Galesburg, Illinois, was provided a sparkling glitter whenever Carl Sandburg returned to his birthplace and visited his friends and relatives, usually in his brother Mart's home.

In the spring of 1959, President

Leland Carlson of Rockford College said that Carl would be speaking there on April 8, and would it be possible for us to drive him from Chicago and back?

I assured him that my wife, my daughter, and I would be delighted and immediately consulted maps of the new Northwest Tollway.

Meeting Uncle Carl at Midway Airport was fairly uneventful. He was a "frequent flier" on American Airlines, and a redcap asked him, "Didn't you bring your banjo, Mr. Sandburg?"

Carl replied tolerantly, "I play the guitar on occasions, but I don't have it with me this trip."

We headed for the tollway, with Carl in the front seat with me. He'd had a speaking engagement in New York the previous evening, he was tired, and occasionally he closed his eyes for several minutes.

The miles passed, and Carl suddenly became talkative. He asked about the farms in the area and his old haunts in Elmhurst and Maywood.

He spoke in a low tone, his window was open, and it was difficult to understand him. I leaned sideways to catch his words as he didn't like to repeat himself. Suddenly I saw a sign indicating I should take the next exit to turn west, and continue straight ahead to go north. Assuming a left turn would lead us to Rockford, I left the tollway as Carl continued his questions and comments.

After about a thirty-minute ride, the road suddenly narrowed, and we found ourselves on a two-lane highway. We had inadvertently taken a road to Aurora and Dekalb, which was about twenty miles south of our tollway. Carl leaned forward and asked, "Is this the tollway?"

I meekly confessed, "Not at this point, it isn't." I glanced at the rear view mirror and my family was bent over attempting to muffle their laughter.

Continuing westward, we reached Route 47 and improperly turned left to the south, instead of righting ourselves to the Northwest Tollway. The community of Yorkville loomed on the horizon, which indicated another tactical driving error, and provided more stifled convulsions in the rear seat. I reversed my direction at the first opportunity and hopefully headed toward Rockford. Carl sensed my apathy and commented, "Why, I'm enjoying this. I used to ride my bicycle in this area when we lived in Elmhurst."

Suddenly, my wife called my attention to a roadside warning, "Danger, drive carefully, soft shoulders ahead."

Carl broke in with, "I'm not so concerned with the soft shoulders in the highway as I am with the soft head in the car!" More back seat hysteria!

We were progressing favorably when Uncle Carl requested that we stop soon as he wished to purchase some mineral oil and a shirt. I accommodated him, although it was apparent to me that I had no need for mineral oil, but possibly a drug which would produce an opposite reaction.

Finally reaching Rockford at dusk, we were greeted by Dr. and Mrs. Carlson, and Herman Nelson, a newspaper staff writer. They immediately began plying Carl with questions until he pleaded, "Don't I get an opportunity to relieve myself?"

Pictures were taken, plus an interview, and we left for Jack's or Better, a popular restaurant. Dr. Carlson had reserved a table in the

rear of the building so we wouldn't be disturbed. However, as we passed through the bar, someone spotted Carl and most of the occupants swarmed around him for handshakes and warm greetings. Carl enjoyed it immensely, and it was some time before we could reach our dinner table. My wife commented, "He's a great guy but sure has a lot of ham in him."

The Carlsons wanted Carl to stay at the Faust Hotel in Rockford, as their household pipes were clogged, and they had no hot water. Carl insisted on staying with the Carlsons. Fortunately a plumber was able to repair their problem 15 minutes before we arrived. It was fortunate that we were late, as the Carlsons were squirming most of the day, themselves.

They had arranged for him to visit the Swedish Historical Museum the following day and had planned a luncheon, but he declined both. He was kept busy during the afternoon with a visit with Alex Farb, a 94-year-old Swedish wood-carver, whom he enjoyed.

Speaking at Jefferson Junior High School before a capacity crowd of 2,000, Carl commented on current events. He was critical of the control which advertisers exercised over the material used on radio and television and of their authority to delete material offensive to them from dramatic works.

After a standing ovation, we posed for more pictures, and I sought my car so Carl wouldn't have too far to walk. I told a teacher where my car was parked, but he said, "Mr. Sandburg is o.k., he's being taken care of," and up came Carl with a lovely teenager on each arm.

I asked Uncle Carl if some friends of ours, Dr. and Mrs. Clausius, who also were Lincoln buffs, could ride home with us. He said he would love

to meet any friends of ours.

As we left, Carl immediately took a short 30-second snooze, but he sat up and said, "Boy, they asked me to come here for a 60-minute talk, and I've been on the go for two days."

My friend, Dr. Clausius, showed Carl a paper which he said was the Gettysburg Round Table News, and included a story of Carl's address before the Joint Session of Congress. Dr. Clausius asked Carl to autograph it, and Carl gruffly retorted, "Autograph it, Hell. I thought you were giving it to me."

Upon reaching Belvidere, our daughter spent the night with the Clausius', and Carl gave them all a hug, although he was a tired 81-year-old.

Although it was late, Carl said he wanted to see our home in Belvidere before returning to Chicago. He said he especially would love to see the basement as I had told him I had panelled it. He admired my fancy work and said, "This is good for you, Dick. Every time you cut and nail up a board, it requires some thinking and measuring." I didn't tell him that some of those boards had been handled at least four times!

My wife asked Carl if he would like a lunch or a drink. He said he would enjoy a boilermaker and a helper. She turned to me for help on that, and he said, "Just mix some bourbon with beer and set up another beer on the side."

Then, while looking through my Sandburg scrapbooks, he accidentally upset a glass which left a white stain on the varnished table. Some time later, we sold some of our furniture, including the table. A prospective buyer observed the white spot, but my wife said, "This is where Carl Sandburg spilled a drink and it won't come off."

The customer hastily said, "Oh, I'll take it!"

We drove into Chicago that night and he stayed with a friend. The next day we drove him back to Midway Airport. While we were on time, the plane was very late. Carl kept pacing back and forth to the desk asking about the plane until the clerk said he was sorry about the plane, but he would personally call him when it arrived.

Carl glanced down at a newspaper and saw the headline, "Frank Lloyd Wright Dies." He sighed and said that all his friends were leaving him. A moment later he said, "Well, at least I won't have to be traveling all over the country any more testifying for him in his paternity suits."

The plane finally arrived, and he gave us both a hug and thanked us for being so kind to him. After he left, we heaved a sigh of relief. It was a grand and glorious experience, but we were truly not sorry that it was over.

* * *

At the Fair

Through the length and breadth of Illinois, county fairs are annual summertime events. Knox County is no exception. For many years it has held an agricultural exposition, usually in the month of July.

Unlike most major events, the fair does not take place in Galesburg. Instead it is domiciled in Knoxville, the city's bitter rival in the county's early days.

When Carl Sandburg was a boy, well over a hundred years ago, attending the Knox County Fair was a great summertime treat. He and his friends would walk to the fairgrounds in Knoxville, a distance of four and one-half dusty miles. They might

have taken a train, which was possible then. Instead, they preferred to save their few coins for events at the fair.

The admission fee was twenty-five cents, which took much of their money. Still, they did not hesitate to give a nickel for the opportunity to listen to the Edison Talking Phonograph. It was the only one in the county, and it departed when the fair was over.

The sound came through earphones, which probably enhanced the experience, giving it something of a stereophonic quality. Part of the recording to which one could listen was the music of a brass band. All who heard it agreed it was as if the band was there on the fairgrounds.

For many of the county's farmers, attending the fair was an opportunity to learn. They came to find out new and better ways to work

their soil and raise their animals. Being a farmer required much effort. Any information which would make their labor more productive was highly prized.

It was also a time to display what they and their wives had achieved. The farmers brought impressive animals and fowl and various forms of produce. For example, one could see the largest rutabaga grown that year in the county, and wonder at its size. Other prodigious examples of vegetables were there to be admired, as were fat cattle and hogs.

The farm wives entered jellies and preserves. Both they and their husbands wanted to receive recognition in the form of a ribbon. They hoped it would be blue, denoting first place. However, a red strip of cloth for second place, or even a white third place award, would be acceptable.

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