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# INKLINGS and IDLINGS

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The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

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

*Fall, 2000*

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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

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## Songbag

The first of the autumn Songbag Concert Series was held on September 14th. An enthusiastic audience heard Any Olde Tyme perform their repertoire of medieval, Celtic, and pre-Civil War American music.

John Heasly, the coordinator of the Series, has announced the names of the artists for the next two concerts. On Thursday, October 12th, Dan Zahn and Chriss McNamara will offer fresh arrangements of traditional songs and original and contemporary tunes.

Mr. Zahn is a folk singer, songwriter, and an instrumentalist. His favored instruments are the guitar and the mandolin. He got his

start in Chicago's Old Town thirty years ago. Since then, he has traveled extensively and has several recordings to his credit. The respected music publication, **Dirty Linen**, has called Mr. Zahn "a consummate folk performer."

On Thursday, November 9th, the group Hammer and Pick will be featured. Its members, Jon Wagner, Jan Sams, and Bob Black, will present traditional favorites on the hammer dulcimer, guitar, bass, and mandolin.

The Songbag Concert Series is sponsored by the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association and is held at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site, 313 East Third Street, in Galesburg. The shows start at 7 p.m.

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## We Welcome New Members

We always derive great pleasure in announcing new members of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. They are:

Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Burdick (Jane)  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Chernin  
(Jeannette)  
Tom Larson  
Cathy Mason  
Robert Mureen  
Jennifer Nelson  
Bea Swartz  
Tom Tourlentes  
John Weese

If you have joined the Association recently, and your name is not listed above, please notify **Inklings**

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

President - Norm Winick  
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Secretary - Jane Murphy  
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Christian Schock

Newsletter Editor  
Barbara Schock

Site Superintendent  
Carol Nelson

Site Interpreter  
Steve Holden

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(New Members continued)

and Idlings of the omission so it  
may be rectified.

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**From the Superintendent**

The ongoing project of new exhibits at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site continues. It was described in the last issue of *Inkling and Idlings*. The work is taking much longer than expected to complete. Steve Holden has worked all summer on text and sifting through photographs to make the exhibits as interesting and unique as possible. Three persons in the Springfield office of the Historic Preservation Agency, including Ryan Roberts, are working on the project as well. The current expected date for completion is

December and a grand opening is still being planned.

Another big project this year is the expansion of the barn building at the rear of the museum grounds. We are adding 12 feet to the south end of the building and will have two washroom facilities and more space in the barn. We had been using it for storage but we now have a new shed for yard items, tools, etc., and will be able to use the entire building for many purposes.

We hope to have demonstrations and learning facilities for schools and the general public, additional exhibits, and all types of special events in the building. The exterior will be completed this fall but interior construction, including insulation, drywall, heating, air conditioning and completed plumbing will be done next year. The newly remodeled building will have a wood shingled roof and look like a barn.

We are very fortunate to have some new expert help in the garden this year. The Master Gardener's program has provided us four wonderful volunteers who have been offering advice and laboring in the hot summer sun to improve the garden. This will be an ongoing project for them and they will also help us design the new garden area around the remodeled barn. They are Roberta Whipple, Jean Philips, Vicki Rhodes, and Lyle Johnson. Their efforts and knowledge are greatly appreciated.

The Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association has decided the Site needs more publicity so it is going to have "rack cards" designed and distributed. These are like the cards you see in motels in the racks by the front desk which tourists can pick up for information about various places in the area. There is a firm which distributes the cards and keeps the racks stocked. This will be an additional expense. If

more visitors come to the Site, the rack cards will pay for themselves with increased sales in the museum store.

The new improvements to the Site are going to make a visit even more pleasant and interesting and should draw more visitors. We hope you will be among them.

--Carol Nelson

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### Lights! Camera! and All That

Tim Hartin, of WILL-TV, the University of Illinois station in Urbana-Champaign, has been in contact with the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. Plans are underway to film footage here for a program featuring internationally acclaimed tenor Jerry Hadley. He will be singing music composed by Dan Crafts for Sandburg's "The Prairie." Hadley, originally from Peoria, is presently appearing in "The Great Gatsby" at the Lyric Opera in Chicago.

Footage filmed at the Site will be narrated by well-known actor David Hartman. It will be utilized in completing the public television program based on Crafts' setting of Sandburg's poetry.

We will keep you informed as to date, channel, and times of airing.

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### Wrinklings and Wild Things

"...Snow time ain't no time to stay  
Outdoors and spoon,  
So shine on, shine on harvest moon,  
For me and my gal."

(XXs to Oliver Hardy,  
in particular!)

While motoring the Interstate, wife Linda and I sometimes quicken the boring miles by singing songs of a singular subject ("love," "heart," "cities," etc.) until memories fail or the hoarse arrives. "Moon," as I recall, has been one of the lengthier mile killers, and it, coincidentally, is the focus of Carl Sandburg's tale, "The Haystack Cricket and How Things Are Different Up in the Moon Towns." It is told by John Jack Johannes Hummadummauffer (but called Feed Box) to his daughter, Eva Evelyn Evangeline Hummadummauffer (but called Sky Blue). Here's how it shines:

This time of the year, when the mouse in the field whispers so I can hear him, I remember one November when I was a boy.

One night in November when the harvest moon was shining and stacking gold cornshocks in the sky, I got lost. Instead of going home I was going away from home.

That second night I came to a haystack where a yellow and gold cricket was singing. And he was singing the same songs the crickets sing in the haystacks back home where the Hummadummauffers raise hay and corn, in the corn belt near the Shampoo River.

And he told me, this cricket did, he told me when he listened soft if everything was still in the grass and the sky, he could hear golden crickets singing in the cornshocks the harvest moon had stacked in the sky.

I went to sleep listening to the singing of the yellow and gold crickets in that haystack. It was early in the morning, long before daylight, I guess, the two of us went on a trip away from the haystack.

We took a trip. The yellow and gold

cricket led the way. "It is the call of the harvest moon," he said to me in a singing whisper. "We are going up to the moon towns where the harvest moon stacks the cornshocks on the sky."

We came to a little valley in the sky. And the harvest moon had slipped three little towns into that valley, three little towns names Half Moon, Baby Moon, and Silver Moon.

In the town of Half Moon they look out the doors and come in at the windows. So they have taken all the doorbells off the doors and put them on the windows. Whenever we rang a doorbell we went to a window.

In the town of Baby Moon they had windows on the chimneys so the smoke can look out the windows and see the weather before it comes out over the top of the chimney. And whenever chimneys get tired of being stuck up on the top of the roof, the chimneys climb down and dance in the cellar. We saw five chimneys climb down and join hands and bump heads and dance a laughing chimney dance.

In the town of Silver Moon the cellars are not satisfied. They say to each other, "We are tired of being under, always under." So the cellars slip out from being under, always under. They slip out and climb up on top of the roof.

And that was all we saw up among the moon towns of Half Moon, Baby Moon, and Silver Moon. We had to get back to the haystack so as to get up in the morning after our night sleep.

(To observe all five quarters of this moon story, see *Rootabaga Stories, Part Two*, p. 113. The book is available in our Museum Store.)

--Steve Holden

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## Carl Sandburg Evens the Score

(Editor's Note: Here is the second half of an article written by Dr. Richard Sandburg. It first appeared in the *Rockford Review*, and contrasts some aspects of the lives of Carl Sandburg and Ernest Hemingway, two of Illinois' greatest native authors.

Because the article first appeared in 1999, some of the references were updated. Others were left untouched, so as not to interrupt the narrative flow.)

Sandburg wrote at night while it was quiet and when his family was in bed. In his attic room in Harbert, Michigan, he was well secluded. His desk was an orange crate which supported an aged manual typewriter. No electric typing machine for Carl.

In his Flat Rock, North Carolina, home, where he spent the last 22 years of his life, his bed and office were on the top floor. Nothing has been changed in the home, named Connemara, except one item.

When his age precluded ascending the stairs to his room, he was brought down to his wife's quarters for the rest of his days. Before he made his last descent, he sat on his bed long enough to leave deep impressions formed by his "buns." This was considered as significant as an autograph or footprints and handprints in Hollywood's sidewalks. For years the area was roped off so no one would dare to smooth out the wrinkled depths in the bedspread. The last time I visited the home, the rope was down and the bedspread had been smoothed, to my regret.

Both men had prolific descendants. Carl's daughter Helga has written twelve books of novels and poems and lectures extensively. Margaret, who has passed away, completed her

father's autobiography, *Ever the Winds of Change*, and a book of letters.

Hemingway's granddaughter, Mariel, is an actress and was nominated for an Academy Award for "Manhattan." She had starring roles in the films, "Little Men," "Roads Ends," and "American Reel," co-starring David Carradine.

The board of directors and curators, Carol Nelson and Steve Holden, of the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site in Galesburg (the Sandburg birthplace) collaborate with Carl Sandburg College. For four years, they have held festivals in April that attract more people every year from all parts of the country. Writer's workshops are conducted by Carl's youngest daughter, Helga. She recites both her father's poetry and her own and reminisces with the large audience about her family. A feature in 1996 was Bob Feller, Hall of Fame pitcher, who autographed baseballs, anything and everything, and was gracious about chatting with visitors in a long line. Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven gave an account of her latest book, *Steichen*. He was Carl Sandburg's brother-in-law. She fielded numerous questions and discussed her story of Carl. She currently is preparing a biography of Thornton Wilder. Helga also attended this session and confirmed Niven's stories.

John Halwas, Western Illinois University English professor, conducted writing workshops in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000. Knox College promotes a poetry competition for young students and awards prizes. Activities include a book fair at Sandburg College, a golf outing, Illinois Young Author's Celebration, a memoir writing contest, children's concert, and a black-tie dance at Soangetaha Country Club.

Hemingway Festivals have been held

each July since 1981 and attract 10,000 people to Key West, Florida. Many celebrants have white beards and hefty paunches and try to outdo each other in bravado and boozing.

A Hemingway son, Patrick, has decided to cancel the annual fest which means no look-alike contest, no tours of Hemingway's favorite haunts, such as Sloppy Joe's Bar and Captain Tony's Saloon, and eliminates the short story competition for aspiring writers. Patrick Hemingway feels the Key West Festival is lacking in taste. The family planned to hold the International Hemingway Festival on July 18-20, 1999, on Sanibel Island, Florida. This was to feature a writer's conference, children's writing competition, and arts events along with fishing, golf, and tennis tournaments.

The Baltimore Orioles baseball team played the Cuban All-Stars in a game in Havana on March 28, 1999. This was televised nationally on ESPN and, at one juncture, a picture of a statue of Ernest Hemingway was flashed to the viewing audience. Hemingway spent much of his life in Cuba, and they celebrate his birthday by splashing a glass of whiskey on the head of the statue.

Hemingway left a book behind when he died, *True at First Light*, about a safari in Kenya, Africa. Sandburg prepared a portion of his second autobiography, but his daughter Margaret completed it, *Ever the Winds of Change*.

The late actor George Peppard performed a one-man show, *Papa, The Legendary Lives of Ernest Hemingway*, in 1988. Peppard was similar to Hemingway. He was married four times and liked to drink a lot. Sandburg has a talented imitator in Nick Earll, of Cobden, Illinois, who has traveled extensively portraying his idol.

Hemingway nudged Sandburg out of the Nobel Prize with his *Old Man and the Sea* over Carl's *Complete Poems*. Hemingway sent a telegram to Sandburg expressing the wish that if he had his way, he would designate Sandburg the Nobel Prize winner, and that he, Sandburg, was truly a great American. When John Steinbeck received the award, he said, "Of course, I am glad to get it, but I wish it had gone to Sandburg." He added, "Damn it, he is America."

Sandburg was no doubt disappointed, but he would have been more pleased to have his picture on the U.S. 13 cent stamp than to receive the Nobel Prize.

With the huge success of the Sandburg Festivals in Galesburg for four years, and the sudden termination of the bawdy Hemingway celebration in Key West, close your eyes and visualize Sandburg and Hemingway in their celestial abode. Carl would be indulging in his boilermaker and helper, while Hemingway is nursing his favorite brandy or Gordon's gin. Suddenly, with the memory of the Festivals very much on their minds, Carl would slap Ernie on his shoulder and mischievously needle his buddy with an "I gotcha, Ernie," to even the Nobel Prize score.

--Richard Sandburg

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### First Job

When he was eleven years old, Carl Sandburg obtained his first regular employment. He entered the service of the real estate firm of Callendar and Rodine. It was domiciled on the second floor of a building on Main Street, between Kellogg and Prairie.

Every weekday morning, at about 7:45, he would clean the office of the previous day's accumulated

detritus.

That task done, Sandburg would take the two cuspidors Mr. Callender, Mr. Rodine, and their clients had filled. He took the spittoons to a hallway cubbyhole which had a faucet and cold running water. There he emptied, washed, and rinsed the cuspidors. Every few weeks or so, he would polish the receptacles to a high shine.

Each Friday Mr. Callender would give Sandburg twenty-five cents for his week's work. In present day money, that quarter was the approximate equivalent of five dollars. However one might value his pay, it was not a penny too much.

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### Seeking a Lifetime Trade

Carl Sandburg celebrated his twentieth birthday in January of 1898. He was concerned that he did not yet have a trade. He decided to hire out as an apprentice to a painter. He worked ten hours a day, six days each week.

He described his employer as a dour Swede who believed in work without talk, and toil without laughter. On one occasion, when Sandburg sang as he worked, he was given an exceedingly sour look by the painter.

Most of his time was spent scraping and sandpapering wood. It was a necessary preliminary to painting, but Sandburg found the work exceedingly dull. Only rarely was he permitted to use a brush, and then only to apply the first coat.

Sandburg began to wonder when he would be entrusted with the application of the second coat of paint. He tried to convince himself he was experiencing the same discontent felt by most apprentices.

Still, he seemed to be making no progress, and his fingers ached each evening from the task of removing old paint from wood.

If, in time, Sandburg had been permitted to do more painting than sandpapering, he might have remained in the trade. However, in April of 1898, the United States declared war upon Spain. In something of a patriotic fervor, Sandburg enlisted in the army, and left the painter's life, never to return.

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### The Part-time Firefighter

After Carl Sandburg returned home from the Spanish American war, he learned Lombard University would give a year's free tuition to qualified veterans of the recent conflict. Although he had not had a high school education, he was admitted to the college.

During his college days, except for the summer months, Carl Sandburg spent every night at the South Prairie Street fire station. There he was employed as a part-time firefighter. Seldom was he there during the day, although he was on call. Instead, he would attend classes at Lombard University, or help at his family's house on Berrien Street. However, he did visit the station often enough during the day to come to know the full-time firefighters who manned it.

The station was on the west side of South Prairie Street, just a half-block south of Main Street. Opposite it was a row of saloons. They occupied the entire block, except for the two corner lots. During the summer days, the firefighters would sit outside the station. They would watch to see who was patronizing the grog shops. They soon learned who were the regular patrons of the

establishments. They themselves were not among that number.

The rear of the station opened onto Boone's Alley, which is now Park Plaza. The Alley had establishments even more disreputable than those on the east side of Prairie Street. One of them, the Bollenback Pool Hall, caught fire one night.

It was just to the rear of the fire station, so the firefighters did not have far to go to extinguish the blaze. Even so, men were unhappy about being routed from their beds, so they did not appreciate the proximity of the fire.

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### Battling Blazes Full-Time

Carl Sandburg left Lombard University without receiving a degree. He went east, and took up the life of a traveling salesman. He managed to support himself on his earnings, but what he really yearned to do was to write. Both selling and writing had to be done almost full-time if success was to be attained in either. Sandburg was not able to reconcile the demands of both.

In 1905, he returned to Galesburg. His brother Martin was able to arrange a job for Carl. It was with the Galesburg Fire Department, where he had been employed on a temporary basis for almost three years.

He was assigned to the Brooks Street station, which was located between Chambers and Pearl Streets. It was not far from his parents' home on Berrien Street.

For his work, he was paid seventy-five dollars per month, which was a handsome sum in that year. In addition to answering fire alarms, he helped to maintain the equipment and the premises. He curried and combed the two horses who pulled the

hose cart and ladder wagons. He cleaned out their stalls, and gave them fresh straw for bedding.

When his work was done, Sandburg had plenty of time to read and to write. In many ways, he completed his formal education at the Brooks Street fire house.

### Back to the Firehouse

In January of 1953, Life magazine decided to do a photo essay about Carl Sandburg's life in Galesburg. Accordingly, photographers and writers from the periodical accompanied Sandburg back to his natal city.

Not surprisingly, one of the aspects of Sandburg's early life to be covered was his employment as a firefighter. He had been stationed at the South Prairie Street and Brooks Street fire houses. The Prairie Street building was long gone, but the Brooks Street facility was still standing. In fact, it was

still in use. It would not be closed until 1980, when a new fire station was built several blocks to the east.

When Sandburg had worked there, the station was about ten years old, and the fire equipment was drawn by horses. It was clearly not the same place almost fifty years later. In his eyes, the fire house had changed mightily by 1953. He declared the station had a highly mechanized apparatus. However, he noted it had been installed in 1925, and the firefighters complained it was out of date.

There was another change which Sandburg noted. "I missed the horsy smell the old place had," he said. It might have been different had Sandburg visited the Brooks Street station on a rainy day. Then he could have caught a whiff of the equines who had once been domiciled there. While it was not a strong fragrance, it would have been unmistakable.

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