

Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 1

and Educational Foundation

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA



CATHER HOME NAMED NATIONAL LANDMARK

The childhood home of Willa Cather in Red Cloud has been designated as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service, Dept. of Interior. The announcement of the selection was made February 12, 1972, by Nebraska Congressman Dave Martin.

Willa Cather's descriptions of the house in *SONG OF THE LARK*, "Old Mrs. Harris" and "The Best Years" guided restoration which was completed in 1968.

In 1969 the National Park Service selected the house for its National Register of Historic Places.

The significance of the Landmark designation can best be explained by quoting part of the Park Service publication, "The National Historic Landmarks Program."

"Americans have long revered their Nation's history and treasured its tangible reminders. National Historic Landmarks are among the most treasured.

"A National Historic Landmark is a Bunker Hill, a Mount Vernon, an Alamo. More formally, it is a district, site, building, structure, or object nationally significant in American history, architecture, archeology, or culture.

"Publicly owned or privately owned, it is a special part of America's heritage, judged by the Secretary of the Interior to possess significance for all Americans and to be worthy of a place on the Department of the Interior's roll of Landmarks commemorating the Nation's past.

"While the National Register of Historic Places includes places of national, State, regional, and local significance, Landmark designation is the unique status accorded limited numbers of properties meeting the stringent criteria of national significance."

WHAT'S NEW

... A Household Treasure ...

The book *ROBIN HOOD* by Howard Pyle, a friend of the Cather family and a friend of Willa Cather, was

given to the CATHER MEMORIAL by Ella Cather Lewis, daughter of John (Jack) Cather. The book is inscribed in Willa Cather's handwriting to "Jack and Elsie" who were her youngest brother and sister. The MEMORIAL will display the book in Willa Cather's room in the Cather house.

The book has been a household treasure and was read first to Jack and Elsie and then to Jack's daughters.

... For Sale ...

Brand new in the Museum gift shop is a man's tie tack—a 24 karat gold plow designed after the one on the Memorial Seal.

Also newly available are colored slides in sets of five at \$1.00 per set: 1 set each of *ONE OF OURS*, *A LOST LADY* and Willa Cather's life; 2 sets of *MY ANTONIA*.

Made exclusively for the Cather Memorial are new souvenir ash trays.

FINANCES

... Woods Grant ...

The Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., of Lincoln, Nebraska, has made a grant of five thousand dollars to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation of Red Cloud, Nebraska for maintenance. The grant is to be invested and the income used for upkeep of the four restored historic properties of the Memorial, excluding the main Memorial building. If necessary, the principal may be used.

Previously, the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., has made grants of \$35,000.00 to restore the original Cather home, the 1897 Burlington and Missouri depot and the 1883 Saint Juliana Catholic Church. Frank Woods personally, gave five thousand dollars for the preserva-



"There are few scenes more gratifying than a spring plowing in that country, where the furrows of a single field often lie a mile in length . . ." O PIONEERS!—Photo Courtesy David E. Scherman

tion of the Grace Episcopal church where Willa Cather kept her membership from 1922 to her death.

This present grant, however, is the first grant restricted purely for a maintenance fund. The Board of Governors of the Cather Memorial hope that this will encourage similar gifts from sources for the long term perpetuation of the lifetime preservation achieved by the Cather Memorial.

... Financial Report ...

Income, Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, 1971

Balance January 1, 1971	\$ 3,377.47
Interest	500.00
Miscellaneous sales, tickets, etc.	1,794.30
Sales Gift Shop	5,074.76
Tours	921.60
Donations	23,414.68
Donations not cash, but of this value	979.79
TOTAL INCOME	\$36,062.60

Expenses, Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, 1971

Utilities

Memorial	\$ 694.29
Cather House	179.64
Episcopal Church	251.31
Depot	605.18
TOTAL UTILITIES	\$ 1,730.42

Repair, Maintenance, and Restoration

Memorial	\$ 3,693.63
Catholic Church	172.82
Cather House	523.13
Episcopal Church	6,348.93
Depot	935.04
TOTAL	\$11,673.55

Value given but not in our books (expense) \$	979.79
Total repair and utilities	13,403.97
Dues	85.00
Time Certificate	5,000.00
Postage	458.02
Insurance	987.00
Newsletter	631.92
Gift Shop	4,300.08
Publicity	124.67
Tax Sales and Use	351.35
Banquets	1,155.83
Hostess Salary	963.26
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$28,440.89

Balance January 1, 1972	\$ 7,621.71
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The number of people making donations is double the number of the previous year. Of the amount given, \$6,000.00 came from the Miner-Weisz Charitable Fund, Inc., and \$5,000.00 from the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. Frank H. Woods gave \$5,000.00 personally and Richard Shannon gave \$2,000.00.

Twenty gifts ranged in size from \$100.00 to \$1,000.00. All the other donations were less than \$100.00, largely in the under \$10.00 bracket.

Dr. L. V. Jacks, author, educator, Chairman of Classics at Creighton University, Omaha, and one of the founders of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation, died in Omaha February 25, 1972.

Thank you for your generous response to the need for more support from the general public in order to maintain our status as a public foundation under the new Federal tax law on museums.

SPRING CONFERENCE 1972



Dr. James C. Olson, Chancellor of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, is the banquet speaker at the Spring Conference.

A former Nebraskan, Dr. Olson is a well known author and authority on the history of Nebraska and the American West.

... O Pioneers! ...

Honestly now, did you read O PIONEERS! this winter? If not, you still have time for that delightful and rewarding chore before April 15, the date of the annual Spring Conference in Red Cloud.

Following an O PIONEERS! theme, the full schedule of events for the day is designed to broaden your appreciation of Willa Cather's writing the fun—a ride in the country, a picnic, genial conversation, and a sharing of thoughts, good food, good music, and good company. We want you to enjoy yourself while you are here and take home with you something of value.

Spring Conference Schedule for April 15, 1972

- 8:30 Mass in the restored 1883 Catholic Church with music from O PIONEERS!, Gounod's "Ave Maria" and Rossini's "Gloria."
- 9:45 Tour of O PIONEERS! country. This 63-mile bus tour will start promptly at the Cather Museum on Main Street.
- 12:00 Lunch at the Little Red Schoolhouse.
- 2:00 Panel discussion on O PIONEERS!, High School Gym, featuring a paper by Dr. Clara B. Cooper of India on frontiers there as opposed to the frontiers described in O PIONEERS! Other panel speakers will be Richard Wilson and Joanna Lathrop. Dr. Bernice Slote of the University of Nebraska English Department will MC the program.
- 4:00 Open house at all the restored buildings in Red Cloud: the Burlington Depot, the Cather house, the Grace Episcopal Church, the Museum, and St. Juliana Catholic Church.
- 6:30 Banquet at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, Pioneer style. Master of Ceremonies: Tom Allan, Omaha WORLD-HERALD columnist and feature writer. Banquet speaker: Dr. James C. Olson, Chancellor of the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Pioneer Folk Music: Lorraine Keilstrup

Cost for complete day is \$12.00.

Cost for partial day beginning at 2:00 p.m. or after is \$6.00. Please, reservations must be in by April 12.



"Winter has settled down over the Divide again: the season in which she sinks to sleep between the fruitfulness of autumn and the passion of spring." O PIONEERS!—Photo Courtesy David E. Scherman

INCREASING INTEREST IN WILLA CATHER

... New Publications ...

Willa Cather is one of the seven authors discussed by Nora Stirling in *WHO WROTE THE MODERN CLASSICS?* (John Day, N. Y.)

The University of Nebraska literary quarterly, *THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER*, Spring, 1972, will have an article on *O PIONEERS!* by David Stouck of the English Department of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada.

Willa Cather's *DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP* is the topic of Lawrence Clark Powell's article, "Southwest Classics Reread," in the February 1972 *WESTWAYS*, the Automobile Club of Southern California monthly publication.

Georgine Milmine's *THE LIFE OF MARY BAKER G. EDDY AND THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE* (mostly written by Willa Cather) has been republished by the Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. In a stimulating introduction, Stewart Hudson gives his interpretation of the use Willa Cather made of her experience with the Eddy Material.

This was Willa Cather's first big assignment after she joined the staff of *McCLURE'S MAGAZINE* in 1907. Later S. S. McClure promoted her to the position of managing editor of his magazine, the leading literary publication of the early 1900's.

Carrie Miner Sherwood died in Red Cloud February 24, 1972, at the age of 102. Willa Cather's life-long friend, Carrie was the prototype of Frances Harling in *MY ANTONIA* which is dedicated to her and her sister, Irene, "In Memory of Affections Old and True."

... Cather Memorial Service ...

October 16, 1971, thirty-five of Willa Cather's relatives gathered in Red Cloud for the first Cather Family Reunion Day. One of the events was a memorial service for Willa Cather in her church, the newly restored Grace Episcopal Church.

We would like to share with you excerpts from the remarks made by The Right Reverend Robert P. Varley, Th. D., Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Nebraska, as he conducted that service.

... Perhaps the purpose (of this gathering) is caught up in the words of (the Psalmist) . . . "The lot is fallen to me in fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage" . . .

... Willa Cather was and is more than a "story-teller". Behind each work there stands a lesson to be learned, a life to be lived, and a heritage to be gained . . . One can see so clearly from her work the fact that her search for meaning and relationship forged her unique identity . . . The fathomless questions of origin and ancestry, of purpose and meaning, of quest and goal provide the raw material for greatness . . .

... Life does not begin with our birth nor does it end with our departure! Truly, "The lot has fallen to me in fair ground"! The God-given gifts bestowed on man find differing responses. "The lot" to one may produce scorn and disgust; to another, apathy and neglect; and yet to another the desire to know, to improve, and to pass on to generations yet unborn the legacy of life . . .

... "Yes, I have a goodly heritage!" Willa Cather found in the texture of the earth and weather, in the average and the extraordinary, in the sacred and the mundane the fabric of life—a fabric woven by man but destined by a providential God. For me, there is more than just reading her works for enjoyment . . . I would understand the fair ground in which she found her lot. I would look to the legacy of human experience which affirmed life.

In today's pragmatic world, filled as it is with oceans of technology, there is a need to once more immerse ourselves in the legacy of our past so that we might see beyond the material structures of our society and view the eternal values of a free world. Willa Cather's world was one of movement, a time of expansion, a period of human progress. If we believe what we do here today, then there will be more than commemoration and history. There will be a realization that to us also—the lot of life is ours in a fair ground, and that we have through persons such as Willa Cather a goodly heritage. And to us falls the tasks not just of preserving but of passing on the lessons of the good life to those yet to come.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 1973

Plans are going forward for a statewide celebration of the 1973 centennial of Willa Cather's birth. Robert Knoll, of the University of Nebraska, Department of English, is chairman of this committee.

... Commemorative Stamp ...

The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee soon will be selecting subjects for commemorative stamps to be issued in 1973. This is the last chance for us to urge you to write a letter urging the Committee to issue a stamp honoring Willa Cather on her one-hundredth birthday and suggest that the stamp first be offered for sale in Red Cloud December 7, 1973.

Every single letter is important. The Stamp Advisory Committee relies almost totally on the NUMBER of letters received when making its selection of commemorative stamps.

If you have written before, please write another letter encouraging them to issue a stamp in honor of Willa Cather.

Teachers of English and government: writing such a letter would be good practical experience for your students not only in letter writing—composition and form—but also in the application of the democratic process—the individual citizen's right and obligation to voice an opinion.

Please write your letter today to:

Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee
1200 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D. C. 20260

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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THANK YOU

Thank you for everything you have done to keep the organization vibrantly alive and growing. Thank you for everything you have done to make the striving to fulfill our aims and goals more and more meaningful.

Your financial contribution keeps the physical aspects of the Cather Memorial flourishing on a firm foundation of wide-spread support.

Your letters of appreciation, comments, and suggestions not only brighten many a day of frustration (like when the painter goes fishing instead), but you also let us know we are not alone, engaged in a meaningless exercise in interior decoration—or whatever.

And finally—and perhaps most influential—your visits here inspire us. Your enthusiasm is catching. Please come for the Spring Conference, or whenever you can. And then, please come back again.

Sincerely,



Miriam Mountford, Newsletter Editor

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF THE ORGANIZATION:

● By becoming a member of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP	\$100.00
SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP	\$5.00 Annually
NEWSLETTER	\$3.00 Annually

- By contributing to a project fund.
- By contributing to the restoration fund.
- By contributing to the scholarship fund.
- By contributing your Willa Cather artifacts, letters, papers, and publications to the Museum.
- By contributing your ideas and suggestions to the Board of Governors.

AIMS OF THE WCPM

- To secure the bonding, insurance and housing of a permanent art, literary and historical collection relating to the life, time and work of Willa Cather.
- To identify and restore to their original condition, places made famous by the writings of Willa Cather.
- To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial in the form of art and literary scholarships.
- To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.



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