

Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

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Red Cloud, Nebraska



PROGRESS REPORT

Your Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial is moving forward with increasingly numerous activities involving more and more people.

More than 200,000 people have come into Willa Cather Country because of the work of the WCPM since it was founded nine years ago.

This spring the number of organizations planning tours directed by the WCPM exceeds by 80 per cent requests of any other year. In 1963 more than 200 tours were made.

Your enthusiastic participation in the WCPM, along with a growing number of new contributing members, increased the 1963 WCPM income to \$10,818.44. This is over \$3,000 more than the 1962 total.

The progress of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial can further be illustrated by taking a look at the new developments in each of the four aims and purposes which guide the growth of the organization.

INCREASING INTEREST

Aim

To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.

. Japan

The first foreign charter ever granted has been approved by the Board of Governors for a WCPM chapter in Tokyo, Japan. Under the leadership of Professor Nishikawa, Professor of American Literature at Tokyo University, this group has been meeting regularly for several years to read Willa Cather.

They were made aware of the WCPM through a copy of the Newsletter sent them by a friend in America. In her request for a group membership, Momoko Ishii wrote. "Some of us have been reading Willa Cather's works for about 30 years, so you can easily imagine how interested we are in your Newsletter."

. California

The University of California, Los Angeles, lists a new literature course in its spring bulletin — "WILLA CATHER: An intensive study of major writings with consideration of Cather as an artist, her style, her themes, her artistry, and her place in American letters." Teaching the course is Donald E. Connors.

With WCPM board members in 1959, Mr. Connors and his Omaha Central High School English classes pioneered the 65 mile bus tour of Willa Cather Country which since then has become so popular with students. His yearly research trips to Catherland from teaching posts in Arizona and California have prepared him for just such a course as he is now teaching at UCLA.

. Nebraska

The Fifth District Women's Clubs Convention held in Red Cloud last fall sparked an enthusiastic interest in the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial among the Women's Clubs of south-central and western Nebraska. The new president, Mrs. Earl High of Venango, reports the WCPM has been chosen as the special 5th district project for the next two years. Mrs. Elwyn Anderson of Juniata, project chairman, reports cash donations are already coming in from some of the 63 Women's Clubs in the Fifth District.

Representatives of museums and historical societies from all over Nebraska will meet in Red Cloud next fall when the WCPM is host to the Nebraska Museum Conference with Mildred R. Bennett serving as Conference Chairman. These leaders are interested in having a closer look at the progress of the Museum and the methods used by the WCPM.

New York

One robin doesn't make a Spring . . . but we can't resist mentioning that an inquiry has been received from a national TV network in regard to filming a half-hour documentary on Willa Cather and the country she wrote about.

Student Activities

Dedication ceremonies were held in January at Willa Cather Hall and Louise Pound Hall, the new twin tower dormitories at the University of Nebraska. Resident students paid tribute to the famous Nebraska women along with other speakers.

Enthusiastic Cather fans from Superior High School English classes volunteered several days' labor at the Museum last fall. Earlier the classes and their teacher, Mrs. Marjorie Smith, had toured Catherland sixty strong and devoted a full edition of THE FLASHLIGHT, their school paper, to report their experiences. The volunteers outstripped their 1962 classmates by turning out in greater numbers, putting in longer hours, and by adding girls to the labor force.

Girl Scouts

THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL is the subject of a new Museum project undertaken by the Senior Girl Scouts who have earned their Willa Cather Merit Badges. The Scout Troop with their leader, Mrs. Bliss Tanner, President of We-So-Braska Girl Scout Council, have made application to the Reader's Digest Foundation for a \$500 grant. With the money the girls will be able to completely furnish the SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL display in the Museum.

Educational Material Needed

In nine years circulation of the WCPM Newsletter has grown to over 5,000. Of increasing importance is the need to augment WCPM printed materials. Such things as printed guides for students and a brochure explaining the WCPM will greatly increase the effectiveness of efforts to spread an interest in Willa Cather. It is hoped funds will be made available in 1964.

CATHERLAND

Aim

To identify and restore to their original condition, places made famous by the writings of Willa Cather.

Plows

The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial is cooperating with the city of Red Cloud to erect four WELCOME TO

neth Schwartz, is directing construction of the signs—a concrete base crowned by the walking-plow, distinctive emblem of the WCPM and most significant symbol of Willa Cather Country's pioneer heritage.

A plow will also be used on the front of the Museum building. Your contributions make it possible for the Board of Governors to allocate \$500 for placing these first five plows.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Aim

To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial in the form of art and literary scholarships.

1964 Scholarship Awards

Contributions to the scholarship fund again make it possible for the WCPM to award two \$100 scholarships at the 1964 Spring Conference. A senior in the English Department at Hastings College will receive a \$100 scholarship. The other will go to a high school senior.

The high school scholarship will go to the winner of a nation-wide essay contest on the subject "The Artistic Values of Willa Cather." Dr. L. V. Jacks, chairman of Classics at Creighton University and chairman of the WCPM scholarship program, reports a widespread interest in the contest. Entries following the rules published in the Fall Newsletter are due before April 1.

WILLA CATHER MUSEUM

Contributions

In the Museum this winter your contributions have made possible a number of major projects involving the whole building.

Installation of the heating and air-conditioning system gave rise to several minor problems that have delayed completion. However, the furnace is in and working. The problems with the air-conditioner are in the process of being ironed out, and it will be in before hot weather arrives.

In the tower portion of the building, the display area for scenes from Cather stories, wiring and plastering have been finished in all the rooms. Most of the area still requires painting, papering, furnishing, and the wax figures planned for each of the scenes. However the Professor's Attic will be furnished (except for the wax figure) and ready for viewing by April 18. The most important item remaining on the list for the tower is a fire-escape system. Until it has been taken

On the main floor additional temporary seating for the educational conference room is being arranged. The selectroslide programs in this room are making it the most popular spot in the building. A new program for the coming season will be a 48 scene tour of Catherland made possible by a contribution to this fund.

. . . Expanded Museum Schedule . . .

For the first time in its nine year history you have put the WCPM in a position to hire a part-time employee for the Museum. Such a step is necessary because of the thousands of visitors to Catherland and the Museum; the growing volume of correspondence; and the increasingly important tasks of cataloging Museum artifacts and filing Archives material. The executive secretary will help your WCPM serve you more efficiently in the future.

Beginning with the 1964 tourist season the Museum will be open on an expanded schedule. Working with the executive secretary, volunteer hostesses and Girl Scout junior hostesses will be in the Museum to help you every afternoon from 1:00 o'clock 'til 5:00 during the summer months. They will also be on hand Sundays and holidays this spring and again next fall.

Please remember you can make special arrangements in advance if you want to bring a group to visit the Museum, tour Willa Cather's Red Cloud or Catherland—or if you will be here at a time when the Museum is not scheduled to be open.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

. . . Special Projects . . .

Here is a partial list of planned projects that need your consideration and financing:

- To spread interest in Willa Cather
 - Printing
 - Student study guides
 - WCPM Brochure
 - Tour of Willa Cather's Red Cloud
 - Tour of Willa Cather's Country
- To mark places made famous by Willa Cather
 - Placing 19 walking-plows
- To provide scholarships for students of Willa Cather
 - Enlarging scholarship fund

- To expand Museum telling the story of Willa Cather

- Portrait Bust of Willa Cather
- Oil Portrait of Willa Cather
- Additional Selectroslide programs

Lower floor display area

- Completion of ceiling
- Tile floor covering
- Uniform glass display cases

Educational conference room

- New flooring
- Permanent seating
- Additional Selectroslide programs

Archives

- Modern shelving and files for vaults

Tower area

- Fire-escape system
- Painting and decorating for life-sized displays
- Furnishings for these scenes
- Wax figures for these scenes

. . . Spring Conference . . .

The ninth annual WCPM Spring Conference will be held April 18 and 19 and will again feature an outstanding personality from the field of art and culture. This year Dr. Robert N. Manley of the University of Nebraska History Department will attend the Conference and be principal speaker at the Saturday evening membership dinner. Past speakers for the occasion have been Dr. John G. Neihardt, Poet in Residence at the University of Missouri and author of A CYCLE OF THE WEST; The Honorable Val Peterson, Ambassador to Denmark and former Governor of Nebraska; and Dr. C. B. Schultz, Director of the Nebraska State Museum and internationally recognized paleontologist.

The Spring Conference weekend activities will begin Friday evening with the Board of Governors meeting. Saturday morning and afternoon and again Sunday morning tours will be available for visitors. The Conference dinner will take place Saturday evening at 6:30. On the program will be presentation of scholarship awards by Dr. L. V. Jacks. The highlight of the evening will be Dr. Robert Manley, who has the unusual ability to present scholarly subjects in a popu-

lar vein. By spicing his talks with folklore and frontier ballads, Dr. Manley has delighted audiences all over the west.

Invitation

We are looking forward to having you join us and other members and friends of the Memorial in Red Cloud for the ninth annual Spring Conference the weekend of April 18 and 19. In the enclosed envelope send your reservations for the dinner, Saturday evening, April 18, and your requests for overnight accommodations.

The envelope is also a reminder that your financial support is necessary to the progress of the Willa

Cather Pioneer Memorial. Your one-dollar contributions pay for a large part of the operational expenditures of the WCPM. Your \$5.00 annual payment toward \$75.00 Life Membership provides the financial backbone of the WCPM. Your large donation finances the special projects aimed at fulfilling the four purposes of the WCPM.

You can be very proud of the progress made by your Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial in its first nine years—and most especially during the past year. With your continuing interest and support the WCPM can look forward confidently to celebrating a triumphant Tenth Anniversary in March 1965.

With sincere appreciation for all your efforts,

Sincerely yours,

Miriam Mountford, Newsletter Editor
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

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

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

LIFE MEMBERSHIP \$75.00

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP . . . \$5.00 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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