



Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

VOLUME VI

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

NUMBER 1

A PROGRESS REPORT TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

In 1955 when the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial was incorporated to honor Willa Cather, the Board of Governors outlined the purposes of the organization to guide its growth and expansion. The four AIMS of the WCPM are . . .

- 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.

The Spring Newsletter is customarily devoted to a complete financial report of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial to show you just how your money is being spent to carry out these four aims.

Your letters indicate that you approve of this practice. More important, by almost doubling your contributions during 1961, you have demonstrated your trust in the capability of the Board of Governors in handling your donations wisely for the purpose of building a sturdy, active Memorial to Willa Cather.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1961

Bank balance, January 1, 1961	\$ 586.83
Total deposits, 1961	11,223.92
Total expenditures, 1961	11,223.12
Bank balance, January 1, 1962	587.63

Sources of Income—

WCPM memberships and gifts	\$ 8,775.90
Contributions to Special Funds	249.11
Rent from Cather House	1,234.10
Gross sales in book and gift department	964.81

Total deposits \$11,223.92

Expenditures—

WCPM Museum & Archives building restoration	\$ 6,032.98
Old museum headquarters: lease and custodial	319.99
Cather House: renovating all utilities	3,408.39
Newsletter, printing and mailing	424.48
Investment for resale (books, stationery, ceramics)	579.99
Museum association dues, promotion	72.71
Supplies for current projects	384.58

Total expenditures \$11,223.12

NOTES ON THE FINANCIAL REPORT

In Regard to the Cather House . . .

Our most generous benefactor, Dr. W. K. Bennett, has given the Memorial clear title to Willa Cather's childhood home by cancelling the \$4,000 mortgage on the house. Until the time when we are financially able to undertake a new restoration project, the two apartments in the house are being rented to produce revenue for the Memorial.

In Regard to Scholarship Awards . . .

Scholarships make up the largest part of the item on the financial report listed as Contributions to Special Funds.

A \$100.00 Willa Cather Scholarship will be awarded in May to a high school senior who has written the best 2,500 word essay on the subject, "For Miss Cather, the pioneer was a person to whom the

PROGRESS CANNOT ALWAYS BE MEASURED BY DEBITS AND CREDITS

In the Museum Building . . .

Construction work being done last year caught the interest of so many more volunteer workers that the number of hours of donated labor increased 300%. We might estimate the money saved — 3,000 hours at an average of \$2.00 per hour or \$6,000. What we cannot measure is the feeling that these volunteers have of personal pride in a worthwhile project; their active interest in its progress, and the goodwill for the Memorial that they spread wherever they go.

As we view the clutter and confusion of moving into the Museum, we realize we have reached a major milestone in the development of the WCPM. It is time to pause briefly at this milestone to evaluate the progress that has been made.

One of America's most outstanding museum directors, Dr. C. B. Schultz of the University of Nebraska State Museum, has given restoration planning his constant attention since the building was purchased. Using his exceptional ability and vast experience, Dr. Schultz has redesigned the interior to the best possible advantage for the various purposes of each area. At the same time he has retained the 19th century atmosphere inherent in the architecture of the building both inside and out.

Mr. William W. Leaverton, Principal of the Red Cloud High School, has applied to the physical renovation and installation of displays not only his past experience with restoration projects but also his patient attention to detail, his organizational ability, and his boundless energy and drive.

The completely successful development of the WCPM Museum and Archives is assured with its direction in the hands of such an excellent combination as Dr. Schultz and Mr. Leaverton.

PROGRESS IN REGARD TO AIM FOUR

President Mildred R. Bennett's paper on Willa Cather Names was translated by VOICE OF AMERICA and adapted for a recent message from the free world to Czechoslovakians behind the iron curtain.

An invaluable addition to our educational department was made when a group of friends presented the Memorial with the hour-long sound film, WILLA CATHER COUNTRY, produced by KUON-TV of the University of Nebraska.

The demand for the new edition of THE WORLD OF WILLA CATHER by Mildred R. Bennett has been so great that the University of Nebraska Press is preparing a second printing which will be out in May.

RESTORATION ATTRACTS NATIONAL ATTENTION

"Because of your active program, your progress, and your outstanding efforts in the preservation of buildings of historical interest . . ." So reads the invitation to the WCPM from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to participate in a Plains States Conference they are helping to sponsor in Omaha May 5. To help with the meeting dealing with the aims and problems of historic preservation, President Mildred Bennett will present pictures of our restoration projects along with a report summarizing our methods and our future plans.

idea and the vision are better and more to be enjoyed than the reality." This new scholarship is made possible by an additional \$50.00 given to the Fund to match the \$50.00 received early last year. The winner will be honored on May 26 at the Spring Conference of the WCPM.

The large number of entries in the essay contest, as well as the enthusiasm displayed by youngsters visiting here, confirms the report of public librarians throughout the country in THIS WEEK, December 17, 1961, that MY ANTONIA is high on the list of books most popular with teen-agers.

A Hastings College student will receive the \$100.00 Willa Cather Scholarship sponsored annually by Dr. Frank S. Hewitt.

NOTABLE COMMENTS

The Omaha WORLD-HERALD augmented its report of Willa Cather's election to the Hall of Fame with a fine editorial April 19. With a long-standing policy of whole-hearted support of the Memorial's aims and purposes, the WORLD HERALD is an influential friend giving complete and accurate coverage to WCPM activities.

Brooks Atkinson in the New York TIMES, November 24, 1961, pays tribute to Willa Cather, "Today . . . very much the major American writer" whose "novels . . . increase in stature with the years". At the same time Mr. Atkinson's comparison of Willa Cather with other writers of the 1920's provides a valid explanation for the increasing interest in Miss Cather, whose "sparse and supple writing has a classical simplicity" which has outlived the "showmanship" of her contemporaries. This popularity is reflected in the growing number of publications about Willa Cather which appear each year.

The New York HERALD TRIBUNE in recognition of National Library Week included Red Cloud in its canvass of librarians of six cities identified with well known authors. Board member Jennie M. Reiher's report of local reader interest in Willa Cather appeared in the HERALD TRIBUNE Book Section April 8.

WCPM PROGRESS IN 1962

The Eugene C. Eppley Foundation of Omaha has granted \$1,000.00 to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial. With this generous gift the Eppley Foundation takes its place as the second charitable organization to participate actively in the Memorial. The initial foundation gift of \$5,000.00 was made by the J. M. McDonald Foundation in 1961.

The official opening May 26 will be the magic day when the dream of a museum and archives for the WCPM becomes a reality. Our library of Cather letters, autographed first editions, foreign editions, reference books, and educational supplements is safely and securely installed in the vault. The museum artifacts have a permanent home where they can be adequately displayed. This fine beginning is made possible through clubs and organizations, through schools and charitable foundations. Yet the largest share of the credit belongs to you and all the other Newsletter readers who answered the appeal for special funds. We continue to make this appeal for your personal interest, your generous contributions, and your solid support.

HALL OF FAME

Willa Cather was named to the Nebraska Hall of Fame on April 17. She is one of the first two distinguished Nebraskans to be selected for this honor. A portrait bust of Miss Cather will be placed in the State Capitol.

Mildred R. Bennett
Josephine Frisbie
Virginia Faulkner
Dr. L. V. Jacks
Helen Lengfeld
John March
Miriam Mountford
Mamie Meredith

Sincerely yours,

Miriam Mountford
Miriam Mountford, Newsletter Editor
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

Harry Obitz
Helen Obitz
Frank O'Rourke
Jennie M. Reiher
David E. Scherman
Dr. C. B. Schultz
Carrie M. Sherwood

FUTURE PLANS

Now that we have the essential elements necessary for a museum, we are able to make plans for activating the exhibits so that Willa Cather's work comes to life for everyone. The first step in this direction is being planned by Dr. C. B. Schultz, Director of the Nebraska State Museum at the University of Nebraska. This orientation room, the first stop in a tour of the museum, will contain the history as well as the geography of Willa Cather Country.

In the general restoration of the building, approximately \$10,000 of work remains to be done. Detailed plans have been finalized, and each area will be completed as finances are available. Your continuing participation is very important to the completion of the WCPM Museum and Archives.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

May 15 marks the beginning of the conducted tours of Willa Cather's Red Cloud and Willa Cather Country. These tours are available at no charge to high school, college, and university student and teacher groups, professional associations, service and civic clubs, and to all other interested groups. Individuals can get directions for making these tours at the Museum.

The Annual Spring Conference of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial will be held in Red Cloud on the weekend of May 26.

The formal opening and dedication of the Museum will take place on Saturday during the Annual Spring Conference.

Dr. John G. Niehardt, America's foremost living poet, will be the Conference dinner speaker Saturday evening, May 26. We are highly honored for the active interest in the WCPM of Dr. Niehardt who has immortalized the heroes of the Early West in his epic, CYCLE OF THE WEST.

The Board of Governors cordially invites you to join us in Red Cloud for the Spring activities. Please use this envelope, enclosed for making your contribution or paying on your membership, to let us know when you will be here; or if that is impossible, to let us know what you are thinking about the Memorial. Your ideas are just as indispensable as your contributions, and we deeply appreciate your continuing interest. Remember

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 the building 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.



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