

FALL NEWSLETTER — 1961

Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

Volume V— Number 2

Red Cloud, Nebraska

To Members and Friends:

PROGRESS REPORT ON OUR FOUR AIMS . . .

AIM: 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

In May more than 100 friends of the Memorial joined the Board of Governors at their annual spring conference in Red Cloud to honor the J. M. McDonald Foundation for its \$5,000.00 contribution to the Memorial Building Fund. The spring Newsletter carried President J. M. McDonald's challenge to you to prove your active interest in the Memorial by trying to match this grant from his Foundation. Your response has been most gratifying.

We are happy to report a 30 per cent increase in membership since the challenge was issued. Among the new Memorial Life Members is Frank H. Woods of the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., of Chicago. We are hoping the two generation Woods family interest in Willa Cather will lead the Woods organization to follow the example set by the McDonald Foundation.

The initial \$5,000.00 from the McDonald Foundation along with your contributions to the building fund made possible a great many changes in the old Silas Garber Bank Building. The exterior of the building has been completely refurbished and the new roof has been completed. Inside, all of the major repairs and architectural changes have been made. The space intended for museum displays, the lower floor, has been given top priority; it is ready for painting and for the construction of exhibit areas. We are looking forward to that day soon when it will be possible to begin moving in the museum artifacts.

AIM: To Identify and Restore to their Original Condition, Places made Famous by the Writings of Willa Cather

John March, research librarian for Collier's encyclopaedia in New York, returned to Red Cloud this summer for several week's study of Webster County historical documents. It is largely through the research Mr. March has been doing for the Memorial that we have been able to identify most of the places in this area used by Willa Cather in her writing. In this field, we are also indebted to various students doing original research on Willa Cather for making their findings available to the Memorial.

AIM: To Provide for Willa Cather a Living Memorial in the Form of Art and Literary Scholarships

The most notable development of the increasingly popular scholarship program is the pledge of an anonymous benefactor of an annual \$50.00 contribution for the next five years.

Dr. Frank S. Hewitt, English Department Chairman, Austin College, Texas, is to date the most generous contributor with his annual \$100.00 Willa Cather scholarship. Dr. Hewitt's additional contribution this year was his sponsorship of a spring tour of Willa Cather Country for two Hastings College students.

AIM: To perpetuate an Interest throughout the World in the Work of Willa Cather

Last winter in Philadelphia Mildred R. Bennett's paper, "How Willa Cather Chose Her Names" was presented to the annual meeting of the American Name Society by its president, Miss Mamie Meredith, who is also a member of the Board of Governors of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

Mrs. Carrie M. Sherwood, Vice President of the Memorial and life-long friend of Willa Cather, joined Mrs. Bennett on "Meet the Author," a regular presentation of KUON-TV, the University of Nebraska station. The show was produced with the cooperation of the University English Department in conjunction with the release of the new edition of Mrs. Bennett's "The World of Willa Cather."

This fall President Bennett's speaking engagements have taken her to Oak Park, Illinois, where she was the guest of two men's organizations — The High Twelve Men's Club and The Exchange Club — and to San Jose, California, where she was guest lecturer for the Adult Education advanced writing classes. Mrs. Bennett has responded to an unusually large number of requests to talk about Willa Cather to high schools, colleges, and clubs.

The 1903 edition of Willa Cather's "April Twilights" is being reproduced for the first time. Because Willa Cather paid for the publication of this her first book, herself, sold what she could, then burned those that were left, "April Twilights" (1903) has always been a rarity. The price of this fine hand-bound volume is \$10.00. We would be happy to reserve your copy of the limited (300) first printing if you will send your request before December 10, 1961.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The large McDonald Foundation grant has financed the first one-third of the total cost of restoring the museum building. Please continue your vigorous efforts to match the \$5,000.00 McDonald grant and prove that our active membership makes the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial worthy of future financial assistance from the McDonald Foundation and other similar organizations. At the same time let's make sure a steady flow of contributions to the building fund keeps the job moving forward continuously to its completion. Remember a large sum of money from a foundation will do a large job quickly; a small amount of money from a large number of people will also do a large job — or many small jobs.

Keep in mind that the museum building is only one phase of one of the four AIMS of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial. The building is not an end in itself — not a hastily revamped facade to attract tourists nor a shrine sheltering a few sacred objects accessible only to the dedicated. The purpose of the building is to protect, preserve, and enhance what goes inside. We are fortunate that we have an historically interesting building that is appropriate for displaying the present Willa Cather collections and large enough to accommodate its growth as more and more people give their Willa Cather artifacts and letters to the Memorial to share them with the world. THE WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES is an active, living memorial where students can gain knowledge and inspiration and where laymen can see the Willa Cather story and gain a broadened understanding of our pioneer heritage as she recorded it.

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

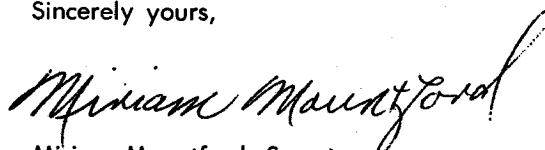
SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP _____ \$ 5.00 Annually

- 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.

Your interest in the Memorial as well as your participation in its programs are deeply appreciated. Both are indispensable parts of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

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

Sincerely yours,



Miriam Mountford, Secretary
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

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



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