

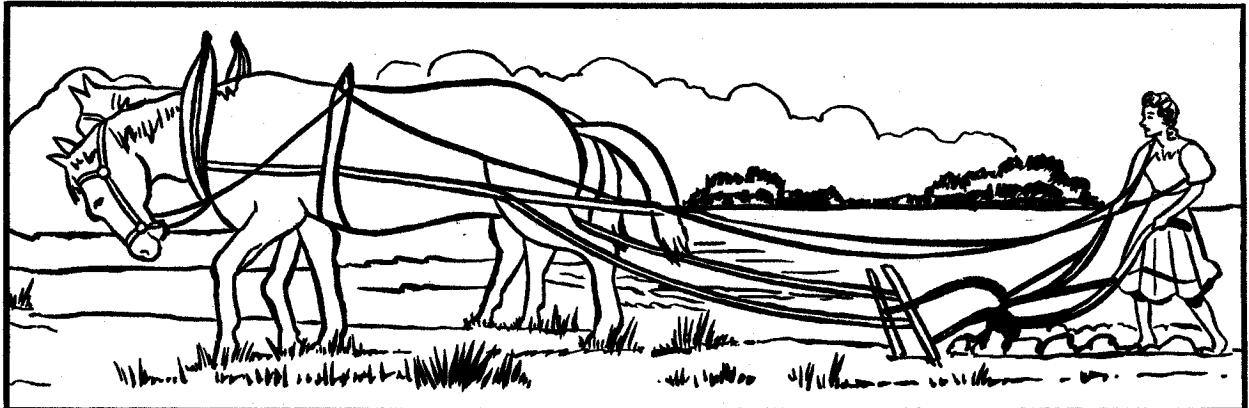
Spring Newsletter - - - - 1960

WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

Volume IV

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

Number 1



PROGRESS REPORT

The weekend of April 2 and 3 the Officers and Board of Governors of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial met in Red Cloud. We would like to share with you some of the results of our conferences as we reviewed what has been accomplished toward fulfilling the four AIMS of the Memorial during our first five years.

AIM TO PERPETUATE AN INTEREST THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IN THE WORK OF WILLA CATHER.

Since 1957 we have sent out the Newsletter twice each year to a mailing list which has grown from 1,000 to more than 5,000. Included on this list are the 2500 people from all over the United States and 15 foreign countries who have visited Red Cloud to study Willa Cather.

To expedite answering requests for information about Willa Cather, especially from students, we now have available a Willa Cather News Sheet graphically portraying the highlights of her life and works.

We had further proof that we are succeeding with this aim when President Mildred R. Bennett was asked to write a Willa Cather article for the Winter 1960 issue of the Belgian Seydell Quarterly. Mrs. Bennett gained additional recognition for the Memorial when her "Willa Cather in Pittsburgh" was selected as first-place winner of the national biography contest sponsored by the National League of American Pen Women. The article appeared in the Spring, 1959 "Prairie Schooner".

AIM TO IDENTIFY AND RESTORE TO THEIR ORIGINAL CONDITION, PLACES MADE FAMOUS BY THE WRITINGS OF WILLA CATHER.

Contributions received during the past five years from a number of Memorial friends made possible the construction of and installation of the contour map of the western half of Webster County identifying all the settings of Willa Cather's Nebraska stories.

Plans are now being laid to purchase the land which is the original setting for My Antonia, and we have an option to buy the Cather childhood home when it becomes available for sale.

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.

When the Memorial was incorporated in 1955, the museum collection consisted of a number of articles and books that Mrs. Carrie Sherwood had been storing for her girlhood friend, Willa Cather. In just five years the collection and library has outgrown its temporary quarters and is valued at a little over \$13,000.00. As a result of last year's contributions we were able to buy the historic Silas Garber (Captain Forrester of A Lost Lady) building for our permanent Memorial Headquarters. Our goal for 1960 is to weather proof the building and rennovate the ground floor so that the museum can be moved to its new home.

Until then the museum will be open as usual for summer visitors in its old quarters in the State Theater Building. New in the museum this season is a life-size reproduction of a sod house interior as it would appear in My Antonia or O Pioneers.

Miss Marguarite Atherton has contributed an entire display of things belonging to the Garbers of A Lost Lady. Margaret Gilchrist, Durango, Colorado, and Mrs. L. A. Cather, Belle Plaine, Kansas have created a Cather Family Tree display.

A third diorama, My Antonia by Nathan Moler, has been contributed to the contour map display. Spaces for two more dioramas picturing scenes from the Nebraska stories will be filled as soon as the money is available.

AIM TO PROVIDE FOR WILLA CATHER A LIVING MEMORIAL IN THE FORM OF ART AND LITERARY SCHOLARSHIPS.

Dr. L. V. Jacks' committee is making plans to carry out this aim in 1960 with a scholarship to be awarded for creative ability. The program will be expanded and augmented as funds are made available.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial is a non-profit organization and is financed entirely by voluntary contributions. The heart of the Memorial is formed by Life Members (those who have contributed \$75.00). Those who have joined since our last report are: Mary Etta Blue of Red Cloud, Carolyn Campbell of Denver (a gift from her father) Wayne Cather of Toledo, and Catherine Urban, President of the National League of American Pen Women, Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Edward Weil and Mrs. Katherine R. Loewenthal of Chicago sent two \$100.00 contributions in memory of their mother, Pauline Rubens, and Mrs. Charles Wiener, prototype for Mrs. Rosen in "Old Mrs. Harris".

We are very pleased that the number of sustaining members (those who contribute \$5.00 annually until life-membership is obtained) is becoming much too large to list in such limited space. We will publish during the forth-coming year a special edition of the Newsletter devoted entirely to membership listing all of those who have contributed in the various categories.

Altogether in 1959 we received more than \$2500.00 in contributions, and donations to the museum collection increased its value from \$10,000.00 to \$13,000.00.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We have reviewed briefly what has been done in the past to carry out the four AIMS of the Memorial. Now let us outline our program for the future.

To restore the Garber Building to its original condition and at the same time make it suitable to house the museum and Memorial headquarters, we have drawn up a \$10,000 five year plan. The professional advisors who have worked with us on the program assure us spending that amount will result in a monument worthy to bear the name of Willa Cather.

Each year \$500 is budgeted for publications such as the Newsletter in order to perpetuate an interest in Willa Cather.

After extensive research most of the places in Webster County made famous by Miss Cather have been located and identified; furthermore the legal aspects of purchasing a number of them have been taken care of. When we buy them and how many we buy will depend, of course, on the availability of funds.

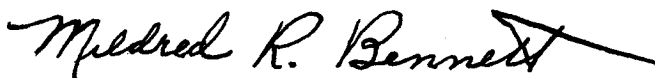
The same thing is true of the scholarship program; it is ready to develop just as rapidly as funds will allow.

We are proud of the progress made during our first five years; yet it is a small beginning compared with all that ought to be done. We have slowly and surely laid a firm foundation; now the living Memorial to Willa Cather is prepared for extensive building in many directions.

Please continue your very personal interest in the Memorial, and add your support whenever and however possible. Use this Newsletter to spread the word by sharing it with friends and passing it around at club meetings. Buy a life membership (\$75) or become a sustaining member (\$5 annually). Contribute to the building fund or to the scholarship fund. Keep constant vigilance for Willa Cather artifacts that we ought to have. And above all write to us, and ask your friends to write, whenever you have encouraging words or a good idea.

Sincerely yours,

The Officers and Board of Governors
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL



Mildred R. Bennett, President

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Helen Lengfeld
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