

To Our Friends and Supporters

Educate, explore, inspire, preserve, protect. This year's annual report illuminates these five strategic words, so vital to the Cather Foundation's mission. I see these words as invitational, connected to every square inch of the Foundation's physical space and to every page of Cather's legacy. The magnificent Cather prairie, south of Red Cloud near the Kansas border, absorbs the visitor into its kinetic landscape, engages with its natural beauty, and educates with its flora and fauna, vestiges of the High Plains biome that existed before settlement days. The Cather Foundation preserves and protects this space for our current and future understanding of the natural world's past. In town, the entrance doors of the Red Cloud Opera House sweep the visitor into the late 19th century structure that filled Cather's youthful imagination with theater, music, comedy, and local folkways. This revitalized Opera House, the site of gallery openings, stage events, conferences, and celebrations, keeps the past's imprint on time's forward projection. Walk the few blocks to the Cather childhood home and you find another portal leading to education, exploration, inspiration, preservation, and protection. For so many visitors to Red Cloud, the childhood home embodies Cather's storytelling. To enter that home is to walk into Thea Kronberg's, Jim Burden's, and Old Mrs. Harris's existences. Willa Cather's fiction is among the world's greatest. Preserving and protecting her brilliance, inspiring others to appreciate her artistry, educating the public on Cather's literary landscapes lie at the heart of the Cather Foundation enterprise. Five words with a big resonance.



Susan N. Maher
President
Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors

What an education! Little did I know just how much my horizons would expand when I joined the Cather Foundation. I am inspired every day by the amazing talent, determination and passion for Cather's life and work exhibited by the Board of Governors, staff, volunteers, and the generous friends who support us. To explore Cather's poignant works with a new appreciation; to steward her legacy for new generations; and to protect and preserve the historic places that shaped Cather's future—these are truly rewarding undertakings for all of us at the Foundation.

The Opera House was Cather's "eye to the world" and this year was no exception. Our programming this year exemplified the dynamic activity reflected in this year's annual report. The public enjoyed a wide variety of art and entertainment from poetry performances to opera and orchestra concerts to enchanting children's theater and photographic exhibits, including the powerful *Remembering Our Fallen* and the Smithsonian's *America Through the CBS Eye*.

No one could ever label the Cather Foundation a one-dimensional organization! It has been a true privilege to join the Cather Foundation. I can't wait to see what's on the horizon for the coming years.



Leslie C. Levy
Executive Director



On the Cover: Picturing Cather's Fictional World

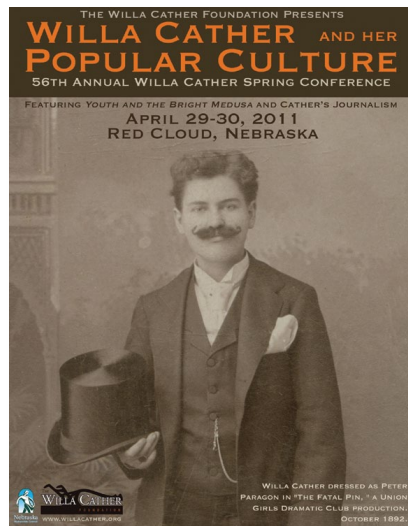
For each of Cather's novels and several of her best-known stories, we have selected illustrations evocative of the work. Some are drawn from real-world models; some are entirely fanciful. See the back cover for a key to the images.

E D U C A T E

Helping Readers Discover the Writer and Her Work

2011 marked the 56th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference and the 13th International Cather Seminar. By enabling generations of Cather lovers and scholars to immerse themselves in her work and life and influences, these two long-running events have greatly expanded the legions of Cather readers and deepened their understanding of her work.

“Willa Cather and Her Popular Culture” was the theme of the 2011 Spring Conference in Red Cloud, exploring Cather’s relationship to the popular culture of her day, in music and movies



and the printed word. One of our distinguished guests was Rin Tin Tin XI, a direct descendant of the canine superstar whom an adoring Cather once called “my crush.” In addition to panels and discussions, conference participants were also treated to an 1890s musical revue, punctuated by alternately acerbic and appreciative commentary on the musical offerings, from Cather’s own writings.

This year’s edition of the biennial International Seminar, sponsored in cooperation with Smith College, was

held in June on the Smith campus in Northampton, Massachusetts. “Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century” traced the transition from a Victorian to modernist America and the legacy of nineteenth-century culture in Cather’s life and work. The featured speakers were the distinguished scholar Nina Baym, author most recently of *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927*, and best-selling novelist Sue Miller, whose ten novels include *The Good Mother* and *While I Was Gone*. One of the highlights of the



long-time publisher Alfred A. Knopf, illuminating Cather’s resistance to the title *One of Ours* for the novel she wished to call *Claude*—resistance she ultimately overcame, of course.

Our *Newsletter & Review* of Fall 2011 was history-making, on two counts: it featured, for the first time anywhere, the full text of Cather’s unfinished and fragmentary final work, “Hard Punishments.” Also included was Cather’s never-published “Paestum,” commemorating her 1908 trip to Italy. Scholar Mark Madigan sensitively rescues this lovely poem from decades of neglect.

The *Newsletter & Review* has been published continuously since the Foundation’s founding; all past issues can be found at www.WillaCather.org.

seminar was a moving and memorable visit to the gravesites of Cather and Edith Lewis, her long-time companion, in nearby Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire.

Uncovering Riches

In the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*, published three times annually, our members encounter fascinating explorations of Cather and her work. Here, for example, is where our friend the Right Reverend Frank T. Griswold, the XXV Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, examines Cather’s “ability to read the book of human experience.” In another story, scholar and Cather Foundation board member Richard C. Harris digs into a little-known trove of letters between Cather and her



E X P L O R E

Sharing Cather's World

What's the point of having treasures if you don't share them? Each year our dedicated guides lead dozens of tours, large and small, through our historic properties in and around Red Cloud. Often our guests are students discovering Cather for the first time, borne along by the enthusiasm of their teachers; just as often we are host to dedicated long-time Cather lovers making pilgrimages to the storied little town where a beloved writer found her voice.

It is our great pleasure to witness many, many transformative moments—as happens sometimes when people look into Cather's modest attic bedroom for the first time, or stand on the Opera House stage where she saw touring theatrical companies perform and where she delivered her high school valedictory address. We get to open new eyes to Cather's life and work and we also get to share in the knowledge and perspectives of our guests. For all of us at the Cather Foundation, helping others experience Cather's world is one of the most rewarding parts of our work.



Left to right: Lynn D. Lu, Erin Duncan, Karen Hartmann Roggenkamp, Tuesday Metcalf, Laura Sunderman, Emily Burns, Jaime DeTour, Virgil Albertini.

I N S P I R E

The Norma Ross Walter Scholarship

When the Cather Foundation's 25th annual Norma Ross Walter Scholarship was awarded to Jaime DeTour in 2011, several past recipients were on hand to participate in the ceremony (see photograph above), among them Karen Hartmann Roggenkamp, the very first winner. Now a professor of literature at Texas A&M University-Commerce, Dr. Roggenkamp called the scholarship a "life-changing event" that launched her on her career path.

Norma Ross Walter was a Navy Wave during the Second World War and a career newspaper editor in California. A lover of Cather and frequent visitor to Red Cloud, she was also a firm believer in education for young women. At her death in 1982, she left a bequest to fund a scholarship program for female graduates of Nebraska high schools who intend to major in English in college. The first scholarship, to Karen Hartmann Roggenkamp, was awarded in 1987.

She was first in an inspiring group. Lynn D. Lu has degrees from Harvard, Sussex University and New York University School of Law, where she now teaches. Erin Duncan has her M.A. from Iowa State and works for the National Education Association. Michele Dowd, with a Ph.D. from Columbia, is an English professor at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Kelly Bare has a degree from Northwestern in English and journalism and works as a special projects editor for *The New Yorker*.

The scholarship winners and the Cather Foundation owe a debt of gratitude to Norma Ross Walter. The Foundation's scholarship efforts, directed by long-time Board of Governors member Virgil Albertini, are a fundamental part of our educational mission.

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P R E S E R V E

Loving Care of Our Historic Properties

One of the Cather Foundation's most basic responsibilities is to protect our historic landmarks from the ravages of time—to keep the prairie grasses from growing over them, if you will. With our partners the Nebraska State Historical Society, we work year-round to manage projects ranging from small repairs to capital-intensive restorations. We do this work at our Foundation-owned properties as well as at the sites originally purchased by the Foundation in its early years and now owned by NSHS, from which we receive an annual budget allocation.



Protecting the Harling House

Routinely, our maintenance and restoration costs far outstrip the funds available; we rely greatly on private contributions for many essential undertakings. One of the Foundation's own properties, the beautiful "Harling House"—unforgettably featured in *My Ántonia*, and deeded to the Foundation by Nancy and Bernard Picchi—is currently undergoing emergency structural repairs, after which interior restoration work will continue. Preserving this stunning historic residence for future generations of Cather lovers is one of our highest priorities.

A New Life for the Cather Second Home

Thanks to a generous gift this year from Jim and Angela Southwick, the Cather Foundation recently purchased the Red Cloud house that has long been known as the Cather Second Home. Willa Cather's parents bought the house in 1903, leaving behind the small rented house they had occupied when Cather was growing up. Cather was a frequent guest and had her own room in the spacious Victorian home, which figures as the Fergusson family residence in Cather's touching late story, "The Best Years."

According to Jim Southwick, the home held fond memories for his mother, Helen Cather Southwick, who recalled serving tea to Aunt Willa there. And in testimony to the resilience of old Victorian houses, it served as a hospital for some years (and was the birthplace of two board members and many of our supporters). In recent years a bed-and-breakfast, the house will again provide lodging and event facilities. With the addition of the Cather Second Home, the Foundation owns five historic sites related to Cather's life and work, and manages an additional six historic sites for the Nebraska State Historical Society.



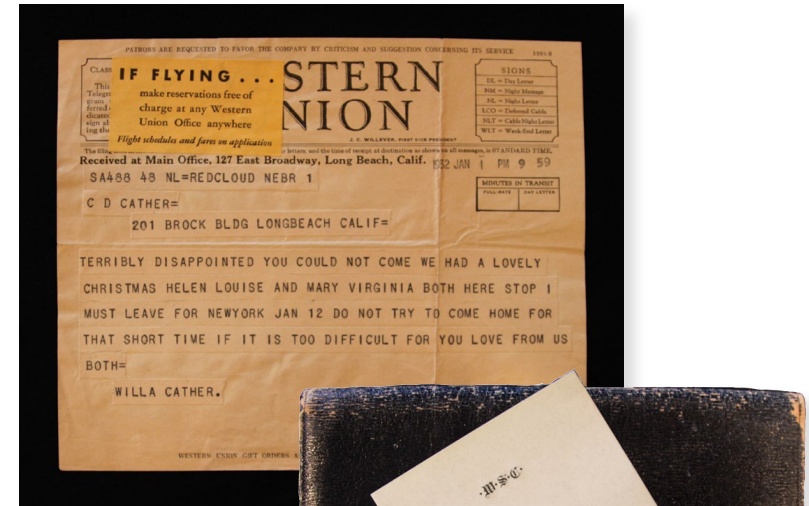
P R O T E C T

Securing the Cather Foundation's Collections

From its inception, the Foundation has been the fortunate caretaker of a fine collection of objects and documents connected to the life and work of Willa Cather. Many of these were gifts of our founding members and many have come to us over the years through the generosity of donors. To help protect these riches so that future audiences can enjoy and study them, the Foundation has begun the ambitious task of building new archival facilities and museum space as part of the Moon Block restoration project. Adjacent to our home at the Red Cloud Opera House, the building known historically as the Moon Block will be joined to the Opera House to create the National Willa Cather Center, at the heart of which will be a new home for our priceless archives.

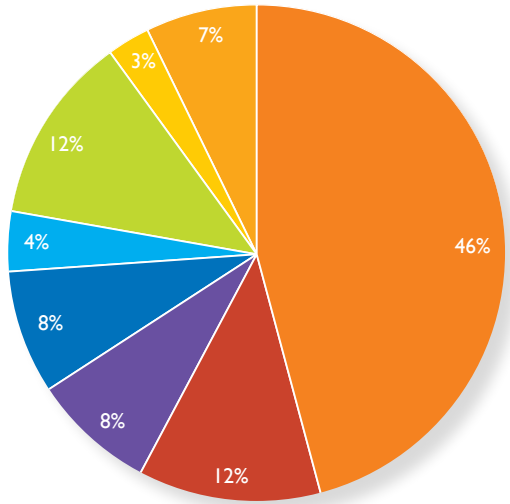
With expanded display capabilities, media and classroom space, and environmentally secure spaces for housing our growing collections, the National Willa Cather Center will enable us to be good stewards of Cather's legacy for years to come.

Clockwise from top: A telegram Cather sent to her brother Douglass ("C. D. Cather") on January 1, 1932; Cather's monogrammed leather correspondence folder and personal stationery; a grouping showing her toiletry case, stationery folder, monogram die, necklace box, and 1889-1890 autograph book; her 17-jewel Elgin pocketwatch; and her 1923 passport. All pieces from the Foundation's Helen Cather Southwick Collection, donated by Jim and Angela Southwick.



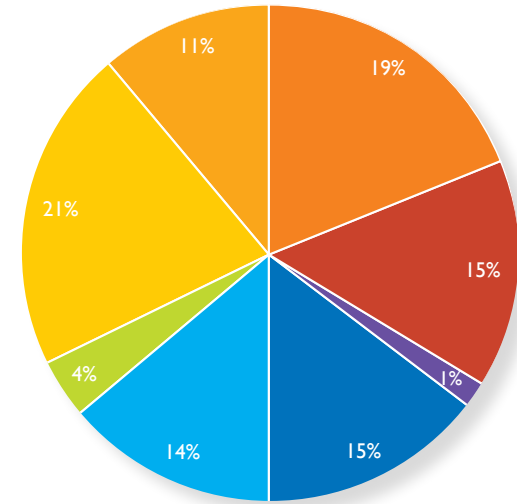
Financial Summary 2011

Support and Revenue



■	Contributions and Memberships	46%	\$390,699
■	Grants	12%	103,803
■	Nebraska State Historical Society Appropriations	8%	68,430
■	Sales and Admissions	8%	64,621
■	Rental Income	4%	31,055
■	Conferences, Seminars, Other	12%	99,924
■	Royalties	3%	29,084
■	Capital Construction Fund	7%	64,264
			\$851,880

Use of Funds



■	Conferences, Seminars, Bookstore and Publications	19%	\$132,430
■	Nebraska State Historic Site Operations	15%	101,935
■	Scholarships	1%	7,880
■	Opera House Programming and Operations	15%	102,650
■	Preservation and Cather Second Home Acquisition	14%	92,382
■	Prairie Restoration and Maintenance	4%	25,702
■	Administration	21%	143,039
■	Capital Construction Fund	11%	71,909
			\$677,927

The variance between *Support and Revenue* and *Use of Funds* is largely due to two factors:

- (1) grant funds of \$75,000 received in 2011 to be expended in 2012, and
- (2) generous restricted contributions of \$75,775 to be expended in future years for programming, preservation, and other special projects.

These figures are based on final year-end audited information compiled by an independent public accounting firm.

Support

The following individuals and organizations were donors to the Willa Cather Foundation in 2011. Space does not permit us to list donations under \$50.00, but we are grateful for these contributions. Every gift is important to us.

\$50,000 and Above

Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE
John Sherwood, Red Cloud, NE
James P. & Angela J. Southwick, Heber City, UT

\$25,000 to \$49,999

Cooper Foundation, Lincoln, NE

\$15,000 to \$24,999

Garnet Lewis, Red Cloud, NE
Woods Charitable Fund, Inc., Lincoln, NE
John A Yost & G. Wade Leak, New York, NY

\$10,000 to \$14,999

Anonymous, Kearney, NE
Gilbert M. & Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation,
Omaha, NE
Carmen & John Gottschalk Foundation, Omaha, NE
Nebraska Arts Council, Omaha, NE

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Dr. Virgil & Dolores Albertini, Fairway, KS
The Theodore G. Baldwin Foundation, Kearney, NE
Carol Cope, Kearney, NE
Thomas Reese Gallagher, New York, NY
Reese Gates, Red Cloud, NE
Geraldine L. Lewis, Red Cloud, NE
Daniel & Lucia Woods Lindley, Evanston, IL
UN-L Cather Project, Lincoln, NE

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Thomas R. Hutson, Thurman, IA
Inavale Foundation, Cambridge, MA
Nebraska Environmental Trust, Lincoln, NE
Bernard J. & Nancy S. Picchi, New York, NY
Red Cloud Community Foundation, Red Cloud, NE
Jim & Trish Schreiber, Meadow Vista, CA
Dayre & Tere L. Williams, Red Cloud, NE

\$1,000 to \$2,499

Adrian Almquist, Bloomington, MN
Melvin C. Anderson Estate, Red Cloud, NE
Marion A. Arneson, Wayne, NE
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R. T. Vanderbilt Trust, Norwalk, CT
Michael & Carmen Zalman, Lincoln, NE

\$500 to \$999

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Mary Ann Mignon, Lincoln, NE
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Jack & Pamela Osborne, Hastings, NE

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Red Cloud Women's Chamber, Red Cloud, NE
Republican Valley Arts Council, Red Cloud, NE
The Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY
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William Welch, Mesa, AZ
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\$100 to \$249

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Red Cloud Animal Health, Red Cloud, NE
Red Cloud Chamber of Commerce, Red Cloud, NE
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7 My Mortal Enemy

"The Henshawes were in Parthia three days, and when they left, it was settled that I was to go on to New York with Aunt Lydia for the Christmas holidays. We were to stay at the old Fifth Avenue Hotel, which, as Myra said, was only a stone's throw from their apartment. . . ."

The Fifth Avenue Hotel, early 20th century; unknown photographer

8 A Lost Lady

"Where Mrs. Forrester was, dulness was impossible, Niel believed. The charm of her conversation was not so much in what she said, though she was often witty, but in the quick recognition of her eyes. . . ."

Cabinet photo of unknown subject, c. 1880s; private collection

9 Paul's Case

"Paul was always smiling, always glancing about him, seeming to feel that people might be watching him and trying to detect something. This conscious expression, since it was as far as possible from boyish mirthfulness, was usually attributed to insolence or 'smartness.'"

Unknown subject, c. 1885; private collection

10 The Song of the Lark

"Into one lovely attitude after another the music swept her, love impelled her. And the voice gave out all that was best in it. Like the spring, indeed, it blossomed into memories and prophecies. . . ."

Olive Fremstad as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. Photo copyright Studio A. Dupont

11 Willa Cather

Willa Cather in 1921 by Rinehart-Marsden, Omaha, Nebraska; from the Durham Museum Photo Archive

12 Sapphira and the Slave Girl

"I was in my mother's bedroom, in the third storey of a big old brick house entered by a white portico with fluted columns. . . . The slats of the green window shutters rattled, the limp cordage of the great willow trees in the yard was whipped and tossed furiously by the wind."

Willow Shade, Back Creek Valley, c. 1870. George Cather Ray Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries

13 Coming, Aphrodite!

"His name was Caesar III, and he had taken prizes at very exclusive dog shows. When he and his master went out to promenade about University Place or to promenade along West Street, Caesar III was invariably fresh and shining."

Illustration by Paul J. Meylan for *Our Friend the Dog* by Maurice Maeterlinck. New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1904

14 Lucy Gayheart

"Her playing for him was nothing but make-believe; and his friendliness was make-believe, perhaps. Then there was nothing real about it,—except her own feeling. That was real."

"The Mozart Sonata" (detail), 1894, by Berthe Morisot; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass.

15 My Antonia

"She was out in the fields from sun-up until sun-down. If I rode over to see her where she was ploughing, she stopped at the end of a row to chat for a moment, then gripped her plough-handles, clucked to her team, and waded on down the furrow, making me feel that she was now grown up and had no time for me."

Illustration by W. T. Benda for *My Antonia*, 1918

16 Shadows on the Rock

"Monseigneur de Laval had not always been a man of means and measures. Long ago . . . his life had been wholly given up to meditation and prayer. Not until he was sent out to Canada to convert a frontier mission into an enduring part of the Church had he become a man of action."

Statue of Bishop Laval, Quebec City. Photo by Andrea Schaffer/Creative Commons

17 Old Mrs. Harris

"There was the kind of nobility about her head that there is about an old lion's: an absence of self-consciousness, vanity, preoccupation—something absolute."

Undated portrait of Willa Cather's grandmother, Rachel Seibert Boak, prototype for Mrs. Harris. Philip L. & Helen Cather Southwick Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries

Prairie photo: Barb Kudrna

1 O Pioneers!

" . . . there are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before; like the larks in this country, that have been singing the same five notes over for thousands of years."

Western meadowlark (stock photo)

2 Death Comes for the Archbishop

"The air and the earth interpenetrated in the warm gusts of spring; the soil was full of sunlight. . . . The air one breathed was saturated with earthy smells, and the grass under foot had a reflection of blue sky in it." Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy, prototype of Cather's Archbishop Jean Marie Latour, in his garden. Photo courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), 049017.

3 A Wagner Matinée

"The name of my Aunt Georgiana opened before me a gulf of recollection so wide and deep that, as the letter dropped from my hand, I felt suddenly a stranger to all the present conditions of my existence. . . ."

Frances Smith Cather, a prototype for Aunt Georgiana in "A Wagner Matinée," 1920. George Cather Ray Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries

4 One of Ours

"Something was released that had been struggling for a long while, he told himself. He had been due in France since the first battle of the Marne; he had followed false leads and lost precious time and seen misery enough, but he was on the right road at last, and nothing could stop him."

Unidentified American soldier, c. 1917; private collection

5 Alexander's Bridge

"It was a spectacular undertaking by reason of its very size, and Bartley realized that, whatever else he might do, he would probably always be known as the engineer who designed the great Moorlock Bridge. . . ."

The Quebec Bridge, *Encyclopedia Britannica* Eleventh Edition (1910–1911)

6 The Professor's House

"That cluster of buildings, in its arch, with the dizzy drop into empty air from its doorways and the wall of cliff above, was as clear in my mind as a picture. By closing my eyes I could see it against the dark, like a magic-lantern slide."

Mesa Verde; photo by Ben FrantzDale/Creative Commons



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