

Willa Cather



NEWS FROM CATHERLAND



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ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA PROCLAMATION

On January 23, 2013, Governor Dave Heineman proclaimed the 2013 One Book One Nebraska: *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather.

In this year, the 100th anniversary of the book's publication, people across Nebraska will read the timeless story of the Bergsons, a family of Swedish pioneers that settles on the American prairie. While Alexandra, the family matriarch, turns the family farm into a financial success, her brother Emil struggles. A novel surprisingly ahead of its time, this work touches on a wide range of enduring themes—love, marriage, temptation, and isolation. One Book One Nebraska 2013 is sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, The Willa Cather Foundation, and University of Nebraska Press.



L to R: Tom Swanson (University of Nebraska Press), Rebecca Faber (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Erika Hamilton (Nebraska Humanities Council), Leslie Levy (Cather Foundation), Governor Dave Heineman, and Chris Sommerich (Nebraska Humanities Council). Photo courtesy of State of Nebraska.

WILLA CATHER'S RED CLOUD: A VIRTUAL TOUR

The Willa Cather Foundation is proud to announce the launch of Willa Cather's Red Cloud, our new, content-rich multimedia virtual tour of the sites that inspired Nebraska's foremost author. This valuable resource for teachers, students, and Cather enthusiasts showcases historic Red Cloud properties, our archival materials, and our dedication to Cather scholarship and our educational mission. As we move further into the digital age, resources such as the virtual tour are critical to reaching new Cather audiences.

The website, www.virtualcather.org, contains videos, audio clips, historic photographs, excerpts from Cather's

writing, and interviews with Cather experts. Its format appeals to today's students who want to explore literature in new ways—through film, audio, primary documents, and on the web.

The site was created by the Willa Cather Foundation under the leadership of Joel Geyer, producer of *American Masters* "Willa Cather: The Road is All," and with the support of National Endowment for the Humanities, The Big Read, *American Masters* series, NET Television, the Nebraska State Historical Society, Paul and Lynette Krieger, and the Sherwood Family.

VISITOR NUMBERS CONTINUE TO RISE

In the last year, Red Cloud has been buzzing with visitors from across the nation and around the world. We've been so pleased to host 8,630 on site visitors, from forty states and five countries, including France, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, and Mexico. Now is the perfect time to begin planning a weekend getaway to Red Cloud, complete with historic site tours, an Opera House show, prairie hike, and a

relaxing evening in the beautifully restored Cather Second Home. If you are interested in arranging a trip to Red Cloud, contact us toll-free at 866-731-7304. It is the perfect destination for your book club, dinner group, Bible study, family reunion or even just a girls' weekend! Special rates are available for groups of fifteen or more.

58TH ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE, MAY 31-JUNE 1

Award-winning Great Plains author Dan O'Brien (*Buffalo for the Broken Heart*), Nebraska filmmaker Charles Fairbanks, and cowboy entertainer and chuck wagon cook Kent Rollins will headline the 58th annual Spring Conference at Red Cloud, Nebraska. The Spring Conference features arts and humanities programs related to the life and writings of Willa Cather, and will celebrate the centennial of Cather's breakthrough novel *O Pioneers!* in which she "hit the home pasture." The novel celebrates the transformation of the American prairies by European settlers and marks Cather's emergence as a major novelist.

This year's conference, directed by Dr. Melissa Homestead of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, also features a Museum of Nebraska Art exhibit of Solomon Butcher's pioneer photographs, and a gallery exhibit, *Inspired by O Pioneers!* A chuck wagon dinner will be served on the prairie, which will also be the location for the inaugural Willa Cather Wildflower Walk. Bluegrass group MAW will perform in the Red Cloud Opera House, and Cather scholars will also be on hand to discuss the

publication of *O Pioneers!*, the forthcoming book *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*, and the new virtual Cather website, www.virtualcather.org.



ENSURE THE FUTURE OF THE WCF

It is never too early to think about planning your future gift to the Willa Cather Foundation. Many of the gifting options available can benefit you in your lifetime, as well as provide future gifts to the Foundation. Moreover, planned giving has a meaningful impact on our mission, beyond your lifetime and far into the future. The Foundation has diverse avenues in furthering Cather's legacy. We promote Cather and her work through her interests: writing and education (scholarships, educational

conferences, programming, the bookstore), theatre and the performing arts (Opera House), family and place (historic preservation/prairie restoration). Respecting the donor's intent is crucial to us. Rest assured, one hundred percent of your gift will be designated and used to further our work in the areas that most interest you and that you've chosen to support. For more information about planned giving, contact Leslie Levy, Executive Director, at 402-746-2653.

COMMEMORATIVE WEBSITE LAUNCHES

The Willa Cather Foundation celebrates the 100th anniversary of the publication of *O Pioneers!* In 1913, Willa Cather published what was to become an American classic, the first of her Nebraska novels, *O Pioneers!*, which details the struggles and successes of those first homesteaders in Nebraska. Alexandra Bergson epitomizes the strength and the vision of our first farmers in an unfamiliar land:

"It seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes drank in the breadth of it, until her tears blinded her. Then the Genius of the Divide, the great, free spirit which breathes across it, must have done lower than it ever bent to a human will before. The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman."

Willa Cather was among these first pioneers in Nebraska, coming west to Red Cloud with her family when she was nine years old. These early experiences and acquaintances were to form the basis for her Nebraska novels. Cather became a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and though she traveled extensively and lived on the East Coast, she never lost her affection for the land and the people of Nebraska.

The Willa Cather Foundation will hold many events in 2013 commemorating the 100th publication anniversary of the novel *O Pioneers!*. Wondering how to keep up with all the fantastic activities during the coming year? Bookmark www.opioneers100.org! The site features direct links to educational resources, events calendar, contests, and merchandise, all in one place!



[Facebook.com/WillaCatherFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/WillaCatherFoundation)

[@WillaCatherFdn](https://twitter.com/WillaCatherFdn)

HELP US REACH THE 1,000 MEMBER MILESTONE

This year, as the Cather Foundation commemorates the 100th publication anniversary of *O Pioneers!*, it's only right that we set a stretch member goal of 1,000 members. There are thousands of Cather readers and admirers around the world, and the Cather Foundation is constantly growing, with a current membership roll of 750+. We are so fortunate to have such an engaged group of members, and, in this milestone year, we want to

challenge them to spread the word. If each of our engaged members brought in just one new member, we would easily meet or exceed the 1,000 member milestone. Support us by talking to your friends, family, and colleagues about your passion for Willa Cather and the work of the Foundation, or consider purchasing a gift membership for a fellow Cather enthusiast!

6TH ANNUAL PRAIRIE WRITERS' WORKSHOP

The 6th annual Prairie Writers' Workshop will offer 20 hours of fiction writing instruction, and the Willa Cather Foundation is pleased to have Kansas native Andrew Malan Milward leading the group. Andrew's writing weaves historical pieces with more modern tales of unflinching realism, creating a contemporary look at Midwestern life. The workshop will begin the evening of Thursday, May 2, and conclude with a public reading and

reception on the afternoon of Sunday, May 5. Guided tours of Cather's childhood home and other historic sites relating to her life and writing, including the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie, will be available to workshop participants.

Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org to register or call 402-746-2653 for more information.

2013 OPERA HOUSE SEASON OF EVENTS UNDERWAY

The Willa Cather Foundation is thrilled to be hosting many wonderful programs and events in the coming year. The Opera House is now entering its 11th season, and this milestone will be celebrated with programs of various genres, including music, exhibits, presentations, and theatre.

Patrons of the Opera House will have the opportunity to attend several live shows, including a production of *Nunsense* by the Sutton Community Theatre; *What the Wind Taught Me*, a Lied Center Arts Across Nebraska program by Angels Theatre Company; and *The Frog Prince* by Missoula Children's Theatre.

Musical performances will include bluegrass band, MAW; popular music from the 70s, 80s, and 90s by Paul Phillips; high energy, swingin' eighteen piece ensemble, the Omaha Big Band; the hot cover band Taxi Driver; and a "Home for the Holidays" concert by audience favorite, The Nelson Brothers.

A National Endowment for the Humanities traveling exhibit, *Our Lives, Our Stories: America's Greatest Generation*, will be shown June 16-August 11, 2013. A presentation by Michael Lasser, entitled "All the Old Familiar Places" will be held in conjunction with the exhibit. The Opera House gallery will also feature the artwork of Gesine Janzen and Todd and Cody Carson Brown. Finally, several Nebraska artists will join forces to create an original exhibit, *Inspired by O Pioneers!*, for the 58th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, which will also feature a traveling exhibition from the Museum of Nebraska Art, entitled *Selected Photographs by Solomon Butcher*.

Opera House events are made possible through the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. For more information on upcoming events or gallery exhibits, visit us online at www.willacather.org/opera-house.



The 2013 season of events kicked off in February with a jazz concert by the Wes Hird Trio, featuring vocalist, Vickie Nielsen.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Nunsense

A musical comedy presented by Sutton Community Theatre
Saturday, April 13, at 7:30 p.m.—\$15

Paul Phillips

'70s, '80s, '90s Hits

Saturday, May 4, at 7:00 p.m.—\$20

Prairie Wildflower Walk

A guided tour of the Cather Prairie at the height of the
early summer blooming period
Friday, May 31, at 1:30 p.m.—\$10

MAW

Traditional Bluegrass

Friday, May 31, at 7:30 p.m.—\$15

Kent Rollins Prairie Chuck Wagon Dinner

Award-winning meal prepared on the Cather Prairie
from an 1876 Studebaker wagon
Saturday, June 1, at 6:00 p.m.—\$30

Omaha Big Band

Classic swing & standards

Saturday, July 13, at 7:00 p.m.—\$20



... all arts events are made possible with the
support of the Nebraska Arts Council &
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.