



NEWS FROM CATHERLAND

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Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org to browse our bookstore or sign up for our e-Newsletter.

Hundreds Attend National Willa Cather Center Groundbreaking

As they placed their shovels in the dirt on June 5, WCF leadership, patrons, and acclaimed historian and guest Richard Norton Smith celebrated an important step in the creation of the National Willa Cather Center, breaking ground on the most anticipated part of the renovation, projected to begin later this summer.

In recognition of this milestone, more than 200 people attended the groundbreaking celebration and dinner in Red Cloud, which was preceded by a compelling keynote address delivered by Smith. The festivities were held on the opening day of the 60th annual Spring Conference and 15th International Cather Seminar.

In 2016, the NWCC will open its doors as a vibrant arts and educational center that will more holistically serve approximately 8,000 annual visitors. Meanwhile, excitement builds as the preliminary phase of construction nears completion, transforming the historic Moon Block.

The impetus for the project is the creation of the best possible preservation and research environment for an extensive and growing collection of rare books, archival papers, photographs, textiles, and artifacts once belonging to Cather and the Cather family. While the Center's focus will be a museum, archive, and exhibition space for collections, the restoration will also provide a classroom, expanded bookstore, art gallery, and backstage facilities for our Red Cloud Opera House.

With thanks to more than 465 supporters nationwide, the campaign to create our first climate-controlled archive and museum is just \$178,000 away from reaching its \$6.7 million goal. We invite you to get involved in this effort by making a donation to the project. Pledges can be made over a five-year period and naming and recognition opportunities are available at various giving levels. For more information, please contact Ashley Olson, Executive Director, at 402-746-2653 or aolson@willacather.org.



Members of the WCF Board of Governors are joined by Executive Director Ashley Olson; Consultant Judy Keller; historian Richard Norton Smith; and architect George Haecker for a ceremonial groundbreaking of what will soon become the National Willa Cather Center.



Spring Conference and International Seminar a Great Success

2015 was a very special year for our annual Spring Conference. As we celebrated our 60th Spring Conference in Red Cloud, we also—in partnership with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Cather Project—welcomed the return of our International Seminar to Nebraska by combining the two events into a weeklong celebration of Cather’s work. In all, we welcomed scholars and guests from 25 states and five countries to Red Cloud and Lincoln, with 289 taking part in the activities and paper sessions.

The conference theme, “Fragments of Desire: Cather and the Arts,” focused on both the publication centenary of Cather’s novel, *The Song of the Lark*, and the larger discussion surrounding Cather’s engagement with, love of, investment in, and representations of art forms and artists of many types. A complete review of the week’s events and a gallery of conference photos can be found on our website, www.WillaCather.org.

Albertinis Become Charter Members of Cather Legacy Society

Dr. Virgil Albertini and his wife Dolores first visited Red Cloud in the 1970s on a road trip from Maryville, Missouri, over Thanksgiving break. During the visit, they learned about the Willa Cather Foundation’s annual Spring Conference. The couple later returned to attend their first Spring Conference in 1978 and have missed only one of the annual gatherings since that time.

“I first read *My Ántonia* as a sophomore in high school, and Cather has been of great interest since the late 1970s when we first came out,” recalled Virgil. During his many years as a professor at Northwest Missouri State University, Albertini often brought student groups from his Cather class to Red Cloud, typically departing at 4:00 a.m. and returning around midnight. “The students saw all the things Cather wrote about come alive in Red Cloud and the surrounding countryside, and they would always have much to talk about on the way home,” Dolores said.

After observing the work of the WCF for many years, the Albertinis have become charter members of the Cather Legacy Society by making a charitable bequest to the Foundation in their estate plans. Recognizing that the WCF will carry out their charitable goals far beyond their lifetime, the Albertinis’ bequest will support preservation efforts at the Cather historic sites in Red Cloud. The

couple has always enjoyed visiting author sites in New England, but Red Cloud holds a special place in their hearts. “If people haven’t been to Red Cloud, they don’t understand,” remarked Virgil. “It’s the most important literary village in America.”



The Albertinis in their acre of wildflowers and native grasses at their country home near Maryville, Missouri.

When asked what excites them most about the future of the WCF, Dolores, a retired librarian, remarked that the addition of a climate-controlled archive within the National Willa Cather Center was particularly pleasing. The couple adores coming to Red Cloud and experiencing the “old-fashioned atmosphere.” They wish to pass along an appreciation for the Midwest and all it offers.

“I want future generations to visit Red Cloud, discover Cather and recognize her not just as a Nebraska or Midwest writer, but as one of the best American writers alongside Hemingway and Faulkner,” remarked Virgil.

The Cather Legacy Society was founded to recognize individuals who make charitable gift plans to benefit the Willa Cather Foundation beyond their lifetime. Individuals who notify us of their plans in 2015 will join Virgil and Dolores Albertini as charter members of the Cather Legacy Society. If you have made a planned gift to the Foundation or would like more information about doing so, please contact Ashley Olson, Executive Director, at 402-746-2653 or aolson@willacather.org.

2015 Scholarships Awarded



Left to right: Madeline Warrick, Madeline Luehr, April Bayer, Deidre Freitas, Executive Director Ashley Olson, and Scholarship Chair Virgil Albertini.

A springtime tradition, the Willa Cather Foundation is pleased to announce the 2015 recipients of the Norma Ross Walter and Antonette Willa Skupa Turner scholarships. Madeline Warrick of Hastings High School received the Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship. Recipients of the Norma Ross Walter Scholarship included April Bayer of West Point-Beemer High School; Deidre Freitas of McCool Junction High School; and Madeline Luehr of Wood River High School.

The scholarship award recognition took place as part of the 60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference. Each of the four recipients, having graduated from a Nebraska high school in May, delivered an original essay on Cather's work, written as a part of the scholarship's extensive application process. This event is a time-honored tradition and always appreciated by the Conference attendees.

Since 1987, the Willa Cather Foundation has awarded over 45 scholarships totaling more than \$156,000 through the Norma Ross Walter Scholarship and Antonette Willa Skupa Turner scholarship programs.

The Norma Ross Walter Scholarship fund was established through a generous bequest from Norma Ross Walter, a lifelong fan of Cather's work, a frequent visitor to Red Cloud, and a firm believer in education for young women.

The Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship fund was established in 2012 by Antonette Willa Skupa Turner, granddaughter of Anna Sadilek Pavelka. The scholarship honors Pavelka, the prototype and inspiration for Antonia Shimerda Cuzak, the eponymous character in Cather's novel.

The scholarship winners and the Willa Cather Foundation owe a debt of gratitude to the generous supporters who

make these awards possible. Our scholarship efforts have impacted the lives of many talented young people and are a fundamental part of our educational mission. For more information about the scholarship programs or to support the scholarship fund, please contact Tracy Tucker, Education Director, at 402-746-2653 or ttucker@willacather.org.

New Program Benefits High School Educators

Inspired to further develop partnerships with the teaching community, a new program launched this spring provided five high school educators with complimentary registrations for the 60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference. The Educator Scholarship was designed to facilitate a dynamic exchange of ideas between Cather scholars and high school educators, upon whom we rely for our next generation of Cather readers.

This year's Educator Scholarship recipients were Brother Jeremy Dominic of Necedah, Wisconsin, who teaches junior high and high school English at Queen of the Holy Rosary School; Sherri Hoye of LaVista, Nebraska, who teaches 9th through 12th grade English at Skutt Catholic High School in Omaha; Pamela Vap of Hastings, Nebraska, who teaches junior high and high school English at Silver Lake in Roseland; Bill Ford of San Francisco, California, who teaches at-risk youth in an urban high school in San Francisco; and Roxanne Whiting of Gothenburg, Nebraska, who teaches high school English and "Survey of Nebraska Authors" at Gothenburg High School.

For more information about the educator scholarship program or to support the scholarship fund, please contact Tracy Tucker, Education Director, at 402-746-2653 or ttucker@willacather.org.



Left to right: Education Director Tracy Tucker, Roxanne Whiting, Pamela Vap, Bill Ford, Sherri Hoye, and Brother Jeremy Dominic.

Weekend of Willa Celebrates 100th Publication Anniversary of *The Song of the Lark*

We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark* with special activities on August 14–15. A "Weekend of Willa" will offer guests ample entertainment at our home in Red Cloud, including a picnic and night sky viewing at the Cather Prairie, guided tours of the Cather historic sites, an art exhibit commemorating the novel's centenary year, and a special program in the Opera House.

On Friday, August 14, the WCF will host the Platte Valley Astronomical Observers for a night sky viewing. The viewing will be preceded by a picnic at the Cather Prairie and a guided hike at sunset. Participants will enjoy the peacefulness of the prairie after dark with the opportunity to view Saturn and perhaps a Perseid or two.

A gala dinner and performance will take place Saturday, August 15, beginning with cocktails at 5:00 p.m. in the Art Gallery followed by a dinner and performance at 6:30 p.m. in the historic Red Cloud Opera House, 413 North Webster Street.

The exhibit, described in detail on page 7, includes visual art in many mediums and a selection of work from artists who live in Red Cloud, Nebraska, Cather's hometown, and from across the state and elsewhere.

The dinner will feature a performance entitled *The Song of the Lark*, a song cycle by Barlow Bradford, which received its first performance at Salt Lake City's Intermezzo Chamber Music series in 2010. Based on Cather's 1915 novel, the cycle was warmly

received at its premiere and in the reviews that followed for both its skillful composition and its melodic expressivity and emotional impact. The cycle's four songs focus on key episodes in the novel. Though its libretto draws on Cather's text, it adapts her words freely and creatively to the needs of a different genre, the lyric song cycle.

The performance receives its Nebraska debut through generous support from the Giger Foundation and the Porter Family. The Porters commissioned the piece in memory of Laudie Porter, who, as wife and mother, converted the whole Porter family into Willa Cather enthusiasts. David Porter, violinist with the Utah Symphony

and President of the Intermezzo Chamber Music Series, will be present to introduce the program.

Tickets for Friday's prairie picnic and programs are \$35/person. Saturday's gala dinner and performance are \$75/person. Purchase tickets for both events at www.WillaCather.org or by contacting Ana Armstrong at aarmstrong@willacather.org or at 402-746-2653.



The Song of the Lark by Jules Breton

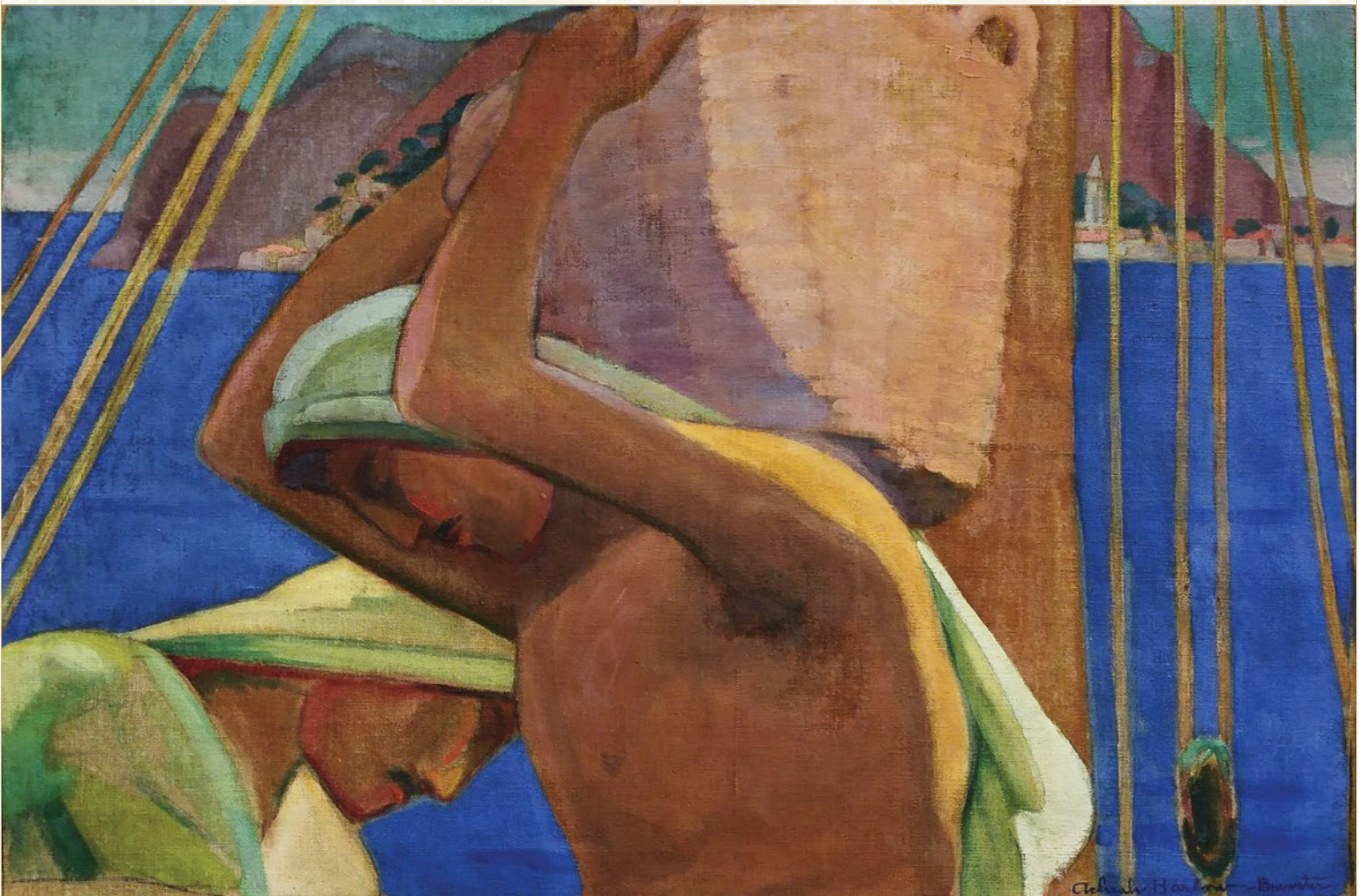
Painting Owned by Cather and Lewis is Restored

Water Carriers is a double-sided oil painting on canvas by Achsah Barlow Brewster, an American expatriot and a former student of Nebraska painter Robert Henri. While attending Smith College, Brewster roomed with Edith Lewis, and it was through Lewis that Willa Cather became lifelong friends with the Brewsters, though they shared a number of acquaintances. A paper label, which remains on the back of the frame, records the painting's sale to Edith Lewis at Capri, Italy. Many years after having hung in Lewis and Cather's New York home, the painting was a gift to the WCF collection from Jim and Angela Southwick.

Through grant support from the Stockman Family Foundation, the unique painting has just undergone a full restoration by Kenenth Bé, Head of Paintings Conservation for the Nebraska State Historical Society's Gerald Ford Conservation Center, who recently shared insight concerning his delicate work to the piece.

"The fact that the painting was double-sided always presents challenges," remarked Bé. "I wanted to be sure that both sides of the painting were respected by the conservation treatment and both preserved, although the main front side was the painting that was always originally exhibited."

Time had taken a toll on the piece, which had become faded and developed two small tears in the canvas. Though Bé considered adhesives to weld together the broken ends of the canvas along the tear, he decided to use strips of Japanese tissue coated with a thermally activated adhesive in a film layer called Beva 371. "Once the adhesive-coated tissue was set in place and activated by heat, it became more or less invisible to the naked eye," he said. The added support of the tissue bridged the tear, lending assurance that the repair will hold when returned to Red Cloud for display and storage.



Water Carriers by Achsah Barlow Brewster (detail)

Barkell Honored with Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award

Each year we recognize a volunteer who has been especially dedicated to helping us meet our mission. Volunteers are vital to the success of the Willa Cather Foundation, and the family of Miriam Mountford recognized the importance of a strong volunteer core when they established the Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award.

Mountford was the WCF's first volunteer who worked alongside its founders and the first president, following founder Mildred Bennett. She also assisted in devising the first guided tours of the Cather historic sites. The Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award was established in her memory to recognize individuals for outstanding volunteer service.

The 2015 recipient is Bill Barkell of Hastings, Nebraska. Recently, Barkell volunteered to complete a much-needed



Bill Barkell, pictured outside the First Baptist Church, is presented the Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award by Executive Director Ashley Olson.

project at the WCF's First Baptist Church. Over an extended period this spring, he and his team replaced portions of deteriorated siding and trim, repaired damaged structural framing, and applied exterior primer and paint to the church. Cather attended in her youth. The result is a reinvigorated historic site that the WCF and the community can point to with pride when welcoming visitors. Matching funds for paint and materials were provided through a grant from the Red Cloud Historic Preservation Commission.

We regularly have a variety of volunteer opportunities available, including assisting with programs at the Red Cloud Opera House,

landscaping at historic sites, and greeting and providing information to visitors and guests. For more information, please call 402-746-2641 or visit www.WillaCather.org.

Soprano Sarah Arneson Returns in October

World-renowned opera singer and Red Cloud native Sarah Arneson returns Saturday, October 3, for a 7:00 p.m. Red Cloud Opera House performance. Arneson, accompanied by her husband, pianist George Kern, will perform operatic pieces featured in Willa Cather's novels including Grieg's "Solvieg's Song" from *Peer Gynt*, written about in *O Pioneers!*; Wagner's "Träume" from *Tristan* and Granados's "Le Rossignol" from *Goyescas*, both mentioned in *The Song of the Lark*; and Dvorak's "The Elderly Mother" from *Gypsy Songs*, from a reference in *My Ántonia*. Songs from composers Puccini, Verdi, Beethoven, and Handel will also be featured in the performance.

Arneson is Associate Professor (retired) of music and voice at Boston University and a sought-after soloist, collaborator, and teacher across Europe and the United States. She has appeared with the Boston and Detroit Operas and performed as soloist at the Kennedy Center for the Schoenberg Festival.

A reception honoring Arneson will be held prior to her concert, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Visual artist Patricia Scarborough, whose oil and pastel pieces will be on display in the Red Cloud Opera House gallery, will also be honored at the reception, which is free and open to the public. Tickets for the Arneson concert are available by calling 402-746-2641 or on our website, www.WillaCather.org.

On View Through August 31: *The Growth of an Artist*

This year, we celebrate the publication centenary of Cather's novel, *The Song of the Lark*. The book is Cather's third, written in 1915; the title comes from a painting of the same name by Jules Adolphe Aimé Louis Breton, dating from 1884 and housed in the Art Institute of Chicago. Set in the 1890s in Moonstone, a fictional town based on Red Cloud, *The Song of the Lark* is a self-portrait of an artist in the making.

To commemorate the publication centenary, *The Growth of an Artist: Commemorating 100 Years of The Song of the Lark* will be on display in our Art Gallery through August 31. This unique exhibit highlights the talents of a number of regional artists while also celebrating the novel's milestone year.



Cottonwoods by Carol Ronin Thompson

New Release! *Cather Studies, Volume 10: Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century*



Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century

Edited by Anne L. Kaufman
and Richard H. Millington

Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century explores, with textual specificity and historical alertness, the question of how the cultures of the nineteenth century—the cultures that shaped Willa Cather's childhood, animated her education, supplied her artistic models, generated her inordinate ambitions, and gave embodiment to many of her deeply held values—are addressed in her fiction.

In two related sets of essays on Cather's life and writing, seven contributors track the particular cultural formations, emotions, and conflicts of value that Willa Cather absorbed from the atmosphere of her distinct historical moment; their ten colleagues offer a compelling set of case studies which articulate the manifold ways that Cather learned from, built upon, or resisted models provided by particular nineteenth-century writers, works, or artistic genres. Taken together with its *Cather Studies* predecessor, *Willa Cather and Modern Cultures*, this volume reveals Cather as explorer and interpreter, sufferer and master of the transition from a Victorian to a Modernist America.

This volume, edited by Anne L. Kaufman and Richard H. Millington, may be purchased by calling 402-746-2653 or online at www.WillaCather.org. Orders placed prior to August 31 will be eligible for 20% off the retail price of \$40.00.

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COMING UP!



Picnic, Sunset Walk, and Night Sky Viewing
Friday, August 14, 6:30 PM
\$35/person. Purchase by August 10.

The Song of the Lark: Gala Dinner & Performance
Saturday, August 15, 5:00 PM
\$75/person. Purchase by August 10.

Earl Bates as "Will Rogers in the 21st Century"
Sunday, September 20, 7:30 PM
\$15 in advance / \$17 day of show

Opera Soprano Sarah Arneson
Saturday, October 3, 7:00 PM
\$15 in advance / \$20 day of show



Arts programming presented with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.