



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.

Final Phase of National Willa Cather Center Construction Underway

With the final phase of construction successfully launched in September, a vibrant new life is in store for a once forgotten and dilapidated historic building adjacent to our Red Cloud Opera House. Known as the Moon Block locally and the Duke Block in Cather's *The Song of the Lark*, the fully restored building will become permanent home to the National Willa Cather Center next year.

"After many years of planning and fundraising, beginning our final phase of construction is a milestone in recognizing Willa Cather's place as one of America's greatest novelists. We are thankful to more than 480 individuals and foundations nationwide who have made this possible," said Board President, Tom Gallagher.

When complete in 2016, the Moon Block will house a state-of-the-art archive, museum and arts center called the National Willa Cather Center. The primary goal of the project is to preserve and provide access to the archival papers, photographs, textiles, and artifacts that constitute our

ever-expanding collection. The restoration shall also provide space for a classroom, enlarged backstage facilities for our Red Cloud Opera House, exhibition space, an expanded bookstore, loft apartments for visitors, and street-level retail spaces.

With final bids and finishing costs 4% above the initial project budget, we continue the last stage of our capital campaign to raise the remaining \$160,000 needed to fully fund the project. The initial campaign goal of \$6.7 million was reached in June when a generous anonymous donor put us over the top. To date, over \$6.8 million has been raised in private gifts, grants, and historic preservation tax credits.

Friends and supporters are invited to make a gift or extend an existing pledge to help us complete the campaign. Gifts may 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 866-731-7304 or aolson@willacather.org.



Front façade restoration begins on first floor of the historic Moon Block.



Scholarship Deadlines Approaching

Scholarship season is upon us, and once again, the Willa Cather Foundation will be awarding scholarships to Nebraska high school seniors. January 31, 2016, is the deadline for the Norma Ross Walter Scholarship, which provides financial assistance, ranging from \$1,250 to \$2,500, to three female graduates of Nebraska high schools who plan to enroll in accredited colleges or universities as English majors. February 28, 2016, is the deadline for

the Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship, which assists one graduate of a Nebraska high school, who plans to enroll as an English or History major at an accredited college or university, with a \$500 scholarship. Selection is based on review of an original essay focused on a Cather novel or short story, intellectual promise, creativity, and character of the applicant. Applications and more details can be found on our website at www.WillaCather.org.

Help us Celebrate our 60th Anniversary: 60 for 60 and Cather Legacy Society

Our work is driven by a desire to be a resource to those who are interested in discovering, appreciating, and promoting the writings of Willa Cather. These parties include members, visitors, scholars, students, serious and casual fans—even people just passing through Red Cloud. We cannot get away from one hard reality, though: while we clearly don't exist to raise money, without raising money we don't exist. You expect your gift to make an impact. We work tirelessly to make sure that it does.

As we celebrate 60 years and look ahead enthusiastically to the National Willa Cather Center's completion in 2016, it feels appropriate to pause for reflection and celebration. We're very grateful for your continued interest, enthusiasm, and support. Together, we'll ensure that our next 60 years are as promising and productive as our first 60. Here are two effective ways that you can support us long-term and have an impact on generations to come.

60 for 60 Campaign: In 60 years, the WCF has grown from a small team of committed volunteers in Red Cloud to a nationwide board of governors and dedicated staff working to establish the first arts and cultural center

dedicated solely to preserving Cather's legacy. Now there's an exciting opportunity to chart a similarly audacious path for the next 60 years! Our 60 for 60 campaign seeks bold donors who will make an additional year-end gift of \$60. The especially bold might consider a three-year pledge of \$20,000 per year, for a total of \$60,000.

Cather Legacy Society: Making a charitable bequest to the WCF will carry out your charitable goals far beyond your lifetime. The Cather Legacy Society was founded to recognize members who make the WCF part of their estate planning. Individuals who notify us of their plans in

2015 will be recognized as charter members of the Cather Legacy Society.

These are two new opportunities to contribute to the long-term growth and success of the Willa Cather Foundation. However, no gift is too small, no gift is without impact, and every single gift is valued and deeply appreciated. To discuss your gift or get more information, please contact Marianne Reynolds, Development Coordinator, at 402-746-2653 or mreynolds@willacather.org. Donations can be made online or by mail.



In Memoriam: Kate Sommer



Kate Sommer welcomes guests to Weekend of Willa in 2013.

Earlier this year the Willa Cather Foundation lost one of our dearest friends and closest colleagues when Kate Sommer, a member of the Board of Governors, lost her long and courageous battle with cancer.

As a veteran creative writing and English teacher at Duchesne

Academy, Kate was a strong ally in our educational mission; her passion for literature and for teaching was evident—and irresistible. Also a skilled and tireless fundraiser, Kate was a vital presence on our board development committee. She chaired “Weekend of Willa,” a fundraising event consisting of an art auction and poetry reading in Omaha to celebrate the 100th publication anniversary of *O Pioneers!* Calling on her love of teaching, she also helped plan events and an essay contest during the centenary year of *O Pioneers!* Kate joined the board in 2011 and passed away in July 2015. We miss her vibrancy and are deeply inspired by her fearlessness.

Special Thanks to a Retiring Board Member



Jim Southwick pictured with fellow Cather family descendant, Trish Schreiber, at the 2010 Spring Conference.

Although he is departing the Board of Governors, Dr. James P. (Jim) Southwick will continue to serve as a member of our advisory council. As Willa Cather’s grandnephew, Jim has long taken a special interest in work of the WCF. He provided valuable guidance in areas of finance and budget as well as buildings and sites. Through his unprecedented generosity, we acquired some of our most cherished assets, including the Helen Cather Southwick Collection, the Southwick Rare Book Collection, and the Cather Second

Home in Red Cloud, to name a few. Jim began serving on the board in 2006. We are very lucky that he will continue to help direct our work and thank him for his friendship and service.

Collaborative Show by Hastings Area Artists on View Now

A new art exhibit on display through January 29 in the gallery of our Red Cloud Opera House boasts a wide range of specialties and mediums by artists from the Hastings, Nebraska area. Included in the exhibit are works by Cody Carson-Brown, Jeremy Daniels, Tom Kreager, Marcella Maley, Jane Marie, Turner McGehee, and Amy Sandeen.

Within the exhibit, Cody Carson-Brown is showcasing a gorgeous ceramic display called “Beyond the Surface” that utilizes earth tones and a mixture of organic features and patterned texture. Jeremy Daniels is displaying beautiful pastel and oil paintings that depict the heart of the Sandhills region. The masterful color selections and styles truly capture the feel of the windy prairie. Tom Kreager of Hastings College created four colorful glass works that he calls his “Drop Series.” Marcella Maley and Turner McGehee of Hastings College bring some of the most intriguing pieces to the exhibition. Marcella’s mixed media compositions are intricate and fascinating while Turner’s compositions are also truly unique and eye-catching. Artist Jane Marie uses natural elements and vibrant colors to make nature come to life in a new way with her sculptural vessels. And finally, Amy Sandeen’s fine art photography prints demonstrate a different view of the natural world.



Prairie Gold by Jeremy Daniels

Welcome, New Board Members!

We at the Willa Cather Foundation are proud to work with a board that supports the organization's mission as effectively as ours does. It's in this spirit of gratitude that we welcome three new members to our board of governors.



Katherine Endacott

Katherine Endacott is a former educator and executive in education publishing, and is currently the President-Elect and Treasurer of the Nebraska State Historical Society. She lives in the beautiful countryside near Pleasant Dale, Nebraska, with husband Richard. They have four children and four grandchildren.

Katherine was the President and CEO of Class.com, Inc., a digital publisher, and Vice President of ACT Aspire, an online assessment company jointly owned by Pearson and ACT. She was the Vice President of the Nebraska State Board of Education and a member of the Southeast Community College Board of Governors. She was also president of the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, a support group for the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of the Lincoln Public Libraries, and president and board member of the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. Her hobbies are reading, history, photography, cooking and traveling the backroads with her husband.



Sarah Baker Hansen

Sarah Baker Hansen is the restaurant critic and food reporter for the *Omaha World-Herald*. She writes weekly restaurant reviews along with stories on food trends, cooking, and the local foods movement. She created and writes the "Food Prowl" series where she creates teams of tasters that travel the city finding the best foods in different categories. She also maintains a food blog, omavore.omaha.com. Baker Hansen, an Omaha native, graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a bachelor's degree in news editorial journalism with a focus on criticism. She loves eating, cooking, travel, fashion and reading. In addition to her role on the Willa Cather Foundation board of governors, she sits on the steering committee for the Omaha Public Library Foundation's 1877 Society.



Amy Springer

Amy Springer, originally from New Orleans, attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and later received her medical degree from the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. After completing a Family Practice Residency Program in Asheville, North Carolina, she ventured to Red Cloud where she has

practiced as a family physician intermittently since that time. She spent two years studying architectural glass at Swansea Institute of Higher Education in Swansea, Wales, and returned to Red Cloud permanently in 2005 where she is an active artist and community member. She provides primary care at the Webster County Community Hospital.

From Our Collection

As we wind down our celebration of the 80th anniversary of the publication of *Lucy Gayheart*, we welcomed a wonderful donation to our collection this month—the five 1935 issues of *Woman's Home Companion* that featured the story in serial form prior to book publication. The charming illustrations, by Robert Henri student Pruett Carter, set this Cather piece apart. Carter was an accomplished teacher and illustrator, especially in the "woman's magazine" market, before his tragic death in 1955. We are so grateful to the many generous donors to our collection!



A scene from *Lucy Gayheart* by Pruett Carter

IMLS-Funded Exhibit to Open in the National Willa Cather Center

Thanks to a Learning Experiences grant of \$111,479 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a new educational exhibit will be designed and installed within the National Willa Cather Center. The exhibit, to be entitled *American Bittersweet: The Life and Writing of Willa Cather*, will honor and explore the life and legacy of Willa Cather through interpretive experiences that will educate guests while showcasing many priceless historical photographs and artifacts. The exhibit's name, taken from the American bittersweet vine that grows outside Cather's childhood home in Red Cloud, Nebraska, explores and embraces the complexities of Cather's life and art—domesticity and worldliness; home and travel; happiness and sadness; the bitter and the sweet.

“A self-guided and interactive educational experience about Cather's life and work has long been missing from our facility,” said WCF Executive Director Ashley Olson. “Creating this exhibit as part of the new National Willa Cather Center will improve and enrich the experience of every visitor. The new exhibit will enable guests to learn about Cather's life and times, understand the significance

of the place they are visiting, and inspire those who haven't read her work to do so.”

Impact of the National Willa Cather Center's creation will be felt locally, as Red Cloud embraces and builds upon its cultural asset, and globally, as readers in schools and homes across the world encounter a writer who somehow, from across vast spans of time and space, speaks to them in a way at once universal and profoundly personal. This exhibit strives to honor the work and memory of one of America's great writers. Through it, the generosity, honesty and beauty of Cather's work will continue to inspire new generations of readers.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Their mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Their grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov.

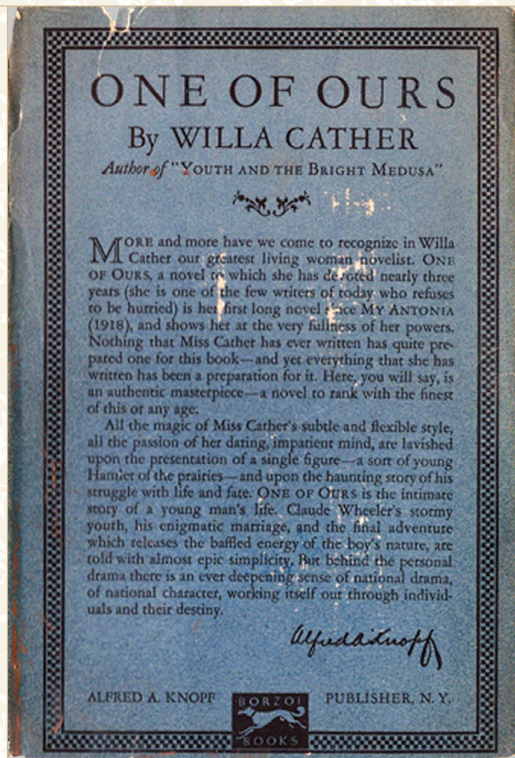


A preliminary sketch of the exhibit's layout.

61st Annual Spring Conference Call for Papers

Save the date for our 61st annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, scheduled for June 2–4, 2016, in Red Cloud, Nebraska. The years 2014–2018 mark the centennial of the First World War and represent a time to re-examine Cather’s writing of that period, particularly her 1922 novel *One of Ours*, which won the Pulitzer Prize. Scholars are invited to submit proposals on Cather and World War I in particular, or related topics that broaden and extend our understanding of Cather’s work both about and during the war years. Subjects of interest include, but are not limited to:

The critical and popular reception of *One of Ours*, the novel’s stance on the war, and comparisons between Cather’s novel to other depictions of the Great War; questions of gender, including women’s participation in World War I and women’s writing about war, including those by Cather’s friends Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant and Dorothy Canfield Fisher; Cather’s Pulitzer Prize and its meaning to her life and career; Cather’s attitude toward and reflections on war, explored through her novels



Dusk jacket of *One of Ours* first edition.

written during WWI—*The Song of the Lark* and *My Ántonia*—and through her letters, her essays “Roll Call on the Prairies” and “The Education You Have to Fight For,” and her short stories of the period; Cather’s love of France and European culture; biographical exploration of G. P. Cather (the cousin on whom Claude Wheeler was loosely based), the idea of heroic masculinity, and civilian responses to the war; popular culture of the World War I period, including music, trench art, fashion, and film; poetry and literature of WWI vis-à-vis central issues in Cather’s war writing; memorials and representations of WWI in both high and popular culture; WWI as setting, both as physical landscape

and as the intersection of cultures, competing historical perspectives, and artistic responses.

Conference directors Julie Olin-Ammentorp and Max Despain invite proposals on the above or related topics by February 1, 2016. Please email proposals to WCF education director Tracy Tucker, along with a short résumé or vita (ttucker@willacather.org).

The Song of the Lark Essay Contest

As Cather fans around the world celebrate the publication centenary of *The Song of the Lark*, we are pleased to announce a student essay contest based on one of the novel’s major themes. Long considered Cather’s most autobiographical work, *The Song of the Lark* portrays the struggle of a young singer, Thea Kronborg, as she discovers and develops her artistic talent. *The Song of the Lark* is a story of not only talent but one of self-determination and vision.

High school students across the country are invited to submit essays of 1,000–1,500 words utilizing *The Song of the Lark* in general, or the following statement in particular, while addressing the following topic: *Thea Kronborg has*

the advantage of people who believe in her, a timely financial gift, and natural talent. What do you believe is the greatest factor in determining Thea’s—or any artist’s— success?

The winning essayist will win a weekend getaway (for him/herself and parents) to Red Cloud, including a stay in the Cather Second Home, tickets to a show at the historic Opera House, a tour of historic Cather properties, and a gift of Cather books. In addition, the winning essay will be considered for inclusion in a Willa Cather Foundation publication. Total value of prize package is \$495; winner is responsible for transportation to and from Red Cloud. Essays are due by January 15, 2016. Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org for more information.

Welcome Development Coordinator Marianne Reynolds



Marianne Reynolds

We are pleased to announce that Marianne Reynolds has joined our staff as Development Coordinator. Previously an executive director for nonprofits and military programs in the Washington, DC, and Baltimore area, Marianne is thrilled to return to Nebraska where she was raised and to support the legacy of one of her favorite authors. Marianne has a

doctorate in education from the University of Maryland-College Park. Her undergraduate work was at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of North Carolina-Asheville.

Marianne has executive experience in academia, the federal government and nonprofit organizations, most recently as the executive director of the Y of Central Maryland's child and youth department in Baltimore. Having been raised in the Nebraska Sandhills, the transition from Baltimore to Red Cloud has been easy. "Joining an organization like the WCF made me feel like I was part of a community immediately," said Marianne.

New Release! Scholarly Edition of *Lucy Gayheart*

Willa Cather's 1935 novel drew on her lifelong interest in music, which plays a transformative role in the lives of her characters. Cather's last novel set in the Great Plains tells the story of young Lucy Gayheart, who escapes life in small-town Haverford, Nebraska, in 1902 to pursue a career in music. In Chicago she falls in love with an older singer, Clement Sebastian, who finds renewed inspiration in her. However, tragic chance destroys their ensuing love affair. The novel has evoked divergent responses among critics and readers ever since its publication.

This Willa Cather Scholarly Edition includes a historical essay by esteemed humanities and music scholar, David Porter, which provides fresh insight into the novel, the role of music, and Cather's writing process. It also features photographs, maps, and explanatory notes with a full range of biographical, historical, and cultural information. The textual editing of the novel, approved by the Committee on Scholarly Editions of the Modern Language Association, draws on corrected typescripts and proofs and presents a clean, authoritative text of the first edition.

The Scholarly Edition of *Lucy Gayheart* may be purchased by calling 402-746-2653 or online at www.WillaCather.org. Orders placed prior to January 31 will be eligible for 20% off the retail price of \$75.00.

WILLA CATHER
SCHOLARLY EDITION

Lucy Gayheart

HISTORICAL ESSAY BY DAVID PORTER

EXPLANATORY NOTES BY KARI A. RONNING AND DAVID PORTER

TEXTUAL ESSAY AND EDITING BY

FREDERICK M. LINK AND KARI A. RONNING

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The Willa Cather Foundation
413 North Webster Street
Red Cloud, NE 68970

COMING UP!



ROCK Legends, an audience customized concert
Saturday, January 30, 7:00 PM
\$20 in advance / \$25 day of show

The Lady with all the Answers by the Nebraska Theatre Caravan
Friday, March 4, 7:00 PM
\$15 in advance / \$20 day of show

Acoustic show by Matt Whipkey
Saturday, April 16, 7:00 PM
\$15 in advance / \$20 day of show

The Marriage of Figaro by UN-L Opera
Friday, May 20, 7:00 PM
FREE

Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org for information on upcoming events.



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