



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.

Cather Symposium in Limavady, Northern Ireland

Join us June 28 to July 1, 2018, in Limavady, Northern Ireland! Set in the ancestral home of the Cather family, and taking place during the centennial of *My Antonia*, this symposium will explore themes deeply resonant in Willa Cather's life and work. Scholarly research will explore a variety of topics including migration and immigration, family legacy and inheritance, gender and language, and religious identity. The symposium will bring together established and new Cather scholars with Irish scholars and the local community. Visits to Cather family sites, along with

social events involving Irish music and storytelling, will be part of the program. The Roe Valley area offers sublime coastal cliffs, mountains and ancient forests, historic ruins and landed estates. The event will conclude with banquet at the historic Drenagh House, an 1837 Georgian mansion on the gorgeous Antrim coastline. Tours of the Giants Causeway and the Walled City of Derry are also included. Registration for the 4-day event is \$150 and is limited to the first 100 participants. Further details can be found online at WillaCather.org/Ireland.



Binevenagh Mountain scenic route overlooks the beautiful Irish coast and countryside, just north of Limavady. Credit: John Purvis, Creative Commons License.



National Willa Cather Center Receives Accolades

We are honored that our National Willa Cather Center has recently received three awards to recognize the extensive work that was completed to restore the historic Moon Block building in which it resides and to acknowledge its popularity as an emerging tourist attraction. The NWCC was awarded the **2017 Nebraska Preservation Award** from the Nebraska State Historical Society, was named the **2017 Outstanding Tourism Attraction** by the Nebraska Tourism Commission, and received a **Build Nebraska Award** from the Nebraska Building Chapter.

The Nebraska Preservation Award was created in 1988 to recognize significant achievements in historic preservation in Nebraska by an individual or organization. The Outstanding Tourism Attraction Award honors Nebraska tourism attractions that have worked toward the continued success and growth of their communities and the state's tourism industries. Nebraska Building Chapter AGC Build Nebraska Awards are given annually in recognition of excellence in the

construction industry. We extend our continued thanks to the generous contributors who made this project possible.



Pictured L-R at the Build Nebraska Awards Banquet: Bo Jones and Tucker Lange of Tru-Built Construction; Roger Slosson of BVH Architecture; Steve Powell of Tru-Built Construction; Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation Executive Director; and Adam Ramaekers of Project Advocates.

2018 Red Cloud Opera House Season of Events

As an extension of our mission to promote Willa Cather's legacy through the arts, we're pleased to announce our 2018 season at the Red Cloud Opera House. This season's selections were driven by community interests through feedback from patron surveys and with the input of a programming committee, led by marketing and program coordinator, Sara Brownwood. As we prepare to launch our 16th season of events, Brownwood remarked, "I have been in the arts and entertainment industry for 17 years and the community support behind the Red Cloud Opera House is simply unmatched at any other venue I've worked with. I hope you'll join us for a program in 2018 to experience first-rate programming in a charming and intimate historic setting."

Patrons of the Opera House will have the opportunity to attend several live shows including *My Antonia*, a contemporary adaptation of Cather's novel by playwright A.P. Andrews; a production of *Alice in Wonderland* starring local youth led by Missoula Children's Theatre; and a murder mystery dinner theatre event.

Concerts will include rising country music star, Lucas Hoge; the folk/american music of Hardened & Tempered featuring Red Cloud native Carolyn Phillips; a big band/jazz event with the Lightning Bugs; and popular hits from the 50s, 60s, and 70s by Blue Plate Special.

Original artwork by members of the Red Cloud Area Arts Club will be on display in the art gallery. Other featured artists bringing exhibits include Ken Anderson, Margaret Berry, Shona Dietz, and works from across the state presented by the Nebraska Rural Living Gallery.

For more information on upcoming events or gallery exhibits, visit us online at www.willacather.org or request a season postcard by calling 402-746-2641. The Foundation's Opera House programs are made possible with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Tickets may be purchased online. Use code WC18P at checkout to receive 10% off your ticket purchase.

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Save the Date! 63rd Annual Spring Conference

We hope you will join us May 31–June 2, as we explore the lasting legacy of Willa Cather’s most beloved novel, *My Ántonia*. When critic Randolph Bourne heralded the book as the arrival of the “American novel,” in 1918, he could not have known the many ways it would remain relevant to today’s American experience. Our 63rd annual Spring Conference will celebrate the centennial of *My Ántonia*’s publication and examine *My Ántonia* and its reputation as a most “American novel.”

Nina McConigley, author of *Cowboys and East Indians*, will deliver the keynote address. Her collection of linked short stories explores modern day immigrant communities on the High Plains. It was the winner of a High Plains Book Award and a PEN Open Book Award. McConigley was born in Singapore and grew up in Wyoming. She was named by *Glamour Magazine* as one of “50 Phenomenal Women Making a Difference” in 2014, and her book was named one of 2014’s Best Prize Winning books by *O, Oprah Magazine*. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Orion*, *Salon*, *Virginia*



Nina McConigley

Quarterly Review, *American Short Fiction*, and *The Asian American Literary Review* among others.

As part of the conference, the Red Cloud Opera House will host ragtime pianist John Reed-Torres, as he performs a concert modeled on the 1888 programs played by John William “Blind” Boone, who traveled throughout the central United States with his touring company. Boone was known for being the first performer to bring plantation songs to the stage, in addition to being the prototype for Cather’s Blind d’Arnault in *My Ántonia*. Reed-Torres is a self-taught, against the grain pianist and composer from South-Central Los Angeles. He has become a nationally recognized ragtime performer and composer.

Throughout the weekend, conference-goers can look forward to informative panel presentations and lectures, as well as some light-hearted activities, musical demonstrations, kolache class, art exhibits in the gallery, and a special display of items from the family of Anna Pavelka.

A schedule of events and registration can be found on our website, or by calling the Willa Cather Foundation.

Willa Cather Featured in *The New Yorker*



The grand opening and dedication of the National Willa Cather Center in June of 2017 was occasion to bring together many friends of the Willa Cather Foundation, both old and new. Among donors, Cather family members, elected officials, and guest

speaker, Laura Bush, was our new friend, Alex Ross, music critic for *The New Yorker*. We’re especially grateful to Ross for writing an illuminating piece on Cather, entitled “A Walk in Willa Cather’s Prairie,” for the October 2, 2017, issue of *The New Yorker*. In this piece, readers discover how Nebraska’s landscape inspired the great American novelist and how her later works like *Death Comes for the Archbishop* stand apart. A link to the full article can be accessed on our website or at www.newyorker.com.

New Website Highlights *My Ántonia* Centenary Events

A new website has been created for the year-long commemoration of the centennial of the publication of Willa Cather's beloved novel, *My Ántonia*. In celebration of this anniversary, the *Willa Cather Archive* at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in partnership with the Willa Cather Foundation and a number of community organizations, is organizing a series of events across Nebraska. Additional events will be hosted by Willa Cather Foundation board members in various locales

across the United States. The purpose of these events is not only to promote the study of Cather's life and works within the larger community, but also to highlight the continued relevance of *My Ántonia* as a story that confronts contemporary issues, including immigration, religious difference, gender, class, and environmental preservation. Several events are funded in part by Humanities Nebraska. Visit www.MA100.org or see the event list on the opposite page for more details.

Anna Pavelka Textiles Added to Collection

As we begin to plan for the upcoming Spring Conference celebrating *My Ántonia's* anniversary, we were grateful to receive several new pieces of fancy work created by Anna Pavelka herself and passed down through the family. These small pieces of crochet and embroidery show the same beautifully fine needlework that we know from Anna Pavelka's quilting. Pavelka was a life-long friend of Cather and the prototype for *Ántonia*.

We hope that you'll join us May 31–June 2, 2018, when we will display these pieces from the Leo Paul Pavelka Collection, in addition to several of Anna's quilts and other Pavelka- and Czech-made needlework. The Willa Cather Foundation would like to thank Paula Daharsh for her continued generosity, and Antonette Turner and family, and the family of Antonette Kort for their many gifts and help over the years.



Detail of a tea towel from the Leo Paul Pavelka Collection that features Anna Pavelka's delicate embroidery work.

Group Tours Offer a Unique Experience

In 2017 we enjoyed hosting several large groups of Cather readers in the new National Willa Cather Center. The Road Scholar program, which we've hosted for several years, continues to bring dozens of enthusiastic, lifelong learners to our doors for lectures and tours, and we also welcomed the Minnesota Women's Press "Reading on the Road" program, which gives women the opportunity to

travel to literary destinations for several days of discussion, exploration, and camaraderie. Do you have a group that is interested in a literary retreat, expanded programming, or an all-inclusive Red Cloud experience? If so, we are happy to customize an immersive program just for you. To plan your retreat, contact education director Tracy Tucker at ttucker@willacather.org.

My *Antonia*

AT 100: THE ONGOING STORY

LEARN MORE AT MA100.ORG
OR WILLACATHER.ORG

- March** **Vintage Classics release of *My Antonia* 100th anniversary edition**
With new introduction by Pulitzer Prize-winner Jane Smiley
- March–April** **“Legends and stories nestled like birds in its branches”:
The Changing Ecology of the Great Plains**
Crane viewing at Audubon Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon, Nebraska,
and Cather historic site and prairie tours in Red Cloud, Nebraska
- March 22–23** ***Prairie Songs: Remembering Antonia***
An original song cycle by Brent Edstrom, Scott Miller, and Tana Bachman-Bland
Red Cloud Opera House, Red Cloud, Nebraska
- April 7** ***My Antonia: New Readings for a Centennial Celebration***
With Max Frazier, Ann Romines, Linda Cather, and John Jacobs
Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Virginia
- May 21** **A Centennial Celebration of *My Antonia* and Music Inspired by Cather**
New York, New York
- May 31–June 2** **“Here at last is an American novel”: Celebrating 100 Years of *My Antonia***
Willa Cather Foundation’s 63rd annual Spring Conference,
featuring Nina McConigley, author of *Cowboys and East Indians*,
and “Black Hawk, the new world in which we had come to live”:
Stories from the Red Cloud Community
- June 28–July 1** **Willa Cather’s Irish Connections**
Cather Symposium in Limavady, Northern Ireland
Scholarly presentations, touring, and music
- August 8** **“She was nearly as strong as I”: Being Woman in the Workplace**
Guest speakers Emily Rau, Assistant Editor of the *Willa Cather Archive*,
and Ashley Olson, Executive Director of Willa Cather Foundation.
In partnership with the Panhandle Business and Professional Women
at Scottsbluff, Nebraska
- September 21** **“What a tableful we were at supper”: *My Antonia* Birthday Feast**
Translations of the novel from Lincoln’s immigrant community.
With Community Crops at Peter Pan Park in Lincoln, Nebraska
- September 22** ***My Antonia* marathon reading**
Gallery 1516 in Omaha, Nebraska
- October 19–22** **Willa Cather Celebration Weekend**
With Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation Executive Director, and Tracy Tucker,
Education Director, at the Jaffrey Historical Society, Jaffrey, New Hampshire
- A Collaboration with the Willa Cather Archive. For more information, call 866-731-7304.*



New Board Members Named

The Willa Cather Foundation, along with a global community of scholars and lovers of classic American literature, recognize that Willa Cather's work is as appreciated and globally relevant today as it was at the time of publication. From her childhood home of Red Cloud, Nebraska, the Willa Cather Foundation has spent 60+ years promoting her legacy. Recently, the WCF welcomed three new members to its board of governors.



Marian Fey

Marian Fey works in the Millard Public Schools in Omaha as the Clarke Community Initiative Facilitator. Ms. Fey most recently served as the Executive Director of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, an organization that provides financial support for the arts and humanities throughout Nebraska. Prior to leading the NCE, she led arts advocacy for the state as Executive Director

of Nebraskans for the Arts and was the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of The ARTery and the Dancing Classrooms program. Fey served two terms on the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education and is committed to advocating for public education. Of her election to the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors, Fey remarked, "I am so honored to serve and have come to admire and respect the work of the Foundation." She continued, "The dedication to the mission by the Board is evident in their commitment to Red Cloud and through their personal enthusiasm for the increased understanding and appreciation of Willa Cather's life and work."



James Jaap

James Jaap is an associate teaching professor of English at Penn State Greater Allegheny. Dr. Jaap's scholarly work centers on Cather and Pittsburgh. In addition to numerous conference presentations and several published articles, he was awarded a Woodress Fellowship in 2013, co-directed

the 2017 International Cather Seminar, and will be co-editing the *Cather Studies* volume 13. Dr. Jaap resides in the East End neighborhood of Pittsburgh, not far from where Cather lived during her time in the city. "I believe by meeting and working with various Pittsburgh groups and by working with others to help research and preserve Cather's Pittsburgh sites, we can continue to promote and preserve Cather's legacy, both in Pittsburgh and throughout the world," said Jaap.

Diane Prenatt is professor of English at Marian University in Indianapolis, where she teaches American and European literature. Dr. Prenatt is an Americanist whose research interests include the representation of domestic acts and ethnic identity in narrative, especially in the fiction of Willa Cather. She has published several essays



Diane Prenatt

in *Cather Studies* and the *Willa Cather Review* and delivered a plenary presentation at the 2016 spring conference. She is currently writing about the life of the writer and social activist Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant. Of her new role on the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors, Prenatt remarked, "I value the collegiality of the Cather community as I've experienced it at conferences, in the archives, on tours of Red Cloud, and I look forward to contributing to sustaining that community."

Expanded Member Benefits Introduced

Following the Willa Cather Foundation's recent expansion of museum and archive spaces at the National Willa Cather Center, we're pleased to roll out expanded and enhanced benefits to our members. As part of the new program, members will enjoy many benefits including: a free guided tour of the Cather historic sites, subscription to the *Willa Cather Review*, bookstore discounts (online and in-store), Cather merchandise, tickets to Red Cloud Opera House events, lodging at the Cather Second Home (advance

reservation required), as well as invitations to special events. Additionally, if you're planning a trip to Red Cloud and will kindly let us know about your visit to the National Willa Cather Center in advance, we'll arrange a behind-the-scenes guided tour of our archive. Best of all, members have a stake in the Willa Cather Foundation's celebrated past and exciting future. View membership levels and benefits, as well as join or renew your membership online at www.WillaCather.org/membership.

Road Scholars Experience Red Cloud

Once again, the Willa Cather Foundation hosted a successful Road Scholar program in September. Twenty-three lifelong learners enrolled in "Red Cloud: Willa Cather's Window on the World," and enjoyed lectures, book discussion, tours, and lots of time to explore!

WCF board members and Cather scholars Andy Jewell, Max Frazier, Chuck Johanningsmeier, and Chuck Peek joined us to give guest lectures on Cather's novels throughout the week. A special kick-off to the week was the final performance of A.P. Andrews' *OH/PIONEER*, a twist on Cather's own novel set in Nebraska. Andrews also joined the Road Scholars for lunch and Q&A about the adaptation process and his Nebraska Cycle of work.

The Road Scholars also had the opportunity to visit the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie with education director Tracy Tucker, as well as touring both the town and country Cather sites. During the country tour, WCF board president Lynette Krieger hosted the group at the George Cather house for a beautiful summer luncheon and cocktails, which was a lovely break from the dusty

trolley. We concluded the week with a behind-the-scenes tour of the NWCC archive and an Ask-Me-Anything style concluding discussion.

We look forward to hosting Road Scholar again September 15-19, 2018. Mark your calendars!



Participants in the Road Scholar program are joined by Board President, Lynette Krieger, at the George Cather House in September 2017.

New Product! MÅ100 Notecards



Celebrate the 100th publication anniversary of *My Ántonia* with this handsome set of notecards, featuring six of W.T. Benda's original illustrations for the novel. The linen-finish cards include quotes from the novel inside the card and white envelopes. In addition to the notecards, we have several new items celebrating the novel's centenary both in the store and on our website!



Board Officers

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Rachel Olsen, *Tour Guide*
Don Richards, *Tour Guide*



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

COMING UP!
AT THE RED CLOUD OPERA HOUSE



*Screening of Home on the Range:
The Music From the Story of America's Iconic Song*
Saturday, March 10, 4:00 PM – Free

Prairie Songs: Remembering Antonia
Friday, March 23, at 7:30 PM – Free (ticket reservation required)

Lucas Hoge, Country act
Friday, April 27, at 7:30 PM – \$30.00

63rd Annual Spring Conference
"Here at Last Is an American Novel": Celebrating 100 Years of *My Antonia*
May 31 - June 2 – Free events or full registration available; see website

My Antonia, an adaptation by A.P. Andrews
July 20 and 21, at 7:30 PM and July 22, at 3:00 PM – \$20.00

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



The State of Nebraska owns six Cather-related properties and a number of inventoried artifacts and documents. The properties are collectively referred to as the Willa Cather State Historic Site and are jointly preserved and maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Willa Cather Foundation. The Cather Foundation acquired the sites in its earlier years and continues to manage them and care for them alongside its own historic properties.



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