

About Us

The Willa Cather Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that works to promote Willa Cather's legacy through education, preservation, and the arts. Our home at the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska, provides a state-of-the-art archive and museum for the preservation and study of a large and growing collection of Cather materials. Through on-site programming, virtual resources, and highly-acclaimed publications, we routinely serve people from all fifty states and over a dozen countries outside of the U.S. on an annual basis.



The National Willa Cather Center

Our programs and services:

- Operation of an archive, museum and study center
- Preservation of the largest collection of nationally designated historic sites devoted to an American author
- Arts and humanities programs in the restored Red Cloud Opera House
- Guided town and country tours of over twenty historic sites relating to Cather's life and work
- Conservation of the 612-acre Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Outreach to and curriculum support for K-12 teachers and students
- Scholarships awarded to future English and history majors
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Review*
- Conferences and seminars held regularly in Red Cloud, nationally, and internationally

"That is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great. When it comes to one, it comes as naturally as sleep."

—My Antonia

How You Can Help

"The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman."

—O Pioneers!

Make a pledge. You may satisfy your pledge over a 5-year period, through payments by check, ACH withdrawal, or credit card.

Make a gift of securities. Gifts of appreciated assets such as stock help you avoid costly gains.

Make a deferred gift. A planned gift by beneficiary designation for a retirement account, or by bequest in a will or a trust arrangement may fit your financial and planning needs.

To learn more about how you can help, please contact:

Ashley Olson, Executive Director
866-731-7304 toll-free
aolson@willacather.org



Willa Cather's influence is undeniable. A Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, she is one of the most highly-acclaimed 20th century authors and her writing has been translated into more than forty languages. Decades after her death, her work remains popular and loved by readers worldwide.

Campaign Steering Committee and Advisors

Campaign Co-Chair: Ruth H. Keene, Omaha, NE
Campaign Co-Chair: John A (Jay) Yost, New York, NY
Glenda Pierce, *Board President*, Lincoln, NE
Marion Arneson, *Past President*, Wayne, NE
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Brad and Nancy Sherwood, Omaha, NE
Steve Shively, Lincoln, NE
Peg Welch, Hastings, NE



"Great-grandmother Carrie Miner Sherwood was a visionary and a collector. A life-long friend of Willa Cather, she saved Cather's letters and Cather family artifacts in her large attic with the hope there would one day be a place for them. We believe in the mission of the Willa Cather Foundation and want to further this legacy. This project preserves the historic sites associated with Cather's life in Red Cloud and enables the Foundation to expand its outreach and programming across the country. We hope you'll join us in supporting it."

—Brad and Nancy Sherwood
Lead Donors

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Willa Cather
CENTER

Campaign for the Future



"Through Willa Cather's writing, we have a better understanding of one of the most remarkable and compelling periods in American History. The sites and collections that make up the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska are cultural treasures, and I am grateful for the community that supports the preservation of these historic landmarks. Your generosity ensures that our children and grandchildren will be able to travel back in time to hear the "nimble air" and learn from Willa Cather's example for many generations to come."

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—Mrs. Laura Bush
Honorary National Campaign Chair

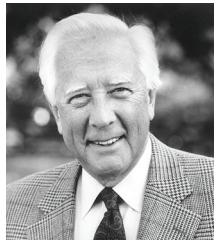
Campaign for the Future

In early 2019, History Nebraska, formerly the Nebraska State Historical Society, transferred ownership of their Willa Cather State Historic Sites and the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial (WCPM) Collection—comprised of approximately 8,000 documents and artifacts related to the life, times, and works of Cather—to the Willa Cather Foundation.

Our acceptance of these historic sites and collections ushered in a new era for our work. It provided an opportunity not only to restore the sites, but to reimagine the entire visitor experience. Restoring and reinterpreting these nationally significant cultural assets will ensure memorable experiences for future generations of readers and literary tourists.

Now we're ready—with your help—to take the next steps. We aspire to:

- 1 Restore seven Cather Historic Sites, including the beloved Cather Childhood Home and the Pavelka (Ántonia) Farmstead.
- 2 Expand our educational programs and resources for a growing number of visitors, teachers, and students.
- 3 Grow our endowment to reflect the worth of our properties and programs.
- 4 Support Red Cloud's tourism development efforts with investment in the adaptive reuse of a historic building into a boutique hotel, thereby strengthening our ability to meet our mission and enhance the visitor experience.



“The marvelous thing about going to Red Cloud, Nebraska, is you can walk right into Willa Cather’s world. There’s the house she lived in, the bank, the opera house, the railroad depot, and the landscape. It’s one of my favorite places in all America.”

—David McCullough

Expanding and Sustaining Our Work

Program Enhancements

Education and preservation are core to everything we do. Expanded exhibits and interpretation at the historic sites will ensure a 21st century museum experience. A new education staff member will provide expanded outreach and programs to schools, libraries, civic and literary groups, and others nationwide. A new facilities position will provide timely preventive maintenance and care for our expanded portfolio of historic properties.

Endowment Growth

We have a small unrestricted endowment and hold restricted endowment funds that are exclusively for scholarships and prairie conservation. We seek to increase the principal of our endowment in order to designate annual earnings to further the preservation and education components of our mission over the long-term.



Hotel Garber will be located in the historic Potter Block, next door to our Farmers and Merchants Bank.

Hotel Garber

Lodging in Red Cloud is limited and inhibits our ability to grow as a tourist destination. We have always struggled to find housing for our visitors, but now that the National Willa Cather Center is open, we routinely need more places than we have available for guests to stay. A market feasibility study tested demand for the project and concluded that Red Cloud can support an upper mid-scale hotel. The hotel will allow us to better fulfill our mission—visitors will be able to stay longer to enjoy the museum, the historic sites, the town, the Cather Prairie, and other scenic places Cather loved.

Restoring Cather’s Treasured Places



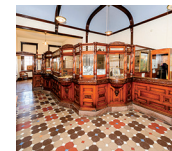
Willa Cather Childhood Home

Home of Willa Cather, her parents, and family. A National Historic Landmark, one of only 21 in Nebraska.



Pavelka (Ántonia) Farmstead

Home of Anna and John Pavelka, prototypes for Ántonia Shimerda Cuzak and John Cuzak, and a setting in *My Ántonia*.



Farmers and Merchants Bank

Built by Silas Garber, founder of Red Cloud and prototype for Captain Forrester in Willa Cather’s *A Lost Lady*.



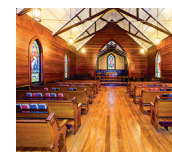
Red Cloud Burlington Depot

The depot that Willa Cather would have traveled through during her return visits to Red Cloud.



J.L. Miner House

Home to James and Julia Miner and children, including Carrie and Irene, to whom Cather dedicated *My Ántonia*. Anna Pavelka, prototype for Ántonia, worked here as a hired girl.



Grace Episcopal Church

The Cather family and Willa Cather were members of this church, and Cather purchased two of the church’s painted glass windows in memory of her parents.



St. Juliana Catholic Church

Willa Cather often came here to hear mass. Anna Pavelka, prototype for Ántonia in Cather’s novel, *My Ántonia* was married in this church.

Campaign Budget

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS **\$3,900,000**

Restoration of the Cather historic sites **\$1,900,000**

Including the Willa Cather Childhood Home, Pavelka (Ántonia) Farmstead, Farmers and Merchants Bank, Red Cloud Burlington Depot, J.L. Miner House, Grace Episcopal Church, and St. Juliana Catholic Church.

Equity investment in Hotel Garber **\$2,000,000**

To provide sorely needed housing for National Willa Cather Center visitors and continued preservation of Red Cloud’s Main Street Historic District.

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS **\$1,100,000**

Exhibits, artifact conservation, and interpretation **\$250,000**

Education Coordinator (wages and benefits x 5 years) **\$275,000**

Sites Manager (wages and benefits x 5 years) **\$275,000**

Educational outreach, publications, and teaching resources **\$200,000**

Marketing and signage **\$100,000**

ENDOWMENT GROWTH **\$1,500,000**

To provide approximately \$75,000 annually (@5%) for site preservation and educational program enhancement.

Grand Total **\$6,500,000**

A detailed budget is available at www.WillaCather.org. All figures are estimates; final costs are subject to change. Construction estimates include a 10% contingency; wage estimates include benefits.