



C A T H E R
a n d t h e
R E A D E R L Y
I M A G I N A T I O N

69th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference

J U N E 6-8, 2024



Willa Cather Reads to Elsie and Jack Cather, ca. 1897
Willa Cather Foundation Collections and Archives at the
National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska
PHO-4-W689-776

Special Programs



INVITED SPEAKER

Kali Fajardo-Anstine, author of *Woman of Light*

Kali Fajardo-Anstine is the nationally best-selling author of the novel *Woman of Light* and the widely acclaimed short story collection *Sabrina and Corina*, a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of an American Book Award. She is a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow and the 2021 recipient of the Addison M. Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Fajardo-Anstine is the 2022-2024 Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at Texas State University. She is from Denver, Colorado.

CELEBRATORY EVENT

Dedication of the Willa Cather Childhood Home

After an extensive sixteen-month restoration, the Willa Cather Childhood Home has reopened! This transformative project has ensured that the 140+-year-old home will be preserved as a cultural attraction for the learning and the enjoyment of future generations. Join us for a dedication and ribbon cutting befitting this home's significance. Tour the beautifully restored Willa Cather Childhood Home, the new *Making a Place* exhibit at the Farmers and Merchants Bank, and the future site of Hotel Garber.



BANQUET ENTERTAINMENT

"A Very Genuine Pleasure:" Willa Cather Readers Theater

Beginning at a young age, Willa Cather was a voracious reader. Her life-long love of reading will be highlighted as actors share curated selections from her letters and published works. Follow along as we explore Cather's own bookish interests and revisit the joy her characters find in reading.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

Sarah Clere, Independent Scholar,
Willa Cather Review Editor

Ashley Olson, National Willa Cather Center
Executive Director

Rachel Olsen, National Willa Cather Center
Director of Education & Engagement

Kelsey Squire, Associate Professor
Ohio Dominican University

Tracy Tucker, National Willa Cather Center
Director of Collections & Curation

OUR CONFERENCE IS MADE POSSIBLE BY



Hommage: Willa Cather

An International Tribute

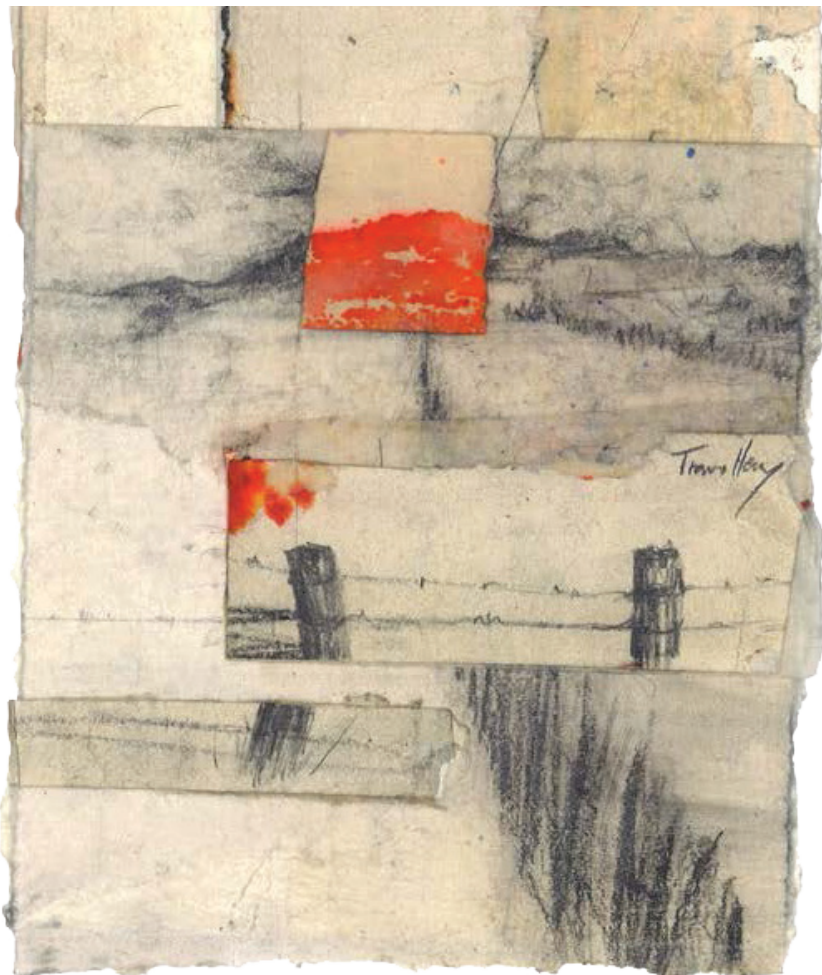
The Associació Internacional Duana de les Arts present an annual catalogue of graphic arts contest winners in an exhibition called *Hommage à trois*. This contest is designed to honor the memory of three literary figures on the occasion of the celebration of their birth centenaries. Willa Cather was a chosen author in 2023.

Graphic artists from around the world created work related to the biography, literary fragment, influences, historical or geographical context of Cather.

The exhibit includes the work of artists from Massachusetts and Kentucky, as well as Argentina, Spain, Poland, Austria, Belgium, Macedonia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Prints of select pieces are available for purchase.

For more information, please visit our website:
<https://www.willacather.org/events>

On exhibit May 15 to August 10, 2024



The Field, The Fire

an exhibition by Travis Hency

In this special exhibition in the historic Burlington Depot, Hency's work features aged paper and book components in new compositions, punctuated by the artist's drawings in graphite.

On exhibit May 15 to August 15, 2024



Why Become a Willa Cather Foundation Member? Because Members Make It Happen!

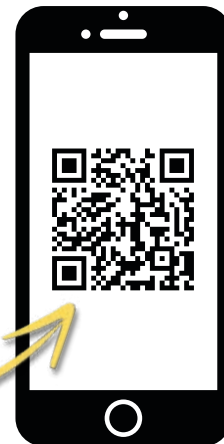
Your Membership Supports

- Preservation of Willa Cather's Childhood Home and eleven Cather historic sites
- Conferences & seminars that spur scholarly research into the life and work of Willa Cather
- Preservation and display of a growing collection of archival and museum pieces
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Review*
- Conservation of the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Cultural events and exhibits at the National Willa Cather Center and the Red Cloud Opera House
- Classroom resources for educators and book clubs



Membership benefits include

- One free tour annually
- *News from Cather Country*
- Print subscription to the *Willa Cather Review*
- 10% discount in our online and on-site
- Free access to our virtual author series
- Advance notice of special events



Gift a Membership or Join Today

Scan the QR Code with your phone to learn more!

The National Willa Cather Center

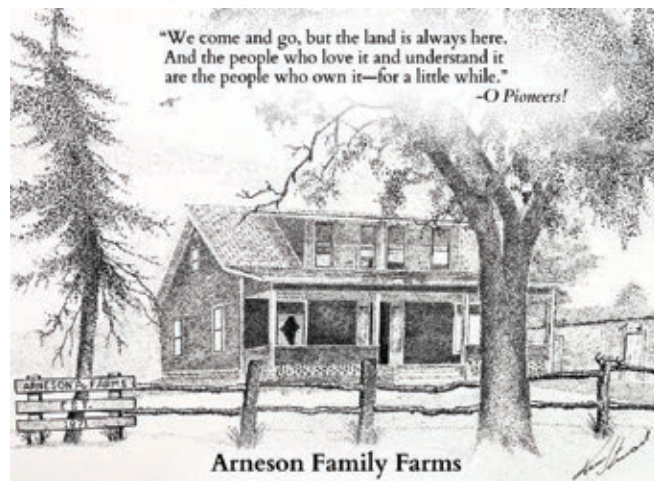


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Supported by many donors, including Jennifer Hein





C A T H E R a n d t h e R E A D E R L Y I M A G I N A T I O N

69th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference

J U N E 6-8, 2024



THURSDAY, JUNE 6

12:30 Welcome & Orientation  Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

1:00 Reading Cather's *Obscure Destinies*: A Guided Discussion

 Red Cloud Opera House  Virtual Discussion

2:00 Session 1A: Early Cather  Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

Pioneer Paperbacks: Preserving Cather's Legacy at the Public Library

Shelby Janke Broderson, Papillion Public Library

"One passion, and four walls": Framing Our Reading of Cather

Jessica Masters, University of Sydney

Figuring the Reader in *Lucy Gayheart* and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*

Richard Millington, Smith College

Session 1B: Women in Cather's Work  Auld Public Library  Recorded

Reading History: The Shared Image of the Past in *My Ántonia*

Joshua Fagan, St. Andrews (Scotland)

Willa Cather and the Pioneer Woman: An American Archetype

Park Bucker, University of South Carolina, Sumter

The Importance of Coffee Cake: Motherhood in "Old Mrs. Harris"

Nicole Musselman, University of South Florida

We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage fully.

To request an accommodation, please contact Nick Powers at npowers@willacather.org.

All insights and opinions expressed by conference participants belong to the speakers, and do not represent the views of the National Willa Cather Center, its staff, or its Board of Governors.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

4:00 **Session 2A: Cather and European Authors** 🧑🏫 Red Cloud Opera House 📺 Live-Streamed
Reading Cather's *Fools* Alongside the Russians

Sophie Kelly Okunhon, CLIMAS Laboratory University of Bordeaux Montaigne

An Appeal to "the human in humanity": Willa Cather Reads *Trilby*

Steve Shively, Utah State University, Emeritus

"What mockery and pang!": Reading Cather Reading Shakespeare

Ashley Etter, University of Notre Dame

Writing Down the Female Line: Divas in George Eliot and Willa Cather

Shellie Sclan, Independent Scholar

Session 2B: Cather and the News 🧑🏫 Auld Public Library 📺 Recorded

The Scofflaw: Willa Cather and Prohibition

Garrett Peck, Author, historian, and tour guide in Santa Fe

How the World Came to Red Cloud: Willa Cather Reads the News

Sallie Ketcham, Independent Scholar

One of Ours: Willa Cather's Emotional War

Lilia Hutchinson, SUNY Brockport

7:00 **Premiere of Willa Cather: Breaking the Mold**

🧑🏫 Red Cloud Opera House 📺 Virtual

This short film chronicles Cather's pursuit of literary acclaim alongside the creation and unveiling of her statue in Washington, D.C. Using archival imagery, Cather's own words, and observations from contemporary readers and scholars, this documentary invites viewers to revisit and reexamine Cather's importance to American literature and encourages exploration of her life more fully through literary pilgrimage.

8:30 **Star Gazing with Garrett Peck** 🧑🏫 Willa Cather Memorial Prairie

Session & Event Locations

Red Cloud Opera House 411 N. Webster St.
Farmers and Merchants Bank 338 N. Webster St.
Burlington Depot 437 W. Welsch St.
Willa Cather Childhood Home 245 N. Cedar St

Auld Public Library 537 N. Webster St.
Red Cloud Community Center 142 W. 3rd Ave.
Grace Episcopal Church 546 N. Cedar St.
Cather Memorial Prairie Hwy. 281, 5 miles south of Red Cloud



Save the Date!

June 5-7, 2025 | Red Cloud, Nebraska
70th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference

Left: Peter A. Juley & Son photograph of Nicolai Fechin's 1923 portrait of Willa Cather (detail). Willa Cather Foundation Collections and Archives at the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska
PHO-4-W689-1126

Potter-Wright Building into Hotel Garber

\$1.1 million to go

\$7.5 million raised



Will You Help *Fulfill Our Dream?*

POTTER-WRIGHT BUILDING

A Commitment to Preservation

To continue our rich tradition of historic preservation and downtown revitalization, the Potter-Wright Building was selected as a location for the hotel. This 1902 structure, which was vacant and decaying for more than twenty-five years, is undergoing rehabilitation to become an event and lodging facility called Hotel Garber.



WHY HOTEL GARBER?

Foundation and Community Priority

A new hotel in Red Cloud has been a priority for the Willa Cather Foundation and other community leaders for more than a decade. A lack of available rooms inhibits our ability to fulfill our mission, as visitors are routinely unable to secure lodging in Red Cloud for conferences and events. An independent market feasibility study concluded that the Red Cloud market could support an additional lodging establishment of up to 30 rooms.

Space to Stay and Create

The design includes a 27-room boutique hotel, meeting space, lounge, catering facilities, and a small library. A street-level entrance will provide access to a lower-level Creative Hub with meeting rooms available for workshops, residencies, and other events.

A Long Time Coming

Planning for this rehabilitation effort began as early as 2018. Basement excavation and underpinning was completed in 2020 to support the return of a third floor that was lost to fire in 1961. Construction on the Potter-Wright Building resumed in 2022 and is projected to be complete in 2024.

Pledges are payable over 5 years, and gifts of \$1,000 and up will be recognized on a donor wall.

Learn more or donate at willacather.org/hotelgarber

Questions? Contact Ashley Olson (aolson@willacather.org) or Jarrod McCartney (jmccartney@redcloudnebraska.com).

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

9:00 Scholarship Awards & Essays  Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

10:30 Session 3A: Adapting “Neighbour Rosicky”

 Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

Jessica Chipman

Which stories are important to surround ourselves with and to share with others? Playwright and theatre artist Jessica Chipman will describe her process of adapting “Neighbour Rosicky” for the stage and producing the stage version of “Neighbour Rosicky” with her students at Alexandria Area High School in Alexandria, Minnesota, for their one-act play contest in January.

Session 3B: Writers Meet Willa—Engaging Writers with the Work of Willa Cather

 Burlington Depot

Ana McCracken, Ames Writer Collective

Join us at the historic Burlington Depot for an hour of writing inspired by an excerpt from *Obscure Destinies* that we will select together. From Cather’s evocative prose, we will write whatever comes to mind—be it fiction, poetry, or nonfiction. After we write, everyone will be invited to read their piece out loud.

This type of writing in community is based upon the Amherst Writers & Artists Method—a philosophy that believes that everyone is a writer. Bring your preferred writing tools, but pen and paper will be provided, too.

This session is led by Ana McCracken, founder of the Ames Writers Collective based in Ames, Iowa. She received her MFA in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University, and her published writing can be found in various anthologies. She is a member of the Willa Cather Board of Governors.

1:00 Session 4A: Cather in New Contexts  Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

The Gay (Old) Joy of Lucy and Nelly: Queer and Trans Temporalities in Willa Cather’s Fictions
Ivy Olesen, University of California, Irvine

Cathedrals and Cosmologies: Teaching *Archbishop* Beside Diverse Philosophical Novels
Carter Davis Johnson, University of Kentucky

Reading Cather’s Novels Through the Lens of Bob Dylan’s Lyrics
Jim Cody, Brookdale Community College

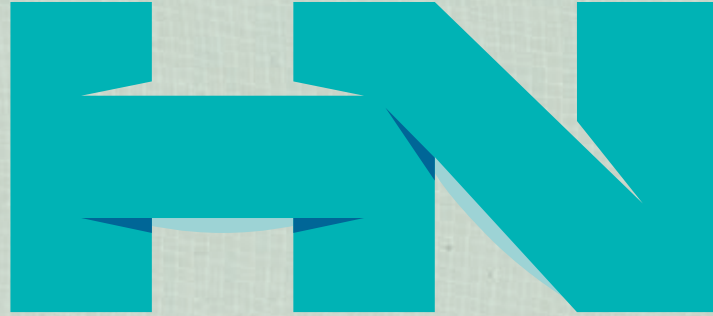
Land and Labor Acknowledgement

The National Willa Cather Center recognizes that forced servitude and unpaid labor gave rise to the society we know today. Willa Cather’s own ancestors included both those who enslaved people and those who sought to free them. Cather struggled with her family’s role in Virginia’s slaveholding culture during her lifetime, and we continue to wrestle with the ramifications of that injustice today.

We also acknowledge that we occupy the homelands of the Pâri (Pawnee), the Washtáge Monzhán (Kansa), and the Ocheti Sakowin (Sioux) peoples, territory that was also inhabited by the Oto-Missouria, Osage, and other indigenous peoples following the arrival of American and European settlers.

**We are committed to honoring these people and recognizing their tribulations
by providing a space for cultural exchange and learning.**

PROGRAM SUPPORTED BY



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Nebraska creates and supports thought-provoking opportunities for Nebraskans to learn,

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FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Session 4B: Emotions and Reading Auld Public Library Recorded

Interpreting Willa Cather's "Paul's Case" with Narrative Medicine

Elisabeth Bayley, Loyola University Chicago

Willa Cather's "immense design": Re-Measuring the Dimensions of "Paul's Case"

Tim Maxwell, College of San Mateo

Intersubjectivity, Mystery, and Hope as Aesthetic Experience in *Archbishop*

Alex Gergely, University of Kentucky

3:00 Archive Research by Appointment National Willa Cather Center Archives

Pre-arranged 90-minute research appointments in the archives (2nd floor).

Session 5A: Early Cather Red Cloud Opera House Live-Streamed

Reading Dramas: Willa Cather as a Drama Critic

Xuesong Zhou, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Cather's Poems in 'The Critic': Jeanette L. Gilder, Charles Hanson Towne, and Newspaper Publication

James Jaap, Penn State Greater Allegheny

Kernel and Nimbus: Willa Cather's Connections to Joseph Conrad, or Why "Behind the Singer Tower" is Not a Muckraking Story

Elaine Smith, University of South Florida (Retired)

Session 5B: Cather and History Auld Public Library Recorded

Reading Cather: What's Race Got to Do with It?

Sharon Kohout, Independent Scholar

Cather's *My Ántonia* Kicks Off One Book One Nebraska

Rebecca Faber, Independent Scholar

"There are many things I want to write you about": Cather's Copy of Ferris Greenslet's *Under The Bridge*

Nathan Tye, University of Nebraska at Kearney

5:00 Artist Talk & Reception with Travis Hency Burlington Depot

Bring a book to exchange and enjoy time to read and network after the reception.

7:00 Invited Lecture: "From Bookshelf to Dreamworld: Cather and the Underground Stream"

 Red Cloud Opera House  Live-Streamed

Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Texas State University

We are pleased to welcome acclaimed author Kali Fajardo-Anstine, who will join us for an invited lecture, "From Bookshelf to Dreamworld: Cather and the Underground Stream." A book-signing will follow this program at the National Willa Cather Center Bookstore, where you can purchase Fajardo-Anstine's books *Woman of Light* and *Sabrina and Corina*.

In her introduction for the 2023 Penguin Classics edition of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Fajardo-Anstine writes, "The novel reminded me of my insatiable childhood reading habits . . . Cather had awoken in me a type of pleasure-reading that over the years had eroded with deadlines, assignments, and the long list of reasons why we do not read out of desire but instead out of duty." We look forward to hearing more from Fajardo-Anstine about the readerly imagination that Cather's work inspires.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

NOVELISTS

Humanities Nebraska

*The Cather Project of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Department of English*

NOVELLA WRITERS

John A (Jay) Yost and G. Wade Leak

SHORT STORY WRITERS

*Ana McCracken & the Ames Writers Collective
Sydney Green & William Lord*

ESSAYISTS

Marion Arneson

Thomas Reese Gallagher

Jennifer J. Hein

*Bernard & Nancy Picchi
in memory of Ardis Yost*

Glenda J. Pierce & Jeff Kirkpatrick

Mark A. & Linda Robison

James & M. Patricia Schreiber

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Daniel Deffenbaugh

William & Joan Dunfey

James A. Jaap

James P. & Angela J. Southwick

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Becky Faber

Patricia Meisinger

Garrett Peck

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SATURDAY, JUNE 8

- 8:00 Coffee & Pastries** 🍷 **Red Cloud Opera House Art Gallery**
Start the last day of Spring Conference with a hot cup of coffee and a sweet morning treat against the backdrop of the beautiful *Hommage: Willa Cather* exhibit.
- 9:00 Service at Grace Episcopal Church** 🍷 **Grace Episcopal Church**
- 10:30 The Passing Show: Pleasures and Disruptions: Reading Cather Collectively**
🍷 **Red Cloud Opera House** 📺 **Live-Streamed**
Join panelists Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Pat Leach, Arielle Zibrak, and Kari Ronning as they explore our Spring Conference topic, “Pleasures and Disruptions: Reading Cather Collectively.”
Moderated by Kelsey Squire of Ohio Dominican University, one of our Spring Conference Academic Directors, this traditionally unstructured panel allows for significant exchange and inquiry into the larger questions surrounding our conference:
How has the experience of reading Cather’s work evolved over time? What can the Cather community do to welcome new readers into the fold? Why does the pleasure of reading Cather’s work endure?
- 1:30 Dedication of the Willa Cather Childhood Home and Ribbon-Cutting** 🍷 **Childhood Home**
Join Willa Cather Foundation leadership, project partners and supporters, Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason, and Nebraska Youth Poet Laureate Miranda Davis for the dedication and ribbon-cutting of the Willa Cather Childhood Home. We are honored to celebrate the place this National Historic Landmark has occupied on literary pilgrimages for more than fifty years.
Special thanks to the guides hosting these Childhood Home dedication tours: Angela Duca, Linda Hitchler, Brenda Knehans, and Janet Maruhn.
- 2:00 Tours of the Willa Cather Childhood Home, Farmers and Merchants Bank, and the future site of Hotel Garber** 🍷 **In-person** *tour group assignments will be provided following the dedication*
Enjoy tours of these beautifully restored historic sites, refreshments, and downtown Red Cloud!
- 6:00 Spring Conference Banquet** 🍷 **Red Cloud Community Center**
Please note: A separate ticket is required for banquet and Willa Cather Readers Theater.
- 7:30 Banquet Performance: “A Very Genuine Pleasure:” Willa Cather Readers Theater**
🍷 **Red Cloud Opera House**
Beginning at a young age, Willa Cather was a voracious reader. Her life-long love of reading will be highlighted as actors Lauren Silverman Durban and Eric Moyer share curated selections from Cather’s letters and published works. Follow along as we explore Cather’s own bookish interests and revisit the joy her characters find in reading.



Save the Date!

June 2025 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin
19th International Willa Cather Seminar

Left: Willa Cather received an honorary doctor of letters degree from Princeton University, 1931. Willa Cather Foundation Collections and Archives at the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska, PHO-250-042



Willa Cather Sculpture

Own a piece of history!

Seize the opportunity to own a copy of the sculpture of Willa Cather created by artist Littleton Alston that was unveiled in the National Statuary Hall Collection of the U.S. Capitol.

The bronze sculptures are twelve inches tall, mounted on a polished walnut base, and each is individually signed by the artist.

If you are an enthusiastic reader who would like to see a Cather statue in your public library, consider purchasing one as a gift!

Ask us for more information about additional Cather programming for public libraries.



Proceeds of all sales will support the purchase of a full-scale edition of the original bronze to be placed in the National Willa Cather Center, and a portion of your \$3,000 purchase is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

Contact Development Coordinator Jeniffer Beahm at jbeahm@willacather.org to purchase your Cather sculpture.

Own & Restore a Piece of Literary History

The Victorian-style home was built in 1883 for Dr. Gilbert McKeeby, who was a Red Cloud physician. A friend of Willa Cather and her family, McKeeby inspired the character of Dr. Archie in *The Song of the Lark*. This historic home on a large corner lot is in search of a preservation-minded owner. The house is available at a low price for the right buyer.



This ad is made possible by the generosity of John A (Jay) Yost and G. Wade Leak.



Ready to learn more about this opportunity and historic preservation in Red Cloud? Contact Board of Governors member Jay Yost at (917) 375-1308 or jbirdyost@aol.com.

69th Annual Spring Conference Participants

Invited Speakers

Jessica Chipman (she, her) is a writer, theatre artist, and educator based out of Minnesota. Her work is recognized by many educational organizations, including the Minnesota Educational Theatre Association, Minnesota State High School League, and the Iowa State Education Association. Jessica is the 2023-2024 recipient of the National Federation of High Schools Region 5 Outstanding Theatre Educator Award.

Kali Fajardo-Anstine is the nationally best-selling author of the novel *Woman of Light* and the widely acclaimed short story collection *Sabrina and Corina*, a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of an American Book Award. She is a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow and the 2021 recipient of the Addison M. Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Fajardo-Anstine is the 2022-2024 Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at Texas State University. She is from Denver, Colorado.

Pat Leach is a former librarian and director of Lincoln City Libraries. She currently hosts the Nebraska Public Media show, "All About Books," and she is an occasional book review contributor for the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

Kari Ronning, Research Associate Professor Emerita of English, serves as an editor of the Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Ronning also contributed to the Willa Cather Archive by writing annotations for the *Complete Letters of Willa Cather*. In addition to textual work, she was co-historical editor, with Susan J. Rosowski, of *A Lost Lady*, historical editor of *Obscure Destinies* and *My Mortal Enemy*, and co-editor of *Cather's University Days*.

Arielle Zibrak is a writer, researcher, editor, and Associate Professor of English and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wyoming. Her writing on century literature, gender, sexuality, and popular culture has been praised by *The New York Times*, *Longreads*, *PopMatters*, *Book Riot*, and *Bookforum* and published in *American Literature*, *American Literary History*, *Arizona Quarterly*, *The Baffler*, *Criticism*, *The Edith Wharton Review*, *ESQ*, *J19*, *LitHub*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Millions*, and *Women's Studies*. Her humor writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *McSweeney's*, and *The Toast*. She is the editor of *Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence: New Centenary Essays* (Bloomsbury, 2019) and the author of *Avidly Reads: Guilty Pleasures* (New York University Press, 2021) and *Writing Against Reform: Aesthetic Realism in the Progressive Era* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2024). Her edited anthology, *Twelve Stories by American Women Writers*, a more inclusive update to their *Four Stories* volume, is forthcoming from Penguin Classics in 2025. She is also currently at work on a video streaming series for Wondrium and a public history of consumer feminism and new-age philosophy in America titled *In the Image of Our Own Desires*.

Willa Cather Childhood Home Dedication Poets

Miranda Davis is a senior at Norris High School in Firth, Nebraska and will be attending the University of Iowa to study English and Creative Writing. Her passions for poetry, nature, and music drive her to create a better world for herself and others through words. Davis's poetry has been published in multiple local anthologies and competes across the state at slam poetry competitions. She earned the prestigious title of Nebraska Youth Poet Laureate in April 2024. Davis has also been a member of the National Speech and Debate Association since 2021 and placed in the top 100 in the nation for poetry in 2022.



Continue your journey . . .

The Willa Cather Childhood Home in Red Cloud is a not-to-be-missed stop on your literary pilgrimage.

We invite you to experience Willa Cather's Red Cloud and the newly restored Willa Cather Childhood Home! You will enjoy unprecedented access on your "no-ropes" guided tour to one of the country's most important literary heritage sites. This National Historic Landmark home recently reopened and features sensitive restoration and hundreds of Cather family artifacts on display—including the original wallpaper applied to the attic walls by Willa Cather herself!

Now open for tours!

Congratulations to our 2024 Scholarship Winners!

Norma Ross Walter Scholarship

1st Place: Miranda Davis

Norris High School; Firth, NE

2nd Place: Emma Rasmussen

Cambridge High School; Cambridge, NE

Ántonia Scholarship

Eleanor Buchanan

Western Albermarle High School; Crozet, VA

Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship

Cadence Schleicher

Gering High School; Gering, NE

Leslie A. and Helen R. Wilson

Memorial Scholarship

Libby Macklin

Blue Hill High School; Blue Hill, NE

National Willa Cather Center Scholarship

Avery Fangmeyer

Red Cloud High School; Red Cloud, NE

The Cather Project



The Cather Project promotes teaching and research about American novelist and University of Nebraska graduate Willa Cather at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and beyond.

Designated a Program of Excellence by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents in 2002, the Cather Project produces the Willa Cather Scholarly Edition and *Cather Studies*, supports research by UNL English department faculty and students on Cather, brings scholars from outside of UNL to present on Cather and conduct research in UNL Special Collections, and organizes conferences and other events.

<https://www.unl.edu/english/cather-project>



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Matt Mason is the Nebraska State Poet and has run poetry workshops in Botswana, Romania, Nepal, and Belarus for the U.S. State Department. His poetry has appeared in *The New York Times*, and Matt has received a Pushcart Prize as well as fellowships from the Academy of American Poets and the Nebraska Arts Council. His work can be found in *Rattle*, *Poet Lore*, *Prairie Schooner*, and in hundreds of other publications. Mason's 5th book, *Rock Stars*, was published by Button Poetry in 2023.

Readers Theater Performers

Lauren Silverman Durban is a performer, writer, teacher, and journalist. She is currently Communications Manager for the Lied Center for Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she has also served as adjunct faculty in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and led public speaking workshops for the College of Business. Lauren has been part of the Lincoln media community for nearly two decades, including several years as evening anchor for ABC affiliate KLKN's Channel 8 Eyewitness News, a six-year stint as a morning drive time radio host as part of 'JP & Lauren Mornings' on KX 96.9, and 15 years as a columnist for *Lincoln Journal Star's L Magazine*. On stage, favorite Nebraska projects include *Sweeney Todd* (Mrs. Lovett), *Into the Woods* (The Baker's Wife), *Ragtime* (Mother), *Grey Gardens* (Big Edie/Little Edie), and *Our Town* (Mrs. Webb). Lauren is a graduate of UCLA in her home state of California.

Eric Moyer is an actor, marketer and solar developer who calls Lincoln, Nebraska, home. After graduating from the College of Fine and Performing Arts with a bachelor's degree in theater, Eric moved to Los Angeles where he earned a number of bit parts in both film and television. Eric returned to Nebraska in 2006 to pursue a Master's Degree in Marketing Communication and Advertising; not long after, he rekindled his love of acting appearing in a number of locally produced film projects. Eric is also an active participant in Lincoln's thriving theater community, appearing in productions produced by the Lied Center, Angels Theatre Company, and Haymarket Theater.

Academic Directors

Kelsey Squire is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Core Program at Ohio Dominican University. She recently published *Willa Cather: The Critical Conversation* (Camden House, 2020). Her work on Cather has appeared in *Great Plains Quarterly*, *Cather Studies*, and *The Willa Cather Review*. She is currently working on a project on escapism and the reception of twentieth-century U.S. women writers. She also serves as the President of the Reception Study Society.

Sarah Clere is an independent scholar and is on the editorial board for the *Willa Cather Review*. Her research on Willa Cather has appeared in *Cather Studies 9*, *Studies in the Novel*, and *The Willa Cather Review*, and is forthcoming in *Cather Studies 14*.

Paper Presenters & Panelists

Elisabeth Bayley is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at Loyola University Chicago. A professor for over ten years, Bayley's focus is on American Literature, and specific research interests include Willa Cather and John Steinbeck, with a particular focus on Ecocriticism and Medical Humanities. Bayley is on the Editorial Review Board for the *Steinbeck Review* and a board member of the Gerber/Hart Library and Archive.

Shelby Janke Brodersen is the Adult Services Librarian at the Papillion Public Library, where she designs library programs, manages several book clubs, and facilitates community partnerships. Born and raised in Central Nebraska, Shelby was actually never assigned Willa Cather in school. A late bloomer, she's become a devoted fan in adulthood, recently making her first pilgrimage to Red Cloud in 2023. Her favorite Cather work (so far) is *A Lost Lady*. In her spare time, Shelby enjoys bowling, playing board games, visiting her local nonprofit cinema, and spending time with her husband and two cats, Minou and Antonia.

Dr. Park Bucker is a Professor of English at the University of South Carolina Sumter. He has published books and articles on F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, William Inge, Thornton Wilder, Joseph Heller, and Dorothy Parker, among others. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Thornton Wilder Society. His essay “‘That Kitchen with the Shining Windows’: Willa Cather’s ‘Neighbour Rosicky’ and the *Woman’s Home Companion*” appeared in the volume *Willa Cather and Material Culture* (ed. Janis P. Stout).

Jim Cody is an English Professor at Brookdale Community College where he teaches Composition and Literature. He completed his doctoral degree at Drew University. He has published scholarly articles in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, *The Journal of Basic Writing*, *California English*, and *Teaching Cather*. He also published an article for an anthology on Bob Dylan’s music called *Tearing the World Apart* (University Press of Mississippi, 2017) and an article for the anthology *Something Complete and Great, a Centennial Study of My Ántonia* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018). He lives in New Jersey with his wife and three children.

Ashley Etter is a PhD student in English at the University of Notre Dame, where she researches nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and poetry.

Becky Faber is a long-time Board member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, having served as president and as chair of the One Book One Nebraska selection committee. She also serves on the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association Board of the Lincoln Public Libraries. Her work has been published in the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*; *Violence, the Arts and Willa Cather*; *Teaching Cather*; *Heritage of the Great Plains*; *Willa Cather, A Reference Guide, 1984-1992*; and *Willa Cather’s University Days, 1890-1895*. The Nebraska Center for the Book awarded her the 2021 Mildred Bennett Award for “exceptional literary contributions.”

Joshua Fagan is a graduate student at St. Andrews, specializing in American and British literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on shifting conceptions of history and science. His current project focuses on literary uses of Darwinian ideas of time and flux in response to the impermanence and overstimulation of the *fin-de-siècle* world. He has published on William Morris and Mark Twain, and his writing on the relation between the premodern and naturalistic transcendence in Robert Frost’s poetry received the Lesley Lee Francis Prize from *The Robert Frost Review*.

Alex Gergely is an English PhD candidate at the University of Kentucky where he studies death and dying in the works of American modernists. His work explores how these concepts come into play with affect, aesthetics, and phenomenology. He has peer reviewed publications in *Early American Literature* (2021) and *Mississippi Quarterly* (2023).

Lilia Hutchison earned a Master’s Degree in English Literature from SUNY Brockport (2021), her studies as an undergraduate and graduate student include Willa Cather and American War Literature, focusing on World War One. Lilia has a published article in *The Willa Cather Review* (vol. 63, no. 2). She intends to pursue further studies on Willa Cather and other controversial authors of American War Literature, to keep the voices of fiction writers of the World Wars alive and impactful in the present American culture.

James Jaap is a Teaching Professor of English at the Greater Allegheny campus of Penn State, where he has been for over 27 years. He has served on the Cather Foundation’s Board of Governors since 2018, and Jaap co-edited volume 13 of *Cather Studies, Willa Cather and Pittsburgh*. His research interests include Western Pennsylvania Art and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Carter Davis Johnson is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Kentucky. His primary scholarly focus is the literature of the America West, specifically the intersection of philosophy, environmentalism, and literature. In addition to his scholarly work, he writes creatively and has been published in *Ekstasis*, *Road Not Taken*, *Flyover Country*, and *Front Porch Republic*.

Sallie Ketcham comes from a long line of Nebraskans. She is the author of *Laura Ingalls Wilder: American Writer on the Prairie* (Routledge). Her recent work has been included in the *South Dakota History Journal*, *The Willa Cather Review*, and is forthcoming in *Cather Studies 14*. She is particularly interested in the life and times of early twentieth-century writers Laura Ingalls Wilder, Rose Wilder Lane, Willa Cather, and Mari Sandoz.

Sharon Kohout has been an active member of the Cather Foundation since retiring from the Centers for Disease Control in 2012. Early in her career she was a lecturer in the English Department at Texas Tech University (Lubbock, Texas). She eventually moved to Atlanta to work as a public health analyst at CDC and was the chief coordinator on projects to reduce disproportionately high rates of tobacco use among low-income populations and people of color. Since its inception in 2020 she has been active in the virtual Cather and Racial Equity study group. Sharon's other major commitments include suicide prevention, plant-based nutrition, and her two beautiful grandsons.

Jessica Masters is a PhD candidate in English at University of Sydney, and works on literary modernism, intermediality, and form. She is co-editor of the Book Reviews section for *The Space Between: Literature and Culture 1914-1945* journal and the Postgraduate Convenor for *The Novel Network* (University of Sydney, affiliated with Duke University).

Tim Maxwell began researching Willa Cather and other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American authors and their literary "conversations" with British Aestheticism while completing an MA in English at U.C. Berkeley. Maxwell went on to the University of Oregon for an MFA in poetry, and then began a career as a community college professor. Over the years, his interest in Cather has not waned. Maxwell currently teaches at College of San Mateo and lives with his family in Menlo Park, California.

Ana McCracken is the founder and executive director of the Ames Writers Collective and a member of the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors. She received her MFA in Creative Writing and Environment from Iowa State University. She is a published author with pieces appearing in the California Writers Club's *Literary Review*, and the anthologies *Nothing But The Truth So Help Me God—51 Women Reveal the Power of Positive Female Connection*, and *Chicken Soup for the Soul—The Joy of Adoption*, and Telepoem Booth® Iowa. At one time she was a columnist and editor for Maui Vision magazine, and her essays and articles have appeared in various publications around the San Francisco Bay Area. She is currently seeking representation for her memoir titled, *Redacted—A Memoir of Adoption*. You can learn more about her at anamccracken.com.

Richard Millington is the Helen and Laura Shedd Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature at Smith College. He is the author of *Practicing Romance: Narrative Form and Cultural Engagement in Hawthorne's Fiction*, and the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Nathaniel Hawthorne* and the Norton Critical Edition of Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*. He has written an array of articles on Willa Cather, each exploring an aspect of her distinctive American modernism, and was the co-editor of *Cather Studies 10: Willa Cather and the Nineteenth Century*.

Nicole Musselman is a third-year PhD student at the University of South Florida. Currently, she is working on her portfolio for entrance into candidacy. Her area of interest is nineteenth and early twentieth-century American literature, particularly depictions of mothers and how culture constructed motherhood as an institution. In 2023, she attended the NEH Summer Institute "Willa Cather: Place and Archive." She was the editor of the 2022 edition of *JourMS, Journal of Mother Studies*. She has taught first-year writing, film and culture, and introduction to literature courses. She lives in Florida with her husband and toddler, who inspire her research in American mother studies.

Sophie Kelly Okunhon is a doctoral student affiliated with the CLIMAS Laboratory at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne. Her research is centered on exploring the influence of Russian realist writers on the literary works of Willa Cather, with a specific focus on the role of folklore. Under the supervision of Stéphane Durrans, she explores how Cather's transatlantic work has a double or triple intertextuality, in which Russian traditions and American local life dialogue. Sophie has previously authored articles on postcolonial subjects.

Ivy Olesen is an MFA Candidate in Fiction at UC Irvine's Programs in Writing, and is working on a collection of short stories about queer lives in Los Angeles, and a novel. Additionally, Olesen teaches an undergraduate fiction writing course, and formerly designed and taught a course called: "Sliding into DMs: Epistolary Literature from the 1700s to Today." Olesen was born, raised, and still lives on the coasts of this country, but has a grandmother who is buried in Beatrice, Nebraska. During a past drive through Nebraska, Olesen never forgot about stopping at a reenactment museum to stretch their legs.

Garrett Peck is an author, historian, and tour guide in Santa Fe, New Mexico, specializing in adventure travel, historic and cultural interpretation, and Prohibition. He leads the Willa Cather's Santa Fe tour, among others, and teaches stargazing in New Mexico's dark skies. He is writing a book about how Cather wrote *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Charles Peek is an Episcopal priest and Professor Emeritus at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He is also a Fulbright Scholar and winner of the Nebraska Center for the Book's Mildred Bennett Award for fostering the literary arts. Peek is an active academic presenter and poet who has won five poetry competitions. A Past President of the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors, Peek and his wife Nancy divide their time between Kearney and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Shellie Sclan has presented papers at Cather conferences since 2005. Her special interest is in the portrayal of performers, women in particular, in the works of Willa Cather, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, and Henry James. Shellie lives in New York City.

Steve Shively was a high school teacher and university professor, most recently at Utah State University before retiring in 2019. He has published several essays on Cather, served as one of the editors of *The Willa Cather Review*, and was co-editor of *Teaching Cather*. He served for many years on the Cather Foundation Board of Governors and has been a regular presence at Cather-related conferences and seminars.

Elaine Smith is a longtime scholar of American Literature. She has taught Cather's work at Carleton College and Florida State University. She has published several articles on Cather and has presented at many Cather conferences, including those in Chicago, Rome, and Pittsburgh.

Dr. Nathan Tye is assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. A historian of Great Plains and Midwest culture, literature, and labor, he has published in *The Willa Cather Review*, *The Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *Annals of Iowa*, and *Nebraska History*.

Xuesong Zhou is an Associate Professor at Zhengzhou University, China, and Deputy Director of The Center for English Studies at Zhengzhou University, and a Visiting Scholar at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her study on Willa Cather has won the National Social Science Fund of China, and her research interests include Cather studies, having published on top-ranking Chinese academic journals a series of critical essays interpreting Willa Cather's *One of Ours*, *The Professor's House*, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, and "Neighbor Rosicky," and theoretical studies on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's "deterritorialization," Hannah Arendt's "action," theories of community, ethics of care, and new materialism.

“One cannot divine nor forecast the conditions that will make happiness, one only stumbles upon them by chance, in a lucky hour, at the world’s end somewhere, and holds fast to the days, as to fortune or fame.”

-Willa Cather in Europe: Her Own Story of the First Journey



Leave Your Mark on the Future

Join the Cather Legacy Society

Our work at the National Willa Cather Center enriches lives in many ways: students encounter Willa Cather’s writing for the first time; dedicated scholars conduct and share their research; aspiring artists find inspiration and solitude to create new work; readers visit the settings conjured in their imaginations. These opportunities derive from our supporters and the rich legacy Willa Cather left behind.

How can you create a lasting impact? Make a gift arrangement to benefit the Willa Cather Foundation beyond your lifetime. Your estate planning attorney can include a provision in your will that leaves a lasting gift to us: a specific asset, a dollar amount, or a percentage of your estate. A bequest can also be made from the residue of your estate or what is left after all gifts have been made to your heirs.

You can decide how your gift is used! Preservation of historic sites and collections, conservation of 612 acres of native prairie, and development of educational resources are only a few examples of how your support can advance our mission. Planned gifts also help us seize new opportunities that are connected to the aspect of our mission that matters to you.

We’re telling Willa Cather’s story, let us share yours, too.

For more information about the Cather Legacy Society and how to ensure our programs benefit generations to come, please contact Jeniffer Beahm at 402-746-2653 or jbeahm@willacather.org.