



In This Issue . . .

~The Cather Foundation dedicates this issue of the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review* to Don Connors, longtime board member who passed away recently

~Joe Urgo introduces readers to Tim Hoheisel, the new Executive Director of the Cather Foundation

~Melissa DeFrancesco generates new insights into *Death Comes for the Archbishop*

~Cathy Bao Bean provides a fresh response to *The Song of the Lark*

~Bruce Baker brings to *Newsletter & Review* readers a recently discovered letter which provides yet another example of Cather's meticulous research

~Judith Johnston traces a revealing professional relationship that Cather cultivated

~Barbara Wiselogel writes about her favorite book, *O Pioneers!*

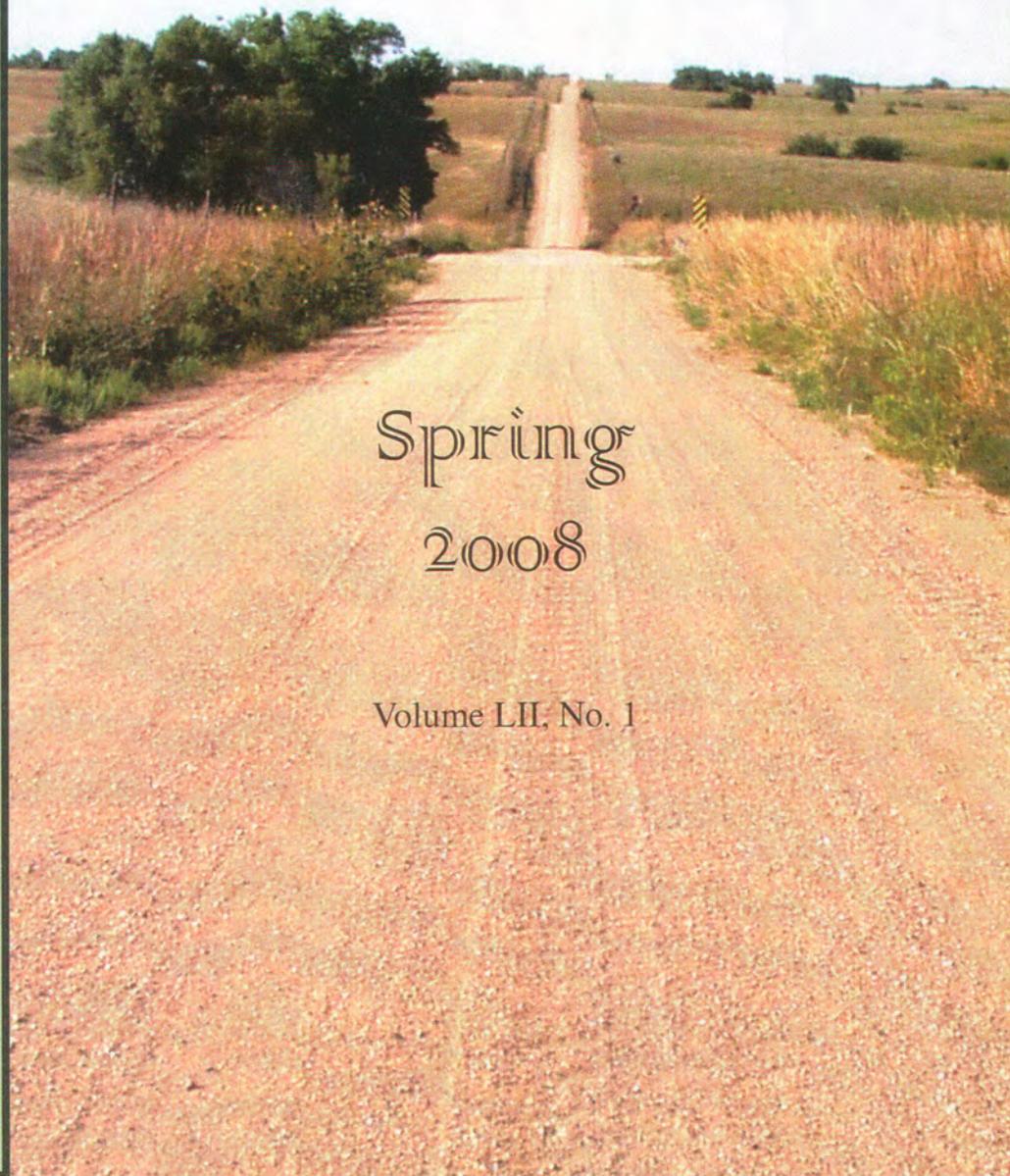
~Erika Koss takes readers on a journey to The Mount, home of Edith Wharton, one of Willa Cather's contemporaries

~Ann Moseley and Cindy Bruneteau present the 2006 bibliography of Cather scholarship

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Optima dies . . . prima fugit

Betty Kort

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The old pasture land was now being broken up into wheatfields and cornfields, the red grass was disappearing, and the whole face of the country was changing. . . . The changes seemed beautiful and harmonious to me; it was like watching the growth of a great man or of a great idea. I recognized every tree and sandbank and rugged draw. I found that I remembered the conformation of the land as one remembers the modeling of human faces. —*My Ántonia*

Change. It seldom comes easily. In *My Ántonia*, Cather provides a confusing picture of her own feelings toward the inevitability of change. On the one hand, she presents Virgil's view that "in the lives of mortals, the best days are the first to flee"; on the other, she portrays the changes in the land



The Moon Block, next to the 1885 Opera House, trails off into the distance in this photograph by Barb Kudrna.

over a span of time as "beautiful and harmonious." Certainly, the changes in *Ántonia* herself were beautiful and harmonious as well. In the end, the reader is left to judge the merits of *change* in the lives of mortals.

For the Cather Foundation, the inevitability of change is apparent, never more than now. Most obvious is the fact that the cover of the this issue is new and different. Sadly, with this issue Merrill Skaggs is delivering her last effort as issue editor of the *Newsletter and Review*. On the positive side, she will be replaced in the fall by Steve Trout. The issue itself is dedicated to one of the longest serving members of the Cather Foundation Board of Governors, Don Connors, who passed away a short time ago. Don served the Cather Foundation well and he will be missed.

Change is apparent in that the Foundation is introducing a new Executive Director for the Cather Foundation, Tim Hoheisel. Inevitably, his leadership will change the face of the Cather Foundation and redirect its future.

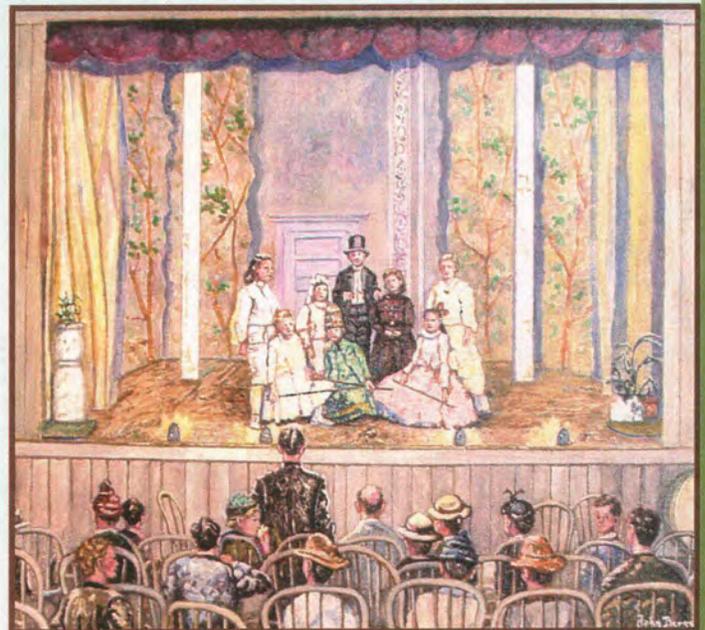
In June of 2008, the Cather Foundation will accommodate what is hoped to be the first of many Elderhostels to come. Though the Foundation receives many visitors throughout the year, the Elderhostel presents a new way to host visitors, with planned educational programming interspersed with engaging Cather-related entertainment.

[Cover photograph by Betty Kort.]

The newly acquired Willa Cather Memorial Prairie is in various stages of restoration—the landscape is changing. A significant grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust is providing the means to move ahead dramatically to return the prairie to its pre-settlement state. Native grasses are being coaxed to return in greater abundance, along with a significant list of wildflowers and forbs, some being on the endangered list. The prairie is already a Nebraska birding site and will soon be advertised on the "Chicken Dance Trail," known to bird lovers as a map of the best birding sites in Nebraska.

The Cather Foundation is also moving quickly to find the means to restore the aging and dilapidated Moon Block building next door to the restored 1885 Opera House. With the completion of this restoration, a new archive will beckon renewed study and research, new businesses will be encouraged to house themselves within the walls of the Moon Block, and expanded facilities at the Cather Center itself will invite new and exciting opportunities for visitors.

Changes in programming are very apparent. For the past five years, the Foundation has been providing more arts-oriented programming, especially in the area of the visual and performing arts. The Gallery now hosts the work of talented, well known contemporary artists from Nebraska and throughout the country. The Opera House is hosting a variety of performing arts programming ranging from music to theater to dance, not unlike the Opera House in the early years. The movement toward the visual and performing arts would appear to be a "beautiful and harmonious" change reflecting Cather's own super-charged creativity.



Detail of a section of a painting of the old Opera House stage. Painting by John Blake Bergers.

Yes, the Cather Foundation is moving in new directions in leadership and programming. There will be occasional resistance, but change is inevitable. Embraced, these changes are sure to become "beautiful and harmonious."

The Mobile Sections of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*: “Padre Martínez,” “The Month of Mary,” “Cathedral,” and “December Night”

Melissa DeFrancesco

While Cather has clearly climbed to canonical status, crucial information regarding her most important texts is still discoverable in any good library. One quality that helped Cather attain greatness was the dominant control she maintained over her own work. By doing so, Cather was able to mold her texts to produce efficiently the effects she desired. Because of this unflagging control, we can assume that any alterations Cather made to her writing—be they additions, omissions, substitutions, or extractions—served some defined purpose.

This dramatic control is evident in Cather’s historic novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, which contains four mobile sections: “Padre Martínez,” “The Month of Mary,” “Cathedral” and “December Night.” By “mobile sections” I mean the sections that Cather felt could be omitted in magazine serialization, or else excised to be published independently. The novel was originally published in a serial edition for *The Forum* in 1927; yet the first three identified sections were not added until the novel’s first edition was published afterwards (Crane 1). The final section, “December Night,” conversely, was extracted from the novel by Cather’s publisher, A. A. Knopf, “in a separate, lavishly illustrated and printed version” for the Christmas trade in 1933, 1934 and 1935 (Mignon 515). I will first discuss here the significance of the additional sections and evaluate what Cather gains by including them. Finally, I’ll assess “December Night” (1933) as it stands on its own, without the support of the novel.

The first of the three mobile sections is “Padre Martínez,” containing chapters named “The Old Order” and “The Miser.” This section may be scrutinized as a major contribution since it stands as the complete fifth book of the nine-book totality. Cather has often been criticized for fictionalizing the actual priest, Antonio José Martínez, in order to make him into an almost completely negative character: “in her simplification of the past she is causing the alienation of a set of readers who recognize more of the historical artifact than she has intended” (Mares 13). Cather has also been accused of depicting Martínez negatively

in order to highlight the positive aspects of Bishop Latour: “if a person can darken the shadows, double the danger, and inflate the evil doing of his defeated adversary, he at one stroke heightens his own luster, increases his own importance in the scheme of things and inflates his own good deeds” (Mares 13). Creating this contrast seems to be precisely what Cather is in fact doing. In fact, Father Martínez not only inverts the character of Latour; his rivalry with Lucero inverts the supportive love between Latour and Vaillant. Cather selects her historical information on the basis of her creative needs. While some historical facts are clear, we must assume that others are shaded in order to fulfill a specific purpose in relation to the whole narrative. Cather herself stated clearly that her subject was the French missionaries sent to New Mexico to bring order to chaos. This chaos is effectively dramatized in the fictionalized and perhaps negative version of Padre Martínez (Murphy 349).

The first theme that “Padre Martínez” introduces is evident in the title of its first chapter, “The Old Order.” Padre Martínez represents an era that is quickly passing with the American annexation of his territory; he is at least subliminally aware that his time is coming to a close: “The American occupation meant the end of men like himself. He was a man of the old order, a son of Abiquiu, and his day was over” (Cather 161). The anticipatory anxiety that Martínez feels manifests itself in anger towards the American government, and also in jealousy towards newly powerful Bishop Latour. Rather than face his fate with stoic calm, Martínez copes with his own loss of power—his essential loss of identity—by lapsing into a severe denial. He injures both himself, through his eventual excommunication, and also his people, through their forced choice between him and Latour—between two opposing faces of the same church. Martínez’ eventual death is foreseen in his overt opposition to change. The popularity of the Catholic Church can be linked to its ability to “adapt to the

Scholarly Contributors

I’m delighted to present, for this last issue I’ll be editing, four pieces of which I’m very proud. As an “outside reader” said of Cathy Bao Bean’s fresh response to *The Song of the Lark*, “Oh, I wish I had the wherewithal to have written that! Wonderful, beautiful, and wise. . . .” A similar voice declared Melissa DeFrancesco’s look at *The Archbishop*, “a lovely essay with new insights.” *New insights* might be the theme here. Both Bean and DeFrancesco are new readers for Cather, with interesting credentials: Cathy Bao Bean is a Chinese-American memoirist, and author of *The Chopsticks-Fork Principle*; Melissa DeFrancesco is just completing her Ph.D. in biology at UMDNJ and teaching Microbiology at Sussex County Community College in New Jersey. These new recruits to our ranks are balanced by the seasoned voices of Judith Johnston, of Rider College, who traces a revelatory professional relationship Cather cultivated, and Bruce Baker, who ends the issue with an interesting new fact about Antonia, America’s current literary sweetheart.

I would like to end my editorial duties by paying tribute to those fine and valued colleagues of former years—Don Connors, Ron Hull, Bruce Baker, John Murphy, David Garwood—each has served Cather scholarship for over thirty years as a member of the Foundation’s Board of Governors. They have truly given sacrificially, much and often, through thickly besetting trials while skating often on thin ice, with resolute grace. I’m glad to have the occasion of Bruce’s concluding note to thank them all, as heartily and resoundingly as possible. I bet we’ll all agree that not just longevity, but also loyalty, should count for something. —Merrill Skaggs, Issue Editor

The Archive

A new feature of the Newsletter & Review allows readers to peek into the Cather Foundation Archive. This issue features examples from a teacup collection owned by Willa Cather's mother and located in the Childhood Home.

Willa Cather's mother possessed a delightful teacup collection, found in the built-in China hutch in the dining room of the Cather Childhood Home. These photographs are among those completed in preparation for the Material Culture Exhibit featured at the 2007 Spring Conference. However, many of the photographs were not displayed because of space considerations. The teacup collection is part of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society. Photographs are by Betty Kort.



Mobile Sections

(Continued)

buoyant spirit of the times" (Murphy 330). It evolves as if by Darwinian laws of evolution. Those like Martínez who do not adapt, cannot and will not survive.

Padre Martínez' bitter struggle with his own mortality intimately illustrates one of Cather's major themes: time is running out. When Martínez faces the reality that his life and power are coming to an end, he is troubled by the everlasting human question, "What do you leave behind, what mark have you made on this world?" Martínez and his counterpart, Padre Lucero, both confront death in this book. Martínez, who is proud and powerful, leaves behind a legend, while Lucero, who is greedy and avaricious, leaves behind his money—indeed, dies protecting it. Both their legacies, however, are temporary. Money will soon be spent and legends will warp and fade over time. Cather, a lover of oppositions, strongly contrasts these two with the enduring legacies of the cathedral and the faith that both Latour and Vaillant leave behind at their own deaths. As a result of Martínez' and Lucero's resentful pride, they both leave their people with lasting impressions of their own impoverished clownishness: "*Comete tu cola, Martínez, comete tu cola!* (Eat your tail, Martínez, eat your tail!) (181)." Lucero, an important man who is expected to utter prophetic last words, speaks a phrase that is obscene, while he imagines Martínez as a subhuman animal being tormented in hell.

Death Comes for the Archbishop has been described by critics as a book structured around the seven deadly sins and the seven corresponding virtues in the fashion of Dante (Murphy 341). If the entire novel can be viewed in this light, then the "Padre Martínez" section can be seen as a compressed concentration of these mortal sins. In this book, each of these sins is embodied and dramatized through three central characters, Padre Martínez, Padre Lucero, and their young protégé Trinidad. These three form a sort of evil trinity, each realized through speculated blood connections: Trinidad may be either Lucero's nephew or Martínez' son. Martínez' most obvious sin is lust, and the whole New Mexican population is well acquainted with his loose reputation concerning women.

"But Jean," Father Joseph broke out in agitation, "the man's life is an open scandal, one hears of it everywhere. Only a few weeks ago I was told a pitiful story of a Mexican girl carried off in one of the Indian raids on the Costilla valley. She was a child of eight when she was carried away, and was fifteen when she was found and ransomed. During all that time the pious girl had preserved her virginity by a succession of miracles. . . . Her chastity was threatened many times, but always some unexpected event averted the catastrophe. After she was found and sent back to some relatives living in Arroya Hondo, she was so devout that she wished to become a religious. She was debauched by this Martínez, and he married her to one of his peons. (Cather 165)

Lucero's greatest sin is avarice, which is mistaken by his misguided but admiring people for thrift. Lucero, in fact, dies as a result of his extreme greed; his death is linked to his paranoiac fear that a thief will steal his money: "No, no do not take away the lights! Some thief will come, and I will have nothing left" (176). Trinidad is the clear physical manifestation of both gluttony and sloth: "They went at once into Martínez' study, where they found a young man lying on the floor, fast asleep. He was a very large young man, very stout, lying on his back with his head pillowed on a book, and as he breathed his bulk rose and fell amazingly" (149). He is essentially useless because his extreme weight and laziness prevent nearly all activity.

Envy surfaces in Martínez' blatant displeasure with Latour, his personal jealousy of the young priest's youth and power. The remaining two sins, pride and wrath, are shared by both Martínez and Lucero. The priests' pride is evident in their egotistical refusal to adapt and accept the change that they are faced with, as well as in their reluctance to admit wrong-doing. Martínez dies unreconciled with the church after his rebellion; and although Vaillant bestows the final sacrament upon Lucero at his death, all that the dying priest can think about is the money

underneath his bed. Their wrath focuses on the American institution that is changing their lifestyle, against Latour who is enforcing this change, and between each other in intense bouts of envious competition. By concentrating the overlying theme of the seven deadly sins into one book, Cather purposefully dramatizes the goodness and virtue of Latour and Vaillant. She also concomitantly intensifies the challenge facing Latour and Vaillant of having to convert a wild land with self-serving leaders into a refuge for righteous faith.

With Cather's addition of Padre Martínez, she creates a foil for Bishop Latour that functions in a variety of ways. Martínez is himself a Mexican, a native, who is well versed in both these people and their landscape. Latour is distinctly an outsider. Yet Martínez remains a powerful and magnetic figure: "The Bishop had never heard the Mass more impressively sung than by Father Martínez. . . . Rightly guided, the Bishop reflected, this Mexican might have been a great man. He had an altogether compelling personality, a disturbing, mysterious magnetic power" (157). It is true that Martínez is an effective shepherd of his people; but he menaces Latour on his white mule, as would an enemy, as a black shepherd, swelling with arrogance and pride:

As the horsemen approached, Padre Martínez himself was easily distinguishable—in buckskin breeches, high boots and silver spurs, a wide Mexican hat on his head, and a great black cape wound about his shoulders like a shepherd's plaid. He rode up to the Bishop and reining in his black gelding, uncovered his head in a broad salutation, while his escort surrounded the churchmen and fired their muskets into the air. (148)

Aside from black, Martínez' signature color is yellow, symbolizing his infidelity to his people, to the Catholic religion and to his God. He is surrounded in his home by the sexual symbol of yellow cats, has long yellow teeth that repel Latour, and believes that the yellow earth serves as medicine. Martínez' putrid yellow is contrasted with the golden glow of Latour's cathedral built out of the golden rock of the native earth.

The second mobile section is "The Month of Mary," the chapter which opens book seven, "The Great Diocese." The fact that Cather added this section in this particular location is a clue to the fact that what it contains will serve as the foundation for the "great diocese" that Latour and Vaillant will build. After a brief description of new territory annexed and now under Latour's jurisdiction and of the recent illness of Vaillant, the chapter opens into Latour's garden, the American version of the prologue's Italian terrace. We learn that for Latour, gardening is relaxation: "the Bishop had worked on it, planting and pruning. It was his only recreation" (209). Cather directs our attention to Latour's desire to grow and to cultivate which is exactly the purpose his mission in New Mexico is meant to serve. The scene answers the question, "How do you make a garden in the desert?" For Latour the answer is, "with a spring of faith" (Weidman 51). Here Cather makes an important connection to the novel's opening chapter in which Latour discovers Agua Secreta, a desert oasis that thrives on its secret, inexhaustible water supply. Cather hints that Latour's mission will be successful because of his natural ability to cultivate important things and because of his faith in his religion, his belief that living things in his desert can bloom when nurtured.

As soon as the question of the garden is answered, another arises: "What *type* of life survives in this desert?" Here the reader is directed to the tamarisk tree that Father Joseph has come to love above all other trees: "They had been so neglected, left to fight for life in such hard, sun-baked, burro-trodden ground, that their trunks had the hardness of cypress" (Cather 210). Despite their harsh life the trees are, however, "miraculously endowed with the power to burst into delicate foliage and flowers" (210). Vaillant's love for the trees stems from his perception of them as trees his people love: "He loved it merely because it was the tree of the people and was like one of the family in every Mexican household" (211). This analogy rings true when we compare the tamarisk to the hardened and neglected lives of the New Mexicans. Cather draws attention to the hidden potential of the people to burst into beauty. Both Latour and Vaillant possess the power to transform their potential into reality through inexhaustible "springs of faith."

In this section Cather solidifies her story in actual history, making it more tangible: "Reproduction, the close following of source material, even its language, is evident in Cather's use of Howlett for Father Vaillant's reminiscence about struggling to get permission to conduct Marian devotions" (Murphy 350). She uses actual historical events to her advantage in presenting her chosen themes. Since Vaillant's time of study in the seminary, she tells us, he has made the month of May his month of personal devotion to the "Blessed Virgin" Mary. The priest's devotion to this heavenly mother allows Cather to further blur the line between male and female that she has been obscuring since the first chapter of the novel where Latour prays to the hermaphroditic cruciform tree. At the center of the novel is the image of the male symbol (i.e., the cathedral) superimposed on the female landscape. In "The Month of Mary," Cather reminds the reader that this male symbolism is founded on the image of the ultimate female who is at the center of all devotion. Mary is not only worshipped by the natives themselves, who have previously been misguided, but is also worshipped by Vaillant (and eventually Latour), an authority who possesses refined, European tastes.

Perhaps the most important topic that Cather incorporates in "The Month of Mary" is the intimate and dynamic relationship between Latour and Vaillant. This section functions to highlight the crossroads that the two priests have reached in relationship to each other. Vaillant hints of the fact that he once required Latour's intense intervention in order to leave France and become an American missionary. This fact alludes also to the opening book of the novel in which Vaillant expresses his desire to remain stationary for the present, once he has arrived in Santa Fe. In dramatic contrast, Vaillant in "The Month of Mary" practically begs Latour to let him leave Santa Fe to search for lost souls:

To hunt for lost Catholics, Jean! Utterly lost Catholics, down in your new territory, towards Tucson. There are hundreds of poor families down there who have never seen a priest. I want to go from house to house this time, to every little settlement. They are full of devotion and faith, and it has nothing to feed upon but the most mistaken superstitions. They remember their prayers all wrong. . . . They are like seeds, full of germination but with no moisture. A mere contact is enough to make them a living part of the Church. The more I work with

Mobile Sections

(Continued)

the Mexicans, the more I believe it was people like them our Savior bore in mind when He said, Unless ye become as little children. . . . I go away feeling that I have conferred immeasurable happiness and have released faithful souls that were shut away from God by neglect. (Cather 215-16)

Although Vaillant's proposed undertaking reaches directly to the heart of their mission, Latour is reluctant to let his friend leave: "You must realize that I have need of you here, Father Joseph. My duties are too many for one man" (217). The two priests have switched places and it is now Vaillant who feels the great calling of God, while Latour is content to remain in his place. In a symbolic gesture, Latour breaks off a lilac-colored sprig from a tamarisk tree, lilac serving as the Whitmanesque representation of masculine love: "This is

a love story . . . of a passionate, flaming, consuming love . . . of two men, one for the other, of the devastating love of these two men for men, women, and children, of the all-embracing love of God for these two men and of other men, and of their love for Him" (Murphy 361). At this moment in the garden both Latour and Vaillant realize that their love for each other is strong, but not fervent enough to completely satisfy them any longer: "Two men grow lonely when they see nobody but each other" (Cather 220).

The third and final mobile section added to the text of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is "Cathedral," the first chapter in the eighth book, "Gold Under Pike's Peak." Positioning this section in this location, Cather forces the reader to discover the gold of Latour's rock that will become his cathedral. She also avoids immediately focusing attention on the monetarily valuable gold that will soon be found in Colorado: "I rode up here from the west in the late afternoon; this hill confronted me as it confronts us now, and I knew instantly that it was my Cathedral" (253). This placement suggests that Latour's gold is more valuable than Colorado's gold. It underscores the fact that Latour's gold will bring people together in a cathedral, while Colorado gold will divide competitors. Latour's gold will also endure much longer than Colorado's fleeting consumer commodity. Ironically, both forms of the gold will require the work of the priests; Latour must build his cathedral for his people and Vaillant must succor the souls of those too busy searching for gold to search for God.

This section confronts Latour with the issue of what he will leave behind after his death, as the same question confronted

Padre Martínez in his section. With her additional sections, Cather has paralleled two contrasting characters as they struggle with the central fact of mortality. Latour, the polar opposite of Martínez, responds in a drastically different way than the proud old heretic.

Latour is beginning to realize that his time is running out. Rather than rebel against this fact, Latour embraces it while consciously planning his gift for the future: "But the Cathedral is not for us, Father Joseph. We build for the future—better not lay a stone unless we can do that" (254). In a novel that is "a kind of center for a series of impressions" (Murphy 356), Latour struggles with the issue of making his own lasting impression. The cathedral is admittedly close to Latour's heart, and will eventually become that heart's physical manifestation, as the cathedral rises out of the earth. This also ties this novel to the previous *My Ántonia* and to the future *Shadows on the Rock*. In those novels, the women were privileged enough to leave

behind a race and a culture, respectively. *Death Comes for the Archbishop* asks and answers the question, "What can a man leave behind?"

The important emphasis in "Cathedral" on Latour's construction is closely related to Cather's opinion about the power that churches command: "The old mission churches, even those which were abandoned and in ruins, had a moving reality about them; the hand-carved beams and joists, the utterly unconventional frescoes, the countless fanciful figures of the saints, no two of them alike, seemed a direct expression of some very real and lively human feeling" (Cather 374). Cather endows churches with both human and supernatural properties: "In Europe, the

revelation of beauty that was to redeem humanity manifested itself to Cather in churches" (Murphy 328). In this section, Cather marries the beauty of European churches with the spirit of New Mexico by combining beautiful Norman architecture with a stone that comes directly from the New Mexican soil. By building a cathedral, Latour is taking part in creation, adding to the incompleteness that he noticed about the physical landscape by using an element of the landscape itself (349). It is "as if, with all the materials . . . assembled, the Creator had desisted, gone away and left everything . . . waiting to be made into a landscape" (Cather 100).

The final mobile section of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is "December Night." It was not added to the text, but extracted from it and published independently. While we have assessed the additional sections for their importance to the whole, "December Night" must be analyzed for what it represents standing on its own. In order to allow this type of publication, Cather must have felt that the story would have



"The Bishop's Apricot." Woodblock print by Gustave Baumann, 1920. (Completed seven years before the publication of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.) Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society.

independent significance. The separate publication of "December Night" was printed in an illustrated edition conveying a highly unique artistic visual dimension not found in the rest of the book. The illustration conformed well to Cather's belief in the enhancement of religion through art: "All Catholics will be sorry about it, I think, when it is too late, when all those old paintings and images and carved doors that have so much feeling and individuality are gone" (375). The illustrations successfully convey the sense of the art one might confront upon entering such a missionary church.

The narrative opens on a December night and creates the cold harshness of winter, as well as Bishop Latour's intense sensation of failure. It dramatizes the anxiety that Latour feels; he is a man burdened with the responsibility of leading others to salvation while he cannot even lighten or inspire his own soul. The white snow and black church are both cold and uninviting images that provide neither solace nor warmth. Latour is painfully aware that he and Vaillant are outsiders. He focuses on the times he has spent in places more like home than his current location. Latour's misery raises the question of how to make a connection and how to integrate into a foreign land with a foreign culture. The Catholic conflict with Protestants is highlighted, as well as the bishop's need to deal with local distrust and resentment. These issues challenge his power as a priest and his dignity as a man. His church provides no support, proving that a church must serve as more than a mere building, for stone and mortar are useless where there is no faith, desire or passion. As Latour approaches the church, he realizes that a woman is also looking to the church for warmth on a cold evening, but its door is locked to her. The fact that the bishop holds the key symbolizes his people's need for him. Religion is closed to those who do not have guidance and Latour serves as the supreme authority available to them. In this confrontation, Latour realizes his selfishness, acknowledging unconsciously that the church was built for the low, the poor and the weak.

Once inside the church the bishop is faced with religion's dichotomy—its power to warm the soul and its power to frighten: "the Bishop took the fur cloak from his shoulders and put it about her. This frightened her. She cowered under it, murmuring 'Ah, no, no, Padre!'" (Night 4). While Sada and the bishop pray, Latour conjures what he knows about the woman's life and contemplates the issue of freedom. What, exactly, is freedom? Sada is free to worship in her heart, but is slave to an American family. She, however, finds greater happiness than Latour, despite all his privileges; so he is left to wonder which type of freedom is more valuable—religious freedom/freedom of soul, or physical freedom/freedom of movement? The bishop's confusion is further complicated when Sada rejects his cloak as a gift, for fear her masters will disapprove: "But she slipped out of it hurriedly; such a thought seemed to terrify her" (9-10). In contrast, Sada willingly accepts the risk of having her rosary beads discovered as they are tied around her waist. Her choice provides evidence that her religion is a personal and internal necessity, while mere physical warmth is external and expendable.

The central, transforming religious force in the narrative is Mary, the Virgin Mother who is deified by Cather in spite of church doctrine that claims her to be mortal. This belief in a central female figure endowed with the power of ultimate salvation illustrates an alteration in conventional religious

opinion. A gender role reverses again when Cather endows Sada with the forgiving qualities of Christ—"More than that, she did not accuse her oppressors" (10)—and also when Bishop Latour is referred to by his full name which contains a significant female element—Jean Marie Latour. Mary herself loses any gender associations when she metamorphoses from a figure on a silver medal into the ultimate symbol of love: "Ah, he thought, for one who cannot read—or think—the Image, the physical form of Love!" (10). The bishop as well as Sada is transformed by this intense religious experience. He bears witness to the power that the religious artifacts have over Sada, a correlation with Emerson's declaration that the populace is deeply immersed in symbolism. Through Sada, Latour realizes the possibility of a truly transcendent religiosity that connects both himself with his people and his people with God. After this revelation, the snow has stopped, the cold is gone, and the bishop is left with the impression that Sada has made, both on the snow and in his heart.

The mobile sections of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* all serve different purposes, but each is intimately related to Cather's chosen effects. In the controversial "Padre Martínez" Cather fictionalized an actual historic character in order to further dramatize her hero's admirable qualities. Martínez represents the "old order" and Latour, the future. Martínez serves as foil for Latour, but joins Lucero and Trinidad as the three manifest the seven deadly sins. "The Month of Mary" provides the analogy of the Bishop's gardening to the cultivation of his people, and depicts the problems of trying to make a desert garden bloom. The section also poignantly highlights the evolution of Latour and Vaillant as they exchange roles. It emphasizes their deep love for each other despite their doctrinal differences. "Cathedral" accentuates Latour's desire to leave behind a legacy for the future. He begins to plan for his own death with an inspiring reserve of grace. Poised as always, he accepts his inevitable mortality. The extracted section, "December Night," in a compressed few pages, explores personal faith, freedom, salvation, renewal, and revelation. Each mobile section serves, above all, as testament to Cather's greatness. Her acute perception about the thoughts of others so directs her work that her accuracy and precision approach perfection.

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Remembering Don Connors, Long-Time Member Of the Cather Foundation Board of Governors

Charles A. Peek, President
Cather Foundation Board of Governors



Don makes a point at a luncheon at the Cather Center. Summer, 2007. Photograph by Barb Kudrna.

When Don Connors died on the first of February, the Cather Foundation (or as Don would have called it, the WCPM) lost a faithful friend and constant supporter. His obituary appeared in Sioux City, where he was born, but his memory comes to me day after day.

Once Don's passion for Cather was spurred by a trip with his students to Red Cloud in 1959, he never took a furlough from the front lines. I've heard from his sister, Darlene Pickrel, and one of his nieces, Tammy Hoover. They are grateful for the Cather Foundation's thoughts and prayers because, among all who knew him, they, too, know that, though he taught in Downey, California, his heart was always in Catherland.

It was so dear of Don, and so typical too, for him to ask that memorials be sent to the Cather Foundation that he loved so much. Don's gifts to the Foundation were continued over a period of more years than almost anyone left on the Board can remember—such

faithfulness and devotion were hallmarks of his life.

Through what was probably a regrettable means, I was privileged to have a few conversations with Don that most others didn't have—we were smoking buddies! The Foundation Board of Governors "enjoys" marathon meetings that usually run from 8:30 in the morning to well on toward 5:00 in the afternoon. But Don and I would sneak out occasionally for a cigarette. Except to talk a little about his declining health, it was never small talk . . . Don always wanted to talk about Cather, about the Foundation, about where he felt it was headed, and about when he thought it was getting off the track. When anything came up that concerned him, I knew that very shortly I'd get a call from California.

When I became president of the Foundation, every one of my conversations with Don came back at one time or another to help me. They gave me an "institutional memory" I could never have otherwise had, and they helped keep us all focused on the mission of the Foundation.

Don was so unassuming that it was unthinkable he would ever push himself on anyone, so I was glad that he always made me feel that he welcomed my company and conversation; for my part, I knew him to be the "roots" of the tree that Mildred Bennett had planted (Cather herself being the soil). Indeed, his friendship with Mildred began the "family ties" that endured for nearly five decades.

He was an admirable man, a faithful member, and a devoted soul. We shall miss him greatly and miss him regularly in every phase of our work because he was, himself, so regular and involved in all the work.

One more of our ties to the past is gone. Cather herself was no stranger to the swift loss of what we hold most dear—treatment of the theme runs throughout her works: "Time like an ever rolling stream bears all her sons away." Daughters, too. Being 78 and in ill health, Don's is not one of those losses that could have been so easily avoided, though we all wish it could have been at least postponed.

Left to right: Don, Carrie Miner Sherwood, and Mildred Bennett. This classic photograph was found among Don's papers and sent to the Cather Foundation by Don's sister, Darlene Pickrel. The photograph was taken at the Webster County Fair in Bladen, Nebraska, in the summer of 1968. This would have been a typical scene in the early years of the development of the Cather Historic Site. Don, Carrie, and Mildred were friends and worked together to promote the acquisition of the historic sites and important artifacts that today are the treasures of the Cather Foundation and State Historic Site.



Don behind his desk as a teacher at Omaha Central. Undated file photo, courtesy of Cather Foundation.



Thea, Thee, or Me? Willa Cather's Immigrant World

Cathy Bao Bean

From the perspective of a Chinese-American who arrived in the United States at age four and who first read Cather's *The Song of the Lark* at age fifty-four, the young Thea is like many immigrants I know: she has at least two selves. In preserving her different selves, Thea is pressured by a myriad of forces to identify with only one of her parts. The preferred part is the one that the majority around her considers the most familiar and least "foreign." At the least, those around her prefer that part which is most useful. In Thea's case, community pressure favors the lass who would meekly teach piano to lazy pupils (whose mothers picked the music) for less than the going rate, while she also plays and sings hymns at prayer meetings for free.

From the perspective of a lyric-opera lover whose ear is deaf to Wagner, the adult Thea can still be excused for singing Sieglinde rather than *Queen of the Night*. Like the well-adjusted immigrant, Thea has matured through heated conditions that reduce complexity in the Melting Pot. That conditioning pressure can force native tongues into using a foreign National Language. It can challenge as well as shame. It can use admiration, ridicule, hope, hatred, courage, fear, fascination and timidity to finish the assimilation task.

From the perspective of a former American philosophy teacher who now uses her memoir as a manual to teach about living with several selves, I offer my view of how Cather's Thea elucidates the range of possibilities for an *immigrant* experience. This range includes reveling in multiplicity, as well as Multiple Personality Disorder. The range encompasses someone's responding to prejudice because (s)he is regarded as "other," as the person who lives in "the only noisy house on this street" (*Lark* 412). The range can also challenge Western culture which denigrates any form of "duplicity."

The fact is that Americans begin by asserting that an acorn can only become an oak tree, and then habitually talk of human development only in the singular: "*Be yourself*"; "*To thine own self be true*"; "*develop self-esteem*." We Americans associate failing to think singularly with a flawed character: "*self-contradictory*," "*two-faced*," "*fork-tongued*," "*self-unaware*." Furthermore, by framing questions in terms of a pyramidal universe—"What's your *favorite color*?" "*Who's your best friend*?" "*what was most fun at school today*?"—we train our children to presume there's room for only one answer or item at a pyramid's top. Regardless of relevance, we hold that choosing *the* one of anything is not only possible but natural. Any failure to choose one item provokes suspicions of being "*wishy-washy*," "*not knowing your own mind*," "*indecisive*," "*unable to commit*."

I recognize how accurately Cather presents these conditions and forces in the interactions of Thea's *Friends of Childhood*. This beginning section of her novel depicts how young Thea detects and then preserves her several selves, especially her Singing Self. Early on, after losing public acclaim to pretty Lily Fisher, she "felt that silence would become the Kronborgs for a while" (349). Soon after, a duality symbolically emerges when "frowning in the *broken* looking-glass . . . her eyes flashed into her own defiantly" (italics mine).

She then decides, "she would rather be hated than be stupid" (350). This choice becomes her wisdom when Thea becomes bitterly disappointed that Madame Necker's worldview can accommodate only one queen at the top. Thea's own world has been molded by a belief in artistic growth that is "more than it is anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness [which] the stupid believe . . . is easy" (697).

Few of Cather's characters have it easy. Their struggles are psychological as well as ethnic. Their lives on the hyphen as Swedish-American, Mexican-American, Moonstone-American, guarantee that each set of circumstances will yield several different cultural emotions, associations, judgments. To have to decide—prematurely, too late, or never—which one self is the right or true self can tear one's wholeness apart: "A Mexican learns to dive below insults or soar above them, after he crosses the border" (336); or a proud but timid Dr. Archie heartily speaks to strangers about his heartless wife. Agreeing with Cather, I regard multiplicity of selves as a drawing that teaches one about doubleness: it looks one minute like a duck and the next like a rabbit. Most people can learn to see each animal in quick turn, but nobody can see two animals in the same shape at the same moment. The ability to switch rapidly is, initially, more a matter of proficiency than preference.

Brilliantly portraying all the characters who are not hermits as "emigrants" and "immigrants" traveling out of and into different worlds—worlds defined by customs, gender, location—Cather shows us how Thea and a few others successfully develop their several selves. But she does so by depicting the degrees of schizophrenia that afflict the comparatively less developed or successful. For example, there's Spanish Johnny who periodically leaves town to go "crazy" elsewhere (331). Or Dr. Archie who must "lose [his married] self" by reading past midnight in his office (333). Or Mr. Wunsch who hears his student's Singing Self, but cannot stand his own.

In contrast and in so many ways, Cather underscores Thea's journeys as fundamentally about inclusion, not exclusion. She does not nurture her Singing Self to the exclusion of her other selves as daughter, sister, friend, student, neighbor, teacher, colleague and lover. She secures different places and positions, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes sequentially, for her several selves. The inclusion is infectious. Thinking about her own "friendly spirit," a kind of "warm sureness," Thea realizes that "When this companion was with her, she could get the most wonderful things out of Spanish Johnny, or Wunsch, or Dr. Archie" (363). Later, in and through Ray's eyes, Thea sees "her own face, very small, but much prettier than the cracked glass at home [had] ever shown it" (425).

Because she knows that "a body has to have something to go to!" (367), Thea is not confined by the topographical and social boundaries of Moonstone even though "every child understood them perfectly" (320). In laying out Thea's options in the town, Cather significantly places the Kohler house beyond the ravine, making it more foreign even than Mexican Town. The Kohler house is home to music from many sources, including Wunsch "from God knew where" (313). Disgusted Kohler sons "got out into the world as fast as possible" and "forgot the past"

Thea, Thee, or Me?

(Continued)

(314). Although she is like the Kohler sons in being ashamed of Tillie's provincial stupidities, Thea is unlike them because she does not refuse Tillie's over-the-top enthusiasm for immediately gratifying American successes. Instead, she leaves Moonstone in order to preserve that connection between her own past and future. In this, her mother's immigrant mode is crucial.

Mrs. Kronborg, with "a singularly unprejudiced point of view," facilitates Thea's multifaceted character (382). Mrs. Kronborg remains Swedish and communal within her family, and stays American and individualistic outside. Because she "let her children's minds alone [and] did not pry into their thoughts or nag them" (309), she does not dichotomize their emotional life by demanding loyalty to one standard only. Even within her mother's house, Thea has a room of her own in which to lead "a double life" (345). She also has a Thor with whom she can relax, a piano room to play secular as well as religious music. She aggregates instead of segregating. In doing so, she can accept the discrepancies between her selves and any single standard. She can leave her selves "in parts" and cultivate multiplicity of soul and role.

A more "nagging" problem is Dr. Archie, but his questions pry open. When he asks whether she likes her book of Byron poems, Thea is initially "confused." Then, when asked for her preference, she names "My native land, good-night." When queried about another, she blushes and looks at Archie suspiciously, opting for "There was a sound of revelry"

over the stay-at-home (but beloved!) "Maid of Athens" (305). Later he asks, "What are you going to do with yourself?" He advocates "Anything . . . only don't marry and settle down here without giving yourself a chance" (367). Thea gives herself many. If temporarily "tongue-tied" in one language (306), she develops others out of the "code of winks and grimaces" used to communicate with Dr. Archie, or out of Wunsch's German. Thus, while Lily Fisher "sang all songs and played all parts alike" (354), Thea's voice "changed altogether" (361). Similarly, each time she took her body to a different location, she apprehended the new and then absorbed and eventually embodied it. At the Ottenburg ranch, "her power to think seemed converted into a power of sustained sensation" (548). As when she first heads for Chicago, each of her emigrations is an opportunity for the immigrants within her to become more intimately acquainted and eventually "united and strong" (554). "She was all there, and something else was there, too,—in her heart, was it, or under her cheek? Anyhow, it was about her somewhere, that warm sureness, that sturdy little companion with whom she shared a secret" (433). Thea becomes the immigrants' diva who thoroughly knows this score.

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President's Message

Hello all,

The new look of the *Newsletter & Review* is more than a look!

Through the help of members and readers and of the board and staff, we have taken some giant steps to secure our future.

Foundations reach optimum sizes, where the resources equal the commitments. However, no growing organization stays at an optimum size very long, and right now the needs within our foundation always just outstrip our resources a little. Yet, thanks to you, at the last minute something always turns up.

"Transition" describes us right now.

We bid a sad and final good-bye to Don Connors, Catherine Cather Lowell, and Josie Davis-George. More, this is Merrill Skaggs' last issue as an editor, and Betty Kort soon steps "up" to rejoin the Board. Thank you, Merrill, for so many years helping to edit issues of the *Newletter & Review* and thank you, Betty, for so ably combining managing the *Newletter & Review* with her many other duties as our Executive Director. Both of you deserve a hearty tribute from all of us.

We move on to a new era, both for the *Newletter & Review* and for the Foundation. Thanks to Joe Urgo and his Personnel/Nominating Committee, we can start that new era in the capable hands of our new Executive Director, Mr. Tim Hoheisel. I'm sure you will all make his welcome a warm one.

Thanks to the Board and staff, we are ready for a grand Spring Conference and our first-ever Elderhostel, with plans well under way for 2009 and its conferences and International Seminar (Chicago) as well.

Let me encourage you to spread the good word about our growing list of accomplishments, our good fortune in always finding the needed help, and our need for continued and increased support from you, your friends, and colleagues.

This issue offers sufficient evidence that what we do in carrying out our mission is worth supporting. Because of that, we aren't ashamed to tell you that, as wonderful as your support is, we need to expand our resources to meet our needs. A new era always builds on the foundation of the past. Our foundation is secure. Now, let's commit to meeting the future in a way that would make our founders proud.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Peek



Cather Scholarship in 2006: A Bibliography

A longtime feature of the Willa Cather Newsletter and Review (WCPMN) was a bibliography of recent Cather scholarship, compiled by such scholars as Virgil Albertini and Jo Ann Middleton. In this issue, Cather Foundation Education Director Cindy Bruneteau resumes that useful feature, which demonstrates the variety and vitality of ongoing Cather scholarship. Her bibliography is based on Ann Moseley's annotated version, forthcoming in *American Literary Scholarship*. Bruneteau has added citations for dissertations. A 2007 bibliography will follow in an upcoming issue.

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(Continued on page 14.)

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was Olga
Skopce (Scotch pol)

Elsa C. Skopce X

In the Spring of 1917 someone in Lincoln told Willa Cather that the best place to ask anyone for Czech names was Wilber, in Saline County. One nice day she boarded the train for Wilber. On her arrival she walked up the street to the Drug Store. When she asked who would be the best person to ask about Czech names, the Druggist told her "That would be Mr. Frank Sadilek. I think he knows every Czech family in Saline County. He has spoken at hundreds of Czech funerals in this area and in northern Kansas." Grandfather was delighted to show her the records he had kept, and Willa remarked that many of them were gratis. (over)

and he said "They were my friends." By this time Grandmother and I had set the table for dinner and we had a hearty meal. Grandfather told Willa how it happened that he was called to speak as a eulogist. In the early settling of Czechs, there were no Czech ministers. In later years, when the Czech people had learned to use the American language, many of them asked my Grandfather to also speak a few words in the Czech language. He then had many friends among the ministers who conducted the regular ceremony not only in Saline County but in other places in Nebraska. Willa asked Grandfather - what did you name your children? He told her - The girls' names are Antonia, Olga, Sylvia and Irma. (next page)

Elsa C. Skopce
The boys' names are Charles, Frank, Walter and Victor. Willa pondered for awhile, and then said "I think I would like the name Antonia for my heroine. Her father's name was Anton." (over)

When it was time for Willa to return to Lincoln, Grandmother gave her some crochet lace, and some of her good Kolace. During the Fall of 1918 they received an autographed copy of Willa's book "My Antonia". After the family had read the book, my Grandfather had sent it to a friend in Czechoslovakia with the suggestion that the friend might translate it into the Czech language. My mother, Dr. Olga Stastny, was in (over)

Elsa C. Skopce
Prague at that time, and Grandfather suggested that she encourage his friend to translate Willa's story. She went to visit him and found that he was very ill. He died a short time later. I think that the Czechs would have loved Willa's story.

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A New Discovery: A Legal Letter!

Bruce Baker

In recent months I've been sorting what my wife calls "all that Cather material," stored for over thirty years of my teaching and researching life. My files contain clippings, photographs, correspondence, and articles from everywhere. Progress has been slow, because I keep stopping to read, fascinated anew by this material's relevance to Cather's work. Recently I came across a piece which I could not recall seeing before: a copy of an undated, hand-written letter or deposition from one "Elsa C. Skocpol." As I read the text, I was astounded by what it revealed about Cather's meticulous research. She not only read books and historical documents: she "took pains" to get accurate or evocative facts from knowledgeable people. The Skocpol letter proves once again how carefully Cather selected her details and how willing she was to travel any distance to "get it right" before she transformed her particulars to universals. To my knowledge, we scholars have been unaware of this piece, which has never been published. It may well serve as a source for important further Cather studies. The text reads:

In the Spring of 1917 someone in Lincoln told Willa Cather that the best place to ask anyone for Czech names was Wilber, in Saline County [Nebraska]. One nice day she boarded the train for Wilber. On her arrival she walked up the street to the Drug Store. When she asked who would be the best person to ask about Czech names the druggist told her "That would be Mr. Frank Sadilek. I think he knows every Czech family in Saline County. He has spoken at hundreds of Czech funerals in this area and in northern Kansas." Grandfather was delighted to show her the records he had kept, and Willa remarked that many of them were gratis, and he said, "They were my friends."

By this time Grandmother and I had set the table for dinner and we had a hearty meal.

Grandfather told Willa how it happened that he was called to speak as a eulogist. In the early settling of Czechs there were no Czech ministers. In later years, when the Czech people had learned to use the American language, many of them asked my Grandfather to also speak a few words in the Czech language. He then had many friends among the ministers who conducted the regular ceremonies, not only in Saline County but in other places in Nebraska.

Willa asked Grandfather—What did you name your children? He told her—the girl's names are Antonia, Olga, Sylvia and Irma.

The boy's names are Charles, Frank, Walter and Victor. Willa pondered for awhile, and then said "I think I would like the name Antonia for my heroine. Her father's name was Anton."

When it was time for Willa to return to Lincoln, Grandmother gave her some crochet lace and some of her good kolác.

During the Fall of 1918 they received an autographed copy of Willa's book "My Antonia."

After the family had read the book, my Grandfather had sent it to a friend in Czecho-Slovakia with the suggestion that the friend might translate it into the Czech language. My mother, Dr. Olga Stastny, was in Prague at that time, and Grandfather suggested that she encourage his friend to translate Willa story. She went to visit him and found that he was very ill. He died a short time later.

I think that the Czechs would have loved Willa's story.

In addition to the body of the letter, and in handwriting quite different from Skocpol's, someone has penned a brief note at the top of page one: "her mother was Olga Stepanok"; and in parentheses just above Elsa Skocpol's name the notation, "pronounced Scotchpol." In the left margin of page one appears the phrase, "1st woman doctor in Nebraska," with a line drawn to the top of the page pointing to the doctor's name. The letter itself, of course, confirms that Skocpol's mother was a doctor, but with the last name *Stastny* clearly written in her daughter's hand. Of these marginalia, I think the most interesting and significant is the information that Dr. Olga Stastny was the "1st woman doctor in Nebraska." That was a major accomplishment for a woman who was a second generation immigrant.

Skocpol herself was therefore a third generation immigrant whose grandfather had presumably emigrated from his native land to this country. What impressed me most was the clarity of thought and command of English the letter reveals. The syntax, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, are noteworthy. Even the penmanship is classic Palmer Method, an American institution in itself, which Elsa had mastered so well that transcription was easy. Elsa Skocpol had obviously adapted well to the new country in which her grandfather had settled. It is little wonder that Elsa concludes her letter with, "I think Czechs would love Willa's story." Moreover, her grandfather would be pleased indeed that the novel was soon translated into Czech and many other languages.

The most significant item in the Skocpol letter is, of course, Cather's own statement about naming her heroine. But the letter also provides evidence of Cather's meticulous research for her fiction. In addition, this narration of a real-life experience of one immigrant family in America gives some insights into one of Cather's major themes. When Mildred Bennett asked me to serve on the WCPM Board of Governors over thirty years ago, I said *yes* for who could say no to Mildred? She would be pleased, I think, that the "young blood" (her phrase) she recruited had discovered another Cather item, a "legal letter," to add to our understanding of Cather's art.

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A Toast to a Professional Friendship

Judith L. Johnston, Rider University

The personal and professional spheres of writers' lives often intersect. They do in two letters Willa Cather writes to Henry Goddard Leach (1880-1970), which scholars may consult in the Willa Cather Collection at Drew University, thanks to the generosity of Finn and Barbara Caspersen, who purchased Frederick Adams' Cather collection and donated it to Drew. In the first of these two letters, September 1, 1931, Cather furiously objects to his decision to publish, in the periodical *The Forum*, which he edited, Granville Hicks's review of *Shadows on the Rock*. In the second letter, May 25, 1932, nine months later, Cather thanks Leach for two letters he had written her, and she asserts—not very credibly—that the review no longer bothers her feelings. Cather's fierce, self-protective pride in her artistry is revealed in these two letters. In defending her new novel against a negative review, Cather is working within the professional sphere, but the letters' emotional rhetoric draws upon Cather's personal sphere.

Before writing that September 1, 1931 letter to Leach, Cather thought about Granville Hicks's review for at least a week. In a letter postmarked August 23, 1931, to Louise Guerber Burroughs (at Drew University), Cather mentions the "nasty" review of *Shadows on the Rock* published in *The Forum*. Cather contacted Leach even earlier, according to evidence in a bookseller's advertisement for a Cather letter: "Fine one-page letter on Cather's monogrammed printed stationery dated 20 August [n.y.] and SIGNED by Cather at the conclusion. Addressed to Dr. [Henry Goddard] Leach, editor of THE FORUM, regarding an article that appeared on Cather's work in his publication." The letter is quoted in full in the advertisement: "Thank you for replying to my telegram, which I am afraid was premature. I have just received from the Knopf office a copy of the estimate of my books published in the September Forum. I wish I might know your personal opinion of the article before I write you. Sincerely yours, Willa Cather." (The bookseller is Charles Agvent, Mertztown, PA., and the advertisement was accessed at www.abebooks.com.) From the reference to the September issue of *The Forum*, the letter may be dated August 20, 1931. Clearly, Cather had been troubled for several days after reading the advance copy of the review, and she had first telegraphed and then written to Leach asking for an explanation.

Her September letter of complaint to Leach is thoughtfully constructed. Addressing him formally, "Dear Mr. Leach," she accepts, she claims, a reviewer's right to a negative evaluation of *Shadows on the Rock*, but she asserts that Granville Hicks unprofessionally makes a malevolent personal attack on her. Quoting Hicks, she finds offensive the reviewer's assertion that she is "deliberately exploiting" the historical past in her "elegiac" novels. She hears Hicks's tone as mocking and derisive. Cather implies, though she does not state, that Leach should have censored Hicks's words, or that, as editor, he should have suppressed publication. She sharply reproaches Leach for his betrayal of professional editorial standards. This is an insult Leach does not deserve.

By 1931, Henry Goddard Leach was an experienced editor. He had edited the *Scandinavian-American Review* from 1913 through 1921, and, since 1923, he had edited *The*

Forum, continuing as editor when this periodical absorbed *The Century* in 1930. Moreover, Leach had published in *The Forum* Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) and "The Double Birthday" (1929). As author and editor, Cather and Leach had established a mutually respectful professional relationship. They had known each other more than two decades, having met in 1910.

When Cather and Leach first encountered each other, however, their roles were reversed: she was the editor and he the author. In 1910, he, then thirty years old, submitted an article on Denmark's forests for publication in *McClure's*, and he was summoned to the magazine's office, where he met the thirty-eight-year-old editor, Cather. Leach had recently completed his doctoral dissertation at Harvard in Comparative Literature (he studied texts in Old Norse, Old English, Sanskrit, Gothic, Old Irish, Medieval Latin, and Old French). Like Cather's friend Louise Pound, he was a scholar of linguistics and literature, but, unlike Pound, he did not have a job as a university professor. In 1910, having just returned from a two-year research trip in Scandinavia (where he had met Selma Lagerlöf and Anders Zorn, among others), Leach needed to earn a living, which he sought to do as a journalist, attempting to place articles about contemporary Scandinavia. In his 1956 memoir, he recalls "Miss Cather" the editor as "calm and soft-spoken," adding that "in her stateliness she seemed a princess. Her first desire was to be of help to a struggling young writer" (*My Last Seventy Years* 201). As Leach tells the story, Miss Cather, after consulting with Mr. McClure, who was away from the office in Rome, requested that Leach change the essay to make it relevant to American readers; Leach complied, and the essay was published in 1911. Cather, as editor, had asked an aspiring writer to revise his work before accepting it for publication.

Addressing him in her September 1, 1931 letter, Cather, though not mentioning their first meeting two decades earlier, deliberately evokes Leach's memory of their first professional encounter when she asserts that she, while editor at *McClure's*, certainly would have refused to publish an essay disparaging Leach, and that, had the editors been away from the office, the staff would have consulted with the editors, herself and Mr. McClure, before publishing a piece unfair to him. This is not an imaginary scenario, but a recollection of their first professional meeting. In her letter, Cather presents herself as a model editor to Henry Goddard Leach, implying that he does not come up to her standard.

The relationship between Willa Cather and Henry Goddard Leach was personal as well as professional. Leach, in his memoir, recalls: "In later years I came to know that Willa Cather was 'my friend,' although my timidity in the face of genius and her own shyness prevented any demonstrations" (201). Leach was one of those friends whom Cather invited to tea at her apartment—"tea" being a euphemism for mixed drinks. He writes, "During the years I edited *The American-Scandinavian Review* I had tea with her once or twice in her New York apartment, and she expressed a kindly interest in my journalism" (202). While Leach was editor of *The American-*

A Toast to Professional Friendship (Continued)

Scandinavian Review, very favorable short reviews of Cather's early novels appeared in his magazine—*O Pioneers!* was reviewed in 1914, *The Song of the Lark* in 1916, and the Swedish translation *Hell, banbrytare! (O Pioneers!)* in 1920. Leach, whom Cather had trusted with the manuscript of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, read it and then suggested to Cather over tea "that the novel seemed to me fashioned like a medieval romance recited by a jongleur—the romance of the rose, for example . . . if thousands in the Middle Ages could listen for hours to a recital that had no plot, in the modern sense, surely the American public would not be so impatient as not to follow the quiet adventures of the Archbishop. Miss Cather said that my comparison with a medieval romance was correct" (202). In New York City, their personal and their professional spheres intersected many times.

Leach's two letters in response to Cather's complaint about Hicks's review have not survived, but his reply must have been courteous, respectful, and friendly. Cather addresses her 1932 letter to him affectionately: "My Dear Dr. Leach." In this letter, Cather assures him that the review had wounded her personally, but not professionally. Using a rhetorical figure that substitutes the institution (the periodical) for the person (Henry Goddard Leach), she explains that she had expected to be treated as a friend by *The Forum*. Although Cather declares to Leach that business concerns are hostile to friendships, her other correspondence reveals that personal friends often aided her professionally by recommending her novels, and that she frequently called upon her large network of friends for research and for advice. Cather does not apologize for challenging Leach's editorial ethics; however, she does ask him to forget that she had been so angered by the negative review of *Shadows on the Rock*. In a gesture of conciliation, she invites him to tea, at some indefinite future date, in New York, concluding wittily that they might drink a toast to Hicks—though his name may be forgotten.

Henry Goddard Leach and Willa Cather did meet for a drink in New York, on February 2, 1933. The newspaper clipping from the *New York Herald Tribune* that Willa Cather proudly sent to her friends (Irene Miner Weisz, Fanny Butcher, and Louise Burroughs all received copies) describes the occasion: "Willa Cather received the first award of the Prix Femina Americain for her novel *Shadows on the Rock* at a reception yesterday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach, 170 East Sixty-fourth Street." Agnes Brown Leach, married to Henry Goddard Leach since 1915, was a member of the American committee for the Prix Femina. Mrs. Leach herself mailed out the formal printed invitations to this reception, making sure that Ferris Greenslet received one (it is found among his papers at the Houghton Library, and he replied directly to Mrs. Leach). Many of Willa Cather's oldest friends were invited and attended the event: Ferris Greenslet, Alfred Knopf, Alfred Harcourt, and Henry Goddard Leach. The selection committee included prominent American women of letters, such as Gertrude Atherton, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Ellen Glasgow, Susan Glaspell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Harriet Monroe, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, and more than two dozen others. In Henry and Agnes Leach's home, Cather was honored in a formal ceremony for the very novel that she

believed had been unfairly reviewed in *The Forum*, and—even if she disliked the photograph of herself—she did enjoy the triumph.

Henry Goddard Leach, in his memoir, asserts that Willa Cather should have won the Nobel Prize in Literature. As part of his campaign to win her a nomination for the Nobel Prize, he writes that he attempted to persuade Scandinavian readers of Cather's literary artistry: "On my visits to Sweden during Miss Cather's lifetime I was several times asked for interviews about American literature and radio broadcasts over the Baltic area. In them I presented Willa Cather as my first exhibit, trying to impress on the critical Scandinavian mind the importance of this shy, sensitive, and elusive author to those who knew only the more exciting writings of Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, and Sinclair Lewis" (200).

When Leach reflects on the 1931 and 1932 exchange of letters with Willa Cather, his comments reveal his admiration for her as an artist and his defense of his own editorial principles. Describing *Shadows on the Rock* as "the most subtle and spiritual of all her novels," Leach claims that the "cynical review" was published without his approval (he was in California), and that he replied to Cather's "letter of protest," citing *The Forum's* purpose to publish controversial opinions. Defending his own editorial impartiality, he adds that "personally my reaction to this book was quite the opposite of that of the smart young critic"—as Cather predicted, Hicks's name is not remembered in Leach's memoir (204). About her claim that his friendship to her should have prevented publication of the review, he writes, "Miss Cather's attitude seemed to me surprising, a smallness unworthy of genius. To me objectivity was a concept transcending friendship. . . . Human loyalties are precious possessions" (204). Leach affirms: "I understand better now the nature of friendship and I treasure that of Willa Cather as one of the jewels of my life" (201). His gracious words may be heard as his toast to his professional friendship with Willa Cather.

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My Favorite Cather Book: *O Pioneers!*

Barbara Wiselogel, Retired Librarian, Returned Nebraskan

I was born on this landscape—blue skies, white clouds, green earth. The black soil in my dad’s three-tiered garden could grow anything. I peeled it off my rubber boots caked from our unpaved street. I swept it from our linoleum floors in Seward, Nebraska. I observed it for two decades, unbelted, on Sunday drives to my grandparents’ farm in Saline County.

When I left Nebraska in 1968, I missed the soil the most. *O Pioneers!* powerfully revives my memory of the land, says an awful lot about women, men, and love, and is dotted with humor.

Alexandra Bergson expresses that the land “seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious” (64). John Bergson instilled in her the belief “that land, in itself, is desirable” (27). She tells Carl Linstrum that the land “woke up out of its sleep . . . and it was so big, so rich, that we suddenly found we were rich, just from sitting still” (108). We are so rich in this natural resource. Travelers flying coast to coast overlook it—miss the smell of it and the color of it. Only the cranes have the sense to return.

“There’s something about this country,” says Carl “. . . that has haunted me all these years” (110). Perhaps that is why, when I saw Webster County, it was a homecoming. So great was the draw of this novel that I now live in Red Cloud. Although I knew no person who lived here, I knew everyone. And they knew me. Willa Cather was my real estate agent. If one has read this book, one knows the geography, the topology, and the people.



Ceres, Roman goddess of the harvest, holding a sheaf of wheat. [Wikipedia]

But it is Alexandra that knocks me out. Her name is mythic. She is a goddess. She is Ceres holding a sheaf of wheat. She is the Everywoman. She is Madonna, Queen, Our Lady of the Divide. She is direct, wise, strong, experimental, pure, fair, smart, just, unchanging, astonishing, sage, over forty, evenhanded, a risk taker, an agronomist, and an accountant. She is the woman we want to be or to marry or to manage our farm or our business or our portfolio. She’s the woman we want for County Commissioner. She travels the high road: “She knew exactly where she was going and what she was

going to do next” (13). Carl Linstrum remembered that, “Even as a boy he used to feel, when he saw her coming . . . that she looked as if she walked straight out of the morning itself” (117). Surely it is Alexandra, rather than The Sower, atop the dome of the Capitol Building, with Willa Cather beneath her feet in the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Bust of Willa Cather in the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Photo by Barbara Wiselogel.



O Pioneers! is tragic, but it’s funny, too. Annie’s hat looks like the model of a battleship (105). Frank Shabata is called “the buck of the beer-gardens” (131). At the fair, Marie, playing a fortuneteller, tells the fat Russian that he will lose his love, lose weight, and “shoot himself from despondency” (197). Lamenting her own girth, Alexandra has a body which “no man on the Divide could have carried very far” (186). What contemporary rural Nebraskans cannot appreciate is Frank Shabata’s annual “spree” to Hastings or Omaha where he would disappear for a couple of weeks, then come home to work “like a demon” (134). I chuckle as Marie confides, when Carl is in town, “‘How nice your dress smells, Alexandra; you put rosemary leaves in your chest, like I told you’” (123-24). I assume, probably incorrectly, that she has put them in her bodice. Later, Marie offers more girl-to-girl advice: “‘The trouble is you almost have to marry a man before you can find out the sort of wife he needs; and usually it’s exactly the sort you are not’” (177-78).



Example of hat from the period. Belle Runyon, David City, NE. [Nebraska Memories digital collection]

Men don’t fare well in this novel. As children Alexandra is described as “looking into the future” (20) while Emil seems “already to be looking into the past” (21). Oscar’s face is “thick and dull” (93). Lou is “tricky” (93), “fussy and flighty” (56). Both brothers are labeled “bigoted and self-

“She knew exactly where she was going and what she was going to do next.”

satisfied” (211). Carl is a wimp and mythically undergoes repeated quests or tests to prove his worthiness. Ivar, the most lucid male character, is considered a lunatic: “It is your fate to be always surrounded by little men” (163), declares Carl and counts himself no better than the rest. It’s a toast to those of us who have been so encircled.

The timeless observations of human behavior delight me. After Lou addresses his wife, Cather comments, “Young farmers seldom address their wives by name. It’s always, ‘you,’ or ‘she’” (104). The Swedish lads are cautious around Emil “because he has been away to college, and were prepared to take him down if he should try to put on airs with them” (192). Lou gossips that Alexandra “pays her hands too much” (86). We frugals wouldn’t want that.

And the romance . . . ah, the romance . . .

Taped to the inside of my medicine chest—no rosemary leaves—just these words carefully clipped from the final pages. “They had reached the gate. Before Carl opened it, he drew Alexandra to him and kissed her softly on her lips and on her eyes” (273).

Take my breath away, frontier dreamer.

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Cather Foundation Receives Grant for Willa Cather Memorial Prairie Restoration

Cindy Bruneteau, Cather Foundation Education Director

The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation is the recipient of three grants totalling \$18,559 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the "Restoration of the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie Project." In the first year of this grant cycle, the Foundation will accomplish most of the initial restoration efforts, while the second and third years will concentrate on controlled rotational burning. The project is one of the 77 projects receiving \$14,798,718 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year.

With this help from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Foundation will enhance its conservation and restoration efforts for this rare ecological gem.

To complete the restoration, the Cather Foundation will continue the effort to remove non-native Chinese Elm and Red Cedar trees, cut walking paths for education, re-establish the ecosystem, restore flowing water to the Prairie, build additional solar fences, and control growth through moderate grazing.

Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the project is a burn plan. Beginning in the spring of 2009, the Foundation will burn 200 acres a year for three years in order to secure the propagation of indigenous grasses and forbs.

The Prairie Management Committee, consisting of biologists, agriculturalists, and ecologists, will oversee the restoration process, which focuses on plant and animal habitat



Willa Cather Memorial Prairie. The new sign indicates substantial support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Photograph by Cindy Bruneteau, Prairie Management Coordinator.

as well as surface and ground water management.

The area is classified as loess, mixed-grass prairie, which marks several transition points that bring together species at the southern edge of their range as well as those at the northern edge of their range. Dr. Steve Rothenberger, professor of biology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and member of the Foundation's Prairie Management Committee, has estimated the existence of 250 reliant plant

species, including the rare Fremont's evening primrose and Fendler's aster—both potential candidates for "threatened" status by the Nebraska Natural Heritage Program. Also, this transitional location affects the species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians as well as invertebrates.



The Nebraska Environmental Trust

Preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations.

Another species that is very rare, and endemic to Webster County, is Fremont's clematis or Fremont's leather-flower. According to Dr. Rothenberger, it is known only from Franklin, Webster, and Nuckolls counties in Nebraska and 15 counties in north central Kansas. Fremont's leather-flower would be a good candidate to reintroduce to the prairie and would potentially benefit the long-term conservation of this species.

The Prairie restoration project is integral in fostering the mission statement of the Cather Foundation. We see the preservation of the Prairie as part of a holistic approach to the study of America's art, history, and culture through the works of Willa Cather, who was a great champion of prairie lands.

As Carl Linstrum observes in *O Pioneers!*, "the land wanted to be left alone, to preserve its own fierce strength, its peculiar, savage kind of beauty, its uninterrupted mournfulness." We strive to be a part of the land's struggle back to itself.

Josie Davis-George Remembered

A memorial service was held for Josie Davis-George at Texas A&M University-Commerce on April 4, 2008. Many in the Cather community became acquainted with Josie at the Bread Loaf conference, where she read her paper, "Reflections of Jenny Lind within *The Song of the Lark*," which was later published in the *Willa Cather Newsletter and Review* 49.3 (Winter-Spring 2006): 57-60. Josie passed away on March 2. According to Ann Moseley, Josie's dissertation, had it been completed, would have been an important contribution to Cather studies. Josie was also Interim Director of Disabled Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Traveling to Red Cloud and Lenox: One Californian's Pilgrimage

Erika Koss

Literature Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts

When I was in graduate school at San Diego State University, I took a seminar in Edith Wharton and Willa Cather that changed my life. The course changed me because it provided the chance to concentrate on the best novels of two truly exceptional writers, to compare their controversial lives and literary themes, and to do it with an excellent teacher (Clare Colquitt) and enthusiastic classmates—what could be better for a “Literature Specialist” like me?

But there was something missing. As a child growing up in North Hollywood, California, the childhood places of Willa Cather (Virginia's Shenandoah Valley) and Edith Wharton (New York City, Italy, and France) seemed exotic and completely out-of-reach. Cather's family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska, when she was nine, and Wharton bought land in Lenox, Massachusetts, to build her home, The Mount. Red Cloud and Lenox seemed as far away as Uganda or Switzerland to a young girl like me who traveled often in the realms of gold, but never on planes or trains. Yet because of the sensual, vivid way these writers described the plains of Nebraska, the valleys of Virginia, the bustle of New York, and the hills of Western Massachusetts in their fiction, all these unfamiliar places felt familiar through my imagination.

I don't usually make New Year's resolutions, but 2007 was the time to finally make my journey to Cather's beloved prairie and Wharton's first real home. My work at the National Endowment for the Arts on the Big Read materials for *My Ántonia* and *The Age of Innocence* fueled this abiding desire to travel to Red Cloud and Lenox. But for reasons more personal than professional, I suddenly needed to physically inhabit these places that transformed two of my favorite writers — if only for a couple days.

Reader, imagine my joy in March 2007 to fly from Washington, DC, to Omaha, Nebraska, then to drive from Omaha to Lincoln, from Hastings to Red Cloud, absorbed in thoughts of Cather's comment, that this land was both “the happiness and curse” of her life. What a pleasure to finally meet Betty Kort, Executive Director of the Cather Foundation, and walk with her through Cather's prairie; to visit the restored houses that Cather loved (especially the Opera House); to meet Antonette Turner, granddaughter of Annie Sadilek who was the model for *Ántonia*, and the Cather Foundation staff.

Then imagine my delight in July to travel to Lenox, Massachusetts, with Betty, where we met Stephanie Copeland, President of The Mount, and ate lunch on that “big terrace” that faces Edith Wharton's splendidly restored gardens, under her unconventional green and white awning, which protected us

from the unexpected rain. Imagine my excitement, when The Mount librarian, Molly McPhee, took Betty and me for a private tour into Wharton's restored library, where I held her copy of the French translation of *The Age of Innocence* — bound by Wharton in green and yellow with “EW” inscribed on its leather cover! Imagine my bliss to sleep for two nights in a beautiful home set in a tranquil forest not far from The Mount, finally understanding why Wharton might leave her fashionable New York City and Newport homes to design, build, and

decorate an isolated country estate of her own creation.

Thankfully there are times our deferred dreams do not dry up like a raisin in the sun, fester like a sore, or sag like a heavy load. Sometimes they come true in unforeseen ways, better than we dared to imagine. For although my passport now holds stamps from countries as far as Uganda and Switzerland, two places that I love best are right here in America.



The Mount. “This place of ours is really beautiful . . . the stillness, the greenness, the exuberance of my flowers, the perfume of my hemlock woods, & above all the moonlight nights on my big terrace, overlooking the lake. . . .” Edith Wharton in a letter to Bernard Berenson, August 6, 1911. Photograph by Erika Koss.



Mount Librarian Molly McPhee shows Erika Koss the French translation of *The Age of Innocence*. Photograph by Betty Kort.

Joe Urgo Introduces New Executive Director Tim Hoheisel



On behalf of the Personnel Committee, I am pleased to announce the Cather Foundation's new Executive Director, Timothy Hoheisel, of Fargo, North Dakota. Tim comes to us after ten years of service in public history and museums, including work at the Cass County Historical Society in West Fargo, North Dakota, the Codington County Historical Society and Museum and the

Codington County Historic Preservation Commission, both in Watertown, South Dakota. Tim has a B.A. in history from Gustavus Adolphus College, an M.A. in public history from St. Cloud State University, and has completed coursework toward the PhD in American history from Kansas State University. Most recently, he's been teaching United States and American Indian history at Minnesota State University in Moorhead and at North Dakota State University in Fargo. Tim is the co-author of three books, *Cass County, North Dakota* (Arcadia Publishing, 2007), *Watertown and Codington County, South Dakota* (Arcadia, 2002), and *Skeletons of the Prairie: Abandoned Rural Codington County, South Dakota* (Donning Publishers), as well as numerous articles and reviews on local histories.

Upon learning of his appointment, Tim said, "I am truly delighted to be the next executive director of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation. I believe it is an exciting time to join this prestigious organization. The hardworking staff and Board of Governors have had many successful accomplishments through the years and I hope to build on that success." Tim's first exposure to Willa Cather came when he was in college. "My freshman English class read *My Ántonia* and I have enjoyed reading Cather's work ever since. I also have a personal connection to Nebraska. My grandmother was born near Blair and was raised on a farm. As a child, my brother and I would sit on her lap as she told us stories about growing up in Nebraska. Perhaps that is why I have a particular affinity for Cather's prairie novels."

The museums Tim has directed have won several awards including the Governor's Award for History from the South Dakota State Historical Society and the Award of Merit for General Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History. As the director of a historic preservation commission, Tim qualified as an architectural historian, according to the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards. He is an agricultural and public historian by training. We are excited by this appointment because Tim's education and professional experience, as well as his personal interest in American literature, complement the mission and work of the Cather Foundation.

The Cather Foundation has been served well for the past five years under the guidance of Executive Director Betty Kort. When the personnel committee began its search for a new executive director, we knew it would be impossible to replace Betty. As her successor, Tim Hoheisel will benefit by what we all share as a result of the Kort years: a strong organization, an active and engaged board, and an efficient and committed staff in Red Cloud. Betty and Tim will work together this spring to assure a smooth transition, and Betty will return to the Board.

The search committee that recruited Tim consists of the personnel committee (Bruce Baker, Glenda Pierce, Steve Shively, Robert Thacker, and Joe Urgo) joined by Chuck Peek and Jay Yost. Assisting with interviews were Ruth Keene and Jan Offner.

Tim Hoheisel will begin work at the Foundation office in June. He's anxious to get started and has already begun rereading Cather's work, and familiarizing himself with Foundation operational materials. "I look forward to working with the fine staff and Board and meeting the many people who have made the Cather Foundation a thriving organization," Tim says. "Feel free to stop by the office this summer for a visit to meet me and chat."

Call for Papers

For Collected Edition of Essays to be Titled: "Modernism West of the Mississippi"

Submit 200-300 word abstracts with +/- 50 word bios via WORD attachments.

Final papers will be 2500-5000 words.

This collected edition will encourage readers to re-evaluate modernism vis-à-vis the West as both a physical landscape and an idea and "westering" as both a physical movement and an ideal.

This Call for Papers encourages contributors to consider:

- How the American West is related to modernism
- How Western experiences and stories and other forms of cultural production contributed to modernism in North America and abroad
- How the aesthetic output from of the West's home-grown and adopted sons and daughters was a reaction to the instability, insecurity and concomitant desire and quest for reliable points of reference and meaning integral to modernist tendencies
- Regionalism's role in modernism
- Changing roles of men and women and of family dynamics in the modern west
- Searching for home: a western and modernist phenomenon
- Multi-culturalism and Diasporas and the western experience
- The role of the Church in the west
- The Mexican Revolution and its refugees' modernization
- Modern disenfranchisement and the Native American voice
- The Idaho phenomenon: Hemingway and Pound

Queries & Submissions to cpearson@mtroyal.ca
In subject line of email, write: RE: "Submission for MWM"
Proposals due by 30 June 2008

Catherine Cather Lowell Dies in California

The Willa Cather Newsletter and Review regrets to report that Catherine Cather Lowell passed away on February 13, 2008. Catherine was a niece of Willa Cather. She served as a member of the Cather Foundation Board of Governors and later on the Advisory Board of the organization. Below is a eulogy written by Ron Hull. Ron Hull is Senior Advisor to Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, Professor Emeritus of Broadcasting UNL, a member of the Cather Foundation Board of Governors, and a friend of Catherine. The eulogy was read at Catherine Cather Lowell's funeral.

14 February 2008

Dear Sir/Madame:

If I could be at Catherine Cather Lowell's service this is what I would say:

My friendship with Catherine Cather Lowell began over 40 years ago when we served together on the Board of Directors of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Foundation, located in Red Cloud, Nebraska.

Catherine was a member of this Board and the fact that she was a niece of America's great writer, Willa Cather, provided us a close, tangible, family link to the person whose work our Foundation perpetuates.

Catherine's professional life was one of service as an Elementary level school teacher. Myriad children in the Long Beach area were fortunate to be influenced by this spirited, warm, sophisticated, classy woman.

I am grateful for the friendship of Catherine Cather Lowell. Her well-lived life is testimony to her famous Aunt's immortal line, "The end is nothing, the road is all."

In respect for Catherine,
Ron Hull

Become a member of the Cather Foundation! Your membership will help support the worldwide promotion of Willa Cather's writings and preservation of the life, times, sites, and works of Willa Cather.

With your membership you will receive copies of the Willa Cather Newsletter & Review, a free tour of the Cather Historic Sites in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to preserve national treasures for future generations.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Join online! Visit www.willacather.org to become a member.

Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Student: \$20
Address	<input type="checkbox"/> General Membership: \$50
Occupation/Institutional Affiliation	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Institution: \$55
Business Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining: \$125
Home Phone Work Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend: \$250
Email Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron: \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge my credit card (VISA, Master Card, Discover, or American Express)	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: \$1,000
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cather Circle: \$2,500

Your membership is tax deductible. Please add \$5.00 for foreign mailings.

A check or money order made out to the Cather Foundation.

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413 NORTH WEBSTER STREET
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WILLA CATHER NEWSLETTER & REVIEW

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The *Newsletter & Review* welcomes scholarly essays, notes, news items, and letters to the Managing Editor. Scholarly essays should not exceed 3000 words; they should be submitted in Microsoft Word as an e-mail attachment and should follow MLA guidelines.

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Essays and notes are listed in the annual *MLA Bibliography*.

Willa Cather Newsletter & Review The Willa Cather Society

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Memorial & Educational Foundation
413 North Webster Street
Red Cloud, Nebraska, 68970

WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (The Willa Cather Society)

Founded 1955 by Mildred Bennett

Mrs. Bennett and seven other founding members of the Board of Governors defined the Foundation's mission, which has evolved into these

AIMS OF THE WCPM

To promote and assist in the development and preservation of the art, literary, and historical collection relating to the life, time, and work of Willa Cather, in association with The Nebraska State Historical Society.

To cooperate with the Nebraska State Historical Society in continuing to identify, restore to their original condition, and preserve places made famous by the writing of Willa Cather.

To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial, through the Foundation, by encouraging and assisting scholarship in the field of the humanities.

To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.

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**CALL FOR PAPERS &
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

**The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and The Cather Foundation
Present
The 12th International Cather Seminar
Cather, Chicago, and Modernism**

Chicago, June 25-28, 2009

The 2009 International Cather Seminar in downtown Chicago will focus on Cather's modernist aesthetic and on her representations of cities and urban spaces (but not exclusively Chicago). Papers dealing with these topics are welcome.

The Seminar will be held at the downtown University Center, a facility that offers reasonably priced accommodations and full conference facilities. The program will also feature tours to famous Chicago sites that would have been known to Cather during her first visits at the turn into the twentieth century.



Barbara Sprague sits beside James Danehey at the piano. Barbara Sprague has not only played for many performances at the Opera House, but also been an inspiration to many. Photograph by Barb Kudrna.

Jump-Starting Dreams

Stephany Thompson
Programming Coordinator

As Program Coordinator of the restored Red Cloud Opera House for the past five years, I have been privileged to witness the Opera House not only return to life but also return with a new consciousness. This beautiful building has been host to hundreds of vocal and music concerts, theatrical productions, dance performances, gallery exhibits and receptions, and movie showings since reopening. Audience members have laughed, cried, tapped their toes, and, in some cases, been enlightened by such humanities program subject matter as mental illness, cancer, overcoming adversity, World War II, black heritage, small town life, world cultures, and, of course, Willa Cather.

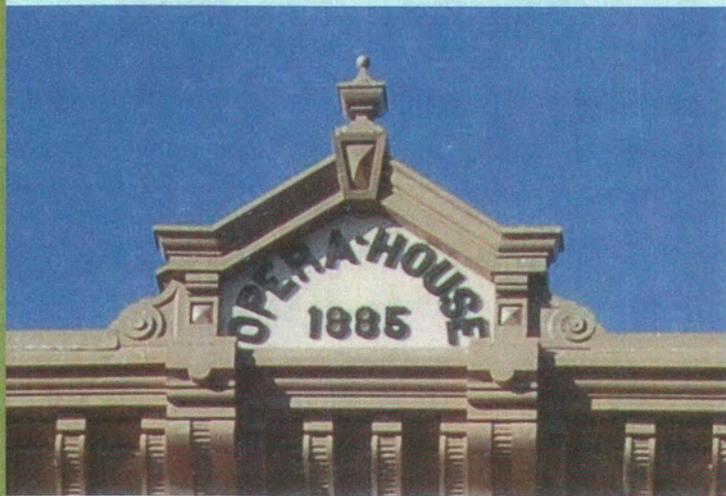
Although the stage has hosted such a variety of programming and welcomed professional entertainers from all over the world, I am passionate about the fact that this stage has also jump-started the dreams of many area youth. It is thrilling to have a young actress on stage who has dreamed her whole life of performing in a real theatre and to witness her progress in cultivating her own theatrical craft. How exciting to see a young actor transform himself into a Norman Thayer or an Ernest Worthing. These youths find their niche in the world, a place where they not only fit in, but thrive. It is humbling and rewarding to see them fly away to college and pursue theatre as a career, knowing that the Opera House stage was a small part of that progression.

"To fulfill the dreams of one's youth; that is the best that can happen to a man. No worldly success can take the place of that."

—Willa Cather

The Cather Foundation

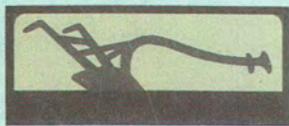
Preserving the Past . . . Informing the Future



"When I go about among little Nebraska towns, the thing I miss most is the Opera House." —Willia Cather, 1929. Photograph by Betty Kort.

project. Local individuals and people from throughout the country had contributed time, energy, and resources to make the restoration possible. At times, many had considered this to be the impossible dream, but it became a reality because the Cather Foundation Board of Governors, the Cather Foundation membership, and friends of the Foundation simply would not give up.

Today the Opera House is alive with activity. The Foundation offices, located on the ground floor, provide the "command center" for worldwide Cather-related activities. The gallery and auditorium invite a wide spectrum of local, regional, and international talent. The facility plays host to a variety of business and professional groups. Weddings have been held there, politicians have spoken there, and, of course, the Spring Conference is centered in the facility. All of these activities and more reflect the same kinds of events that dominated the Red Cloud Opera House back in the late 1800s and early 20th century. Cather was at home in this facility then, and we like to think that she would be pleased with the events occurring there now. The restored Opera House has turned out to be exactly what those who made it possible expected.



CATHER FOUNDATION
413 North Webster Street
Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

Restored Red Cloud Opera House Celebrates 5th Anniversary

On May 3, 2003, the newly restored 1885 Red Cloud Opera House was officially reopened and dedicated. The reopening five years ago was highlighted by an outdoor dedication, during which a number of dignitaries from throughout the state and the nation spoke, and Marcy Thompson's fifth grade class cut the ribbon. On stage that evening was James Ford's production of *The Bohemian Girl*, which had also been produced in 1898 by the Anderson Company with Willa Cather herself in attendance.

The dedication was truly a gala event. There was much to celebrate that day. Twelve years of planning, fundraising, and plain hard work had gone into the

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