

# Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

VOLUME XIII, NUMBER 1

and Educational Foundation

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

## PHOTOS OF THE DIORAMAS

These are pictures of what you will see in your guided tour of the WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION. Now you will hear the Cather quotations that go with the exhibits.



### QUOTATION FOR THE SCENE FROM "THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL"

"The sculptor's splendid head seemed even more noble in its rigid stillness than in life. The dark hair had crept down upon the wide forehead; the face seemed strangely long, but in it there was not that beautiful and chaste repose which we expect to find in the faces of the dead. The brows were so drawn that there were two deep lines above the beaked nose, and the chin was thrust forward defiantly. It was as though the strain of life had been so sharp and bitter that death could not at once wholly relax the tension and smooth the countenance into perfect peace—as though he were still guarding something precious and holy, which might even yet be wrested from him."

Of James Laird, Cather writes: "The man was red as his beard, with features swollen and blurred by dissipation, and a hot, blazing blue eye. His face was strained — that of a man who is controlling himself with difficulty — and he kept plucking at his beard with a sort of fierce resentment . . . ."

## NEW SOUND INSTALLATION

Shortly after the last newsletter went out, Josephine Frisbie, one of the members of our Board of Governors presented the WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION with a check for \$1,000.00 with which to install in the main museum, sound equipment comparable to that we have in the Cather house.

The first step was to write Armstrong-Templeman in Abilene, Kansas, for advice. Harry Armstrong came to visit us and we decided how many speakers we would need to cover the area. In order to lease the equipment we signed a contract for four years, yearly cost being \$225.00.

As soon as the location of speakers had been decided, we called in local electricians who ran the wires and installed the necessary equipment. The script for the tape was then composed and sent to Charlie Dugdale of Studio City, Calif. He had made our tape for the Cather house and had expressed a willingness to help with other tapes. He and his wife, Mickey, made the tape and returned it as soon as possible. The ma-



### QUOTATION FOR THE SCENE FROM "A LOST LADY"

"Niel opened his eyes and looked wonderingly about the big, half-darkened room, full of heavy old-fashioned walnut furniture. He was lying on a white bed . . . . He was in pain, but he felt weak and contented. The room was cool and dusky and quiet . . . . The little boy was thinking that he would probably never be in so nice a place again. The windows went almost down to the baseboard, like doors, and the closed green shutters let in streaks of sunlight that quivered on the polished floor . . . ."

Mrs. Forrester is taking care of him.

chines were in place and all we needed to do was plug in the tape and turn on the machine.

At the suggestion of Harry Armstrong who has had a great deal of experience with museums and tapes, we made a short tape for groups of twenty or more—leaving time for them to progress from scene to scene, and a longer tape which will allow ten or less persons to go through the building. The shorter tape merely points out items and does not give Cather's quotations.

The MEMORIAL is most grateful to Josephine Frisbie for giving this addition to our museum and making our tours through the building more meaningful. The work of the hostess is cut down considerably and everyone who goes through the building gets the same story of the work. Time is allowed afterward for asking questions and visiting the gift shop.

## Spring Conference, April 19, 1969

Principal speaker for the spring conference will be Clara B. Cooper from India. She has a Master's Degree from Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, and is working on her doctorate in American Literature at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. The topic for her doctoral study is: "Willa Cather: The Nature of Evil and Its Purgation."



MISS COOPER

She is well recommended by the English department of Florida State University.

Other speakers at the conference will be **Marion Marsh Brown**, retired from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and **Dr. Ruth Crone** of Mankato State College, Mankato, Minn. **Mrs. Brown** and **Dr. Crone** are collaborators on a book about Willa Cather: **THE MANY FACES OF WILLA CATHER** which will be released by Scribner's Sons this fall. The two ladies will hold a dialogue on their research and preparation of the book on Willa Cather.



MRS. BROWN



DR. CRONE

Mrs. Brown is the author of many books, including **YOUNG NATHAN**, **SWAMP FOX**, and **FRONTIER BEACON**. Dr. Crone has written many articles and she collaborated with Mrs. Brown in a book about Helen Keller's teacher, Annie Sullivan, called **THE SILENT STORM**.

The conference will begin on the afternoon of April 19 with a two o'clock tour of the town, including the restored Cather childhood home. You will also see the old Catholic church, as yet unrestored and the 1897 Burlington depot in a state of partial restoration. You will visit the little Episcopal Church where Willa Cather held her membership from 1922 until her death.

Fees for attendance at the conference including the afternoon tour and the evening banquet with speakers will be \$5.00. Please send your reservations in early as we have limited space for guests.

## ANTIQUE COLLECTOR

The WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION has on its Board of Governors an expert on antiques. For years Helen Obitz has studied the different aspects of antique furniture and house furnishings. She attends many auction sales and brings back items that are of importance in restoring Cather times and places. Without her specialized knowledge we could not have restored the Cather childhood home to its 1885 condition.

For the Cather house she found a large base burner to put in the parlor. She brought in the old sewing machine for Grandmother Boak's room, a carved wooden hobby horse, a heating stove to fit the times and a brass safety lamp. She also has given kettles, pans, a grinder and other things for the kitchen, including an old fashioned range. She found a flour barrel and a kerosene stove. All the beds in the Cather house with the exception of one, have been Helen Obitz' finds. To fit up an old fashioned bed is not easy as the old time springs and mattresses are shorter than the modern ones. Helen collected Brussels carpets until she had the proper ones for the parlor and dining room floors.

Whenever we need something in the way of antiques, we alert Helen and she calls Louis Hansen of Hardy, Nebraska. Between the two of them they can find almost anything.

In 1968 Helen gave, among other things, a set of walnut pulpit and pews to be used in the restoration of the old Catholic Church. For the depot she gave a coal bucket, a water barrel, a baggage truck, a paper press, an old typewriter, a two wheeled truck for carrying heavy boxes, a potbellied heating stove, some railroad lanterns, a Pullman stool and a special oil can.

To appreciate Helen's work you need to come and see the restored Cather house and the items awaiting placement in the Burlington depot and the old Catholic Church.

## GIFTS RECEIVED

RECEIVED from the Miner-Weisz Charitable Fund a gift of \$2000.00. This will enable us to put a new roof on the Memorial building. The severe winter snows have caused some leakage in spite of the fact that we had the roof tarred last summer. Also we will purchase a new microfilm reader to use in reading the old Red Cloud newspapers.

RECEIVED from Mrs. Barbara Walch of Rolling Hills, California, a buffalo robe used in the olden days for winter travel in sleds and carriages. We have put it on one of the beds in the attic of the Cather house.

RECEIVED from Katherine S. Diehl of India, copies of **OBSCURER DESTINIES** and **THE OLD BEAUTY** in Bengali.

RECEIVED from Josephine Frisbie \$1000.00 for putting sound equipment in the Museum building and keeping it there for four years.

RECEIVED from Wayne Cather of Toledo, Ohio, an order for a complete set of Cather books. Every year Mr. Cather, a distant cousin of Willa Cather, donates a complete set of Cather books to some school library. In 1968 he gave such a set to the Charles E. Wilson Library of Anderson College, Anderson, Indiana, his former home. His order for that complete set of books is always welcome at the MEMORIAL. This gesture on his part should give others some ideas about gifts for their local libraries. Books can be given in memory of friends or as ideal graduation presents.

## FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1968

These figures represent an unaudited statement from our books. Every year the John B. Gorgen CPA Agency in Kearney, Nebr. makes out our Internal Revenue report and furnishes us with statements regarding our accounts. Mr. Gorgen has done this service free for a number of years and we do appreciate his help. So far he has not done the 1968 books, and this statement is merely taken from our books before the accountant checks them. But we feel you might like to know how we get and how we spend the money we receive.

### Receipts

Donations .....	\$7,849.31	
Sales from gift shop (gross) .....	2,520.39	
Cather house tours .....	525.50	
Sales tax collected .....	79.40	
Interest on time certificates .....	153.62	
Sale of old car .....	50.00	
Refunds .....	79.42	
Banquet tickets .....	300.00	
		\$11,557.64

### Expenses—Cather House

Utilities .....	\$ 215.59	
Cleaning, labor, etc. ....	134.53	
Mdse. and furnishings .....	615.29	
Insurance .....	38.00	
Sound equipment lease .....	225.00	
		\$ 1,228.41

### Expenses—Memorial Building

Utilities .....	\$ 474.36	
Maintenance .....	387.13	
Postage and permits .....	299.36	
Insurance .....	467.00	
Auto expense .....	13.56	
Newsletter .....	379.98	
Gift shop, not books .....	396.16	
Gift shop books .....	1,165.46	
Dues and advertisement .....	163.75	
Supplies and equipment .....	1,207.78	
Hostess — bookkeeping .....	492.20	
Tax .....	109.91	
Freight .....	7.98	
Banquet .....	265.00	
Cather house income .....	523.65	
(We have taken some in this account that hasn't been paid over to the Cather House account, hence the difference in figure)		
Miscellaneous including \$1,000 time certificate and \$225.00 in scholarships .....	1,225.69	
		\$7,578.97

### INCREASED INTEREST IN WILLA CATHER

On Sunday, October 20, 1968 the Millard Public Schools dedicated their new elementary school named in honor of Willa Cather. A good group attended the ceremonies and listened to an inspirational talk by Dr. Paul Kennedy, Dean of Teachers College, University of Nebraska at Omaha. He stressed the significance of naming the school "The Willa Cather Elementary School" after a woman who was so vitally interested in young people and their education. Mildred R. Bennett attended the dedication and said a few words of appreciation and gave an invitation to all present to visit the WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION in Red Cloud.

Leo Rogelberg of Rogelberg and Company, White Road, Warwick, Mass. visited Webster County to make film strips and movies of Cather country. He filmed a pioneer family riding in a buggy silhouetted against the evening sky. He also photographed two pioneer men standing at the 1897 Red Cloud depot and talking about the crops and weather. These film strips are part of a study on the country backgrounds of Western novelists. When the strips are completed, they may be obtained for use in schools for instruction in American Literature.

Pack Memorial Public Library in Asheville, North Carolina wrote us for material for an exhibit on "American Literary Shrines" which will be on exhibit at their library during March and April and will then be available for loan to other public libraries in North Carolina.

AMWAY Corporation requested material about our Museum to include in their HALL OF FREE ENTERPRISE in Ada, Michigan. They plan to dedicate their building Nov. 7, 1969, and invite visitors to attend.

NEBRASKA HISTORY, Winter, 1968 published a letter from Willa Cather dealing with the old opera houses. The letter is edited by Mildred R. Bennett.

President Goheen of Princeton in his address at the Centennial convocation, opened and closed with remarks about Willa Cather and quotations from Bernice Slote's KINGDOM OF ART. He spoke of Willa Cather's being the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Princeton.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER, Spring, 1969, will carry "Willa Cather Reports Chautauqua, 1894." Bernice Slote's research has brought this material to light.

The University of Nebraska History volume I, due to be published in April by the University of Nebraska Press will have a picture of Willa Cather with the **Hesperian** staff.

### LETTERS

The MEMORIAL receives many letters asking for material on Willa Cather. Many fourth grades throughout the country read about Cather and their students write asking for free information. Then we have the adult student who wishes to know what research resources can be found here.

One of our favorite letters is that from someone who has visited and enjoyed the trip through Catherland and the Museum. Such a letter comes from Mieko Kawagoe of Japan. She writes: "Now it is the busiest time for me in teaching in the university because, as you might know here in Japan, the new spring semester begins from April and before that we must complete the entrance examinations for the new students who wish to enter the university. All through the last semester I used MY ANTONIA as my text for reading and understanding English. The slides that you gave me in Red Cloud were welcomed by every student with great excitement. Oh, I do wish I could visit you and Red Cloud some time in the near future."

Mieko spent a week with us several years ago when she was a student at the University of Nebraska. She saw first hand the materials at the Museum and visited all the places in Webster County, of which Cather has written.

Another letter from Roger Leech of Chicago tells of how he and his sister, Hope Leech, had enjoyed their trip to Red Cloud. Mr. Leech sent us a column from **Chicago Daily News PANORAMA** with Van Allen Bradley's article in the book section. Mr. Bradley tells

of finding a first edition of **April Twilights**, of how he had to bleach and rebind it and of how much it is now worth. If any readers have copies of the 1903 **April Twilights**, let us know, as we have requests for them from Cather collectors.

Another book for which we have had requests is **THESE TOO WERE HERE; LOUISE HOMER AND WILLA CATHER**, by Elizabeth Moorhead. If you have this book and wish to sell it, let us know and give your price.

We always have orders for first editions and would like to know of any available.

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION endeavors to maintain a professional attitude and for this reason belongs to a

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Mildred R. Bennett  
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**YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

● By becoming a member of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

LIFE DONATION CONTRIBUTION . . . \$75.00

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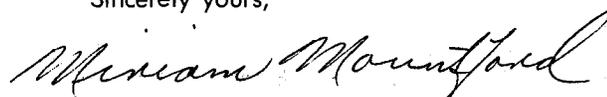
- By contributing to a project fund.
- By contributing to the restoration fund.
- By contributing to the scholarship fund.
- By contributing your Willa Cather artifacts, letters, papers, and publications to the Museum.
- By contributing your ideas and suggestions to the Board of Governors.

number of museum organizations: The American Association for State and Local History, The Nebraska Museums Conference, The American Association of Museums, The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, and the Mountain Plains Museum Conference. Helen Obitz and Mildred R. Bennett belong as individuals to the International Council of Museums. The MEMORIAL receives the bulletins from these organizations and is listed in their directories.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Again we want to thank all of you for being members of our organization. Your letters and your gifts are most welcome. Please come to Red Cloud and see Catherland for yourself and inspect the work your money is doing.

Sincerely yours,



Miriam Mountford, Newsletter Editor  
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

**AIMS OF THE WCPM**

- To secure the bonding, insurance and housing of a permanent art, literary and historical collection relating to the life, time and work of Willa Cather.
- To identify and restore to their original condition, places made famous by the writings of Willa Cather.
- To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial in the form of art and literary scholarships.
- To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.



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