



Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

VOLUME VII
NUMBER 2

Red Cloud, Nebraska

WILLA CATHER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

Aim

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.

. Contributions

In the spring Newsletter we itemized a list of projects in need of funds. The number and size of contributions received for these projects surpassed our wildest expectations and made the summer of 1963 the most exciting in the short history of the WCPM.

The most substantial gift came from Willa Cather's niece and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Shannon of Denver. During a visit here early in the summer, Mrs. Shannon, whose father was Miss Cather's brother, Roscoe, expressed her delight with everything being done by the Memorial. The Shannons' gift will make possible the installation of a central heating and air-conditioning system in the Museum as well as the completion of several projects in the lower floor display area.

Mrs. Paul Gallagher of Omaha gave the money necessary for completing construction work in the "Professor's Attic" to make the room ready for furnishing.

Another notable contribution was from Mrs. Benjamin Hitz of Indianapolis, widow of the donor of the Hitz Cather Collection to the Newberry Library in Chicago.

Perhaps the most unusual contribution came from the Brown Mortuary in Superior. It is an old-fashioned casket to be used in the "Sculptor's Funeral" scene.

The contribution of a used station-wagon to the Memorial solved a problem not mentioned on the spring Newsletter list. That is, the Museum's need for some sort of conveyance capable of hauling items ranging from caskets and plows and paint to people touring Willa Cather Country.

The most important contributions continue to be your gifts of \$1.00 to \$5.00. You and others in increasingly large numbers form the financial backbone of the WCPM.

. Visitors and Volunteers

This year more Webster County ladies joined the large group of dedicated volunteers who kept the Museum open every afternoon during the summer months. Assisted by Senior Girl Scouts working on their Willa Cather Merit Badges, they were hostesses to a record-breaking number of Museum visitors.

Willa Cather's sister, Miss Elsie Cather, visited again this summer. With Miss Cather was Silas Garber's granddaughter who came to see the Museum in the building built in 1889 by her grandfather, the man who was Captain Forrester in Willa Cather's A LOST LADY.

Willa Cather's sister-in-law, Mrs. Roscoe Cather, was here with Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Shannon, Jr.

Among the six Japanese girls here for the Spring Conference were Nobuko Tsu Kui, who was writing her MA thesis on Willa Cather, and Mieko Hamaya of Tokyo who spent an additional week in Red Cloud while working on her doctorate on Willa Cather.

Other visitors to Catherland from foreign countries were Miss Ulla Syvanen of Finland and Mr. Abdullah Abbame from the University of Baghdad, Iraq.

. Education and Archives

Museum visitors, whether they came individually or as members of student or club groups, profited from the first program produced by the Automatic Selectroslide Projector which was donated to the Memorial last spring. Additional programs of colored slides, commentary, and music can be prepared for the machine for fifteen dollars each.

WCPM Board Member and Research Librarian for Collier's Encyclopaedia John March of New York worked in the Archives two weeks this summer cataloging and filing new material.

. . . **Museum Associations** . . .

The WCPM will play a large part during the coming year in the Nebraska Museums Conference. At the annual meeting in Lincoln September 27, Dr. C. B. Schultz was elected chairman of the Advisory Board. Helen Obitz, who is serving her second year on the Advisory Board, was elected secretary-treasurer of the organization. The Nebraska Museums Conference accepted the WCPM's invitation to hold its 1964 fall meeting in Red Cloud, and Mildred R. Bennett was named Conference Chairman for the meeting.

INTEREST IN WILLA CATHER

Aim

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

. . . **East Meets West** . . .

Japanese students, who know Red Cloud and Cather Country from studies in their native land, emphasized the international theme of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Spring Conference held April 26 and 27.

Mieko Hamaya, one of the six Japanese here for the occasion, was working on her doctorate on Willa Cather at the University of Nebraska. She told the banquet audience:

"Miss Cather and her novels are very popular among the students in my country. She captured and preserved the precious little things of life in her books. Her love for the good, old traditions of home and country are quite similar to our own philosophy of life. Her symbolism, her intellectuality, and the poetic atmosphere of her novels appeal to the Japanese.

"For many years I have dreamed of this place. Now I am most heartfelt happy to say I have been here. It is more beautiful than my dreams."

Other speakers on the program stressing the international significance of the WCPM were Miss Esther Montgomery, Lincoln's KUON-TV teacher of American literature, Tom Allan, feature writer for the Omaha WORLD-HERALD, and WCPM President Mildred R. Bennett.

. . . **Cather Scholarship Winner to England** . . .

Miss Margot Uehling, the Hastings College senior who was awarded a Willa Cather Scholarship, is using it in conjunction with a Fullbright Scholarship at the University of Leeds in England.

. . . **Interest Spread by Women's Clubs** . . .

Last month 171 members of the Fifth District Nebraska Federated Women's Clubs visited Catherland for their annual convention. Because the district made the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial their project for the year, the WCPM joined the Red Cloud Woman's Club to host the two day affair.

"One of Ours" was the theme of the first luncheon with WCPM Mildred R. Bennett as speaker. The Girl Scouts of America were represented by Miss Cheryl Reiher and Mrs. Bliss Tanner who talked about the unique Willa Cather Merit Badge.

Taking full advantage of Museum Open House and the tours of Willa Cather's Red Cloud, fifth district members were generous with their praise and with their contributions and indicated they will give continued support to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

. . . **And by Nebraska Community Betterment** .

In November the Memorial will be one of the hosts when the statewide Nebraska Community Betterment planning-session is held in Red Cloud to kick off the 1964 contest—further recognition of the unusual quality of improvements already accomplished and projects planned for the future.

. . . **Newsletter Mailing** . . .

Spreading news of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial far and wide will be speedier and more efficient beginning with this Newsletter because of the contribution of an Address-O-Graph machine to the Memorial.

Please send your zip code as soon as possible so it can be added to your address plate in time for the spring Newsletter mailing.

. . . **Willa Cather Honored** . . .

The University of Nebraska borrowed a photograph of Willa Cather from the Memorial and is having it reproduced for Willa Cather Hall in their new Twin Towers Dormitory.

John J. Murphy of the College of Saint Teresa, Minnesota is producing "Great Ladies of the American Novel," a series of nine lectures for KTCA-TV. Two of the programs will be devoted to Willa Cather. Professor Murphy ordered the WCPM educational slides and text "Willa Cather Country" to use in his TV series as well as in his Willa Cather classes.

A portrait bust of Willa Cather honoring her selection to Nebraska's Hall of Fame was placed in

the State Capitol at Lincoln last May. WCPM officers participated in the unveiling and dedication ceremonies.

CATHERLAND

Aim

To identify and restore to their original condition, places made famous by the writings of Willa Cather.

. . . Walking Plow Project

Fifteen old-fashioned walking-plows are now lined up in the back yard of the Museum. The new station-wagon is currently engaged in expeditions to bring in more plows that were donated but not delivered.

Since the project was launched last spring, four more locations have been designated for plow markers, and we have extended our goal of twenty plows to twenty-four. Because the search for plows has generated more enthusiasm all over Kansas and Nebraska than any other memorial project so far, we are just a few short of the goal.

Now we are eager to get on with putting the plows in their places. As funds are available, they will be erected as permanent markers at the memorable sites in Webster County portrayed by Willa Cather's pen.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Aim

To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial in the form of art and literary scholarships.

. . . 1963 Scholarship Awards

Last spring two \$100 scholarships were awarded by the WCPM. One was given to a high school senior chosen by means of a nationwide essay contest; the other to a senior in the English Department at Hastings College chosen for the CALIBER of work done on Willa Cather. Financing came from your donations to the scholarship fund, from the WCPM Board of Governors, and from Dr. Frank S. Hewitt, of Austin College, Texas.

Dr. L. V. Jacks, chairman of Classics at Creighton University and chairman of the WCPM scholarship program, presented these scholarship winners at the WCPM Spring Conference.

Miss Catherine Rauscher of Omaha's Brownell Hall received a \$100 Willa Cather Scholarship for her essay on Cather novels as interpretations of early Nebraska pioneer life.

Miss Margot Uehling of Gothenburg received a \$100 Willa Cather Scholarship for her work on Willa Cather at Hastings College.

. . . Attention High School English Teachers . . .

Now is the time for you to be making plans for your seniors to enter the 1964 Willa Cather essay contest. The prize is a \$100 scholarship.

Make use of the essay subject in your class-room work—as an assignment while studying the American novel or as a book-report assignment. Then you choose the best three essays and enter them in the contest.

The subject is, "The Artistic Values of Willa Cather."

The rules are:

1. High school students in their senior year may compete.
2. Their status as seniors and the originality of their essays should be certified by their English teacher or high school principal.
3. The essay should consist of not more than 2,500 words.
4. The essay should be typewritten, double spaced, on one side of the paper.
5. Not more than three entries may come from any one school.
6. All papers must be post-marked not later than Midnight, April 1, 1964.
7. The decision of the judges shall be final.
8. Money awarded may be used for the education of the winning student at any college he chooses.
9. A student who competes is by so doing agreeing tacitly to the terms offered.
10. A prize winner is not eligible to compete a second time.

Mail all entries and correspondence relating to the essay to me, Miriam Mountford, WCPM Secretary, Red Cloud, Nebraska.

PROGRESS IN 1963

With your continued enthusiastic interest and generous support, the progress of the Memorial is constantly gaining momentum.

Your contributions to the Memorial since last spring will make this a busy winter in several different areas. More restoration work can be done in the tower rooms of the Museum, the area that will be devoted to the life-sized scenes of Cather stories.

Installing the central heating and air-conditioning will be a major project and will solve a major problem. It will be finished by next summer so that irreplaceable artifacts and papers will be spared even one more season of extreme temperatures and humidity—and so your next visit to the Museum will be comfortable and leisurely.

The project of using plows to mark settings from Willa Cather's books is well underway.

Plans for the Future

Your enthusiastic response to the projects needing support listed in the Spring Newsletter encourages us to repeat it with a few additions:

- Portrait Bust of Willa Cather
- Oil Portrait of Willa Cather
- Lower floor display area of Museum
 - Completion of ceiling
 - Tile floor-covering
 - Uniform glass display cases
- Tower portion of Museum building
 - Fire-escape system
 - Electrical wiring

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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Completion of construction of 4 rooms for life-sized scenes from Cather stories

Furnishings for these scenes
Wax-figures for these scenes

Placing 24 walking-plow markers

Printing booklets
 Tour of Willa Cather's Red Cloud
 Tour of Willa Cather's Country
 Student study guides
 WCPM Brochure

Additional Selectroslide programs

The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial depends upon your generous support. Thank you for making 1963 its best year. Please continue to participate in the life and growth of the organization.

Sincerely yours,

Miriam Mountford, Newsletter Editor
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF THE ORGANIZATION:

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

LIFE MEMBERSHIP \$75.00

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP . . . \$5.00 Annually

- 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.

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- 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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