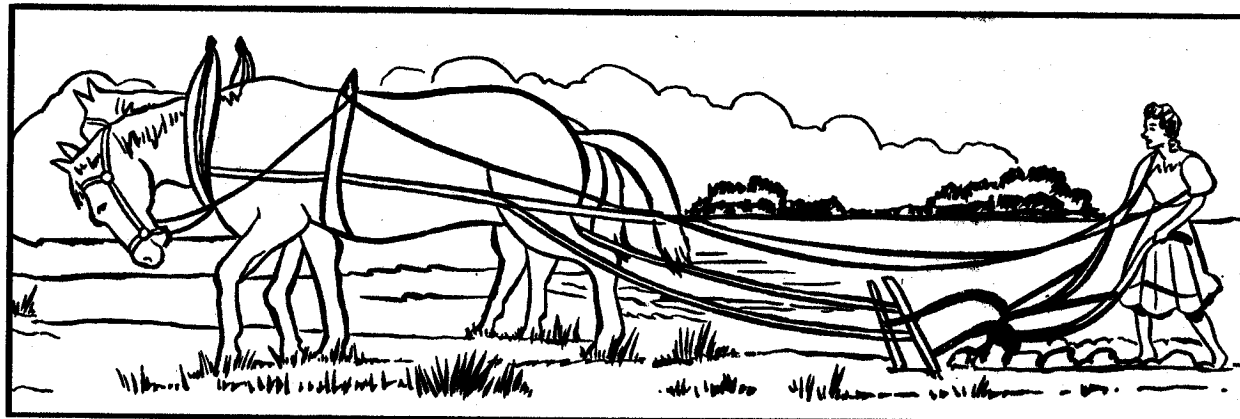


WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL

VOLUME II

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

NUMBER 2



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AIMS of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial

1. To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.
2. To identify and restore to their original condition, places made famous by the writings of Willa Cather.
3. To provide for Willa Cather a living MEMORIAL in the form of art and literary scholarships.
4. 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.

MUSEUM NOTES

The scale model of the western half of Webster County, setting of six of Willa Cather's works, has been installed at the Museum. The large (4' x 8') plaster-of-paris contour map was constructed at the University of Nebraska under the supervision of Dr. C. B. Schultz, Director of the State Museum. A year and a half of painstaking work and material worth \$4000.00 has produced a perfect replica of Cather Country as it is found in O! Pioneers, My Antonia, One of Ours, A Lost Lady, Song of the Lark and Lucy Gayheart. Besides being a beautiful panorama with its colors of late June, it provides a composite picture for the Cather fan that only hours of driving and walking could otherwise accomplish.

Now that the map has been installed the display will be completed with six miniature dioramas illustrating scenes from the six Nebraska novels. Mrs. Dorothy Hawkins, who accompanied Mrs. Bennett to Lincoln for the Nebraska Museum Meeting, stayed to study the construction of dioramas at the Nebraska Historical Society and Nebraska State Museum.

VISITORS

Dr. C. H. Brush and his wife who is a life member, from Shenandoah, Iowa, made their first visit during the summer. The Rev. Father Pacificus Kennedy, Denver, Colo, returned this summer for a short visit. Many groups of teachers (one all the way from Texas) toured points of interest and the Museum. Student groups included Dr. Frank S. Hewitt and his Modern American Literature classes from Hastings College; Prof. L. L. Robinson and musicians from Bethel College, Mishawaka, Indiana; Dr. James E. Miller and English students from Nebraska University along with a student from Denmark and Dr. and Mrs. J. R. Murphy of the Zoology Department of the U. of Nebraska. Visiting writers were George Leighton of New York City and Dr. W. D. Amsbacher, President of the Nebraska Historical Society and author of the "Out of Old Nebraska" column. MacGregor Jessiman of St. Andrews, Scotland arrived just in time to prove to a group of students that we really do have visitors from all over the world.

STAFF ACTIVITIES

President Mildred R. Bennett was elected president of the Nebraska Writers' Guild and has become member-at-large of the National Association of American Pen Women. Mrs. Bennett is the author of The World of Willa Cather and editor of Early Stories of Willa Cather.

John March, Research Librarian, Collier's Encyclopaedia, New York City, spent two weeks in Red Cloud in the Museum library filing the Willa Cather letters and doing research so that

he could identify and photograph all the old houses mentioned in Cather's writings.

PUBLICATIONS

Numerous writings concerning Willa Cather have been published since the Spring Newsletter; however, in our limited space we shall mention only two. Dr. Otakar Odlozilik, now of Pennsylvania University spent some time in Red Cloud doing research for his Sketches from Two Worlds which he has written in his native Czechoslovakian. Part of the pictures in the book were furnished by the Memorial. Ruth Franchere has written Willa: The Story of Willa Cather's Growing Up for junior high pupils.

GIFTS

Recent additions have increased to \$3000.00 the value of the Memorial's collection of paintings by Nebraska artists. Grant Reynard has given six of his Nebraska paintings and Mrs. Faye Richardson Wilson of Lincoln has donated six paintings from her Elizabeth Dolan collection.

Two unusual but typical Cather items have been added to the Museum. An herbarium made in 1899 by Lawrence Peirce contains 100 specimens of Nebraska wild flowers--the same nameless blooms that Willa Cather worried over and gave titles before they were classified in Gray's Botany. In the bleak and cropless year of 1894 a cemetery piece was fashioned of white goose feathers for Tena Erickson's funeral. Mr. and Mrs. Refshauge have presented it to the Memorial as a sample of how the pioneers satisfied their hunger for beauty and color.

Mrs. George Seibel, formerly of Pittsburgh, Pa., gave \$100.00 to the Memorial in memory of her husband.

MAIL BAG

Inquiries come regularly from high school, college and graduate students doing work on Willa Cather. The most charming recently was from Miss Guilione Costi of Italy. Evidence of their real interest in the Willa Cather Memorial came from the English pupils of Central High, Omaha, when they each donated ten cents, a total of \$40.98 for the Memorial.

An interesting incidental result of the Newsletter is that the widely scattered branches of the Cather family are discovering each other. We have received a Family History from J. Howard Cather of Rochester, New York.

Newest life members are Mrs. Faye Richardson Wilson and Nebraska artists Terence Duren and Grant Reynard, and Museum artist, Dorothy Hawkins.

FUTURE PLANS

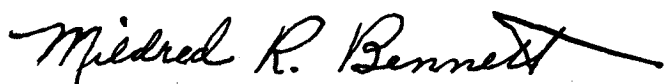
Under our present budget the fixed expenses connected with operating the Museum amounting to approximately \$2000.00 a year are paid by the profits from the sale of books and stationery, by your contributions and by the royalties from Mrs. Bennett's book, Early Stories of Willa Cather. Your donations are used to buy, restore and maintain authentic Willa Cather artifacts which we are constantly acquiring.

Our plans for the immediate future call for expanding our present program, as your mail assures us we must do, and for setting up a scholarship fund. Right now the committee is busy making plans of methods for raising \$10,000.00 over and above the budget. We are very eager to take advantage of an offer from the City of Red Cloud to buy for the original purchase price the City Hall. Built originally as a bank in 1888 by Silas Garber (Capt. Forrester of A Lost Lady) of red stone cut and imported from Colorado, the building gave an air of sophistication to the pioneer community. The structure with its high mural dome, molded cornices and carved oak paneling represents an architecture seldom seen today, and its actual value is estimated at over \$30,000.00. In spite of the building's decline from a proud past, all the original fixtures and furnishings have been preserved. We want to restore it to its historic grandeur and make it the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial headquarters and Museum.

We would appreciate your suggestions for ways of raising the \$10,000.00 necessary to buy and restore the Garber building. This is our goal for 1959.

Sincerely yours,

The Officers and Board of Governors
WILLA CATHER PIONEER MEMORIAL



by Mildred R. Bennett, President



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