

NEWS FROM CATHER COUNTRY



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Visit us online at www.willacather.org to browse our bookstore or sign up for our e-Newsletter.

Safeguarding the Stained Glass Windows at Grace Episcopal Church

When the Willa Cather Foundation was gifted the Grace Episcopal Church by the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska in 1969, the motivation to preserve the site stemmed from it being the home church of Willa Cather and her parents. Two of the eight stained glass windows that adorn the church were purchased by the Cather children in memory of their father Charles F. Cather and their mother Mary Virginia Cather. From the outside, the Grace Episcopal Church is a modest structure which may not garner a second look from most people who pass by. From inside the sanctuary, its beautiful stained glass windows spectacularly glow on even the gloomiest of days. These special windows were made in the Munich Pictorial style by the Emil Frei Art Glass Company at their factories in St. Louis, Missouri, and Munich, Germany.

Through your generous support of our *Campaign for the Future*, we welcomed Nicholas Frei of Emil Frei & Associates to help us preserve the windows that were made by his great-great grandfather's company. Efforts included repairs to the stained glass and delicate washing of the interior and exterior surfaces.

Our skilled facilities team worked with Frei on efforts to preserve the windows

and make them more visible from the exterior. Perimeter putty replacements ensure that each section of stained glass is securely held in place and free from water infiltration. The exterior wood frames were scraped and freshly painted before being covered with clear tempered glass to protect the windows.

According to Nicholas Frei, windows were generally fabricated at Emil Frei's St. Louis studio. At times when the St. Louis studio was overly busy, inexpensive German labor made it feasible for some projects to be sent to the Munich branch for fabrication; however, it seems that customers could choose the Munich studio, as may have been the case with these commissions. While

at work, Frei discovered a sticker on the vent of the "St. John the Evangelist" window that indicated it was made in Germany at the Munich branch. This window and "The Good Shepherd" window that Cather purchased to memorialize her father were placed in the church in February 1930; the *Webster County Argus* states the two windows, "present much of beauty to the structure both from within and without and implant tender thoughts permanently within the minds of the worshippers."



"The Good Shepherd" window memorializes Charles F. Cather.

continued on next page

Safeguarding the Windows at Grace Episcopal Church

continued from front page

Because of your donations, these awe-inspiring windows will be enjoyed for generations, while they continue to memorialize the lives of Cather's beloved parents and showcase the handiwork of the Emil Frei studios. We are especially grateful for grant support from the Woods Charitable Fund, given in memory of our dear friend Lucia Woods Lindley, that aided in the care and preservation of the stained glass windows.

Slowly but surely, the Grace Episcopal Church is being preserved thanks to generous donations to our *Campaign for the Future*. If you, too, would like to support the rehabilitation of the church, please donate online or mail your gift to the Willa Cather Foundation, 413 N. Webster Street, Red Cloud, NE 68970.



Grace Episcopal Church following the window preservation efforts.

Portrait of Evelyn Osborne Joins the Collection

A portrait of a woman named Evelyn Osborne allows consideration of a shared history between Cather and her friend, author Dorothy Canfield Fisher. In her short story "The Profile," Willa Cather writes of a painter who falls in love with his subject, a woman named Virginia Gilbert, who bears a long facial scar "caused by a deep burn, as if from a splash of molten metal." The inspiration for the character is thought to have been Evelyn Osborne, the daughter of Charles Osborne, a noted silver designer for both Whiting Manufacturing and Tiffany's.

Evelyn Osborne was also at the heart of a disagreement between Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Willa Cather. As Mark Madigan has written in Vol. 44 of the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*, Osborne and Canfield both studied at the Sorbonne, and on Cather's first trip to Europe, Canfield kindly arranged lodging and introductions for Cather and her traveling companion Isabelle McClung. Madigan's research on Canfield's letters reveals that Canfield prevented "The Profile" being published in *The Troll Garden*, Cather's 1905 collection of short stories, out of fear that Osborne would not only recognize herself in the story, but might be pushed toward

suicide by Cather's depiction. Osborne would die in 1905 of appendicitis, tragically young, and "The Profile" went on to be published in *McClure's Magazine* in 1907.

Last summer, Madigan was made aware of a portrait that had been painted of Evelyn Osborne. Instead of being created by a young, lovestruck painter, as Cather had written in her short story, it was painted by Osborne's father, Charles, and dates to approximately 1902. The piece had gone under the hammer, and it was only as the buyer began to research the painter "C. Osborne" that the connection between the fragile painting in the Renaissance Revival frame and the Cather short story came to light.

The painting was added to our collections in late September and requires professional conservation. Plans are being made to have it assessed by the team at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha.

If you are interested in learning more or in supporting the restoration effort, please contact our Archivist Tracy Tucker at ttucker@willacather.org. Donations may be made from our website as well, by designating a gift to "Evelyn Osborne."



This circa 1902 portrait of Evelyn Osborne will soon undergo a conservation assessment.

William Norris Buffett Gifts Millions for Creation of Hotel Garber

Literature enthusiasts from across the country who visit the National Willa Cather Center will soon have access to enhanced amenities. Guests can look forward to overnight stays in Red Cloud at a charming boutique hotel, thanks in large part to the support of William Norris Buffett.

Buffett's Inavale Foundation recently gifted \$2.6 million to the Willa Cather Foundation. A large portion of the gift is to support the redevelopment of a downtown building into Hotel Garber. The project is one of four goals of the Foundation's *Campaign for the Future*, which has provided funding for capital improvements at numerous historic sites, new exhibits and interpretation, and an endowment to support educational outreach and preservation.

While he was born and raised in Omaha, Buffett spent ample time in Red Cloud during his youth. In all, he spent twelve summers at his grandmother's farm near neighboring Inavale. Some of his fondest memories of boyhood are the trips he made "to town" on Saturday evenings. A night out in the 1940s consisted of a meal at Sid's Café, a movie at the local theater, a ten-cent bag of popcorn, and a butterscotch sundae at the Hawley Drug Store.

Joined by both friends and family, Buffett has enjoyed several visits to Red Cloud in recent years. He's become an excellent ambassador for the National Willa Cather Center and the Red Cloud community. He expressed great happiness in making this monumental gift, noting that Red Cloud has a special place in his heart and memory. When acknowledged for his generosity, Buffett said simply, "Red Cloud gave more to me than I could possibly give to it."

The gift also honors Buffett's ancestors, including Daniel Gibbon Norris, who arrived in Webster County in the spring of 1871 and filed a homestead claim on land near the Republican River. The lounge of Hotel Garber will be named for Daniel Norris, and individual guest rooms in the hotel will be named in memory of Buffett's grandmother, parents, and his brother.

A writer himself, Buffett sprinkled many Cather quotes throughout his book *Grubbed Stumps, Fixed Fence, Pa to Town: Our Nebraska Farm 1871-2010*. The publication is a beautifully illustrated account of his family's connection to the Norris homestead over three generations. More than that, it's a thoughtful assortment of personal recollections, newspaper articles, and first-hand accounts of rural life. The book debuted in 2013 and is available in the Willa Cather Foundation bookstore. All sales benefit the organization's mission.

Ashley Olson, executive director of the Willa Cather Foundation, noted that Buffett's generosity will have a lasting impact on the work of the Foundation. She described the hotel project as a huge



William Buffett on a recent visit to the National Willa Cather Center.

step forward for the Foundation and the community, but noted that the flexible nature of the gift will also allow the Foundation to take advantage of other strategic opportunities to promote Cather's legacy. "Being entrusted with a gift like this is an honor and a dream come true; we are immensely grateful to Bill and his family for their astonishing generosity," she said.

About Hotel Garber

Hotel Garber will be a 26-room boutique hotel in downtown Red Cloud. The facility will help achieve tourism development and downtown revitalization goals by rehabilitating the Potter Block building, a 1901 structure that has been vacant and decaying for over twenty years. The hotel's name is a nod to Silas Garber, a founder of Red Cloud, the third Governor of Nebraska, and prototype for Captain Forrester in Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady*. When fully restored, the building will provide much-needed lodging for tourists and expanded meeting facilities for events and retreats. It will allow visitors to the National Willa Cather Center to stay longer to enjoy the museum, the historic sites, the town, the Cather Prairie, and other scenic places Cather loved. In the first ten years of operation, Hotel Garber is projected to add up to ten new jobs and generate \$6.7 million in revenue and \$800,000 in sales and lodging taxes. Construction is projected to begin in 2022.

How You Can Help

Please consider supporting the project in one of two ways: as an investor or a charitable donor. Projections indicate that an investor can expect a 4% annualized return on their investment, and \$25,000 buys one unit of ownership. Additionally, naming and recognition opportunities are available for those who choose to support through a tax-deductible charitable gift to the Willa Cather Foundation.

Angela Duca is 2021 Miriam Mountford Volunteer of the Year

We are delighted to announce that Angela Duca has received the 2021 Miriam Mountford Volunteer of the Year Award. Recognizing the importance of a strong volunteer corps, the family of Miriam Mountford established this award in her memory as an annual and perpetual tribute to those whose selfless service is at the heart of the Willa Cather Foundation's work.

"Angela has demonstrated a commitment to our mission for many years, first as a tour guide, and now as a volunteer," Executive Director Ashley Olson said at the February volunteer reception. "We're grateful that she continues to give her time and talent to benefit the organization."

After retiring as a tour guide in 2020, Angela transitioned immediately to an engaged volunteer, logging 135 hours in our archive where she sorted organizational history clippings, reboxed archival materials, and assisted researchers.

"Angela's work in the archive has really focused on making our organizational history more accessible," Education Director and Archivist Tracy Tucker said. "From our very early days as the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, volunteers collected clippings and news about our work, our volunteers and staff, Cather mentions and research, and information related to our historic sites in scrapbooks."

In preparation for restoration work to happen at the Farmers and Merchants Bank, Angela agreed to tackle the huge project of



Angela Duca is pictured accepting the award from Executive Director Ashley Olson.

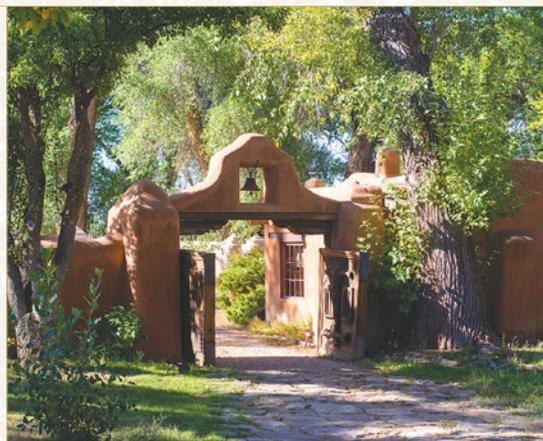
"dealing with the scrapbooks." As a result, she has systematically reviewed every page and compiled chronological files of the materials, has rehoused and reorganized several smaller sub-collections, and done a lot of preparatory work that will, eventually, enable us to digitize and search these files. Thank you Angela, from every one of us at the National Willa Cather Center!

Would you like to assist with programs at the Red Cloud Opera House, landscaping at historic sites, special projects assisting staff, or greeting guests? If you are interested in volunteering, contact: Rachel Olsen at (402) 746-2653 or at rolsen@willacather.org.

This Autumn, Spend an Immersive Weekend in Taos, New Mexico

Join us in Taos, New Mexico, for a 3-day, 3-night excursion, November 10–13, based at the historic Mabel Dodge Luhan House, where Willa Cather was once a guest. We will explore "Willa Cather and the Counterculture" and the best of this beautiful mountain town's historic and arts offerings, while learning about Cather's time in New Mexico.

When Mabel Dodge settled in Taos and began to invite her friends and artists from the East in 1918, she did so with the idea of establishing not just an artists' colony but a completely different "counterculture" lifestyle long before it was trendy. We'll discuss and share from Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *The Professor's House*, and other readings,



The Mabel Dodge Luhan House.

in addition to touring the Father Martinez Hacienda and Taos Pueblo, the Fechin House and the Millicent Rogers Museum, and more.

Registration for \$995 includes three nights lodging, breakfast and lunch on Friday and Saturday, and breakfast on Sunday. Admission and fees to museums and sites are also included. Dinners will be hosted around the region but are not included in the registration cost. Transportation will not be provided.

This event has a limited capacity, so plan to register early! For questions about the program, please visit our website for more information or contact our Education Director Tracy Tucker at ttucker@willacather.org.

Tim Youd to Retype Willa Cather Novels in Nebraska

Los Angeles-based performance artist Tim Youd will retype *The Song of the Lark* at our historic sites and landscapes while in residence in Red Cloud from April 10-28. Represented by the Cristin Tierney Gallery in New York, Youd will also be performing at Joslyn Art Museum and the Willa Cather Archive during the months of April and May. Youd will retype three Cather novels in their entirety: *O Pioneers!*, *The Song of the Lark* and *My Antonia*.

Like Youd's previous *100 Novels Project* performances, all three books will be retyped on the same make/model typewriter used by the author, and in a location related to the novel or author. When retyping, Youd types all the words of the novel onto one page (which is backed by a second sheet) by running it repeatedly through the typewriter. The words become illegible, and the accumulated text becomes a rectangle of black ink inside the larger rectangle of the white page. Upon completion, Youd separates the two highly distressed pages and mounts them side-by-side in diptych form. This performance relic thus becomes a formal drawing, a representation of two pages of a book. The novel is present in its entirety, yet the words are completely obscured.

Prior residencies at historic writer's homes have included William Faulkner's Rowan Oak with the University of Mississippi Art Museum (Oxford, MS), Flannery O'Connor's Andalusia with the Savannah College of Art and Design

(Milledgeville and Savannah, GA), and Virginia Woolf's Monk's House (Rodmell, Sussex).

While Youd is in Red Cloud, visitors will have a chance to witness his typing at various historic sites and landscapes related to Willa Cather; a full schedule of locations can be found at www.WillaCather.org. This performative exhibit will be an intriguing opportunity to experience an artist at work, while envisioning Cather's artistic process and its execution.



Performance artist Tim Youd working on his *100 Novels Project*.

Apply for Our Inaugural Teacher Institute

A new National Willa Cather Center Teacher Institute is set to provide immersive learning opportunities for educators. A select group of educators will receive funding to allow dedicated time to develop a rich supply of activities, lessons, and other educational assets that help students learn about Willa Cather. The inaugural summer teacher institute will take place July 7-11, 2022.

To be considered, applicants must be employed full-time as a K-12 teacher or librarian and demonstrate a clear interest in further developing Willa Cather and/or Nebraska history or Nebraska literature curriculum for their students.

Applicants will be selected based on criteria that includes demonstrated success in the classroom, depth of interest in Willa Cather and Nebraska history, writing proficiency, research skills, and technological competencies as they relate to

education. The selection committee will consider any challenges to professional development while reviewing applications and hopes to build a demographically and geographically diverse cohort to inspire vibrant and exciting educational outcomes.

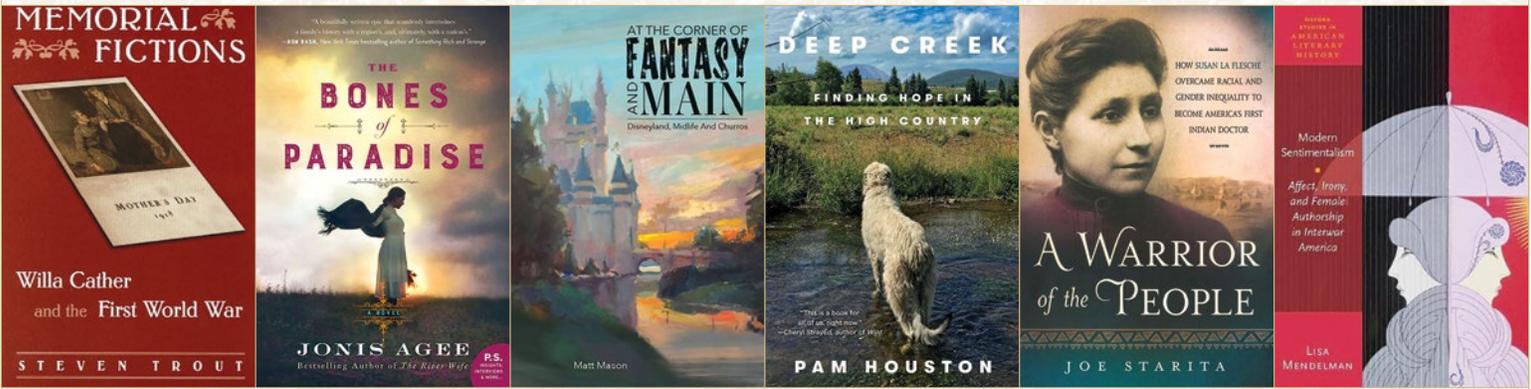
Participants will receive a travel stipend, with lodging and meals provided, and other benefits, including additional teaching resources and ongoing support from our education staff.

This unique program offers five days of immersive literature and history study in the largest collection of nationally designated historic sites dedicated to an American author. Special lectures will augment historic site tours, visits to the archive, and one-on-one conversation with Cather scholars, but participants can also expect comfortable B&B lodging and generous time to relax and plan for the coming year. Those who complete this retreat-style professional development workshop receive a certificate of completion and support packet that details contact hours and curriculum.

Applications are available online, and the last day to apply is April 30. Winners will be notified the week of May 2.



Save the Dates & Register for Our Virtual Author Series



Launched in 2021, our popular virtual Author Series hosts great literature and conversation among authors and their readers. The series is part of our commitment to expanding our programming and making additional offerings available to our members across the country. Donor underwriting and support from the Nebraska Arts Council, Humanities Nebraska, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment have helped to make the author series possible. You're invited to join us virtually each month for these engaging book talks. Visit www.WillaCather.org and click on "Events" for more details.

Steven Trout – Author of
Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War
April 21, at 7:00 p.m.

Jonis Agee – Author of
The Bones of Paradise (2022 One Book One Nebraska selection)
July 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Matt Mason – Author and Nebraska Poet Laureate, with
2022 Nebraska Youth Poet Laureate
August 18, at 7:00 p.m.

Pam Houston – Author of
Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country
September 22, at 7:00 p.m.

Joe Starita – Author of
A Warrior of the People
November 10, at 7:00 p.m.

Lisa Mendelman – Author of
Modern Sentimentalism: Affect, Irony, and Female Authorship in Interwar America
December 8, at 7:00 p.m.

Books from our Author Series are available online at WillaCather.org/shop or in our National Willa Cather Center Bookstore.

Restoration of Willa Cather Childhood Home to Begin in 2022

In the summer of 2021, the Willa Cather Foundation awarded a contract to BVH Architecture for site investigation, schematic design, and the development of construction documents for a long-awaited restoration of the Willa Cather Childhood Home. A previous historic structures report and an analysis of the existing conditions have shaped plans for the restoration. Construction is set to begin this year. Efforts will include the restoration of windows, doors, trim, and floors; addition of new electrical service, lighting, attic climate control, and fire and intrusion alarm systems; replacement of deteriorated fascia boards, shingles, gutters, and downspouts; reconstruction of brick window wells; addition of an accessible walkway and entrance; regrading of the site away from the foundation; rebuilding a historically appropriate fence; and conservation, treatment, and cleaning of the original wallpaper in Willa Cather's bedroom.

The project is supported by a Save America's Treasures grant administered by the National Park Service. The NPS, in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), award these matching grants to support the preservation of nationally significant historic properties and collections. The Save America's Treasures grant uses revenue from federal oil leases for preservation and conservation projects without expending tax dollars and requires a dollar-for-dollar match in non-federal donations. We're grateful to the John K. & Lynne D. Boyer Family Foundation, Mammel Foundation, Fred & Eve Simon Charitable Foundation, the Dinsdale Family, and an anonymous supporter for their gifts. If you, too, would like to support the restoration, please donate online or mail your gift to the Willa Cather Foundation, 413 N. Webster Street, Red Cloud, NE 68970.

Trendy Fashion Line Finds Inspiration in Willa Cather's Writing

Lingua Franca, a New York-based boutique clothier, announced the release of their "Willa Cather Collection" on International Women's Day, March 8. Their Willa Cather-inspired capsule was created in partnership with the National Willa Cather Center and Penguin Random House. Twenty percent of proceeds from the sale of items in the collection will benefit the National Willa Cather Center.

The collection aims to memorialize the writer's prose, while conjuring the mystic beauty of Nebraska's prairies with hand-stitched embroidery and handmade crocheted embellishments. These unique creations evoke a modern sense of nostalgia, reflecting a yearning towards simpler times and finding inspiration from the past. New York-based influencer, designer, and CEO, Rachelle Hruska MacPherson was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, and graduated from Creighton University in 2005.

"I (like every Nebraskan) learned about Willa Cather through school-assigned readings of *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia*," MacPherson said. "But, it wasn't until later, as a New Yorker, that I came to understand the extent of Cather's work and the impact it had on the world outside of my home state." Like Cather, the designer has been shaped by both locales "in remarkable ways."

"It is always a thrill when we find that a company outside the publishing world has as much enthusiasm for our great authors as we do," added Suzanne Herz, publisher of Vintage Books &



Anchor Books. "We could not be happier to see Lingua Franca highlight Willa Cather's work. What a stylish way to support writing and reading!"

"Fashioning Willa Cather quotes to clothing is such a creative way to celebrate her work," said Ashley Olson, executive director of the National Willa Cather Center. "We're grateful to the Lingua Franca team for supporting our mission through this unique partnership."

Introducing Nick Powers as Visitor Services Coordinator



Nick Powers joined our team in January in a newly created position, assisting our visitors with tours and events, lodging, and other aspects of the visitor experience, as well as operating our National Willa Cather Center Bookstore. Nick graduated from the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln in 2019 with degrees in history and secondary education. In 2021, he completed a summer internship with the Aspen Historical Society, where he gave tours of an old mining ghost town in Colorado.

Apply for the Ana McCracken Educator Scholarship

The Ana McCracken Educator Scholarship allows educators to experience the Cather historic sites, the cultural opportunities, the growing body of Cather scholarship, and the camaraderie that our Spring Conference offers. Since 2015, these awards have facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas between Cather researchers and educators, upon whom we rely for our next generation of Cather readers.

We will award three teachers or administrators complimentary registration to the 2022 Willa Cather Spring Conference, as well as provide a travel stipend. The Willa Cather Foundation will also arrange complementary guided town and prairie tours for recipients. To apply for the Educator Scholarship see our website. Questions may be directed to Education Coordinator Rachel Olsen, at (402) 746-2653 or rolsen@willacather.org. **The 2022 application deadline is April 30, and recipients will be notified the week of May 2.**

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The National Willa Cather Center
413 North Webster Street
Red Cloud, NE 68970

COMING UP!



67th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference – “Literary Prizes: Acclaim and Controversy”

Join us as we explore the landscape of literary prizes while marking the *One of Ours* centenary
Thursday-Saturday, June 2-4

Nebraska Chamber Players present Chris Ellenwood’s *Children of the Moon*

Based on *One of Ours*, this performance features Brian Leeper as vocalist
Saturday, June 4, at 7:30 p.m.

The Inaugural National Willa Cather Center Teacher Institute

A new and immersive offering for educators
Thursday-Monday, July 7-11

Author Series: Jonis Agee

Discussion of her novel, *The Bones of Paradise* [One Book One Nebraska Selection]
Thursday, July 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org for information on upcoming events.



Arts programming presented with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.