



W.C. XII

To Our Friends and Supporters

As we recap another eventful and impactful year, we also share our immense gratitude for your monetary and in-kind contributions that make our mission-driven work possible. We've dreamed big, we've asked for your support, and you've delivered generously—time after time. From a financial perspective, last year was the most successful year in our history. While it's reaffirming to see our revenue grow, our work has always been about so much more than the money. The connections we've built with you—the community and the audience we serve—mean so much to us.

We also believe that engagement with Willa Cather's writing, life, and associated places can provide meaning and inspiration to people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities. In fact, we have seen this happen on a routine basis. We recognize it when visual artists and contemporary writers share that they were influenced by Cather's literature. We see it when performers take the stage at the Red Cloud Opera House and get a thrill from being in a space where Cather performed and sought entertainment. And we see it when visitors from thousands of miles away finally experience familiar literary settings as they walk onto the Cather Prairie or into her childhood home.

As we pen this letter, we're on the cusp of what could be our most important year yet. There are many long-awaited milestones to celebrate. Construction is commencing on two important preservation projects in Red Cloud: restoration of the Willa Cather Childhood Home and rehabilitation of the Potter Block to become Hotel Garber. A bronze sculpture of our prized author will be unveiled in the U.S. Capitol as part of the National Statuary Hall Collection. We'll celebrate 150 years of Willa Cather (she's never looked better)! Last but not least, the Pulitzer Prize was bestowed on Cather nearly one hundred years ago, and 2023 marks publication centenaries of her *A Lost Lady* and *April Twilights and Other Poems*.

To mark these important occasions, we will organize commemorative exhibits and host celebratory events in Red Cloud and beyond. You'll have ample opportunities to engage with Cather's writing and settings, through a combination of on site and virtual offerings. We'll display unfamiliar Cather artifacts from the collection, host an inaugural Willa Cather Residency for Artists, and support teachers and students as they bring Cather into the classroom. All of this will allow us to enrich more lives, and it will only be possible with your continued generosity. It's your support that enables us to expand our arts, education, and preservation efforts. This year and all years, we thank you.



Robert Thacker
Board President



Ashley Olson
Executive Director

Cover: *Willa Cather Memorial Prairie 2022*, Cassia Kite. OBJ-367-001. Gift of the artist to the Permanent Art Collection. Willa Cather Foundation Collections & Archives at the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, Nebraska.

Our Mission

To promote Willa Cather's legacy through education, preservation, and the arts.

Our Vision

To become a premier cultural center that offers broad educational opportunities for patrons to experience Cather's work, explore historic landmarks related to her life and times, foster their own creativity, and embrace the arts and humanities.

Our Programs and Services

- Operation of a museum, archive, and study center at the National Willa Cather Center
- Preservation of the largest collection of nationally designated historic sites devoted to an American author
- Conferences and seminars held annually in Red Cloud and biennially across the country and internationally
- Arts and humanities programs in the restored Red Cloud Opera House
- Guided town and country tours of more than 20 historic sites relating to Cather's life and work
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Review*
- Outreach to and curriculum support for teachers and students
- Scholarship awards for student research and to support English and history majors
- Arts and educational exhibits at the National Willa Cather Center
- Restoration and conservation of the 612-acre Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Management of a Cather bookstore and gift shop



Fulfilling Experiences: Educational Opportunities Abound

“I like to tell people that I meet, in and outside Nebraska, that my summer in Red Cloud as a humanities intern at the National Willa Cather Center was one of the most fulfilling seasons in my life so far. To be able to have a professional, paid summer experience within the humanities so close to home is rare and unparalleled in rural Nebraska. Through this internship, I was able to explore various subfields of the humanities in one organization; network with scholars, patrons, artists, and trustees; and become a part of the lovely community of Red Cloud. Even as I travel throughout Europe pretending to be Cather and live in Greece as an educator, I find my soul visiting the prairie every once in a while.”

Margaret Rieckman
Thessaloniki, Greece



Engaging students and lifelong learners has always been central to our mission, but this year our education efforts grew to create deeper connections with elementary school and university students. New activities for fourth grade field trips to the National Willa Cather Center included “Guess the Gadget,” an opportunity to learn about items in our archival collections; and “Be a Letter Detective,” which asks classmates to work collaboratively to decipher Cather’s handwriting. A new collaboration with the University of Nebraska

Foundation, the Cather Project, and the Cather Archive offers a paid summer humanities internship. The program allows college students to create educational resources while learning about museum operations through tours, archival work, and events. These talented and inquisitive young people are an inspiration, and we’re grateful to have opportunities to engage with them about Willa Cather, the arts, and the humanities.



Students from the University of Nebraska at Omaha traveled to Red Cloud with professor Todd Richardson to take guided tours and provide feedback about how we can enrich the visitor experience. Their suggestions will help inform the reinterpretation of our historic sites.

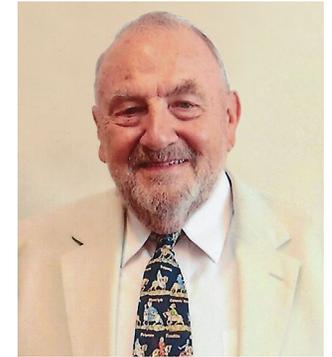
Deciphering Cather’s script handwriting proved a difficult and amusing task for fifth grade students in Mrs. Faimon’s Red Cloud Elementary School class.



Enlivened By Restored Beauty: Preservation Efforts Advanced

“Beautiful windows are a treasure but, like all treasures, they must be cared for, especially when they are part of Cather’s own personal legacy. When Nancy and I walked into Grace Church this past spring we were greeted by an amazing sight—that old, dim interior was sparkling with light and color due to the restoration of the windows, the enhanced lighting, the polished wood. What a wonderful difference it makes. Our Diocese joins me in celebrating your efforts, not only as we provide the celebrations in that sacred space so enlivened by its restored beauty but as readers blessed again and again by Cather’s works. Thanks for being such caring stewards of the riches of Catherland!”

Rev. Charles A. Peek
Kearney, Nebraska

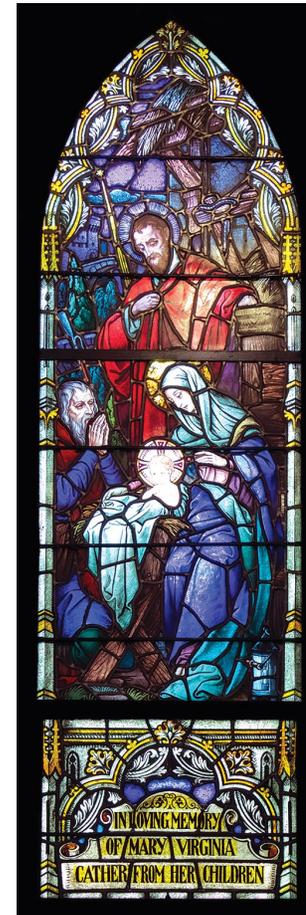


2 Preservation efforts have been a constant focus since our founding, but we made immense strides this year with major restoration efforts that were a part of our capital improvement plan. In all, four historic sites with a direct connection to Cather’s writing and life were given significant attention. The Burlington Depot and Pavelka Farmstead are now accessible and better protected from the elements with restored windows, doors, and new siding. The interiors of both sites were also restored to their respective periods of significance. An interior and exterior rehabilitation at the Farmers and Merchants Bank preserved this iconic site and prepared the space for new exhibits. A final undertaking involved restoration and protection of priceless stained glass windows at Grace Episcopal Church, two of which memorialize Cather’s parents.

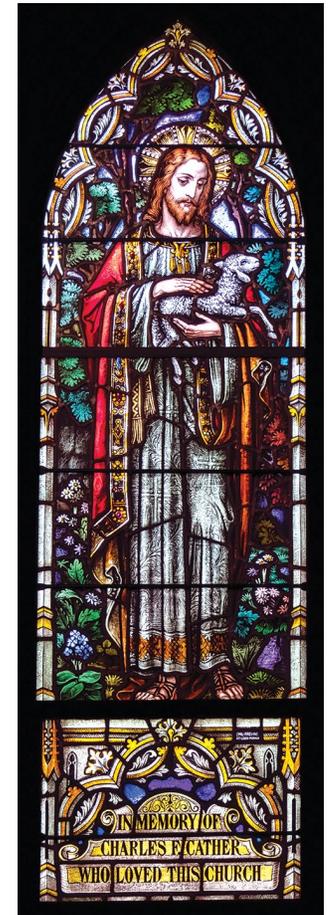
Left: The restored facade of the Farmers and Merchants Bank, one of the most iconic buildings in downtown Red Cloud.



Middle: “The Nativity,” one of the windows manufactured by the Emil Frei Art Glass Company; this window memorializes Willa Cather’s mother, Mary Virginia Cather.



Right: “The Good Shepherd,” Emil Frei Art Glass Company; this window memorializes Willa Cather’s father, Charles Cather.



Play and Experimentation: Art and Artists Championed

*“The Foundation’s support as we developed *Henrietta Solway*, a new work based on Cather’s writings, was invaluable. Their financial support allowed us a freedom in the rehearsal room that is rarely possible for artists. We were able to play and experiment with new kinds of artistic choices, intertwining music more closely with the storytelling and working with an additional performer. The Foundation also brought Cather’s magazine writings to our attention, opening up to us a whole new side of her work, and her biography.”*

Karim Muasher
New York, New York



The arts-based aspect of our mission touches both artists and patrons of the arts. In its first full year, the Author Series program expanded to include a wide range of authors with connections to Cather, Nebraska, and beyond; it made writers accessible to over six hundred readers nationwide. Visual artists who had their work shown in the art gallery were lauded by visitors to the National

Willa Cather Center, as well as thousands of virtual guests who browsed the accompanying online galleries. Commission of a new play inspired by Cather’s short stories, serialized novels, and personal letters introduced new audiences to the author’s work, and will continue to do so as part of the Lied Center’s Arts Across Nebraska program when it tours in 2023.



A rousing game of baseball is depicted in this scene from an original play that was created by students participating in a summer camp at Red Cloud’s Valley Child Development Center. Under the direction of Blixt Locally Grown, students also created the sets and premiered their play at our Red Cloud Opera House.



The exhibition *Young at Art: A Selection of Caldecott Book Illustrations*, part of ExhibitsUSA, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance, presented original illustrations from classic children’s literature. It was paired with an author talk by children’s literature expert Leonard Marcus, who discussed the life and work of illustrator Randolph Caldecott. Pictured: Elizabeth O. Jones (1910–2005), *Prayer for a Child*, 1944; watercolor, 6-1/2 x 5-3/8 inches; Courtesy of Wichita Falls Museum of Art at Midwestern State University.

Financial Summary 2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the years ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,097,717	1,506,213
Investments	7,604,664	5,296,549
Prepaid expenses	89,165	0
Pledges receivable, net	269,500	138,600
Other receivables, net	1,567,272	1,374,813
Bookstore inventory	76,811	248,842
Property and equipment, net	3,419,319	2,720,794
Investments in real estate	5,840,229	5,840,229
Art and historic structures	445,621	425,686
Total assets	<u>\$21,410,298</u>	<u>\$17,551,726</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accrued expenses	81,277	51,118
Deferred revenue	1,196,000	1,096,000
Capital lease obligations	1,820	4,247
Total liabilities	<u>\$1,279,097</u>	<u>\$1,151,365</u>
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	15,995,282	13,106,392
With donor restrictions	4,135,919	3,293,969
Total net assets	<u>\$20,131,201</u>	<u>\$16,400,361</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$21,410,298</u>	<u>\$17,551,726</u>

The financial statements of the Willa Cather Foundation are audited annually by an independent public accounting firm. A copy of the audited financial statements and the Foundation's tax filing (Form 990) may be obtained by contacting the Foundation's office.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Contributions and memberships	2,411,464	1,134,296
Grants	1,543,689	865,857
Sales and admissions	98,966	50,632
Rent income	51,707	42,001
Conferences and seminars	19,295	13,987
Royalties income	9,296	11,785
Other income	128,294	26,849
Interest income	187,282	123,523
Investment gain/loss	296,811	317,280
Sponsorships	36,975	29,345
Developer fee income		3,398
Total revenue and support	<u>\$4,783,779</u>	<u>\$2,618,953</u>
EXPENSES		
Program		
Cost of sales	38,740	23,419
Education and scholarships	56,311	51,416
Preservation of sites and collections	305,065	308,877
Historical center operations	90,766	77,219
Opera House and programming	218,383	195,075
Cather prairie operations	19,620	20,753
Supporting		
Management and general	278,804	280,613
Development and fundraising	45,250	90,803
Total expenses	<u>\$1,052,939</u>	<u>\$1,048,175</u>
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS		
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>\$16,400,361</u>	<u>\$14,829,583</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$20,131,201</u>	<u>\$16,400,361</u>

The Founders Society

These generous individuals have made cumulative lifetime gifts of \$1,000,000 or more to advance our mission.

Anonymous

The Inavale Foundation, Arlington, MA
Brad & Nancy Sherwood, Omaha, NE

The Cather Legacy Society

These generous individuals made charitable gift plans to benefit the Willa Cather Foundation beyond their lifetime through a gift intention in their will or through a beneficiary designation.

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† Deceased

Support

The following individuals and organizations were donors to the Willa Cather Foundation in 2021. Space does not permit us to list donations under \$50.00, but we are grateful for these contributions. Every gift is important to us.

\$250,000 and Above

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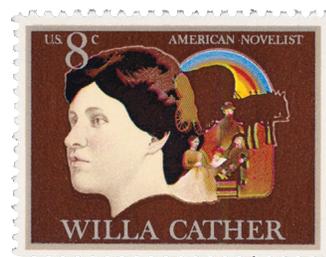
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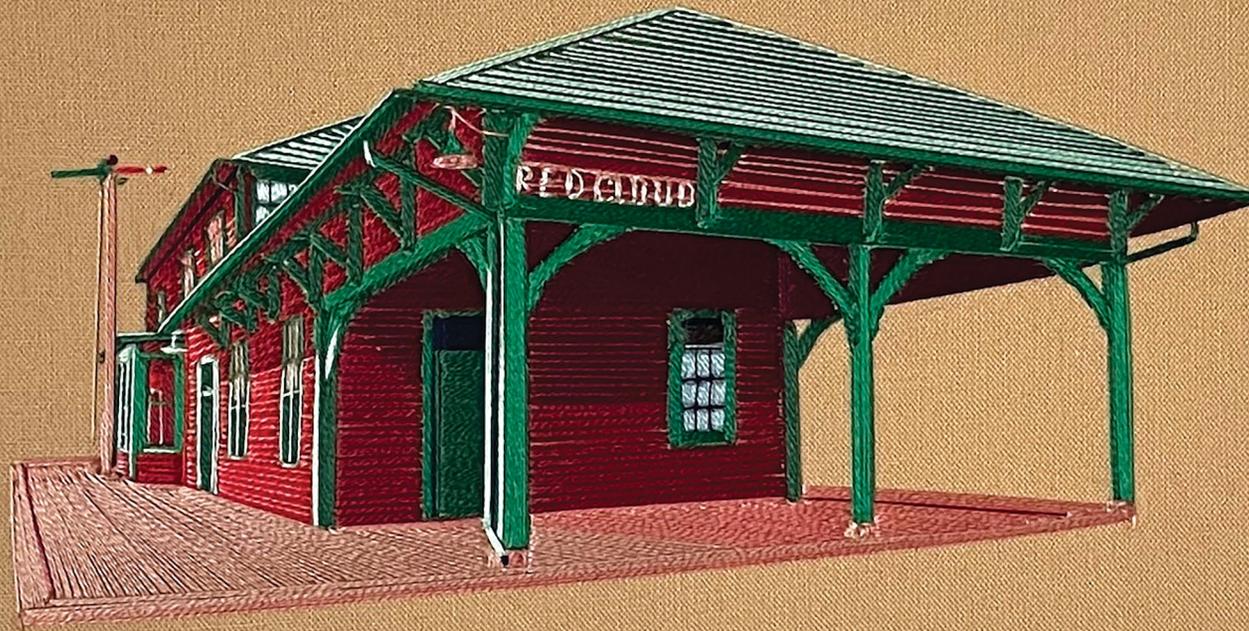
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How smoothly the train runs beyond the Missouri;
Even in my sleep I know when I have crossed the river.
The wheels turn as if they were glad to go . . .
They run like running water,
Like Youth, running away . . .
They spin bright along the bright rails,
Singing and humming,
Singing and humming.
They run remembering,
They run rejoicing,
As if they, too, were going home.

— Excerpt from "Going Home (Burlington Route)"
by Willa Cather



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