Beyond Nebraska: Willa Cather’s Pittsburgh

The 16th International Cather Seminar
Duquesne University
June 11-17, 2017

Pittsburgh, where Willa Cather lived from 1896 – 1906, is known as “the City of Bridges” for the 446 bridges criss-crossing its three rivers. The Smithfield Street Bridge, pictured here, is a National Historic Landmark and the oldest Pittsburgh bridge still in service, carrying traffic across the Monongahela since 1883. It is the second-oldest steel bridge standing in the United States. Cather used this bridge as a setting in her short story “Double Birthday.” Photo courtesy the Detroit Publishing Photograph Collection of the Library of Congress.
CALL FOR PAPERS
Beyond Nebraska: Willa Cather’s Pittsburgh
The 16th International Willa Cather Seminar

Dates: June 11-17, 2017
Location: Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Directors: Dr. Timothy Bintrim, Saint Francis University
Dr. James Jaap, Penn State Greater Allegheny
Site Director: Dr. Faith Barrett, Duquesne University

Willa Cather left Nebraska in 1896 and for the next decade made Pittsburgh her primary residence. During these ten years, Pittsburgh rapidly expanded as steel, glass, and other industries grew to meet the demand of a growing nation. Immigrants and African Americans flocked to the city as jobs were readily available, and the city nearly tripled in population during this decade. This was Cather’s first experience in an urban, multi-ethnic and -racial city, and she took advantage of all the city had to offer. She worked as an editor, teacher, reviewer, and freelance writer. She cultivated friendships and mixed with all sorts of Pittsburghers. She published extensively—not only hundreds of profiles and reviews, but also more than thirty short stories; a collection of poetry, *April Twilights* (1903); and *The Troll Garden*, her first collection of stories. After moving to New York in 1906, she continued visiting Pittsburgh until 1916, writing parts of several novels at the McClung residence. Despite the importance Pittsburgh played in her life, much remains undiscovered. This seminar will further explore the influences of Pittsburgh on Cather’s life and career.

Read the full Call for Papers at www.willacather.org/learn/conferences-cfp
We invite proposals on a wide range of topics within Cather studies, but particularly the following:

**Cather’s Pittsburgh Writings**
- Signed, pseudonymous, and unsigned works written in the city
- Daily journalism, editorial work, reviews, and correspondence
- The lost Pittsburgh novel (*Fanny*)
- Works with Western Pennsylvania settings and references
- Echoes of Pittsburgh in Cather’s novels

**Cather’s Pittsburgh Life**
- Life in boardinghouses and with the McClungs
- Family, friends, and acquaintances
- Clubs, excursions, and other diversions
- Forays to New York, Virginia, Washington, and her first trips abroad
- Cather’s experience of music: symphonic, operatic, sacred, classical, folk, popular, and jazz
- The Carnegie International and art in public and private collections

**Pittsburgh’s People and International Connections**
- Cather’s place in Pittsburgh’s diverse literary pantheon
- Cather’s troubled relationship with race and ethnicity: representations and elisions
- Social class, immigration, and Americanization; religious and political minorities
- Cather’s journalistic commentary on international affairs

Please send 500-word proposals of individual papers to the Willa Cather Foundation’s education director, Tracy Tucker, at ttucker@WillaCather.org, by February 15, 2017. If your paper is accepted, you will be notified by March 15, 2017. You will need to submit your final paper by May 1, 2017. Papers should be 8-10 pages in length (20 minutes when read).