Fragments of Desire: Cather and the Arts
60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference
June 5–7, 2015 | Red Cloud, Nebraska

In the centenary year of Cather’s *The Song of the Lark*, join us in Red Cloud, June 5–7, 2015, for the 60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, taking place in conjunction with the 15th International Willa Cather Seminar. Highlights include informative papers and panel discussions; guided town and country tours; an evening on the prairie; a screening of the NET Television documentary, *Yours, Willa Cather*; and the premiere of *Larksong*, a theatrical retelling of *The Song of the Lark*.

It was over flat lands like this, stretching out to drink the sun, that the lark sang—and one’s heart sang there, too.

Keynote Speaker: Richard Norton Smith
A nationally recognized author and historian and a familiar face to viewers of PBS *NewsHour* and C-SPAN, Mr. Smith has been director of the Herbert Hoover, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museums, as well as founding director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. His past appearance in Red Cloud was for C-SPAN’s live broadcast of *American Writers* in 2001.

*Larksong*, a theatrical retelling of *The Song of the Lark* written and performed by A.P. Andrews, Kerri Lowe, Adin Lenahan, Kaela Mei-Shing Garvin, and Alton Alburo
Cather’s story of uncovering one’s potential and deciding between present and future selves will be at the heart of an intensive artists’ residency and culminating performance by this group, led by Superior native A.P. Andrews. Original words and music and Cather’s beautiful prose combine with dance and performance to create a one-of-a-kind, theater-in-the-round experience.

On exhibit throughout the conference: *The Song and the Spark* by Elysia Mann
An excerpt from Cather’s 1915 novel *The Song of the Lark* serves as a textual basis for a series of drawings that explore the subjects of collaboration, identity and ambition through the physical imposition of translucent drawings on hand-rendered text.

The Growth of an Artist: Commemorating 100 Years of *The Song of the Lark*
Artists from across the state and region will participate in this exhibit celebrating the publication centenary of the novel. Inspired by the many themes present in the text, this collaborative show will include many styles and mediums.

The Regionalist Works of Grant Reynard
Organized by the Museum of Nebraska Art
In his first summer at New Hampshire’s MacDowell Colony, Grant Reynard met Willa Cather, who confided that she gained true success only when she began writing of her experiences in Nebraska. Born in Grand Island, Reynard began his artistic career in his father’s music store and went on to become one of the most prolific illustrators of his time with work appearing in *The Saturday Evening Post, Redbook, Ladies’ Home Journal, Harper’s Bazaar, McCall’s*, and *Scribner’s Magazine*.

About the 15th International Willa Cather Seminar
The 15th International Seminar, co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Cather Project, will take place from June 5–11, in Red Cloud and Lincoln. In addition to Spring Conference activities, highlights will include scholarly papers and plenary panels, a keynote by Terese Svoboda, campus tours, Jazz in June, the exhibit *Cather and the Visual* at the Sheldon Museum of Art, which will include the painting *The Song of the Lark* by Jules Breton on loan from the Art Institute of Chicago, and a program entitled “The Fine Things of Youth: Words and Music from Willa Cather’s *Lucy Gayheart*.” To register for the seminar, visit www.WillaCather.org or call 402-746-2653.
Friday, June 5
9:00 Welcome and remarks
9:30 Norma Ross Walter and Antonette Willa Skupa Turner scholarship awards and reading of winning essays
10:45 Panel discussion—“Awakening Young Artists: Arts Education Then and Now”
12:15 Lunch on your own
1:45 Rotating activities at Cather historic sites
• Kenneth Be, on painting conservation
• Christine Lesiak, Andy Jewell, Janis Stout on Cather’s letters
3:45 Premiere of NET Television documentary—Years, Willa Cather
5:00 Keynote by historian Richard Norton Smith
6:30 Dinner and toast to National Willa Cather Center groundbreaking
8:00 Annual Wildflower Walk at sunset—Willa Cather Memorial Prairie

Saturday, June 6
8:00 Coffee & kolache
9:00 Service at Grace Episcopal Church
10:30 The Passing Show—“Enriching Human Experience: The Arts in Cather’s Life and Work”
12:00 Luncheon—Spanish Johnny’s Cocina
1:45 Paper presentations, or reading of Cather’s play The W Eğitim Train
3:30 Paper presentations, or gallery talk—The Regionalist Works of Grant Reynard
5:00 Artists’ reception
6:30 Banquet and Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award presentation
8:00 Larksong performance at the Red Cloud Opera House

Sunday, June 7
9:00 Sunday Brunch
10:45 Town and Country Rotating Tours
12:30 Lunch
1:30 Town and Country Rotating Tours
4:30 Panel Discussion
6:30 Folk Music & BBQ at the Burlington Depot

Panelists and Speakers
Kenneth Be is Head of Paintings Conservation for the Nebraska State Historical Society’s Gerald Ford Conservation Center. He has recently completed work on Achsah Barlow Brewster’s Water Carriers, a painting owned by Willa Cather and Edith Lewis, and Paul Powis’s Sleigh with Trailing Wolves.
Christine Lesiak is an Emmy-nominated and Peabody award-winning producer with NET Television. She was co-producer and writer of Willa Cather: The Road is All and will debut her new documentary, Yours, Willa Cather, in the Red Cloud Opera House.
Tim Bintrim is Associate Professor of English and the Chair of Literature and Languages Department at Saint Francis University. His research interests include Cather and the visual arts among many others; Tim will co-direct the 16th International Willa Cather Seminar in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2017.
Angela Conrad is a Professor of English and the Humanities Division Chair at Bloomfield College in New Jersey. Angela boasts numerous Cather publications and was a co-director of the 1998 Colloquium, “Willa Cather’s New York.”
Elaine Smith focuses on domesticity, modernism, and immigration in Cather’s novels. In 2010, she presented “Of Coconut Cake and Consommé: Willa Cather’s School of Cookery” here in Red Cloud. She is a Professor at the University of South Florida.
John Flannigan is a recently retired Professor of English at Prairie State College in Chicago Heights, Illinois; he served as President of the Prairie State College Federation of Teachers for ten years. His publications include Modern Fiction Studies and Cather Studies.
A.P. Andrews is a Nebraska-born playwright, currently writing in New York. He is Teaching Assistant at Playwrights Horizons Theater School at NYU and conducts workshops elsewhere, including our own Prairie Writers’ Workshop in July 2015.
Fritz Mountford is a native of Red Cloud and is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Hastings College; his career encompasses teaching, performance, consulting, and educational leadership in the performing arts.
Jane Dressler is a distinguished performer, instructor, and researcher at Kent State University. She premiered My Antonia, a song cycle by composer Libby Larsen, as part of a lecture-recital titled “Willa Cather: Her World of Music” at our International Seminar in 2000.
Patsy Koch Johns is an accomplished performer, director and educator originally from Grand Island, Nebraska. She was named 2006 Nebraska Teacher of the Year and received the Governor’s Arts Award for Excellence in Arts Education in 2014.