Featured Speaker for Spring Conference

The Cather Foundation will present as featured speaker at Spring Conference Michel Gervaud, professor of English at the University of Aix en Provence. Dr. Gervaud has taught French in the United States and has visited Red Cloud several times. He represented France and its admiration for Willa Cather's writings at the International Conference on Cather held in Lincoln in 1973, the one hundredth anniversary of Cather's birth. He has published articles about Cather - both in French and English.

Since 1989 marks the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, Dr. Gervaud will bring greetings from France who gave us the Statue of Liberty and we will send back our best wishes for the future of France, the country Claude Wheeler thought "better than any country can ever be."

Uncle Sam Wants You!

...to look at World War I posters which will bring alive for you the appeal, the anguish, the triumphant spirit of that war to "save the world for democracy." You will see how Uncle Sam asked citizens to eat less meat, use less white flour - conserve all other necessities to provide for the boys over there. You will see how we worked with France to help support the spirit of the fighting men and comfort the widows and orphans. We must not let time dim our respect and appreciation for their sacrifice more than 70 years ago.

See the special exhibit at the Depot on loan to the Cather Foundation from UNL's Love Memorial Library Archives, Joseph Svoboda, Archivist.

Conference Reservations
Due May 3!

(Continued on Page 2)
34th Annual Cather Spring Conference
SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1989

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Registration, coffee and kolache — Cather Foundation Art Gallery
and Bookstore, 326 North Webster

8:30 a.m.
Mass — Grace Episcopal Church, 6th and Cedar
Father Louis Catching, officiating

9:30 a.m.
Mass — St. Juliana Catholic Church, 3rd Avenue and South Walnut
Father Frank Leiblinger, officiating

10:15 a.m.
Ribbon Cutting Ceremony — Mildred Bennett’s Office Building
immediately south of Post Office, Webster Street
Ron Hull, presiding

10:30 a.m.
A Visit to One of Ours Country — Tour departs from Bennett Building. Visit the Wheeler home, then on to Bladen for a memorial service (the Rev. Stephen D. Eldred, officiant) at the Bladen Cemetery (Bladen Opera House if weather is inclement) in honor of G. P. Cather (prototype for Claude Wheeler) and all war veterans.

1:00 p.m.
Lunch — Vet’s Hall, 3rd and Cedar

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
“The Passing Show” — Vet’s Hall, 3rd and Cedar
Panel: One of Ours Three Short Paper presentations followed by discussion groups, then a concluding session.
Bruce P. Baker, moderator

4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Vet’s Hall — World War I Songs led by Marshall Christensen

7:00 p.m.
Banquet — Michel GerVAud, Guest Speaker
Dr. Harrold Shiftier - poems by American soldiers in France High School Gymatorium, 7th and Webster

8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Open — Cather Foundation Art Gallery and Bookstore
326 North Webster

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Open — Cather Historical Center, 338 North Webster
Open House — Cather Childhood Home, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
and 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Grace Episcopal Church, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
St. Juliana Catholic Church, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Open House — Burlington Depot, 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Selection of UNL-Love Memorial Library’s World War I posters
Refreshments courtesy of Catherland Federated Women’s Club
(4:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.)

Cather Center Buildings are opened courtesy of Cather Historical Center, Nebraska State Historical Society, John Lindahl, curator.

Wooddress Receives 1st WCPM Annual Award

The first WCPM Annual Award for the year’s best book-length scholarly work on Cather was presented to James Woodress (University of California-Davis) at the Western Literature Association’s Annual Meeting in Eugene, Oregon, October 6, 1988. The cash book award, for Willa Cather: A Literary Life, was accepted by Susan J. Rosowski (UNL) for the absent author.

The WCPM award will be made each year at the WLA Annual Meeting for the best book-length study and for the best article on Cather. The book award will be for work published the previous year; the article award (due to the volume of Cather essays appearing in a wide range of journals) for work published two years prior to the award. The first article award, from 1987 work, will be presented this October 1989.

The committee of judges for these awards includes Mildred Bennett (WCPM), Bruce Baker (UNO), Robert Knoll (UNL), John Murphy (BYU), and Susan Rosowski (UNL), who, as members of WCPM’s Board of Governors, will be ineligible for awards.

1922 Publisher’s (Continued)

that to read this book will bring to an immense number of Americans the same deep glow of feeling, and that innumerable American families will open their arms to the hero as one of their own, much loved, flesh-and-blood kin.”

— Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher,
New York.

Announcing the publication of the autobiography of Mildred R. Bennett (the early years). The Winter Is Past. Special pre-publication price is $14.95. Send check or credit card information to: The Edwin Mel len Press, 240 Portage Road, Lewiston, NY 14092
Birthday Celebration
We have established a celebration each December in honor of Willa Cather's birthday. In 1988 Betty Jean Steinshouer gave a presentation "Willa Cather Speaks" to the Webster County grade school children at our Foundation office, Sunday, December 4. Ms. Steinshouer's presentation fascinated the children.

Ms. Steinshouer talked to high school students on Monday and in various other schools the remainder of the week.

On December 7 the Very Reverend Dean John P. Bartholomew of St. Mark's Pro Cathedral in Hastings gave a requiem mass at the Grace Episcopal Church. The communicants and friends gathered afterward at the Corral Cafe for lunch.

Outreach in the academic and local communities involved thousands of participants. In preparation for the conference, veteran American literature critic Alfred Kazin addressed a televised BYU forum on the valuable contribution of unchurched writers to our religious views and concepts of God. Other presymposium activities included discussions on Cather with high school teachers and their students. Attendance at symposium lectures ranged from 100 to 200, depending on the hour and class schedules of BYU students and professors. Follow-up included a panel discussion attended by almost 50 people at the Provo Public Library.

As the first Cather symposium to involve historians as well as literature scholars, lectures ranged from James Woodress's review of Cather's relations with her family to BYU historian Ted Warner's analysis of Cather's sources in Death Comes for the Archbishop. Marilyn Arnold discussed Cather's early letters from Nebraska; Susan Rosowski, the families in Cather's fiction; David Stouck, Cather's principles of history; John Murphy, the faith community in Archbishop, and Blanche Gelfant and Patricia Yongue, family and marital issues in One of Ours. Historians Robert Cherny (San Francisco State) and Wilbur Jacobs (University of California-Santa Barbara) lectured on Cather's Nebraska and Cather's Quebec, respectively. Bruce Baker discussed the inter-generational family in "Old Mrs. Harris," and Lucia Woods shared personal reflections on Cather's fiction after opening an exhibit of her photographs on Cather's various worlds.

Festive symposium events included a recital organized by BYU faculty musicians and devoted to works featured in Cather's fiction. Arias from Elijah, Norma, Orpheus and Eurydice, etc. were placed within texts selected from Cather by John Murphy. Mildred R. Bennett spoke on Cather's European genealogy at the banquet on the

(Continued on Page 4)

Cather Folks Enjoy a Break from the Symposium

BYU Cather Symposium Wins Humanities Award
"Willa Cather: The Family and Community," a symposium held on the Brigham Young University campus last September 14-17, has been selected by the Utah Endowment for the Humanities as a "Merit Award Project," an "outstanding example of how the humanities disciplines can be used in public programming."

Ten New Essays (Continued)
Machebeuf, the major source for Archbishop. John Murphy, editor of the issue, includes a useful bibliography of primary sources and a helpful preface.

The 134 page volume is available from WCPM for $4.00 or through the mail from WCPM for $6.00, which includes handling and postage.

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(Continued on Page 4)
BYU Symposium (Continued)
lasted night of the symposium and
was presented by Marilyn Arnold
with a framed official poster of
the symposium to bring back to
the WCPM in Red Cloud.

The four day meeting gen-
erated significant interest in Ca-
ther among non-academic as
well as academic readers. A ma-
ajor component was the presen-
tation of 48 session papers on
various aspects of the theme of
family in Cather by scholars
from New York to California and
a score of states between.

Call for Essays
To honor Mildred Ben-
ett on her 80th birthday,
The Edwin Mellen Press
will publish a volume of
 scholarly essays dealing
with any aspect of Willa Ca-
ther's life or writings.

The Press invites all
scholars, but especially
those who wish to share in
this tribute to Mildred, to
send their contributions
before May 31, 1989. It is
hoped, but not promised,
that the volume will be
published during autumn,
1989.

Essays should be not
less than 6000 words and
not exceed 15,000. They
must have full documenta-
tion. (The Chicago style
manual is preferred.)

We would appreciate
your communicating your
intentions to us imme-
diately and inform us of the sub-
ject of your study.

Write or phone Dr. Linda
Hoff, The Edwin Mellen
Press, 240 Portage Road,
Lewiston, New York 14092
(Ph. 716-754-2794).

Cather Plaque
Returned to UNL
In our most recent newsletter
we asked for help in identifying
the proper location for a Cather
plaque which the sheriff's de-
partment of Great Bend, Kansas,
had found near a creek in Barton
County, about five miles north of
Great Bend.

Dr. Robert Knoll of the English
department at the University of
Nebraska-Lincoln immediately
recognized it as one that dis-
appeared from Andrews Hall in
1969 during building renovation.
Now much corroded and very
dirty, it has come back to the
UNL English Department where
it will appear after experts
decide whether or not to remove
the corrosion.

The plaque was given to the
University by the Nebraska Fed-
eration of Women's Clubs, Inc.
in 1950 to honor Willa Cather as
"One of Ours."

Cather Foundation
Receives Rare Book
Marian Yost, whose family
knew Willa Cather personally,
has given the Cather Foundation
the 1903 copy of April Twilights
presented to her maternal grand-
father:

“For my friend C. L. Cotting
from Willa Cather
New York
November 6, 1918”

This rare edition is highly
prized in the rare book trade.

Mr. Cotting was a pioneer Red
Cloud businessman.

Bequests . . .
Two bequests have come to
the Cather Foundation since our
latest report to you. The estate
of Fanny Butcher Bokum left
$1,000 and an autographed
photograph of Miss Cather.
Fanny Butcher, a friend of Willa
Cather for 35 years, was book
to the Chicago Tribune.

Anne Marie Rehtus Loezlin,
who died last fall, left a $1,000
bond to the Cather Foundation.

We are grateful to all those
who have remembered our orga-
nization in this way.

Writer's Workshop
JULY 14, 15, & 16
The Cather Foundation will
host a Writer's Workshop July
14-16. Instructors are James
Work of Colorado State Univer-
sity at Fort Collins, Colorado,
and Dorothy Minchin-Comm,
Loma Linda University, Rivers-
side California.

Dr. Work, Professor of Eng-
lish; Executive Director, Colo-
rado Seminars in Literature;
President-elect, Western Litera-
ture Association, and teacher
Western American Literature,
Heritage of the West, and
Nature Writing, brings a ver-
satile background to the work-
shop.

For three past summers he
was on faculty of a back-country
and wilderness institute for
Colorado College, teaching na-
ture writing during week-long
field trips into La Garita Wilder-
ness Area, Canyonlands Nation-
al Park and Arches National
Monument.

Author of dozens of articles
on literature and on methods of
teaching writing, he edited the
University of Nebraska Press
critical edition of Shane, and
UNP's forthcoming anthology
Prose and Poetry of the Ameri-
can West. He has two other
books under contract, both

(Continued on Page 5)
Writer's Workshop
(Continued)

about writing. He has published articles in Magazine of the Midlands, Colorado Country Life, Empire, and other popular regional magazines.

A Colorado mountain native, he is past-president of the Rocky Mountain College English Association, former director of Creative Writing at College of Southern Utah, frequent speaker at Western Literature Association meetings, Western/Southwestern Literature Session Chairman, 1989 Rocky Mountain MLA.

Dorothy Minchin-Comm, author of seven books and numerous articles, teaches at Loma Linda University, La Sierra Campus in Riverside, California. She has conducted writing classes in the United States, India and currently in Jamaica. She specializes in inspirational writing, autobiography, Christian oriented nonfiction and instructs in how to motivate the right brain experience.

Mrs. Comm took her doctorate in 18th Century Colonial Literature at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Born of an Australian father and an American mother, she has achieved international citizenship, having lived in New Foundland and Alberta, Canada, England, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, and the Philippines. She has traveled extensively. Immediately after her appearance in Red Cloud, she starts on a tour of the Far East to write television documentaries.

Dead Dogs at Homecoming:
A Homeric Motif in My Ántonia

As Jim Burden approaches Ántonia's farm in the final section of My Ántonia, he comes upon two of her sons, Jan and Ambrosch, grieving for a family pet: "Ahead of me, in a plum thicket beside the road, I saw two boys bending over a dead dog." In contrast to Jim's joyful reunion with Ántonia, this scene comprises a prologue that is both melancholy and puzzling. When Ántonia is talking with Jim, she learns of the death from her daughter Anna and she quickly soothes the sad-eyed Jan. Later, while Jim and Ántonia admired the apple orchard, Jan, Nina, and Lucile measure an area within the enclosure: 'Jan wants to bury his dog there,' Ántonia explained. 'I had to tell him he could.' " (341).

Willa Cather's brief episode recalls the scene from Joseph Andrews in which another industrious and affectionate family is distressed by the sudden death of their dog. In Henry Fielding's book too, the death intrudes upon a pastoral setting. As the cheerful Wilsons entertain Joseph Andrews, Fanny Goodwill, and Abraham Adams in their fruitful garden, the sound of a gunshot startles them. The Wilsons' young daughter breaks out crying when their blooded dog limps up to her and then dies licking her hand. The scene is even more sentimental than its equivalent in My Ántonia: the little girl "exprest great agony at his loss, and the other children began to cry for their sister's misfortune, nor could Fanny herself refrain." Fielding integrates the incident more firmly into the rest of the story than Cather does; the cruel squire who shoots the pet has "no motive but ill-nature" (219), and the parents and sympathetic visitors display the good nature that is idealized throughout the novel.

Cather's scene may intentionally parallel that of Fielding, whom she ranked among the best writers of English prose. Mrs. Wilson and Ántonia are their children's main source of comfort in the scenes of death; moreover, the love of each woman inspires her husband to both financial success and emotional contentment, mirrored in the flourishing landscapes. Both scenes, however, may have a common source in The Odyssey that can help to explain the unusual coupling of the central character's arrival with the death of a dog. In Book XVII, Odysseus finally reaches home after a 20-year absence. The loyal swineherd Eumaios hospitably welcomes him to his cottage in the country but does not know his disguised master. When Eumaios guides him to the palace, Odysseus is recognized by his old dog Argos, who weakly wags his tail. "Wiping a salt tear from his cheek," Odysseus hides his sorrow as the dog dies; he listens to the swineherd's lament for the lost glories of the past, when Argos was swift and Odysseus was in command.

Jim Burden and Joseph Andrews, like Odysseus, are journeying heroes who return to the homelands they left about 20 years before. None of the three men is immediately recognized by his loved ones. "My husband's not at home, sir. Can I do anything?" Ántonia asks her childhood friend (332), and the Wilsons do not realize that Joseph is their son, who was kidnapped as a baby. In all three works, the death of a dog is a prelude to the eventual recognition of the protagonist and his assimilation into a family. This Homeric element joins many others in My Ántonia and Joseph Andrews: the division of both works into "books"; the elevated language — for example, Jim Burden's reference to a prairie "the colour of wine-stains" (15), and Fielding's elaborate description of dawn as Aurora (71); epic battles, such as Jim's struggle against the rattlesnake and Joseph Andrew's use of his legendary cudgel against an attack of vicious dogs, including one "descended from an Amazonian breed" (229).

(Continued on Page 6)
YOU CAN PARTICIPATE
IN THE LIFE AND GROWTH
OF THE ORGANIZATION
• By being a Cather Memorial Member and financial contributor:

  BENEFACCTOR ........................ $1,000.00 and over

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS
Patron .............................. $100.00
Sustaining .......................... 25.00
Family ............................. 15.00
Individual .......................... 10.00
WCPM members receive:
Newsletter subscription
Free guided tour to restored buildings

• By contributing your Willa Cather artifacts, letters, papers, and publications to the Museum.

• By contributing your ideas and suggestions to the Board of Governors.

ALL MEMBERSHIPS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND BEQUESTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE
Under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1965

AIMS OF THE WCPM
• To promote and assist in the development and preservation of the art, literary, and historical collection relating to the life, time, and work of Willa Cather, in association with the Nebraska State Historical Society.

• To cooperate with the Nebraska State Historical Society in continuing to identify, restore to their original condition, and preserve places made famous by the writing of Willa Cather.

• To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial, through the Foundation, by encouraging and assisting scholarship in the field of the humanities.

• To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.

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NOTES
1Willa Cather, My Ántonia (1918; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954), p. 329. Future references will be noted parenthetically in the text.

April Event
On Friday evening, April 14, at 8:00 there will be a public reading of April Twilights. Readers will be Susan Rosowski, Stephen Behrendt, and Julie Cochran of the UNL Department of English. Come to The Haydon Gallery, 230 North 7th Street, Lincoln.