Call for Papers: Willa Cather’s Letters/Willa Cather and Letters

As the Complete Letters of Willa Cather is nearing completion, Cather's letters are available and accessible to scholars and researchers in an unprecedented way. To mark this moment in Cather scholarship, The Cather Project and the Willa Cather Archive at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will be holding a day-long scholarly symposium on October 10, 2022, featuring papers that engage Cather's letters in new and deeper ways that may have been previously unavailable to scholars. Hosted in-person on the campus of UNL in Lincoln, NE, the day will feature plenary presentations and conversations that encourage diverse and deep engagements with this newly-accessible corpus.

A variety of approaches and topics are welcome, and papers may focus exclusively on Cather or Cather in relation to other figures. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

* Epistolary forms and conventions
* Letters in the context of the history of letter writing
* Engagement with the material aspects of letter-writing (pens, pencils, stationery, typewriters, envelopes)
* The employment of secretaries to assist with correspondence
* Epistolary networks
* The negotiation of relationships through letter writing
* Gaps in epistolary archives and how to interpret them
* Letters in relation to published literary or critical work
* Lies in letters
* Cather as a literary critic in her letters
* Cather’s testamentary ban on letter publication
* Access to authors’ letters as shaping research and teaching
* Cather as a reader of published letter collections
* Letters and literary estates
* Letters as collectible objects/letters in collections
* Computational approaches to letters (network analysis, sentiment analysis, etc.)

We are also interested in hearing from those engaged in editing other U.S. women authors’ letters for digital publication for a roundtable on such efforts.

If you are interested in presenting, submit an abstract and a 2 pg. cv or bio-sketch by July 15, 2022 to Melissa J. Homestead, Director of the Cather Project, at mhomestead2@unl.edu. Lodging and meals in Lincoln will be covered for those selected to present.

A volume of Cather Studies will also be devoted to this topic, with a submission deadline of November 15, 2022. For the Call for Papers see here. However, attendance at the symposium is not a prerequisite for submitting an essay to Cather Studies, or vice versa.