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, Cather Studies will devote a volume to essays that engage with Cather’s letters in new and deeper ways that may have been previously unavailable to scholars. Melissa J. Homestead, editor of Cather Studies and co-editor of the Complete Letters, will edit the volume.

A variety of approaches and topics are welcome, and essays 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.)

Essays should be submitted no later than November 15, 2022. Essays should be documented in Chicago Style using notes. See this guide for advice about how to cite letters as published in the Complete Letters. Essays will undergo double-blind peer review. Please direct queries and submissions to mhomestead2@unl.edu.

The Cather Project and the Willa Cather Archive will also co-sponsor a scholarly symposium on Cather’s letters at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the fall of 2022—dates and details to be announced—but attendance at the symposium is not a prerequisite for submitting an essay to Cather Studies.