

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Faculty Publications -- Department of English

English, Department of

---

Spring 2008

## Nebraska, New England, New York: Mapping the Foreground of Willa Cather and Edith Lewis's Creative Partnership

Melissa J. Homestead

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, [mhomestead2@Unl.edu](mailto:mhomestead2@Unl.edu)

Anne L. Kaufman

*Bridgewater State College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishfacpubs>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

Homestead, Melissa J. and Kaufman, Anne L., "Nebraska, New England, New York: Mapping the Foreground of Willa Cather and Edith Lewis's Creative Partnership" (2008). *Faculty Publications -- Department of English*. 77.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishfacpubs/77>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications -- Department of English by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# NEBRASKA, NEW ENGLAND, NEW YORK: MAPPING THE FOREGROUND OF WILLA CATHER AND EDITH LEWIS'S CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP

MELISSA J. HOMESTEAD  
ANNE L. KAUFMAN

Some time in 1931 or 1932, about thirty years into her relationship with Willa Cather, Edith Lewis sat down with pen in hand to edit a working typescript of Cather's short story "Neighbor Rosicky." First published in 1930 in the *Woman's Home Companion*, the story was to be included in *Obscure Destinies*, a volume of three Cather stories that had all first appeared in women's magazines. Lewis, the evidence suggests, was working with a carbon of the typescript originally submitted for magazine publication.<sup>1</sup> On the typescript and in the magazine publication, Cather describes Mary, Anton Rosicky's wife, checking her baking before she asks her husband about his visit to the doctor concerning his heart trouble: "Mary took the twisted cake covered with poppy seeds out of the oven, lightly broke it up with her hands and then sat down opposite him." In her elaborate but legible script, easily distinguishable from Cather's often illegible scrawl, Lewis made a key substitution and expansion, revising the sentence to read, "Mary took out of the oven a pan of Kolaches stuffed with apricots, examined them anxiously to see whether they had got too dry, put them beside his plate, and then sat down opposite him."

A few years later, in 1935 or 1936, Lewis picked up her pen to edit essays collected in Cather's *Not under Forty* (1936). In 1922, Cather had published an essay on Annie Adams Fields in the *Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post* under the title "The House on Charles Street." This time, Lewis had before her a typescript titled "148 Charles Street" that framed the original essay with new beginning and ending paragraphs. Lewis made several small but telling changes to Cather's descriptions of both Fields's home and Cather herself in the original essay. She tweaked the list of nineteenth-century writers and artists who frequented Mrs. Fields's salon, canceling "Lady Henry Somerset" and adding "Winslow Homer and Sargent." In the original, Cather writes

about Mrs. Fields's garden as an extension of her salon, a space featuring "flourishing ... lilacs and flowering shrubs" that might have been brought to Mrs. Fields by the "school-book names ... from Cambridge or Concord" (Longfellow or Emerson, whom Cather mentions as visitors to the house). Lewis substituted a single variety of flowering shrub, "guelder roses," for the "lilacs and flowering shrubs." Lewis also corrected a significant classical reference in a key passage about Cather herself. Cather describes Mrs. Fields as quoting from "Dr. Donne," and Cather feels forced to reveal her ignorance by asking "And who ... was Dr. Donne?" Cather reports, "I knew before morning. She had a beautiful patience with Scythian ignorance, but I was strongly encouraged to take two fat volumes of Dr. Donne to bed with me that night." Scythian? Why would Cather use this reference to an ancient people known for their defiant, warlike nature to describe her ignorance in the face of Mrs. Fields's culture? Lewis substituted "Bœotian," an agricultural, illiterate people scorned by Athenians for their dullness, whose name became a synonym for provincial backwardness and ignorance (Brewer's 125–26, 815).

Who was this woman who could add local color in the form of kolaches (Czech pastries) to one of Cather's Nebraska stories and who could refine (and correct) the details of Cather's depiction of the home of a legendary New England literary hostess? One could search long in Cather biography and criticism and find no traces of the woman capable of making these carefully considered changes to Cather's prose. One can, of course, find many references to Edith Lewis, the woman with whom Cather shared an apartment in New York City for nearly four decades, but that Edith Lewis is largely a cipher. Whether or not Cather biographers and critics are willing to characterize any of Cather's intimate relationships with women as lesbian, they have shown little interest in investigating the details of Lewis's life except as documented in Cather's letters and in Lewis's discreet and self-effacing memoir of Cather, *Willa Cather Living* (1953). In the absence of information about Lewis, conventional wisdom has it that Pittsburgh socialite Isabelle McClung strongly and substantively influenced Cather's artistic production by serving as grand passion and muse, while the faithful and subservient Lewis attended to the quotidian and clerical details of Cather's life. Cather biographer Sharon O'Brien, for instance, characterizes Lewis as a "loyal mate" and "partner willing to be a 'secondary consideration,'" while she characterizes McClung as Cather's "grand romance," "abiding passion," "her muse" and "ideal reader" (126, 357, 356, 126, 356, 356).

An American Masters documentary on Cather first aired on public television in 2005 memorably encapsulates the most striking aspects of this long-settled characterization of Lewis. Allotting Lewis about thirty seconds of airtime out of ninety minutes, the documentary voice-over narrator labels Lewis “a practical partner.” Critic Margo Jefferson lists all of the sorts of people Cather did *not* choose to share a home with (another writer, a painter, an actress) and then describes the person Cather *did* choose as “a safe, solid person who devoted herself to Willa Cather.” Cather critic Richard Giannone concludes the brief Lewis segment by posing and answering his own question: “The question arises did Edith Lewis surrender her genius, her talent to support Cather’s? Probably—but that’s okay” (*Willa Cather*). Across the screen flashes a single photograph of Lewis taken during her years living with Cather. She stands alone, leaning against a blank wall in a shapeless overcoat, her hands behind her back, her hat pulled down to shade her eyes from the sun, her mouth pulled into a frown by her squinting, and her features distorted by the contrast between light and shadow. This oft-reprinted photograph neatly encapsulates—and perhaps is one source for—repeated scholarly characterizations of Lewis as a “shadow,” a “puzzling shadow figure,” and a “myster[y]” (Lee 70; Stout 279; Yongue, “Willa” 187). Needless to say, McClung receives exponentially more airtime, lavishly illustrated with flattering photographs.

Even when Cather scholars have tried to describe, or at least imagine, Lewis as a woman with a life beyond her relationship with Cather and personal force within that relationship, their attempts founder for lack of information. O’Brien, for instance, tries to correct Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant’s portrait of Lewis as “Cather’s first mate,” keeping quietly in the background at social



Edith Lewis. The photograph was probably taken by Willa Cather ca. 1925 or 1926 during a trip to the American Southwest. Courtesy of Archives & Special Collections, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries.

functions in their home. "Lewis helped and seconded in many ways besides proofreading galleys and passing the canapés," writes O'Brien (355); "Lewis' place in Cather's emotional and creative life was not subordinate to Isabelle's but different, and quite likely equally important" (357). Still, readers are left with the galleys and the canapés (to which O'Brien adds travel arrangements and luggage wrangling), work Cather could have delegated to a personal secretary or housekeeper. The "quite likely equally important" part remains undefined.

Certainly, Cather's working typescripts have only recently come to light, and most of the biographical scholarship on Cather (including O'Brien's biography) was written without access to—or even knowledge of—these materials. With the evidence of the typescripts in mind, this essay begins the project of reconstructing the authority of the woman holding the editorial pen. For the purposes of this essay, we begin at the beginning, focusing primarily on Lewis's family history and Lewis's life before she met Cather in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1903. Turning to sources such as newspapers, census records, city directories, local histories, genealogies, and college and university archives, and supplementing this research with interviews with Lewis's collateral descendants, we have found a wealth of information about Lewis's family history and early life. We track the movements of her large and mobile extended family across the nineteenth-century West, but we also foreground their departure point for these migrations, New England. We place the young Edith Lewis and her family in the cultural milieu of Lincoln, Nebraska, in the 1880s and '90s, but we also recover her deep New England family history, which profoundly shaped both her Nebraska childhood and her early adulthood when she left Nebraska, first to attend college in Massachusetts and then to seek a career in publishing in New York City.

In "148 Charles Street," Cather claims that in the parlor of Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett's shared home, "an American of the Apache period and territory [meaning herself] could come to inherit a Colonial past" (57). As the widow of James T. Fields (of Ticknor and Fields, the preeminent nineteenth-century American literary publishing house), Annie Fields called up for Cather "little volumes of Longfellow and Hawthorne with that imprint" in "my father's bookcase" (53). Mrs. Fields served as a link back to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England because she was a living connection to the deceased nineteenth-century New England literary figures who had been "part of the very Charles Street scene. Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Hawthorne, Lowell, Sumner, Norton, Oliver Wendell Holmes" (56). As we demonstrate, Nebraska-born Edith Lewis with her family history and her college edu-

cation was a representative of that New England past as well. Thus, at the moment Cather and Lewis met, we find powerfully concentrated in the figure of Edith Lewis two geographically located versions of the past Willa Cather valued: the Nebraska of her own childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, and a New England-centered literary culture she encountered through reading—and the future to which she aspired—New York, the rising center of the twentieth-century American culture industries. Although *Willa Cather Living* reveals little information about Edith Lewis, Lewis's memoir does reveal her thorough knowledge of Cather's family history and Nebraska childhood and how they informed Cather's fiction. Although Cather never wrote *Edith Lewis Living*, we suggest a corollary possibility—that Cather knew Lewis's family history and Nebraska childhood and that traces of Lewis's family stories may have found their way into Cather's fiction. In short, we begin to recover Edith Lewis as a woman who could, thirty years after meeting Cather, make substantive and useful revisions to both "Neighbor Rosicky" and "148 Charles Street" and who could have influenced Cather rather than, as some critics have claimed, have been virtually subsumed into her.<sup>2</sup>



Edith Labaree Lewis was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, on December 22, 1881 (University of Nebraska, Transcript).<sup>3</sup> Like most European-American residents of Nebraska in the early 1880s, her family were recent arrivals. During the decades following the Civil War, her father's and mother's families had been working their way west from New England. Edith Lewis's maternal and paternal ancestors were among the earliest white settlers in what became New England, making them, as her niece recently described them, "old Yankee families" (Trainor). Through her father, Henry Euclid Lewis, Edith was descended from Dr. Samuel Fuller, a Mayflower Pilgrim, as well as George Lewis, who arrived in Massachusetts in 1630 (Waite 447, see also entry for Homer Pierce Lewis in Marquis 666). In the early years of the republic, descendants of these seventeenth-century Massachusetts Puritans relocated to Claremont, New Hampshire (Waite 447). Edith Lewis's paternal grandmother, Adeline Labaree, was descended from French Huguenots who arrived in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, fleeing religious persecution. The Labarees relocated to Charlestown, New Hampshire, in the 1750s, in the midst of the French and Indian War, and patriarch Peter Labaree was taken captive by Indians, although he survived to raise a large family (Waite 447). Thus both the Labarees and the Lewises had settled in New Hampshire before the nineteenth century, with other



Edith Lewis playing in a sandbox with her nieces Ruth and Elizabeth (daughters of her brother Harold) in the 1920s. Courtesy of the family of Ruth Lewis Trainor.

branches of the family tree reaching into Vermont and Maine. This paternal family history reorients our understanding of Cather's time spent writing in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, and Lewis and Cather's subsequent selection of Grand Manan, a Canadian island off the coast of Maine, as their summer residence. Most certainly, it proves patently false one scholar's claim that New Hampshire was exclusively Cather's place and that Lewis's burial at Cather's side in the Jaffrey graveyard was an intrusion by Lewis into a place to which she had no claim (Yongue, "Willa" 203 and "Edith" 15).

Through her mother, Lillie Gould (born Sarah Lydia), Edith Lewis was descended from two distinguished Rhode Island Quaker families with early colonial-era roots. Daniel Gould arrived in Massachusetts in 1637 with his Puritan parents, but as an adult, he converted to Quakerism and moved to the Rhode Island colony in the wake of persecution by his former co-religionists. Lewis's maternal grandfather bore the name of his first colonial ancestor, and his second wife (and Lewis's grandmother), Sarah Earle, was descended from the earliest English settlers on the island of Nantucket (Downer II:201).

Edith Lewis's father was born on the family homestead in Claremont on February 1, 1848, the seventh child of George Gilbert Lewis and Adeline Lewis's eight children who survived into adulthood (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110; Waite 448). Henry and his brothers Eugene,

Francis Wesley (“Frank”), Arthur George, and Homer Pierce Lewis all graduated from Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, New Hampshire (Fielder), and then received degrees from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. As Eugene Lewis’s *Boston Herald* obituary boasts, “for 14 successive years the family was represented” at Dartmouth by at least one son in attendance (Lewis, Eugene). With few opportunities for post-secondary education available to young women in the antebellum era, the Lewis daughters (Ellen, Isabelle [“Belle”], and Marion) did not graduate from Kimball Union Academy, but they did attend, as did their mother before them (Fielder). The Claremont town history highlights the educational achievements of the Lewis children: “This is a remarkable record of a family of eight children of a New Hampshire farmer of but moderate means, due largely to the intelligence, ambition, frugality, and industry of the mother, in cooperation with the father and the children themselves” (Waite 448).<sup>4</sup>

All five of the Lewis brothers taught school during winter terms in order to help pay their college expenses, and all of them spent their early years after college teaching. Like so many young men from rural New England in the post-war era, they found that westward migration offered greater opportunities for economic and professional advancement. Middle son Arthur was a lifelong New Englander and educator, but the four other Lewis brothers left New England, and of those four, three (including Henry) left the teaching profession. Henry, Frank, and Eugene became western lawyers who used their legal skills in the banking and financial enterprises that drove western development, while Homer taught his way across the country. The Lewis brothers traveled in stages, individually and in groups, to the states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and as far west as Utah. Gender constrained the physical and professional mobility of the three Lewis sisters, although they were equally enterprising. Ellen married a Vermont farmer, but Belle and Marion remained unmarried and moved west as teachers, residing in their brothers’ households (Waite 448, Trainor).

Henry Lewis, Edith’s father, first taught in New Jersey and Vermont, but he moved to Moline, Illinois, in 1876, where he read law under his brother Eugene, who had moved there in 1869 (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110; Webster 74). After being admitted to the bar in 1878, he became his brother’s law partner (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110; Lewis, Henry). Homer Lewis also moved west in 1876, to Davenport, Iowa, across the Mississippi River from Moline, where he was a teacher and then a school principal (Dartmouth Class of 1874; *History of Scott County* 871; Downer I:938, 944).



It was in the twin cities Moline and Davenport that the lives of Edith Lewis's parents converged. Daniel Gould moved his family to Davenport in 1857, where he manufactured and sold furniture. Lillie, born in 1858, was their first and only child born in the West (Downer II:202). In keeping with their Quaker faith, the Goulds were a progressive and reform-minded family. Daniel and Sarah supported the causes of abolition and temperance. Daniel served for fifteen years on the Davenport school board (in which capacity he undoubtedly came in contact with Homer Lewis), while Sarah and her married daughter Mary Wing supported the local public library (Downer II:202, I:790). In the absence of a Quaker community, the Goulds helped to establish and support the First Unitarian Church in Davenport (Downer II:202). The Lewis brothers and sisters had been raised in the Congregational Church, the denomination descending from the Puritanism of their ancestors. However, both Eugene and Henry converted to Unitarianism after graduating from college (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 112; Webster 75). Henry Lewis and Lillie Gould married in the Davenport Unitarian church on September 3, 1879 (Scott County 233, *Owen's* 135). Thus, on the eastern edge of the prairies in 1879, we find woven together in marriage two separated strands of New England history: a Mayflower descendant whose family had hewed to the church of its Puritan forefathers married the descendant of an apostate persecuted by the Puritans.

Henry and Lillie Lewis briefly established a home in Moline, where their first child, Harold Gould Lewis, was born in 1880 (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 111). On July 20, 1881, Henry and Lillie, four months pregnant with Edith, moved with their infant son to Lincoln, Nebraska, then an aspiring capital city of the prairie state with a population that would reach twenty thousand by 1885 (Olson 207). Henry hung up his lawyer's shingle over his office at 10th and O streets downtown, while his family lived a short walk away. Henry quickly added loan brokerage to his business, and his family moved further from the center of town, eventually settling in 1885 at 27th Street south of O, where the family owned a home for nearly twenty-five years.<sup>5</sup> Also in 1885, Henry's older brother Frank moved to Lincoln with his family from Weymouth, Massachusetts (Dartmouth Class of 1866, 59–60; Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110). Frank's family, consisting of his wife, Mary Burr White Lewis, and children Gilbert Newton, Roger Labaree, and Mary (or "May") Hammett Lewis, first shared a home with Henry and Lillie's family but then moved into the house next door. Henry and Frank began a seven-year partnership as Lewis & Lewis—lawyers, brokers, and financial agents—with a substantial focus on western land investments

for eastern parties.<sup>6</sup> In his law practice, Frank Lewis gained particular prominence in the city as the lawyer for the Law and Order League, of which he was a founder. The League sought to use the courts to purge the developing city of saloons, casinos, and bawdy houses (Mahoney 173; Dartmouth Class of 1866, 60). Henry became a director and officer of two banks—in 1886, he became vice president and a managing director of the Union Savings Bank, and in 1889, he became president of the Lincoln Savings Bank and Safe Deposit Company (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110).

Members of Lillie Lewis's family also moved to Lincoln. Lillie's adolescent nephew Daniel Gould Wing came to Lincoln in 1885 to take a job as a messenger at the State National Bank ("Wing"), and the next year, the rest of his family followed—Lillie's eldest sibling, Mary, and her husband, George Wing (originally from New Bedford, Massachusetts), with their daughters, Alice Earle and Elizabeth ("Bessie") Russell, and younger son, Thomas Ellwood Wing. All three of the younger Wing children enrolled in various divisions of the University of Nebraska, while their older brother, Daniel, worked his way up in banking without the benefit of a college education.<sup>7</sup>

This family history brings us to the moment in 1890 when Cather arrived in Lincoln to enroll in the university preparatory division. By then, Edith Lewis had spent the entire nine years of her life in Lincoln, nearly as many years as Cather's eventual total years of residence in Webster County and Lincoln combined (indeed, Cather's family had moved to Webster County a mere seven years before, in 1883, two years after Lewis's family moved to Lincoln). Edith's father had recently become a bank president, and he and her uncle Frank ran a loan brokerage business. Edith had three living siblings, her older brother, Harold, and her younger siblings, Margaret Earle and Frederick Stewart (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 111). She was surrounded by an extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins—all well established in the rapidly growing city. Cousin Daniel Wing had just been promoted to the responsible position of cashier at the American Exchange National Bank. In nearby Omaha, her uncle Homer was principal of the high school and her aunt Belle was a teacher in the same school (Dartmouth Class of 1874; Lewis, Homer; Waite 448). Edith herself had been studying violin at the university-associated fine arts school for several years, while her cousins Alice and Bessie Wing were enrolled at the university as special students, as was Edith's mother, Lillie (University of Nebraska, *Catalogue 1890–91*, 31, 16–17). Alice and Bessie's brother Tom were university sophomores that year, and some of Edith's paternal cousins were

also enrolled (*University Catalogue 1890–91*, 14). May Lewis was a freshman, while Gilbert, a boy genius schooled mostly at home during his childhood, was a precocious fourteen-year-old enrolled as a second-year student in the preparatory division—that is, he was in the class to which seventeen-year-old Willa Cather was assigned based on examination results (*University Catalogue 1890–91*, 31, 16–17, 22–23; Pauling 487).

Cather biographers have long recognized that although Cather arrived in Lincoln from Red Cloud with few connections, she quickly and astutely allied herself with Lincoln's social and cultural elites. What they have failed to recognize, however, was the central place the Lewis and Wing families occupied in those elite circles. When Cather arrived in 1890, the total student enrollment at the university was only 570 (*University Catalogue 1895*, 64), so Edith Lewis's siblings and cousins represented a substantial percentage of the student body; and in such an intimate environment, students and faculty had at least a passing acquaintance with all the members of the campus community. Cather verifiably knew one of Edith Lewis's cousins, Tom Wing, very well. In an 1896 letter to her friend and classmate Mariel Gere, Cather claimed to have had a brief, failed romance with Tom Wing in 1895, and a few years later, Tom married Cather's classmate and close friend Katherine Weston, daughter of a university regent. Although Cather very successfully maneuvered her way into the power centers of Lincoln and university society, in 1890, when she first arrived in Lincoln, she was an outsider from Red Cloud, while nine-year-old Edith Lewis was already centrally and comfortably ensconced in those circles.

Harold and Lillie Lewis were typical of New England emigrants of their class in midwestern cities in that they anchored themselves in social networks by participating in selective social clubs. Reconstructing the club life of Edith's parents and other adult relations highlights to an even greater degree Edith's status as a member of the Lincoln elites to which young Willa Cather aspired. William Jennings Bryan moved to Lincoln in 1887 to practice law with his friend Adolphus R. Talbot from Illinois, and in 1888 or 1889, the ambitious young Bryan invited Henry Lewis and nine other men active in the Democratic Party to be founding members of the Round Table. At each meeting of this informal, somewhat secretive club, a member of the club presented a paper on a selected political, literary, scientific, philosophical, or social topic, and general discussion followed (Coletta 38; Faulkner; Dawes 6, 10–11, 19; "Men's"). At first, the meeting featured only talk, but later, eating and drinking followed discussion, and the club also diversified politically, admitting Republican members in addition to Adolphus Talbot, the only Republican among the

original eleven. Among the members during the club's first two decades were Lincoln lawyer Charles Gates Dawes (later US comptroller of the Currency under President William McKinley, US vice president under Calvin Coolidge, and ultimately Nobel Peace Prize winner), James H. Canfield (chancellor of the university and Dorothy Canfield's father), Silas Burnham (Henry Lewis's Dartmouth College fraternity brother [noted in Burnham's obituary] and fellow Lincoln banker), Charles [H.] Gere (editor and publisher of the *Nebraska State Journal*), Will Owen Jones (managing editor of the *Journal*, part-time university instructor, and the man responsible for Cather's being hired by the *Journal* as a drama critic [Woodress 84]), and Daniel Gould Wing (Edith's cousin and Silas Burnham's colleague), as well as judges, other bankers and businessmen, and male university faculty. Henry Lewis's friendship with Bryan extended to their families. Edith Lewis's younger sisters recalled frequent visits with their mother to play with the Bryan children at Fairview, Bryan's grand estate east of Lincoln built in 1903 (Trainor).

Cather also made the acquaintance of Bryan and his family in Lincoln, and she twice turned this friendship into journalistic fodder. During her brief stint as an editor at the *Home Monthly* magazine in Pittsburgh, she wrote about Mrs. Bryan in "Two Women the World Is Watching," a comparison of the potential of Mrs. Bryan and Mrs. McKinley as first ladies. Four years later, prompted by yet another round of presidential politics, she slightly fictionalized her first meeting of and friendship with the candidate himself in "The Personal Side of William Jennings Bryan," a piece published in *The Library* under the pseudonym Henry Nickelman. Cather, a Republican, was no fan of Bryan's populist politics, although she found him a compelling representative figure of "the entire Middle West; all its newness and vigor, its magnitude and monotony, its richness and lack of variety, its inflammability and volubility, its strength and its crudeness, its high seriousness and self-confidence, its egotism and its nobility" (789). In Cather's fiction, Bryan appears as a polarizing force and a marker of the political and cultural divides of Nebraska in the 1890s. In her story "Two Friends" (1932), the election of 1896 causes a rift between two small-town Nebraska friends, one who supports Bryan, the other McKinley. In *O, Pioneers!* Alexandra Bergson's brother Lou voices support for Bryan and populism in a way that makes clear his boorish cupidity (104). The Lewis family's more intimate relationship with the Bryan family and the involvement of the Lewis and Wing men in Nebraska and national politics on both sides of the political divide in the 1890s may have been a force in Bryan's emergence retrospectively as a figure in Cather's literary imagination.

In the gender-segregated world of social clubs in Lincoln in the 1890s, Lillie Lewis was also a force to be reckoned with. Lillie belonged to the Lotos Club, which was first organized in 1880 as the Avon Club. Sarah Harris, later editor and proprietor of the *Lincoln Courier* and the person Lewis credits with introducing her to Cather in 1903 (Lewis, Edith ix), was a founding member.<sup>8</sup> The club began as a Shakespeare study group, but by the time sisters Mary Wing and Lillie Lewis were invited to join in 1890, discussions revolved around more general topics, much like at the Round Table. Like many women's clubs of the era, the group continued to diversify its activities through the 1890s and into the early twentieth century, adding social and cultural events and charitable work to its mission. In the early 1890s, the Lotos Club minutes (on deposit at the Nebraska State Historical Society) document Lillie Lewis's involvement in the members' study of ancient Egypt and classical Greece (I:Feb. 27, 1890; I:Nov. 19, 1891; II:Dec. 3, 1891). In the late 1890s, when the group shifted its focus to contemporary social issues, Lillie Lewis read a paper titled "What Is Society?" She also presented a lantern slide lecture on the history of world expositions, delivered a review of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1903 book *The Home, Its Work and Its Influence* (a book advocating the socialization of housework), and sponsored a talk by a non-member, Miss Miller, on "Ventilation and Sanitation in the Public Schools of Lincoln" (III:March 15, 1900; III:May 15, 1901; IV:Feb. 11, 1904; III:Feb. 6, 1902). Tellingly, Lillie Lewis also led the club in its response to the YWCA's request for support in outfitting a room for "poorer girls" who might reside temporarily at the Y. While the Lotos Club proclaimed itself to be in sympathy with this particular YWCA project, it objected to the Evangelical Test for full membership in the association (III:Sep. 20, 1900). Lillie and Henry Lewis were founding members of Lincoln's All Souls Unitarian Church in 1898 (*History of All Souls* 12), and although local Ys had considerable autonomy in interpreting the meaning of "evangelical" in vetting members of local chapters, Unitarians (along with Jews) were clear targets for exclusion. After some back and forth with the Y, Lillie was a member of the club committee that drafted a resolution presented to the Lincoln YWCA, criticizing the Evangelical Test as "unChristlike in its spirit of limit[ing] the scope of work, which might be done in this city" (III:Nov. 1, 1900). In sum, Lillie Gould Lewis was a quintessential Progressive-era clubwoman.

Lillie Lewis engaged in these club activities with women who shared her economic and social privilege. With Sarah Harris a significant exception, most of the members were wives of businessmen and university professors and administrators. On the club membership rolls

during the 1890s were the wife of Charles Bessey, the pioneering botanist and university chancellor; Elizabeth Benton Dales, daughter of the university's first chancellor and wife of J. Stuart Dales, an early graduate and important administrative officer for fifty years; Mattie Benton Stewart, another daughter of the first chancellor and wife of Judge W. E. Stewart; Elizabeth Lewis Burnham, wife of Silas Burnham (and unrelated to the New England Lewises); Celia Harris Harwood, who was Sarah Harris's sister and the wife of Nathan Harwood, president of the Lincoln National Bank (the Harwoods were also founding members of All Souls Unitarian, and Nathan was a member of the Round Table); and Frances Chamberlain Brown Taylor, a Smith College graduate, former instructor of political economy at the university, and wife of G. W. Langworthy Taylor, professor of political economy. Flavia Canfield, Chancellor Canfield's wife, never became a member but was a frequent guest, as was "Mrs. Pound of the Ingleside" (mother of Louise, Olivia, and Roscoe) (II:April 27, 1893; April 19, 1894; May 31, 1894; Aug. 16, 1894). The wife of Canfield's successor, Benjamin Andrews, was quickly elected to membership, and the chancellor himself favored the club with a lecture on the subject of "The Emancipation of Women" (II:Nov. 1, 1900; Dec. 5, 1901). Edith Lewis's cousins Alice and Bessie Wing became members in their own right after their mother's death in 1895, and Bessie also became a faculty wife when she married DeWitt Brace, professor of the College of Engineering, in 1901 (III:Oct. 30, 1901).<sup>9</sup> Last, and certainly not least, one of the longest-standing and most active Lotos Club members was Mariel Clapham Gere, wife of Charles Gere, and mother of Ellen, Frances, and Mariel, some of Cather's closest friends during her Lincoln years. Indeed, the Lotos Club often included daughters of members in their activities, taking note in the minutes of the presence of "Lotos Buds," a status that Edith Lewis and the Gere girls shared on several occasions (III:Feb. 26, 1903).

Considering this extremely dense overlap of social networks in Lincoln between the young Edith Lewis and the young adult Cather, they certainly must have known of each other during these years, even if they did not meet. An accident of timing and the continued mobility of the Lewis family likely accounts for the deferral of their first face-to-face meeting until 1903, several years after Cather's residence in Lincoln (1890–1895). In 1892, Henry Lewis sold his controlling interest in the Lincoln Savings Bank, although he continued to serve as president through 1893.<sup>10</sup> Early in 1893, the bankruptcy of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad initiated a nationwide financial panic, and the panic and ensuing depression decimated the banking industry to which Henry

Lewis had committed much of his professional energy. In 1894, Henry's brother Frank and his family left Lincoln for Boston, Massachusetts, and the brothers began a new financial enterprise, the Merchants' Trust Company, with Frank serving as president from Boston and Henry serving as secretary and treasurer in Nebraska (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110–11; Waite 448). Beginning such a new business enterprise in the depth of an economic depression was a financial struggle, but a new opportunity caused by the depression buoyed up the Lewis family's prospects: Henry was appointed to oversee the affairs of two failed federally chartered banks in Kearney, Nebraska. Kearney was a smallish central Nebraska city, population approximately two thousand (that is, about the same size as Cather's Red Cloud), just north of the Platte River. In November 1894, the failure of the two banks within a week of each other shocked this aspiring small city, which believed that the aftershocks of the 1893 banking crisis had already ceased ("It Quits," "Another"). In 1894, William Jennings Bryan was serving as Democratic congressional representative from Nebraska, and a Democrat, Grover Cleveland, was in the White House. Faced with the need to appoint receivers for two Nebraska banks on short notice, James H. Eckels, the inexperienced young comptroller of the Currency, almost certainly would have sought recommendations for a suitable receiver from Bryan, Henry Lewis's old Round Table crony.

Henry appeared in Kearney shortly after the banks closed ("Local Brevities"), but his family did not follow him until 1895. The family, now consisting of parents Henry and Lillie and children Harold, Edith, Margaret, Ruth Putnam (born 1893), and Helen Chase (born 1894), lived in the city of Kearney, but Henry Lewis also purchased a ranch property in nearby Grant Township, which he continued to own into the twentieth century (Buffalo; *Standard* 41). The land around Kearney benefited from the first large-scale irrigation project in the state of Nebraska, and Henry became involved in various irrigation and development projects, maintaining his involvement after the family returned to Lincoln (Dartmouth Class of 1872, 111). As an adult, Edith's brother Harold regaled his eastern-born and -raised children with stories of his western childhood, including shifts patrolling irrigation ditches on horseback (Trainor). Lillie, the children, and the family's household goods moved back to Lincoln in late 1896 so that the children could attend the university, but Henry continued to travel back and forth regularly between the cities through 1897 and sporadically for years afterward, tying up the loose ends of the banks' financial affairs ("City Notes"; Dartmouth Class of 1872, 111).

(595)

# THE LINCOLN SAVINGS BANK

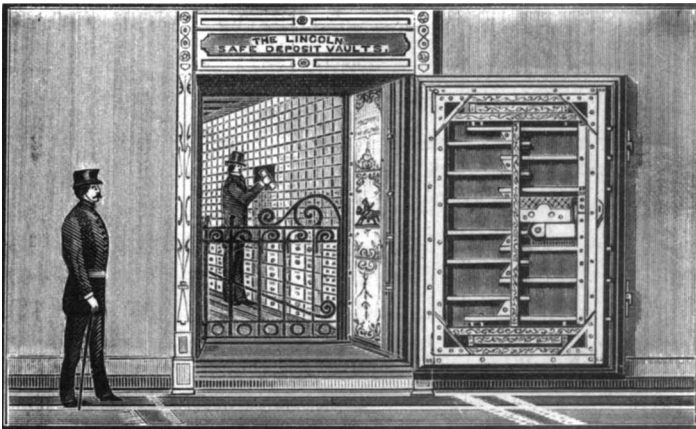
—AND—

## Safe Deposit Company.

CORNER P AND ELEVENTH STREETS.

Subscribed Capital, \$250,000.00.

Stockholders' Liability, \$500,000.00.



### YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT SOLICITED.

5 per cent per annum paid on deposits for all full calendar months money is on deposit. Funds invested on security of first mortgages on real estate, bonds, and approved collaterals.

**HENRY E. LEWIS, PRESIDENT.**  
**A. P. S. STUART, VICE PRESIDENT.**

**W. H. MCCREERY, TREASURER.**  
**R. WELCH, TELLER.**

### ◆ DIRECTORS. ◆

**N. S. HARWOOD,**  
Pres. Lincoln National Bank.  
**H. J. WALSH,**  
Vice Pres. Capital National Bank.  
**JOHN B. WRIGHT,**  
Pres. Columbia National Bank.  
**W. H. MCCREERY,**  
Director Amer. Exchange Bank.

**H. P. LAU, Wholesale Grocer.**  
**A. P. S. STUART,**  
Director Capital National Bank.  
**WM. McLAUGHLIN,**  
Capitalist.  
**FRED. WILLIAMS,**  
Of Pace, Williams & North.  
**HENRY E. LEWIS,**

An advertisement for the Lincoln Savings Bank and Safe Deposit Company from the *Hoye's City Directory of Lincoln for 1892*. Edith Lewis's father, Henry E. Lewis, was president and a member of the board of directors. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

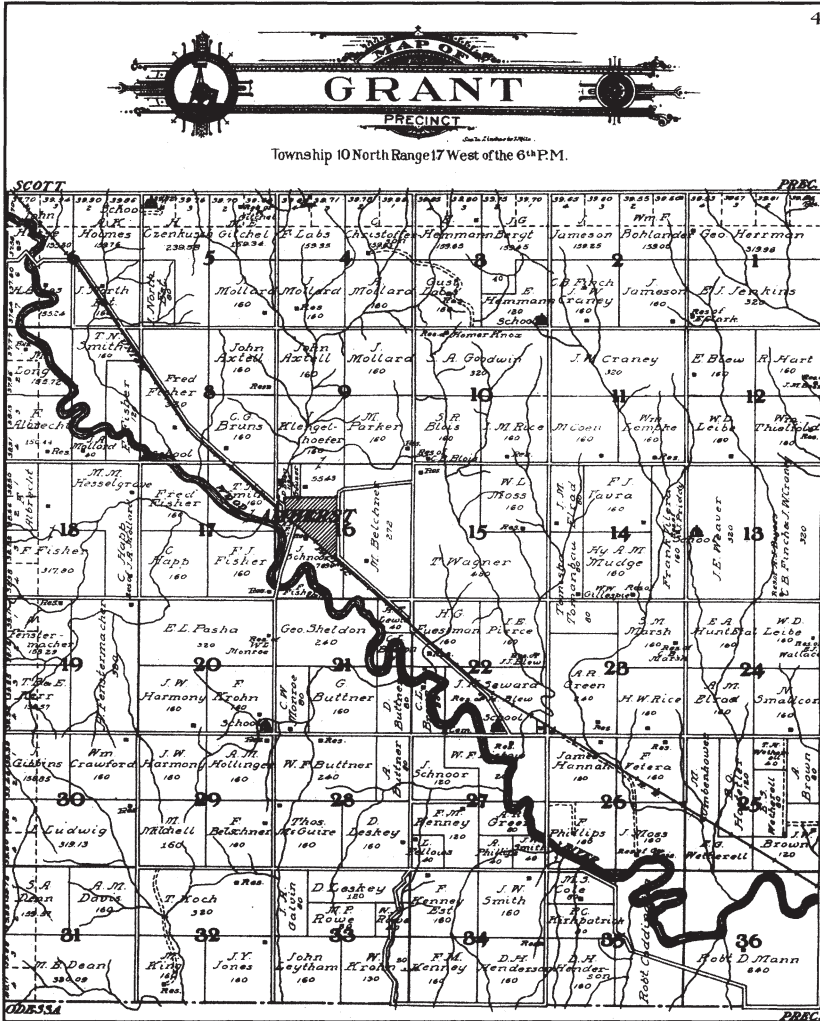


Willa Cather's father, Charles, was also involved in Nebraska land finance during the 1880s and '90s, but at a lower level and, apparently, less successfully than Henry Lewis. Knowledge of Henry Lewis's deep and intricate involvement in western banking and land development during the turbulent 1880s and '90s must necessarily impact the way readers experience Cather's fictional characters whose careers follow similar paths. My *Ántonia's* Jim Burden, with his legal work on behalf of railroads, for example, or, in *A Lost Lady*, the diabolically twinned figures of Captain Daniel Forrester. "There were then two distinct social strata in the prairie States," Cather observes at the opening of *A Lost Lady*, "the homesteaders and hand-workers who were there to make a living, and the bankers and gentlemen ranchers who came from the Atlantic seaboard to invest money and to 'develop our Great West'" (7-8). Captain Forrester is in the latter category as "a railroad man, a contractor, who had built hundreds of miles of road for the Burlington" (8). As a boy, Ivy Peters is an "ugly fellow, ... [who] liked being ugly" (19). When the adult Ivy meets boyhood acquaintance Niel Herbert on the train close to the end of the novel and details his successes, he comments as well on the fall of the once-mighty railroad men, including Captain Forrester: "Good deal of bluff about all those old-timers. The panic put them out of the game" (100). Ivy Peters also becomes a land developer and owner and drains a beloved marsh on Captain Forrester's property, thus "assert[ing] his power over the people who had loved those unproductive meadows for their idleness and silvery beauty" (101-2). Herbert contemplates the ascension of men like Ivy Peters with regret:

The Old West had been settled by dreamers ... a courteous brotherhood ... who could conquer but could not hold. Now all the vast territory they had won was to be at the mercy of men like Ivy Peters, who had never dared anything, never risked anything. They would drink up the mirage. ... All the way from the Missouri to the mountains this generation of shrewd young men, trained to petty economies by hard times, would do exactly what Ivy Peters had done when he drained the Forrester marsh. (102)

Of course, Cather's Nebraska fiction focuses as much on farmers as on those on the other side of land finance, and Henry Lewis's career illuminates these literary representations as well. Although he spent his adult life as a teacher, lawyer, banker, and loan broker, Henry Lewis did grow up on a farm in New England, and knowledge of the complexities of the financial situation of ordinary Nebraska farmers would

have made its way into Lewis family dinner-table conversations. Edith Lewis's Nebraska memories, including, crucially, a year of adolescence in central Nebraska, thus could have informed Cather's representations of central Nebraska agricultural finance in *My Ántonia*, *O, Pioneers!* and *One of Ours*. And, significantly, Claude Wheeler's family in *One of*



A page from the *Standard Atlas of Buffalo County Nebraska* (1907). The ranch property owned by Edith Lewis's father, Henry E. Lewis, appears near the center of the map in the northeast corner of section 21, bisected diagonally by the railroad and bordered by the Platte River on its southwest corner. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

*Ours* hails from New England. Cather had her own New England family connection: her aunt Amanda Frances Smith Cather, who was born in Boston and raised in New Hampshire and Vermont; and the Wheelers are, as every analysis of *One of Ours* inevitably notes, a fictionalized version of “Aunt Franc,” her husband, George, and their son, G. P. Cather. However, Cather fictionalizes her southern uncle as a man with “a State-of-Maine drawl” (13), and she notably peppers *One of Ours* with New Englanders. In a shrewd transaction, Nat Wheeler acquires a “fine, well-watered ranch” in Colorado from “Tom Wested[,] ... a Maine man, from Wheeler’s own neighbourhood” in exchange for his ancestral farm in Maine (97, 96). When Claude Wheeler and Enid Royce marry, Nat Wheeler acquires for them an abandoned ranch property on which, decades before, “two young New Englanders, Trevor and Brewster, ... had tried to be great cattle men” and had failed, “wast[ing] a great deal of money very joyously” in the process (155).

Upon Edith Lewis’s return to Lincoln, she renewed her studies in the preparatory division of the university, in which she had first enrolled in 1894, while her brother Harold briefly enrolled in the university’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts before transferring to the Industrial College to study engineering (University of Nebraska, Transcript; University *Calendar* 1896–1897, 287; University *Catalogue* 1898–1899, 378). From 1898 on, Edith and other members of her family regularly appeared in the society news in Sarah Harris’s *Lincoln Courier*, especially after Edith was inducted into the Delta Gamma sorority in January of 1898



The Delta Gamma Sorority in the University of Nebraska yearbook (the *Sombbrero*) from 1899. Edith Lewis is at the far right in the front row. Courtesy of Archives & Special Collections, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries.

(“Locals”), the same sorority that her older cousins Alice and Bessie Wing had joined as students. Although the Gere and Canfield women favored Kappa Kappa Gamma (*Sombrero* 1894, 153, 142; “Among”; “Kappa”; “Social”), Edith’s joining of the Deltas more firmly cemented her place in the social circles constructed by her parents’ clubs. Helen Harwood, Sarah Harris’s niece, was a Delta Gamma sister who continued to be active in the sorority after her 1896 graduation (“Deltas”). Julia “Daisy” Miner, half sister of Frances Brown Taylor, and Edith were fellow Delta freshmen during the 1898–1899 academic year (*Sombrero* 1899, 87). Edith



Edith Lewis ca. 1902, the year she graduated from Smith College. Courtesy of the family of Ruth Lewis Trainor.

Lewis’s name appeared in the society columns of the *Courier*, but it also appeared as a byline. From June through December of 1898, Sarah Harris regularly published sketches by Edith L. Lewis. Although Cather was in Pittsburgh at this time, Harris reprinted Cather’s “Passing Show” columns from Pittsburgh, and Edith Lewis’s sketches thus appeared several times in the same issues of the *Courier* in which Cather’s columns appeared.

If Lewis had continued her studies in Lincoln, she might have followed in Cather’s footsteps as a university student/journalist, but in the fall of 1899, Lewis transferred with sophomore standing to Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, a private women’s liberal arts college (Smith College, Lewis). Although Edith Labaree Lewis had spent her entire life in Nebraska up to this point, she was hardly an outsider in New England. Lewis’s older cousin Mary Delia Lewis, daughter of her Uncle Arthur, graduated from Smith in 1894 (Lewis, Mary). The only Lewis brother who didn’t go west, Arthur, had been living with his family in Worcester, Massachusetts, about sixty-five miles east of Northampton, for twenty years (Lewis, Arthur George). Furthermore, in 1897, Edith’s Uncle Homer left Omaha after serving fourteen years as principal of the Omaha High School to join his brother Arthur in the

Worcester public school system (Dartmouth Class of 1874). Without doubt, Edith's parents felt reassured that two uncles and their families were close by when they sent their daughter, just shy of her eighteenth birthday, so far from home. Her Uncle Frank and his family were also in Massachusetts, in Boston, another fifty miles east of Worcester; and her Uncle Eugene, who had gone the farthest west of all the Lewis brothers—all the way to Salt Lake City—had returned to live on the family farm in New Hampshire (Lewis, Eugene). Edith Lewis's eastward migration thus continued a long-term family pattern of coordinated movements across the country, except that by the late nineteenth century, the migratory patterns had begun to reverse. Indeed, by the time he sent his daughter east to college, Henry Lewis was the western holdout among his brothers.

By completing her college education at Smith College, Edith Lewis solidified her place in existing family-based networks and made new and important connections apart from her family; in both cases, however, her Smith College years more deeply tied her to New England and to the "Colonial past" Willa Cather portrayed herself as "inheriting" in Annie Adams Fields's parlor in Boston. Henry Lewis's Dartmouth classmate George Barstow French, a New Hampshire lawyer, sent his daughter Ruth Hawthorne French to Smith (Smith College, French). Edith Lewis was elected into membership in the literary society of which Ruth French was secretary, the Phi Kappa Psi (Phi Kappa Psi, "Record" Sep. 29, 1900; Phi Kappa Psi, "Minute Book" Oct. 29, 1900). Another notable member of this literary society was Ellen Tucker Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson's granddaughter. Her father, Edward Waldo Emerson, gave a public address sponsored by the club on the topic of "Reminiscences of Thoreau," in which he described the period of time during which Thoreau lived in the Emerson household as an unpaid servant and companion to the young Edward Waldo (Phi Kappa Psi, "Minute Book" Nov. 10, 1900; "About College"; Ryan). The daughters of more contemporary literary figures were also her classmates. George Washington Cable, whose support of African American civil rights had made him unwelcome in his adopted home of Louisiana, relocated to Northampton and sent two of his daughters to Smith (Butcher 156). Aspiring fiction writer Charles Chesnutt had visited Cable in Northampton when his daughters were young, and, impressed by the town and the college, he sent them there as students several years later (Chesnutt 46, 76), where they were among the earliest African American students to enroll at Smith. Edith Lewis, who majored in English rhetoric, had classes with both Cable and both Chesnutt daugh-

ters. Finally, Edith Lewis's roommate in Hatfield House her sophomore year, Achsah Barlow, a young woman born to a British immigrant father and a mother descended from seventeenth-century Connecticut Puritans, became Lewis's lifelong friend. After graduating from Smith, Barlow studied painting in New York City at the New York School of Art and the Art Students League. Poet Vachel Lindsay introduced her to Earl Brewster, also a painter and a descendant of the Puritans, whom she married in 1910 (ACA; Brewster 23, 203–4). It was through the Brewsters that Cather and Lewis met D. H. Lawrence and thus gained entrée into Mabel Dodge Luhan's Taos circle.

When Edith Lewis returned to Lincoln in 1902 as a newly minted college graduate, she secured a teaching position at Whittier Grammar School, one of the city's public schools (*Hoye's*). However, she did not stay in Lincoln long. In 1903, she set out for New York to try her luck in the world of publishing, a move that was imminent when she met Cather, allegedly for the first time, in Sarah Harris's living room in the summer of 1903. The future of almost all the members of the Lewis and Wing clans (and of Willa Cather) lay in the East, in New England and New York, not in Nebraska. Not only had most of Edith's father's siblings reversed course and returned east, the younger generation of her siblings and cousins who had been her peers in Lincoln did the same. Edith's brother Harold transferred from Nebraska to Columbia University's School of Engineering a year after Edith transferred to Smith (*Columbiana*). Cousin Daniel Gould Wing had left Lincoln in 1897 to become a national bank examiner, a job that had come his way as a result of his work as auditor of the national Republican campaign fund for William McKinley's successful 1896 presidential campaign and his connection to Charles Gates Dawes, his fellow Round Table member (Dawes vii) and the man appointed comptroller of the Currency by McKinley (Dawes xiv). Bank examining duties in Boston and an appointment as a bank receiver led to his becoming president of the First National Bank of Boston in 1903 ("Wing"). After getting his bachelor's and law degrees from Nebraska, Daniel's brother Tom Wing moved to New York in 1902 and became a Wall Street lawyer (University of Nebraska, *General Catalog* 28, 46). (Katherine Weston Wing moved there with him, but she died a year after their marriage, and he remarried.) Widowed with two children and pregnant with a third in 1905 after only four years of marriage, Bessie Wing Brace left Nebraska for the East, living first in Scarsdale, New York (where Tom Wing lived), and ultimately settling in West Newton, Massachusetts (Cahan 145–46).<sup>11</sup> Frank Lewis's children also planted themselves in the East during the early years of the twentieth century. Gilbert Newton Lewis received his BA, MA, and

PhD from Harvard and taught chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Pauling). His younger brother Roger Labaree Lewis received a Harvard BA and was an instructor in the Harvard English Department (Lewis, Roger). Their older sister Mary Hammett Lewis chose New York rather than Massachusetts, where she taught at the Horace Mann School, an independent school affiliated with Columbia University that served as a laboratory for John Dewey's progressive educational theories (Provenzo and Provenzo).

In 1900, while Edith Lewis was a Massachusetts college student, Henry and Frank Lewis's trust company disbanded, and although Henry continued to work as a loan broker on his own, the Lewis family's Nebraska phase came to an end in 1909 after nearly thirty years. Henry, Lillie, and their two teenage daughters, Ruth and Helen, moved to the Boston area, where Frank Lewis had recently died. In 1906, Cather moved from Pittsburgh to New York, the rising center of American literary culture and publishing, to work for *McClure's Magazine*. In 1907, *McClure's* sent her to Boston, the declining remnant of nineteenth-century American literary culture and publishing, to work on an investigative biography of Mary Baker Eddy. Lewis and various members of her extended family thus preceded Cather in her moves to both New York and Boston.

In 1903, then, when Edith Lewis and Willa Cather met, Lewis was a well-connected, aspiring young woman poised to become a somebody, not an isolated and insignificant nobody, as Cather scholars have frequently, but erroneously, presumed. She spent her childhood as a member of Lincoln's social and cultural elite as well as a year of her adolescence in central Nebraska, experiences that intersected with Cather's. Her family history and her college education connected her to a rich American cultural past centered in New England, while her departure from Lincoln in 1903 set her on a path to a professional future in New York City (the story of Lewis's distinguished careers in magazines and advertising in New York is beyond the scope of this essay). Thus, at the moment Cather and Lewis met, Cather found powerfully concentrated in the figure of Edith Lewis the past she valued and the future to which she aspired. Those who characterize Lewis as the "useful" or "practical" partner miss the kind and degree of their relationship. Perhaps Isabelle McClung was Cather's "grand passion," but McClung's family certainly made Isabelle socially and economically "useful" to Cather (a free place to live in the finest neighborhood in Pittsburgh, subsidized trips to Europe—what's not to love?). There is ample evidence that Lewis did manage some joint household affairs and help Cather with galley proofs, but as the recently discovered typescripts described at the

beginning of this essay demonstrate, Lewis was involved in earlier and more substantive stages of Cather's composing process. The person who picked up the pen to edit Cather's typescripts in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s was a career woman with an intellectual presence and a member of a large, well-educated, well-connected, and successful extended family whose late nineteenth-century migrations bridged the "Colonial past" of New England and the "Apache period and territory" of Nebraska's early decades of statehood. When Cather met her in 1903, Edith Lewis was poised to be "useful" not simply as an unpaid secretary and lackey, but as domestic partner in (and financial contributor to) a comfortable and cosmopolitan Manhattan home and as a creative partner in the public enterprise of Willa Cather's literary career.

### NOTES

The authors would like to thank the following people for offering encouragement and advice and sharing resources: the late Ruth Lewis Trainor, the late Susan Rosowski, Kari Ronning, Charles Mignon, Robert Thacker, Timothy Mahoney, Carmella Gorman Orosco, Mary Ellen Ducey, Andrew Jewell, Nanci Young, Mary Murphy, David Cahan, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Guy Reynolds, Merrill Maguire Skaggs, Janis Stout, and Evelyn Funda. An Oklahoma Humanities Council Travel Grant supported Melissa Homestead's research, and a Margaret Storrs Grierson Travel Grant from the Smith College Archives supported research by both authors.

1. Charles Mignon, a textual editor for the Willa Cather Scholarly edition, reconstructs Cather's composing process with a primary focus on *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, the typescripts of which also show significant editorial intervention by Lewis. A full theoretical inquiry into the nature of Lewis's involvement in Cather's creative process is beyond the scope of this essay, but in light of recent scholarship on collaboration, we would characterize her editorial work as a form of collaboration. See, for example, Ede and Lunsford, Karell, Laird, and Stillinger.

2. While Lewis is the subject of benign neglect in the standard biographies, she is subjected to outright hostility—and a great deal of misinformation—from Arnold, Bennett, and Yongue. All three represent Lewis as being entirely subsumed into Cather during Cather's lifetime. While the venom in these accounts is puzzling, we suspect that it originates in scholarly frustration at Lewis in her role as Cather's literary executor. We also suspect that Dorothy Canfield Fisher was the source of misinformation in the 1950s. See, for example, her letters to Margaret Brown, widow of biographer E. K. Brown (quoted in Thacker), and Bennett's account of her visit to Fisher's house in Vermont ("Friends"). John Murphy is far more sympathetic, but he is nevertheless anxious to defend Cather and Lewis against "accusations" of lesbianism.



3. Registration of births with public authorities was not required in Lincoln until the twentieth century, so we rely on university records.

4. Much of this information about the Lewis brothers and sisters and what follows has been synthesized from scattered pieces of information from the brothers' Dartmouth files of alumni records as well as class publications and from Waite. The sisters have been harder to track. We have relied on the scant information in Waite, reinforced with US census records and Kimball Union Academy student records. Citations are provided only for specific information about each individual sibling.

5. Henry Lewis's business and the family's residences can be traced through various city directories published during those years.

6. Sources to which the brothers themselves seem to have provided information vary in their descriptions of the nature of their business, so we synthesized these fragments. See Dartmouth Class of 1866, 60; Waite 448; and Dartmouth Class of 1872, 110.

7. Again, much of this information appears in Lincoln city directories, and enrollment of Edith Lewis's cousins can be tracked in the University of Nebraska catalogs. We provide citations only for specific claims about individuals.

8. This characterization of the club's history is based on a reading of the minutes from the late 1880s through the early twentieth century. See also "Clubs." Citations for the club minutes include volume number and date (the minutes are not consistently paginated).

9. Club members' names are listed at the front of every volume of the minutes. Conventions of recording married women's names have required some informed guesswork on our part. For the university officers and professors who were Lotos members' husbands, see Manley as well as Knoll. William Jennings Bryan's wife, Mary, belonged to the Lincoln Sorosis rather than the Lotos Club (Coletta 38).

10. There is some lack of clarity about precisely when Lewis severed his association with the Lincoln Savings Bank. He is still listed as president in the 1893 Lincoln city directory, but various items in his Dartmouth class records claim that he sold his interest in the bank in 1892.

11. Alice Wing has proved the most difficult to trace. Apparently, she remained unmarried and moved east to be near her brothers, then died in a boating accident off Long Island around 1920.

## WORKS CITED

- "About College." *Smith College Monthly* 8.3 (1900): 191.
- ACA Galleries. "Achsah Barlow Brewster. Biography." <[www.acagalleries.com/dynamic/artist\\_bio.asp?ArtistID=25](http://www.acagalleries.com/dynamic/artist_bio.asp?ArtistID=25)>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2008.
- "Among the Greeks." *Hesperian*, May 27, 1898, 7.
- "Another One Goes." *Kearney Semi-Weekly Hub*, Oct. 15, 1864, 4.
- Arnold, Marilyn. Foreword. *Willa Cather Living*. By Edith Lewis. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989.

- Bennett, Mildred. "At the Feet of Willa Cather: A Personal Account of Edith Lewis as Protector." *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter* 33.3 (Fall 1989): 19–22.
- . "Friends of Willa Cather." *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter* 41.1 (Spring 1997): 5–7.
- Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable. Revised & Enlarged.* New York: Harper, n.d. [ca. 1947].
- Brewster, Achsah Barlow. "To the Child's Children. The Child. Harwood Barlow Brewster: A direct descendant of Elder William Brewster, scholar and leader of the Pilgrim Fathers, Harwood bore the Brewster look. Her character fulfilled the family motto: Verite Soyet Ma Garde." Typescript. Achsah and Earl Brewster Collection, Barbara and Finn Casperson Cather Collection. Drew University Libraries.
- Buffalo County Nebraska. School Census. District 7, July 2, 1895. Photocopy, Buffalo County Historical Society.
- Burnham, Silas Henry. Obituary. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, Dec. 1933. Clipping in file for Silas Henry Burnham, Class of 1874. Dartmouth College Archives.
- Butcher, Philip. *George W. Cable: The Northampton Years.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Cahan, David, and M. Eugene Rudd. *Science at the American Frontier: A Biography of DeWitt Bristol Brace.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
- Cather, Willa. "148 Charles Street." *Not under Forty.* New York: Knopf, 1936.
- . "148 Charles Street." Typescript. Phillip L. and Helen Cather Southwick Collection. Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries.
- . Letter to Mariel Gere. Aug. 4, 1896. Nebraska State Historical Society.
- . *A Lost Lady.* 1923. Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- . *My Ántonia.* 1918. Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.
- . "Neighbor Rosicky." Typescript. Phillip L. and Helen Cather Southwick Collection. Archives and Special Collections, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries.
- . *O, Pioneers!* 1913. Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- . *One of Ours.* 1922. Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.
- . "The Personal Side of William Jennings Bryan." In *The World and the Parrish: Willa Cather's Articles and Reviews, 1893–1902.* Ed. William M. Curtin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970. 782–89.

- . "Two Friends." *Obscure Destinies*. 1932. Willa Cather Scholarly Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 161–91.
- [Mary K. Hawley, pseud.] "Two Women the World Is Watching." *Home Monthly*, Sep. 1896, 4–5.
- Chesnutt, Helen M. *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952.
- "City Notes." *Kearney Semi-Weekly Hub*, Oct. 15, 1896, 4.
- "Clubs." *Lincoln Courier*, Jan. 22, 1898, 5.
- Coletta, Paolo E. *Political Evangelist, 1860–1908*. Vol. 1 of *William Jennings Bryan*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
- Columbiana Library, Columbia University Archive. Letter to the authors. July 7, 2004.
- Dartmouth College Class of 1866. *Records and Memorials*. N.p., n.d.
- Dartmouth College Class of 1872. *Class Report '72*. Pittsburgh, PA: Stevenson, Foster [ca. 1903?].
- Dartmouth College Class of 1874. *Report of the Class of 1874*. N.p., n.d.
- Dawes, Charles G. *A Journal of the McKinley Years*. Ed. Bascom N. Timmons. Chicago, IL: R. R. Donnelley, 1950.
- "The Deltas at Beatrice." *Nebraskan*, March 18, 1898, [1].
- Downer, Harry E. *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa*. 2 vols. Chicago, IL: S. J. Clarke, 1910.
- Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.
- Faulkner, E. J. "Nights of the Round Table." Feb. 5, 1973. Typescript. Nebraska State Historical Society.
- Fielder, Jane Carver. Archivist, Kimball Union Academy. E-mail correspondence with Anne Kaufman, Aug. 9, 2005, and Aug. 12, 2005.
- French, George Barstow. Obituary. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, March 1933. Clipping in alumni file for George Barstow French, Class of 1872. Dartmouth College Archives.
- A History of All Souls Unitarian Church 1898–1948*. Lincoln, NE. 1948.
- History of Scott County, Iowa*. Chicago, IL: Inter-State Publishing, 1882.
- Hoye's City Directory of Lincoln for 1903*. Lincoln, NE: State Journal Company, 1903.
- "It Quits Business." *Kearney Semi-Weekly Hub*, Oct. 15, 1864, 4.
- "Kappa Kappa Gamma Convention." *Hesperian*, Sep. 16, 1898, 2.
- Karell, Linda K. *Writing Together/Writing Apart: Collaboration in Western American Literature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- Kimball Union Academy. Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Kimball Union Academy for 1859–60. Kimball Union Academy Archives.
- . Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Kimball Union Academy at Meriden Village, Plainfield, NH, for the Academical Year 1853–54. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Press, 1854.

- Knoll, Robert E. *Prairie University: A History of the University of Nebraska*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- Laird, Holly A. *Women Coauthors*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Lee, Hermione. *Willa Cather: Double Lives*. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Lewis, Arthur George. Obituary. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, May 1917. Clipping in file for Arthur George Lewis, Class of 1869. Dartmouth College Archives.
- Lewis, Edith. *Willa Cather Living*. New York: Knopf, 1953.
- Lewis, Eugene. Obituary. "Eugene Lewis dies on 68th birthday." *Boston Herald*, March 13, 1907. Clipping in file for Eugene Lewis, class of 1864. Dartmouth College Archives.
- Lewis, Henry Euclid. Obituary. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, June 1927. Clipping in file for Henry Euclid Lewis, Class of 1872. Dartmouth College Archives.
- Lewis, Homer Pierce. Obituary. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, April 1930. Clipping in file for Homer Pierce Lewis, Class of 1874. Dartmouth College Archives.
- Lewis, Mary Delia. Faculty File. Smith College Archives.
- Lewis, Roger Labaree. Alumni Record File, Class of 1906. Harvard University Archives.
- "Local Brevities." *Semi-Weekly Kearney Hub*, Nov. 12, 1894, 3.
- "Locals." *Nebraskan*, Jan. 21, 1898, [3].
- Lotos Club. Minute Books. Nebraska State Historical Society.
- Mahoney, Timothy R. "Great Sheedy Murder Trial and the Booster Ethos of the Gilded Age in Lincoln, Nebraska." *Nebraska History* 82.4 (Winter 2001): 163–79.
- Manley, Robert N. *Frontier University (1869–1919)*. Vol. 1 of *Centennial History of the University of Nebraska*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969.
- Marquis, Albert Nelson, ed. *Who's Who in New England*. 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: A. N. Marquis, 1916. Google Book Search: <books.google.com>.
- "Men's Intellectual Clubs. Lincoln Has Organization for Mental Stimulus. Round Table Was the First." *State Journal*, Dec. 30, 1906, Sunday ed., sec. Home Building, 4.
- Mignon, Charles W. "Willa Cather's Composing Process." *Resources for American Literary Study* 29 (2003–2004): 165–84.
- Murphy, John. Introduction. *Willa Cather Living*. By Edith Lewis. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. v–xix.
- O'Brien, Sharon. *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Olson, James C., and Ronald C. Naugle. *History of Nebraska*. 3rd ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- Owen's Gazetteer and Directory of Scott County Iowa*. Davenport, IA: Globe Steam Printing, 1877.

- Pauling, Linus. "Lewis, Gilbert Newton." *Dictionary of American Biography*. Supp. 4. Ed. John A. Garraty and Edward T. James. New York: Scribner's, 1974.
- Phi Kappa Psi. "Record of the Recommendation Committee" and "Minute Book." Smith College Archives.
- Provenzo, Eugene, Jr., and Therese M. Provenzo. Introduction. *An Adventure with Children*. By Mary Hammett Lewis. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985. i–ix.
- Ryan, Barbara. "Emerson's 'Domestic and Social Experiments': Service, Slavery, and the Unhired Man." *American Literature* 66.3 (Sept. 1994): 485–508.
- Scott County Iowa Genealogical Society. "Marriage Records 1870–1879 Scott County Court House Davenport, Iowa." Compiled 1976.
- Smith College. Transcript of Edith Labaree Lewis, Class of 1902. Smith College Archives.
- . Transcript of Ruth Hawthorne French, Class of 1902. Smith College Archives.
- "Social and Personal." *Lincoln Courier*, Aug. 27, 1898, 7.
- Sombrero* [Univ. of Nebraska yearbook]. Lincoln: State Journal Co., 1894.
- Sombrero*. Lincoln: Class of Nineteen Hundred, 1899.
- Standard Atlas of Buffalo County Nebraska*. Chicago, IL: Ogle, 1907.
- Stillinger, Jack. *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Stout, Janis P. *Willa Cather: The Writer and Her World*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.
- Thacker, Robert. "'A Critic Who Was Worthy Of Her': The Writing of Willa Cather: A Critical Biography." *Willa Cather as Cultural Icon*. Vol. 7 of *Cather Studies*. Ed. Guy J. Reynolds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. 303–28.
- Trainor, Ruth Lewis. Personal interviews with Anne L. Kaufman. Aug. 2004 and Aug. 2005.
- University of Nebraska. *Calendar 1896–1897*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1897.
- . *Catalogue 1890–91*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1891.
- . *Catalogue 1892*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1892.
- . *Catalogue 1895*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1895.
- . *Catalogue for the Year 1898–1899 and Announcements for the Year 1899–1900*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1899.
- . *General Catalog of the Graduates, 1869–1906*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1906.
- . Transcript and Personal Card of Edith Labaree Lewis. University of Nebraska–Lincoln Archives and Special Collections.
- Waite, Otis R. *History of the Town of Claremont, New Hampshire, for a Period of One Hundred and Thirty Years from 1764 to 1894*. Manchester, NH: Clarke, 1895.

- Webster, John C. *Memorialia of the Class of '64 in Dartmouth College*. Chicago, IL: Shepard & Johnston, 1884.
- Willa Cather: The Road Is All*. Writ. and prod. Christine Lesiak, prod. and dir. Joel Geyer. American Masters. PBS. WNET, Lincoln, NE, Sept. 7, 2005.
- "Wing, Daniel Gould." *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*. Vol. 38. New York: James T. White, 1953.
- Woodress, James. *Willa Cather: A Literary Life*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
- Yongue, Patricia Lee. "Edith Lewis Living." *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter* 33.3 (Fall 1989): 12–15.
- . "Willa Cather and Edith Lewis: Two Stories, Two Friends." *The Mildred Bennett Festschrift: In Observance of Her Eightieth Birthday*. Ed. Debbie A. Hanson. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1991. 187–211.

