

EDITOR'S CORNER

"...this is happiness, to be dissolved into something complete and great."
My Antonia by Willa Cather

The vast treeless spaces of the Great Plains affect nearly everyone who comes to it. Sometimes the effect is negative—loneliness, isolation, monotony; at other times it can be positive—openness, freedom, solitude. Such feelings often spur the artistic and creative mind. In this issue of *Heritage of the Great Plains* we explore literary responses of Great Plains writers to the geography and lore of the region.

Of all the Great Plains states Nebraska has probably produced the best-known writers. Of these Willa Cather is the one most easily identified with the region. In "Allusions and Echoes: Multi-Cultural Blending and Feminine Spirituality in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*" Karen Hindhede shows us Cather's use of Mexican, Indian and Anglo myths to explore issues relating to multiculturalism and feminine spirituality. Another of the well-known Nebraska authors is Bess Streeter Aldrich. Daniel Holtz delineates the authors' different approaches to capitalist pioneers in "Willa Cather and Bess Streeter Aldrich: Contrasting Portrayals of Money-Grubbers and 'Olafarians.'"

The gunfight has always been a staple of western film and literature. James Work examines the role of the gunfight in "Variations on the Gunfight in Western Short Stories." The term *wakan* is a Sioux term which means holy or spiritual. Nancy Owen Nelson explores the key role this special spirituality has played in the novels of Frederick Manfred. In "Reimagining Kansas: Emmett Dalton, Ron Hansen, and The Great Coffeyville, Kansas Raid" Gregory Morris delves into the area of historical fiction.

Although this is an issue devoted to the literary tradition of the Great Plains, the articles cover a broad range of topics within that theme. We hope that reading them will provide you a greater appreciation for the literature of the Great Plains.

Julie Johnson
Managing Editor