

WT07-78, Continued

Cather describes the church as the site of Nelly's baptism.

"By a kind of unformulated etiquette one did not call upon candidates for baptism on the day of the ceremony, so I had my first glimpse of Nelly that evening. The baptistry was a cemented pit directly under the pulpit rostrum, over which we had our stage when we sang Queen Esther. I sat through the sermon somewhat nervously. After the minister, in his long, black gown, had gone down into the water and the choir had finished singing, the door from the dressing room opened, and, led by one of the deacons, Nelly came down the steps into the pool. Oh, she looked so little and meek and chastened! Her white cashmere robe clung about her, and her brown hair was brushed straight back and hung in two soft braids from a little head bent humbly. As she stepped down into the water I shivered with the cold of it, and I remembered sharply how much I had loved her. She went down until the water was well above her waist, and stood white and small, with her hands crossed on her breast, while the minister said the words about being buried with Christ in baptism. Then, lying in his arm, she disappeared under the dark water. 'It will be like that when she dies,' I thought, and a quick pain caught my heart. The choir began to sing 'Washed in the Blood of the Lamb' as she rose again, the door behind the baptistry opened, revealing those three dear guardians, Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Freeze, and Mrs. Spinny, and she went up into their arms." ("The Joy of Nelly Deane" - Collected Short Fiction 1892-1912, pp. 62-63).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540800/N4437610

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 23-24, block 14, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska.

WT07-89

- 1. NAME: William Ducker house
- 2. LOCATION: 821 Franklin Street 82-4930
- 4. OWNER: Kay and Mason Senti
- ADDRESS: Bellaire, Kansas 66934

7. DESCRIPTION: Built in 1886 by Robert Cochrane, this two story frame dwelling has its narrow gabled end facing the street as the front of the house. The three-bay (ground floor) front facade and gable roof with return cornice speak to its stylistic origin as a late, vernacular manifestation of the Greek Revival. A modest rectangular bay on the north and the two-story bay window on the south indicate its later, Victorian era construction date. The Ionic- columned porch along the east front and the enclosed porch addition along the north are turn-of-the-century features (photo #33).

WT07-89, Continued

8. SIGNIFICANCE: Will Ducker was born in England and went to Illinois to work for his older brothers in their store. He was well educated and had a love for learning. He came to Red Cloud at the age of 50 where he gave lessons in the classics to his children to supplement their regular schoolwork. Willa spent time reading with him both while she lived in Red Cloud and after she had moved to Lincoln to attend the University.

" . . . Upon moving from the farm into Red Cloud in 1884, she began to read Latin with 'Uncle William Ducker,' not a relative but a well-educated Englishman who took an interest in her. Six years later, at the University, she took more Latin and Greek, and during the summers she and her brother Roscoe read Virgil. Evidence of classical influences in her work have been pointed out by many critics." (Bennett: 1961, p. 119).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540260/N4438035

Verbal Boundary Description: Annex lot 8, Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska

WT07-91

1. NAME: Dr. Gilbert E. McKeeby house
"Dr. Archie's house"

82-6937

2. LOCATION: 641 No. Cherry street

4. OWNER: Dwight and Teresa Bender

ADDRESS: 641 No. Cherry Street, Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

7. DESCRIPTION: The McKeeby house was built ca. 1883 on several lots in the western suburbs of Red Cloud. The dwelling is a distinct, one-and-one-half story ell-shaped frame house with multiple rear additions. Detailing is distinctly Victorian in character including the porch supports, the bracketed bay window centered on the front gable and the wood cut-out window trim. The house is exceptionally well-preserved—its Victorian paint color scheme contributing much to the overall ambience of the property (photo #34).

8. SIGNIFICANCE: The McKeeby house is significant to the major theme of the Cather nomination. Dr. G. E. McKeeby was one of Willa's first adult friends. He was a graduate of Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York City and practiced medicine for 14 years. He moved to the drier climate of Nebraska because of poor health. He began practicing law in Red Cloud but switched back to medicine after a short while. Willa occasionally went on calls with him.

McKeeby was the prototype for "Dr. Archie" in Song of the Lark. His house is also described in the novel:

"Dr. Archie was very proud of his yard and garden, which he worked himself. He was the only man in Moonstone who was successful at growing rambler roses, and his strawberries were famous." (The Song of the Lark, p. 32).

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