

WT07-31 Continued

In Song of the Lark a Christmas concert is held at the opera house.

"It was the custom for each of the different Sunday-Schools in Moonstone to give a concert on Christmas Eve. But this year all the churches were to unite and give, as was announced from the pulpits, "a semi-sacred concert of picked talent" at the opera house." (Song of the Lark, pg. 59.)

"The hall was packed. It seemed as if every one in Moonstone was there, even Mrs. Kohler, in her hood, and old Fritz. The seats were wooden kitchen chairs, numbered, and nailed to long planks which held them together in rows. As the floor was not raised, the chairs were all on the same level. The more interested persons in the audience peered over the heads of the people in front of them to get a good view of the stage. From the platform Thea picked out many friendly faces." Song of the Lark, pg. 61.)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage: Less than one acre  
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540970/N4437550

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 9-10, block 5, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska.

WT07-32

1. NAME: Moon Block 87-4926  
2. LOCATION: w. s. Webster street between 4th & 5th Avenues  
4. OWNER: Sharon K. Salmon, et. al.  
ADDRESS: Box 134, Guide Rock, Nebraska 68942

7. DESCRIPTION: The Moon block is an extensive two story brick commercial structure of five stores. The east street facade consists of five store-fronts of cast iron with the second story facade of brick. Each store is demarked on the second story of the corbelled brick facade by a slight pilaster as are each of the two street level entries to the office spaces above. Each store has three-bay fenestration above except for the southern-most store which is four bays wide. The flat-arched windows, which have since been blocked with wood, each display metal hoods in a stilted-pedimental form. The whole facade is capped with a continuous, pressed-metal cornice (photo #26).

Relatively minor street-level remodelings have occurred over the years but most, if not all, of the cast-iron work is still in tact.

8. SIGNIFICANCE: The structure was built in 1886 by Senator John Moon (formerly of Michigan) for use as commercial and office space. One of the second level offices was occupied by Willa Cather's first adult friend, Dr. G. E. McKeeby ("Dr. Archie" in Song of the Lark), relating the building to the major theme of the nomination (see also WT07-91).

**WT07-32, Continued**

In her novel, Song of the Lark, Cather calls the building the "Duke Block" and gives the "Moon" to the town—"Moonstone."

"Dr. Howard Archie had just come up from a game of pool with the Jewish clothier and two traveling men who happened to be staying overnight in Moonstone. His offices were in the Duke Block, over the drug store. Larry, the doctor's man, had lit the overhead light in the waiting-room and the double student's lamp on the desk in the study. The isinglass sides of the hard-coal burner were aglow, and the air in the study was so hot that as he came in the doctor opened the door into his little operating-room, where there was no stove. The waiting-room was carpeted and stiffly furnished, something like a country parlor. The study had worn, unpainted floors, but there was a look of winter comfort about it. The doctor's flat-top desk was large and well made; the papers were in orderly piles, under glass weights. Behind the stove a wide bookcase, with double glass doors, reached from the floor to the ceiling. It was filled with medical books of every thickness and color. On the top shelf stood a long row of thirty or forty volumes, bound all alike in dark mottled board covers, with imitation leather backs." ( Song of the Lark, p. 3).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage: Less than one acre

UTM Coordinates: 14/E540970/N4437580

Verbal Boundary Description: South 3.5 feet of lot 3 and all of lots 4-8, block 5, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska.

**WT07-43**

1. NAME: Matthew R. Bentley house  
"Wick Cutter" house

2. LOCATION: 845 No. Cedar

4. OWNER: James E. and Ida M. Burress

ADDRESS: Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

82-4927

7. DESCRIPTION: The M. R. Bentley house was built in 1883 by carpenter J. Brubaker. The house is a one-and-one-half story frame building, cross-shaped in plan with a bay window on the south of the main body of the house and with a shed-roofed bay on the south of the rear wing (photo #27).

The house is a carpenter version of the Gothic Revival, being of a symmetrical form with projecting entrance pavilion so commonly associated with that residential style in Nebraska. The cross gabled roof, each gable displaying a simple king-post motif, enhances the stylistic interpretation, especially on the entrance pavilion with its steeply-pitched gable. Sawn-board cutout decorations enhance the pedimented hoods, and the sills of each window.