

Librarian's Shelf by Rachelle McPhillips

One Book, One Nebraska 2013

Every January the Nebraska Center for the Book embarks on a mission to connect Nebraskans to one another through a shared reading experience. This program is called "One Book, One Nebraska" and intends to "cultivate a culture of reading and discussion."

The idea behind the program is exciting: bring Nebraskans from many walks of life together with a book that is written by a Nebraskan author or that is set primarily in our state.

This year's One Book, One Nebraska selection is, "O Pioneers!" by Willa Cather. It is an especially suitable pick since 2013 marks the 100th anniversary of the novel's publication.

Cather lived a remarkable life, being transplanted in her youth from her first home in Virginia to Nebraska, the wide open prairie that would become home to her characters. She later moved to the east coast, edited magazines, and eventually focused on writing. One of her works, "One of Ours" earned her a Pulitzer Prize. Cather was the first woman inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

According to the Books in Print database available through <http://NebraskAccess.ne.gov>, Cather called "O Pioneers!" her first authentic novel, "the first time I walked off on my own feet." In that solo walk, Cather took great strides writing a novel that has been hailed as being "ahead of its time."

It is easy to see how the story earned that billing when we meet the Bergson family. Alexandra's ailing father recognizes her competence and defies convention by leaving the family farm to her rather than to one of her brothers. Alexandra's resolute nature reaps success on the farm and, unfortunately, resentment from two of her brothers.

To celebrate the One Book, One Nebraska 2013 title, the library will host a movie screening of the film adaptation of the novel on Thursday, October 24 at 7:00 p.m. This screening is free and open to the public.

Columbus Public Library's Book Discussion Group met to discuss, "O Pioneers!" on Thursday, September 26. This group meets eleven times per year, usually on the last Thursday of the month. Meeting dates are occasionally adjusted to accommodate holidays and other community events.

Everyone is welcome to attend these book discussions. They are free and open to the public. Interlibrary loan fees are waived for patrons who request the book club book the month it is to be discussed.

If you've been hesitant to join a book club, now is an excellent time to try ours on for size. At our next meeting on November 7th at 7:00 p.m., participants will choose the reading list for 2014. If you would like to suggest some titles for consideration for next year's reading list, contact Rachelle at rmcphil@columbusne.us or call 402-562-4201 before October 25.

For more information about the Nebraska Center for the Book, visit them at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/>.