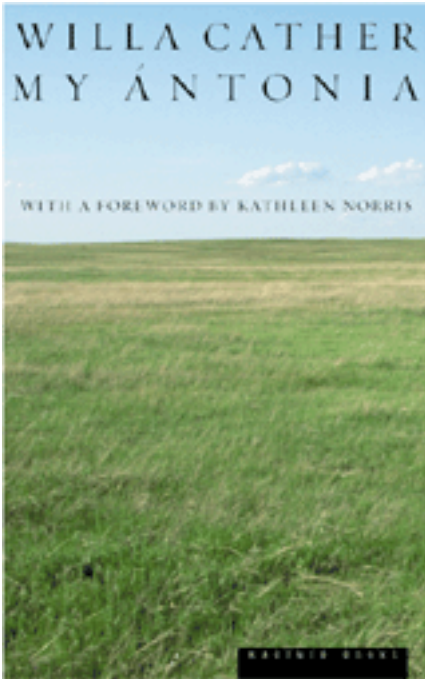


## Press Release



# My Ántonia

by Willa Cather

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## Introduction

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Boston, Mass. — Willa Cather's novel *My Ántonia* has been selected for Chicago's citywide book club, "One Book, One Chicago." Cather's classic novel of an immigrant woman's life on the plains of Nebraska in the 1880s was first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1918. The book will be the focus of a series of book club discussions, exhibits, and lectures during the week of October 14.

Cather, a Pulitzer Prize–winning author of more than fifteen books, was one of the most distinguished American writers of the early twentieth century. She was "discovered" by Ferris Greenslet, Houghton Mifflin Company's editorial director at the time, who edited her first four novels, including *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and the final book in Cather's trilogy of Nebraska novels, *My Ántonia* (1918). Over one million copies of the Houghton Mifflin paperback have been sold.

A Chicago Public Library exhibit about Willa Cather's writing will include a first Houghton Mifflin edition of *My Ántonia*, along with its original illustrations. The most recent Houghton Mifflin edition of *My Ántonia* includes a foreword by the poet and writer Kathleen Norris, in which she notes Cather's role as a pioneer in American fiction. "Intent on telling the truths of a particular time and place, she made her own prose as spare as the land about which she was writing," says Norris.

The week of activities will include a panel event titled "Willa Cather's Circle of Experience" at the Harold Washington Public Library on October 17 at 6 p.m. The Chicago Public Library will also host three screenings of C-SPAN's *American Writers: Writings of Willa Cather*. A special screening of the film *My Ántonia* will take place at DePaul University on October 16. For more information about these and other events, go to [www.chicagopubliclibrary.org](http://www.chicagopubliclibrary.org).

## About Willa Cather

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From Kathleen Norris's foreword to the Mariner paperback edition of *My Ántonia*

Willa Cather was born on December 7, 1873, near the town of Winchester, Virginia, in the North Neck region of the state, where her ancestors had farmed since the late eighteenth century. She was the first of seven children. Cather was nine when her family moved to Nebraska, following her father's parents and his brother, who had emigrated to the frontier during the 1870s. Cather's family left behind a large and prosperous farm, a house that Cather remembered as roomy and cheerful, and, of course, the lush foliage of Virginia. Her family settled on a farm near Red Cloud, Nebraska, which had been founded in 1870, and by the time Willa Cather arrived, it had a population of about 1,000, a school, and a small opera house.

Cather herself epitomizes an all too American displacement; her best writing years, including the period in which she wrote her first three Nebraska novels, were spent in New York City, where she had gone in 1906 to work as an associate editor at *McClure's*, one of the most popular magazines of the day.

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