

Mari Sandoz

HERITAGE

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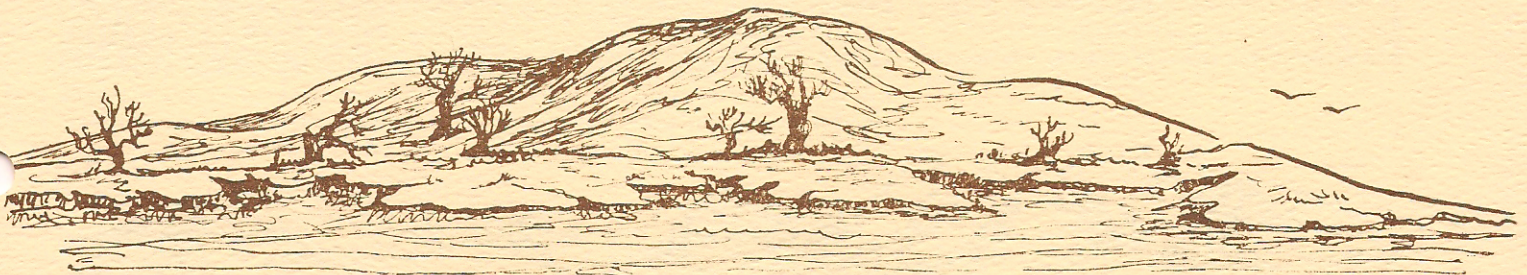
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This unusual picture from the R. W. Graves collection of glass plate negatives shows an unidentified Indian with a beard. Through a grant from the High Plains Center at Chadron State College, the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society hopes to identify the subject of the photograph, which was taken some time during the early part of the century.



"By understanding this one drop of water, I hope to discover something of the nature of the ocean."

THE R. W. GRAVES COLLECTION OF EARLY-DAY PHOTOGRAPHS

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society has been awarded a grant by the High Plains Center for Environmental, Historical, and Multi-cultural Background Studies at Chadron State College to preserve and catalogue photographs in the R. W. Graves collection of glass plate negatives. The negatives, which were found several years ago in the wall of a building being torn down in Chadron, were all taken from about 1906 through the 1920's. The photographer, R. W. Graves, opened a business in Chadron in 1906, and took many pictures of Indians, the early days of the college, and commercial scenes.

The Society has been given access to the negatives by the **Chadron Record**, which obtained them through Don Huls, former owner and publisher of the **Record**. The plates in the collection number over a thousand and provide a fascinating look at the art of an early-day photographer, as well as an impressive visual record of the history of northwest Nebraska during that time.

Photographer David Tipton is printing the photographs, including selected ones for an exhibit. Dr. Allen Shepherd, associate professor of history at Chadron State, is doing research into the historical aspects of the pictures, and Frank Snocker, a student in anthropology and history at CSC, is now devoting much of his time to research into the photographs.

The goal of the project funded by the High Plains Center is to print and catalogue all of the pictures in the collection, identify as many as possible, and develop an exhibit of representative pictures from the collection. The Society feels that this is just the first step for research into the collection, which represents a wealth of material significant to the history of the area. In addition, the collection has considerable aesthetic merit, and many of the photographs are worth preserving as works of art in themselves, quite apart from any historical significance.

YOUNG WRITERS CONFERENCE

A Young Writers Conference on April 7 and 8 is being sponsored by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. The conference will be designed for high school and college-age students and will feature Charles Ghigna, an award-winning poet who is currently poet-in-residence at the Alabama School of Fine Arts, and Tom Allan, feature writer for Omaha World Herald.

The conference will focus on both poetry and journalism and will give students a chance to have their own works read and discussed. It is particularly appropriate for the Society to sponsor such a workshop, since Mari Sandoz herself was always interested in helping and encouraging young writers. If you know a young person who is interested in writing, tell him or her about the Mari Sandoz Young Writers Conference in Chadron on April 7 and 8. More information about the conference may be obtained by writing the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska. 69337

TIPTON EXHIBIT AT STUHR MUSEUM

During April the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island will show an exhibit of David Tipton's photographs entitled Nebraska Images: The Northwest Corner. The exhibit was financed through a Bicentennial grant from the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society and was first seen during Mari Sandoz Day, 1977. Tipton's photographs show a cross-section of life in northwest Nebraska, with scenes from the badlands, the Pine Ridge, farms, ranches, and small towns.

NEW BOOK ON MARI SANDOZ

Re-visiting the Plains Indian Country of Mari Sandoz, a new paperback written and illustrated with photographs by Tucson, Arizona author-photographer LaVerne Harrell Clark, has been published by the Blue Cloud Quarterly Press in Marvin, South Dakota.

Available for \$2.50, Clark's book appears as Chapbook Number Five in a series of literary works published by Benedictine Missionaries to the Sioux Indians at Blue Cloud Abbey. According to Carla Chlouber, director of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, the book will be available through the Society at Chadron State College, or it may be ordered from Blue Cloud Quarterly, Marvin, South Dakota 57251. Cost including postage is \$3.00.

The book provides a look at the scenes and home places of Mari Sandoz' youth and Sandhill years in the Nebraska Panhandle, as well as a view of her later adult travels as an author to nearby points of major Indian importance located in South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming.

Not only does Clark furnish a pictorial introduction to such distinguished works by Sandoz as *Old Jules*, *Crazy Horse*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *The Battle of the Little Bighorn*, she also acquaints readers with new portraits of all of Mari Sandoz's surviving brothers and sisters, who still live in the region of her birth and burial place in Sheridan County, Nebraska, near the site their famous locator-surveyor father, "Old Jules," homesteaded.

Mrs. Clark has published seven additional articles about Sandoz, one of which in 1974 won a national first place award "for the best magazine article" in the biennial Letters Contest of the National League of American Pen Women. Additionally, she has published extensively about the Navajo, Apache, Hopi, and Rio Grande Pueblo Indians, including her award-winning paperback *They Sang for Horses*, (Univ. of Ariz. Press, 1971) which concerns Navajo and Apache folklore.

Mrs. Clark's recent publication, *Re-visiting the Plains Indian Country of Mari Sandoz*, is the latest title issued in the Blue Cloud Quarterly Press series. Other titles which have appeared in the series edited by Br. Benet at the Benedictine Indian Mission in S. D. include: *Ghost Rhythms* by Peter Brett, *Rushmore Inhabitation* by Colin Simms, *Tracks of the Dead* by David Cloutier, and *North: Poems of Home* by Maurice Kenny. All are available in paperback from the Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, S. D., or at bookstores throughout the U. S. which stock titles related to the American Indian and especially his poetry and literature.



SANDOZ WORKSHOP

Chadron State College held its first workshop on the writings of Mari Sandoz last summer, with 31 students participating in the intensive two and one-half week course. Entitled "The World of Mari Sandoz," the workshop featured field trips to the Sandhills, Fort Robinson, and the Museum of the Fur Trade, as well as guest lecturers and video-taped material on Mari Sandoz and western Nebraska.

Dr. Richard Loosbrock, professor of history at CSC, led the workshop, which carried three hours of either undergraduate or graduate credit in history or English. Carla Chlouber, director of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, which is based at Chadron State College, assisted with the class.

The workshop, although primarily a course on the writings of Mari Sandoz, virtually amounted to a course in the history of northwest Nebraska as well, since so many of the writer's books were concerned with the history of the region.

On a tour led by Judy McDonald, executive director of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, the class saw the River Place, southeast of Hay Springs, where Mari Sandoz was born. The group also visited the Sandhills homestead of Old Jules, now the home of Flora Sandoz, Mari's sister. There they saw the grave of Mari Sandoz, located on the hillside overlooking the orchards of her father. The class also visited the Sandoz Room, which is filled with clippings and mementoes, over the Chamberlin Furniture store in Gordon.

Another field trip took the class to Fort Robinson, where Vance Nelson, curator of the Fort Robinson Historical Museum, led the group on a tour of the Fort and the Cheyenne Outbreak Trail, which leads to an area north of Harrison. Mari Sandoz' **Cheyenne Autumn** tells the story of the Cheyennes' tragic attempt to escape from Fort Robinson almost a hundred years ago.

The class also visited the Museum of the Fur Trade, where director Charles Hanson discussed **The Beaver Men**, Mari Sandoz' story of the fur trade. Other trips took the group to Fort Robinson for the Western art exhibit and, at another time, for a reception presented in the style of the 1890's.

Another feature of the class was the use of video-taped

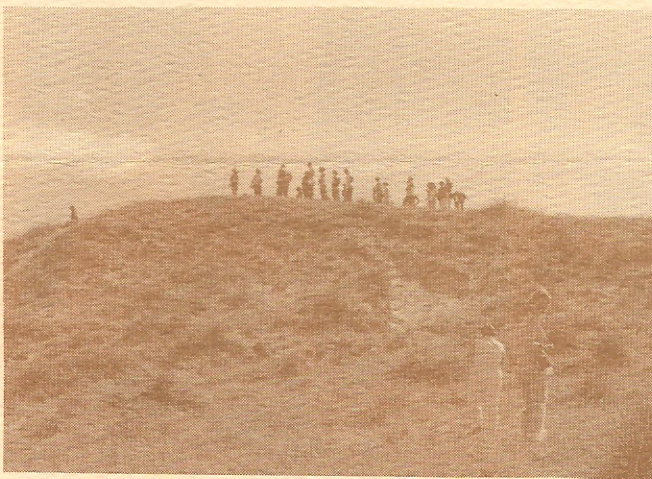
and audio-visual materials on Great Plains history and on Mari Sandoz. The class saw a preview of the new Nebraska Education Television documentary on Mari Sandoz, with Dick Cavett interviewing members of her family.

Although most of the participants in the workshop came from the three states of Nebraska, Wyoming, and South Dakota, one class member, LaVerne Harrell Clark, came from Tucson, Arizona. A writer and photographer with a special interest in Mari Sandoz, Mrs. Clark has published several articles on Mari Sandoz and has just published a book, **Re-visiting the Plains Indian Country of Mari Sandoz**.

"The World of Mari Sandoz," will be offered at Chadron State College again next summer, with Dr. Richard Loosbrock again leading the workshop. Those who enroll, as last summer's participants will undoubtedly agree, are bound to learn a great deal not only about Mari Sandoz, but also about the time and the country that shaped her vision and influenced her development as a writer.



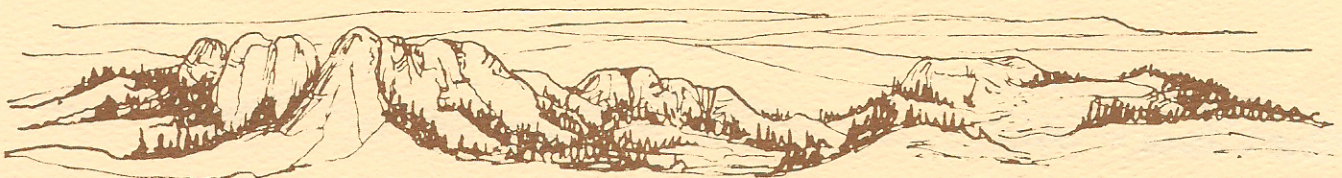
LaVerne Harrell Clark, on the left, chats with Blanche Sandoz during a lunch break at the home of Flora Sandoz. Blanche is the widow of Fritz.



Members of the class are silhouetted on top of Indian Hill, which they climbed while on a visit to the River Place, where Mari was born.



The cast of the Folger Theatre Group production of **Black Elk Speaks** visited the site of the Red Cloud Agency at Fort Robinson when they were in Chadron on January 23 and 24. The drama, based on John Neihardt's book, drew capacity crowds for the two performances presented in Chadron. The play's tour of nine Nebraska colleges was underwritten by a grant from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities. Vance Nelson, curator of the Fort Robinson museum, is second from the right.



MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS ESTABLISHED

by
Larry Miller

Two memorial scholarships in honor of two successful Sandhills ranchers have been established at Chadron State College. They are the Bob Pifer Scholarship Award and the Fritz T. Sandoz Award.

The scholarships were announced as part of Mari Sandoz Day at Chadron State College on May 11, 1977. Several dozen persons were on hand for the event.

Mrs. Caroline Pifer, widow of Bob Pifer, presented a check for \$5,000 to the Chadron State College Foundation for establishing the Pifer award, which is earmarked for use by students studying agriculture. It is to go to a student demonstrating financial need, not necessarily to a student who excels academically.

In establishing the scholarship fund, Mrs. Pifer has stipulated that the principal remain untouched and that only the interest be used in awarding scholarships, thus ensuring that the fund shall not diminish.

The Sandoz award is a similar scholarship in the name of the late Fritz Sandoz. Mrs. Pifer and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Fritz Sandoz, presented the CSC Foundation with a check in the amount of \$3,000. It contains the same guidelines specified in the Pifer scholarship.

Caroline Sandoz Pifer is the youngest daughter of Old Jules, while Blanche Sandoz was married to Fritz Sandoz, the youngest son of Old Jules.

"We are truly appreciative and excited about this generosity on the part of Mrs. Sandoz and Mrs. Pifer," said Dr. Edwin C. Nelson, President of Chadron State.

"It comes at a very crucial time in the development of our agricultural program at CSC, and these scholarships will serve as fitting memorials to Mr. Pifer and Mr. Sandoz.

"The real beneficiaries, of course, are the needy young persons who will receive the scholarships in the years ahead," said Nelson, "and these scholarships will perpetuate the pioneering spirit of the men for whom they're named."

Bob Pifer grew up in the Rulo, Nebraska area. His mother had lost her sight when Pifer was quite young, and she was sent to a home for the blind. His half-brothers worked for the Margraves, a large ranching and feeding operation, and young Pifer joined them when he was "old enough to hold a fork."

Pifer met Caroline Sandoz when he visited the store on the Sandoz ranch in the Sandhills.

They were married in 1935 and lived on part of the Old Jules Sandoz place for about five years. They then bought more land, including 4,000 acres from the old Nern Ranch south of Gordon. Their holdings eventually reached 12,000 acres, and their Double R ranch was home for many fine Herefords.

The Pifers had two daughters, Mary Ann Anderson of Boulder, Colorado, and Eleanor Hamilton of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mr. Pifer died in 1974.

"Bob was a man who worked hard all his life," says Mrs. Pifer, "and he believed in the value of education."

Thus came the origins of the Bob Pifer Scholarship Award at Chadron State College.

Fritz Sandoz farmed and ranched all his life, raising corn and cattle on his ZX Ranch. When he and his wife Blanche were first married, they lived south of Seneca, Nebraska, near the Dismal River. In 1928 they purchased

part of the Old Jules Sandoz place south of Gordon.

Blanche Sandoz remembers, "There were no buildings on the place except a one-room granary, and that's where we first lived."

In 1953-54, they built a new home, and Mrs. Sandoz has lived there ever since. Fritz died in 1975.

Fritz Sandoz is remembered as a jack-of-all-trades. He was one of the first welders in the country; he did blacksmithing; he was a cobbler; and he enjoyed working with leather.

When asked about hobbies that he may have had, Fritz's widow recalls that while he liked to hunt, "work" was his main hobby.

Although Fritz and Blanche Sandoz had no children of their own, they helped at least six different young people get a start in life. Some were relatives — others were not.

Sandoz had little formal education, but he was good at mathematics, a trait that helped him develop a successful ranching operation.

Mrs. Sandoz recalls their helping one young woman who had worked for them.

"She was valedictorian of her high school class, but had no money to continue her education." Fritz and Blanche helped her through college.

It may well have been this philosophy that generated the idea to do something more for others.

"Something more" has resulted in the Bob Pifer Scholarship Award and the Fritz T. Sandoz Scholarship Award, two of the larger scholarships to be offered at Chadron State College.

Of particular importance is the fact that Mrs. Pifer and Mrs. Sandoz have specified that the awards go to students studying agriculture. The vital role of agriculture in our society — and the contributions to agriculture made by people like Fritz Sandoz and Bob Pifer — will remain in high regard at Chadron State College through the establishment of the Pifer and Sandoz scholarships.



Another typical picture in the Graves collection of glass plate negatives is one of a young Indian girl and child.





In the fall of 1976 television personality Dick Cavett interviewed members of the Sandoz family for a documentary produced by the Nebraska Educational Television Network. Seated in front from the left are young Jules Sandoz, James Sandoz, and his wife Marie. Standing are Flora Sandoz, Dick Cavett, and Caroline Sandoz Pifer. (Photo courtesy of the Nebraska Educational Television Network).

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