

The Mari Sandoz  
Heritage Society

*Pilster  
Great Plains  
Lecture  
Series*

"What's So Great About  
the Great Plains?"

*Featuring*

**Dr. Andrew Graybill**

Professor and Director of the  
Clements Center for Southwest Studies  
at Southern Methodist University in  
Dallas, Texas

September 28, 2023

7:30pm

Chadron State College  
Chadron, Nebraska

*Mari Sandoz*  
HERITAGE SOCIETY

**Mari Sandoz Heritage Society**  
P.O. Box 6808 | Lincoln, NE 68506-0808  
[www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)



## The Pilster Endowment

In 2006, the late Esther Pilster gave a gift of ranchland in northwest Nebraska near Whitney in Dawes County, to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. The gift, which established an endowment with the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, was a tribute to her late husband Raleigh, who grew up on the ranch, and his parents John and Grace Pilster. As a beloved teacher and school administrator for 44 years, Esther served 29 years as principal at Boyd Elementary School in Omaha. Esther wanted her gift to honor the courage and tenacity shown by Raleigh's parents and others who lived on the Great Plains. The Pilster Great Plains Lecture Series and other programs are funded by the Pilster endowment.

### Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

The vision of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is to foster an understanding of the literary and historical works of Mari Sandoz; and to honor the land and the people about which she wrote: Native Americans, ranchers, farmers and the people who settled the High Plains country.

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society works to build an appreciation of Mari Sandoz's body of work and to preserve the legacy of this premier historian by bringing people together for the discussion of her works, presenting a symposium, distinguished lecture series, a writing workshop and administering and raising funds to support these efforts.

In addition to the three major annual events, the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society also works to preserve the literary works and legacy of Mari Sandoz. The Society maintains extensive archive materials including manuscripts of Mari's works, research she compiled in a meticulous and copious index card system, written histories, essays, short stories, correspondence and personal items. Many of these collections are permanently on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. The Society supports the Center's academic, archive and research programs.

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is a 501(c)(3) organization and is member supported. To join or provide a gift membership, please visit our website at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org). All membership contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

## Program

### Welcome

Dr. Ron Patterson, Chadron State College President

### Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Remarks

Shannon Smith, President

### Introduction of 2023 Pilster Lecturer

Dr. Kurt Kinbacher, Chadron State College

### "What's So Great About the Great Plains?"

Dr. Andrew Graybill, 2023 Pilster Lecturer

### Q&A with lecturer followed by a book signing

## About The Lecture

The Great Plains is a region that is difficult to define and often overlooked and misunderstood. Historian Andrew Graybill traces one early effort to give the Great Plains its due. In his most important book, *The Great Plains* (1931), leading western historian Walter Prescott Webb (1888-1963) emphasized the significance of the environment as a historical actor in its own right. Yet the book is marred by considerable shortcomings, among them Webb's wincing racism. In his talk highlighting the recent 2022 reissue of the book (University of Nebraska Press), Graybill explores the volume's notable limitations while arguing for its enduring vitality.

## Dr. Andrew Graybill

Andrew Graybill is a professor of history and director of the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He is the author or editor of four books, including *The Red and the White: A Family Saga of the American*



*West* (Norton/Liveright, 2013). He taught at the University of Nebraska from 2003-2011.