

# *The Story Catcher*

*A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society*

## Friendship, Loyalty and a Love of Crazy Horse

*Eleanor Hinman is referred to frequently in Mari Sandoz's biography by Helen Winter Stauffer leading us to the assumption that she played a large part in Mari's life and to the question, "who was Eleanor Hinman?"*

In 1940, Mari Sandoz dedicated her book, *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas* this way: "To Eleanor Hinman, who spent many faithful months on biography of Crazy Horse and then graciously volunteered to relinquish her prior claim to me."

Eleanor Hamlin Hinman was born in Lincoln, Neb., on Dec. 9, 1899, was one of Mari Sandoz's staunchest and most dedicated supporters. As the daughter of Edgar Lenderson Hinman and Alice Julia Hamlin, she was descended from an extensive line of educators. Her father was chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska. He, along with Hartley Burr Alexander, personally financed the university's anthropological studies. Her mother was a teacher of the Young Women's Business and Professions class, and was a leader in many cultural activities.

Eleanor was educated in the Lincoln public school system and attended both the University of Nebraska and Wellesley College, receiving her B.A. from the University of Nebraska in 1921. After graduation, she went east, hoping to make a career of writing, but returned to take graduate work. Interested in all forms of writing, she attempted both the short story and the historical novel, and winning first prize in poetry in an Omaha Women's Press Club with one of her poems. (pp. 70)

Her career was varied; she taught in Shelby, Neb., was reporter on the *Lincoln Daily Star*, an instructor in journalism at Doane College in Crete,

### How Do You Solve a Problem Like Marie, Mari?

Many people remember Mari Sandoz as "Marie." She was named Marie at birth, but later chose Mari (Mar-ee with the pronunciation on both syllables). Mari is the European version of Mary and the way her father pronounced the name. After returning to the name Sandoz, from her married name Marie Macumber at the suggestion of an agent in 1929, she used the name Mari Sandoz both personally and professionally from then on.

Neb., a music critic on the *Omaha Bee*, an editorial secretary for the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior in Chicago, and was an associate editor for the *Missionary Herald*. She later became a research assistant and a faculty rural psychologist in NU's College of Agriculture.

As a feature writer for the *Lincoln Daily Star*, one of her finest articles was an interview with Willa Cather in 1921. Cather gave few interviews during her long career as a novelist and the one conducted by Eleanor Hinman is still a must read for any Cather scholar.

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*(The page references are from Mari Sandoz Story Catcher of the Plains by Helen Winter Stauffer. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE. 1982. Other references are footnoted and cited at the end of the article.)*

## The StoryCatcher

The "Story Catcher" is the title of a book by Mari Sandoz and it is the title of Helen Winter Stauffer's biography of Mari, "Mari Sandoz: The Story Catcher of the Plains."

The StoryCatcher is published four times a year by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The Sandoz Society seeks to build an appreciation of Mari Sandoz's body of work, to preserve the literary works and legacy of this premier historian, and to raise funds to support these efforts. Each year, the Society hosts a conference that celebrates and studies the works of the author.

Additionally, the Society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College. These materials and financial support from the Society's endowments support the College's academic, archival, research, and outreach programs.

Address changes should be mailed to 2301 NW 50th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. To join the Society, fill out and mail the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information, e-mail [marisandoz\\_society@windstream.net](mailto:marisandoz_society@windstream.net), or [www.marisandoz](http://www.marisandoz).

## Mari Sandoz

The feats, the passions, and the distinctive speech of the West come alive in the writings of Mari Sandoz (1896-1966).

As the author of 23 books, including *Old Jules*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Crazy Horse*, the *Strange Man of the Oglalas*, she was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller and an artist passionately dedicated to the land.

With her vivid stories of the last days of the American frontier she has achieved a secure place as one of the finest authors in American literature and one of Nebraska's most important writers.

As a historian and as a novelist, Sandoz was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 1976 and posthumously received the coveted Wrangler Award from the Hall of Great Westerners.

## Friendship, Loyalty (cont.)

### Friendships Discovered in The Quill

In 1921 a group of women writers began meeting in Lincoln. They formally organized as the "Happy Venture Club" in January 1922. At the monthly meetings members read short stories, poems or chapters of their longer works; participated in dramatic sketches; and reported on their work in progress, publications and honors. Applicants for membership were required to submit samples of their work to be evaluated by a committee. The group changed its name to "The Quill" in September 1923.

Mari and Eleanor met when Mari joined The Quill in 1929, which met semimonthly at the old Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. [Mari] formed lasting ties with several members of Quill; if anyone could claim to be a close friend. (pp.69) It was during this period that Mari realized they shared a very strong interest in Native American history and culture, Eleanor shared with Mari that she had been researching and working on a biography about Crazy Horse. The two soon became friends.

Mari's Quill experiences were instrumental in setting her on the next step of her career. Her membership in the group encouraged her to break into the eastern publishing market and guided her toward an agent, which directly led to her choice of a new professional name. (pp. 71-72)

One of the speakers at Quill suggested a New York agent, Margaret Christie, who was willing to work with unknown authors. Mari disregarded many of Christie's suggestions; however, the most notable contribution to her career was Christie's suggestion that Mari Sandoz was a better writing name than her pen name, Marie Macumber.

### Friends on a 3,000-Mile Journey

In the foreword of *Crazy Horse*, Mari writes about a three-thousand-mile fact finding journey, that the two friends decided to make in 1930. The focus of the journey was to research Crazy Horse by interviewing Native Americans who had known the great leader. The journey was considered a success, with the authors securing several interviews with individuals who had known Crazy Horse.

Before the trip, Mari wrote to several editors proposing articles about their experiences on the venture, called "Stalking the Ghost of Crazy Horse in a Whoppee" (the Model T). (pp. 80)

Sandoz Letter: June 21, 1930

To Kenneth Wilcox Payne (North American Review)

...Eleanor Hinman, daughter of Dr. Hinman, head of the Philosophy Department, University of Nebraska, is writing a fictionalized biography, book length, of Crazy Horse, an Indian war chief killed at Fort Robinson...

...We intend to interview all the Indians, scouts and military men available who were in any way connected with the killings or the incidents leading up to it.

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## Friendship, Loyalty (cont.)

We are going in an old Ford, a creature unfamiliar to both of us. The trip will cover the Rosebud Reservation, S. Dak., where the old priest who is writing a dictionary of the Dakotah language resides. Then to the Pine Ridge Reservation, also in South Dakota, where Old He Dog, one of the few surviving members of the fraternal organizations to which Crazy Horse belonged, resides. He is blind and speaks no English, but has a vivid memory.

From there we go to Sheridan, Wyo., to interview some old timers, and then on to the Custer

Battlefield and the locale of the Battle of Rosebud, both in Montana. Fortunately, we have access to the pictograph manuscript, the sole surviving Indian history of those battles, which Helen Blish is deciphering for the Carnegie Foundation...<sup>1</sup>

No editor seemed interested, but Mari hoped the trip would provide her with many subjects for stories.

(pp. 80) She was interested in learning about the flight of the Cheyennes under Dull Knife

and Little Wolf. Seeing the places and being on the Indian's land helped Mari begin recreating in her mind the scenes that had taken place here.

In July 1930, they set off on the three-week journey traveling in a Model T that the two women found they frequently had to repair themselves. They also took along a tent and camped out while exploring reservations and interviewing Indians. (pp. 79)

Their work was aided by another university friend, Helen Blish, who was already on the Pine Ridge Reservation. As the daughter of an Indian Bureau employee, she had spent much of her life on reservation including 10 years on the Pine Ridge. Because Blish had been to the reservation frequently in the previous three years interviewing

elderly Sioux for her graduate thesis, she was able to help Eleanor Hinman and Mari Sandoz when they first went to the Pine Ridge for their interviews regarding Crazy Horse in 1930.

Blish shared her contacts and special knowledge with Mari and Eleanor. She also helped her two friends with their itinerary, in procuring an interpreter, and with introductions to the survivors of the Indian wars and battle comrades of Crazy Horse.

They interviewed those who had known Crazy Horse personally or who had first-hand knowledge of his life and the events surrounding his death at

Fort Robinson in 1877. As Blish had done, they hired John Colhoff, official interpreter for the Pine Ridge Agency. After their work was concluded, they visited the Black Hills and the Custer battlefield.<sup>2</sup>

The trip helped Mari realize that she was in a unique position to share her knowledge of the culture of the plains Indians and that she had special insight of the culture from both the inside and outside. (pp. 79)

She took copious notes and carefully documented the interviews for future reference.

The charismatic Crazy Horse held a strong attraction for both Mari and Eleanor.

Long before she knew she would write the biography, Mari was drawn to the chief as a hero and she saw him as representing the Native people as a whole not just an individual. As she said in a letter to Rebecca Knowles on May 2, 1944, she wanted to depict "the process utilized to defame, expropriate, and destroy a minority and its whole way of life." Additionally, she imagined young "Curly's" escapades around her home land in the Sandhills.



*The inscription on the back says, "Our camp at Whiteclay Creek. EH ready for the day."*

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## Friendship, Loyalty (cont.)

On Oct. 9, 1930, Eleanor sent a copy of her interviews to Dr. Addison E. Sheldon, director of the Nebraska State Historical Society:

Here at long last is the record of our interviews on Crazy Horse. I put them in your hands to do what you think is best. By way of keeping faith with our friends on the reservation, I want their stories to go on record in their own words somewhere so that any student of Indian or frontier history who digs deeply enough into the materials may find them. The interviews are of very unequal value, but I think you may find some of them of interest in connections with some of your own studies. Thank you for your assistance and encouragement.

I am, Sincerely Yours, Eleanor Hinman.<sup>3</sup>

The interviews are published as they were presented to the Society with Eleanor's footnotes and introduction unchanged.<sup>4</sup>

### Eleanor's Continued Loyalty

After the trip, Eleanor sent sections of her Crazy Horse manuscript to Mari for criticism. Although usually patient and tactful with apprentice writers, was harsh with Eleanor. Mari didn't believe the hero was receiving the literary treatment she deemed worthy. Eleanor took the suggestion with good grace.

Eleanor was convinced that Mari's talent far surpassed her own and became one of her staunchest boosters. Not only was Eleanor a loyal enthusiast, she often found ways to help Mari financially. Mari once thanked her for throwing her a rope, but she was unhappy because her debts gave her a sense of obligation and she didn't like to be beholden to anyone.

On Jan. 10, 1930, in a note from Mari to Eleanor: "Attached I.O.U. for \$50.00 due Oct. 1, 1930."<sup>5</sup> In another note to Eleanor in June 28, 1930, Mari sent another promissory note.

Sandoz Letter: Nov.17, 1932

To Mr. C.C. Calhoun, Washington, D.C.

...Miss Hinman is not the best source of information in the world. She has a fine historical sense and an excellent memory for dates and facts,

but she never remembers to answer letters...Her research, as a biography of Crazy Horse would suggest, has been mostly among the hostiles, the old men who knew or pretended to know little of what the Loaf-About-The-Forts were doing. Just now her book rests, much to my regret, for the theme is not only a vital and significant one but the four chapters she has written reveal more of the true nature of the Plains Indian than anything so far...Whether she could sustain such writing only the actual execution will tell...<sup>6</sup>

In 1933, malnourished and destitute, Mari decided to return to the Sandhills. Eleanor thought Mari intended to give up her writing permanently and offered to pay for a trip to New York so that Mari could meet with publishers and learn their point of view. Mari feared her friend was trying to mold and influence her and bluntly refused.

Eleanor opposed the move to the Sandhills telling Mari she would pay her living expenses in Lincoln in order to keep her writing. Eleanor pleaded with her friend to "be sensible" in a letter dated Oct. 28, 1933.

Letters in the Sandoz Collection (the Greenwell index) at Love library indicates Mari's depression and snappishness at her friend:

Nov 7, 1933: Mari to Eleanor: "Please go to hell." Also, Mari vehemently wrote saying, "If I am tired and disgusted and

want to lay down with my face in the sand, please remember that sand is plentiful and the face is, after all, mine..."

She ended by castigating Eleanor for presuming to interfere in her life and pointedly reminded her that her own novel had not been written yet. (pp. 90)

Nov. 18, 1933: Eleanor apologizes, but she was shocked and hurt: "You have all those gifts and qualities which I so deeply desire, and so sadly lack. I cannot believe but what I shall some day see you in that position of distinction in which I have already placed you. I have the greatest faith in your ultimately reaching the place you are resolved to reach..." (pp. 90)

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## Friendship, Loyalty (cont.)

Sandoz Letter: Dec. 6, 1933

Dear Eli,

...I'm working on *Slocum House*...It's all drudgery, anyway, this business of existence, to one of my temperament. How is the novel coming? Well I hope. ...I have quit sending out manuscripts...<sup>7</sup>

Notes from the Sandoz Collection (the Greenwell index) at NU's Love Library in Lincoln:

May, 1935: Mari pays interest on loans.

May, 1935: Eleanor wants to renegotiate the loan, easing the terms.

June, 1935: Eleanor offers congratulations to Mari on Atlantic Monthly award.

Although she generally let Mari's acrimonious behavior slide, in a June 1935 letter, Eleanor alludes to a knife in the back and disloyalty. "If anyone was ever wounded in the house of his friends, I was so wounded last summer. The knife had your name on it and there was one at hand who claimed to be a witness to the blow."

Trying to entice Mari back to Lincoln, Eleanor sent ten dollars for railroad fare and offered Mari a job as her own assistant. But it was a job with the Nebraska State Historical Society offered by the director, Dr. Sheldon that enticed Mari back to Lincoln. After returning and sparring with publishers over *Slocum House*, she decided to concentrate on her Indian material. ...since 1930 she had been interested in the Oglala Sioux chief Man Afraid of His Horse, and she had also been collecting notes on the Cheyennes. (pp. 115)

Now she decided, after much consideration, to delay the Man Afraid book, since both Eleanor and A.E. Sheldon were working on their biographies of Crazy Horse and Red Cloud, men of the same tribe and contemporaries of her subject. Although she was sure neither would finish, she felt ethically bound to give them more time. p(p. 115)

Sandoz Letter: Mar. 1, 1940

To Helen Blish

...I dropped Young Man Afraid of His Horse

because the book was so closely related to Eleanor's Crazy Horse and Doctor Sheldon's Red Cloud. Because my book would make publication more difficult for either of them, I put it off until after the Cheyenne book...<sup>8</sup>

### Eleanor's Gift

After she had spent 10 years trying to develop the material, it was possibly a lack of time and money to travel to Washington, D.C. to research the national archives that caused Eleanor not to finish her biography on Crazy Horse.

On two separate occasions, Eleanor offered her work, on Crazy Horse, to Mari. Impressed with *Slocum House*, she suggested Mari write about Crazy Horse in 1938 and then again in early 1940, Eleanor offered her friend the use of her Crazy

Horse material, but Mari was uneasy. She was afraid her friend would regret giving up the story she had worked on so long. (pp. 90)

*"She did it as a complete surprise to me, with her typical generosity and graciousness."*

Sandoz Letter: March 1, 1940

To Eleanor Hinman

...Are you still disinclined to go on with the Crazy Horse story? If you are certain that you don't want to do the book, and that you do not regret giving it up, do you mind my switching from Dull Knife to your old Sioux War Chief?

Sincerely,

P.S. This time, no matter what I do, I will not do the ethical thing of staking my claim publicly—not and have it jumped again.<sup>9</sup>

Sandoz Letter: June 16, 1941

To Helen Blish

...I don't know whether Eleanor told you that she relinquished her priority on Crazy Horse to me.

She did it as a complete surprise to me, with her typical generosity and graciousness. I intend to dedicate the book to her, if she'll let me, after she's had some indication of that I am making of her beloved subject. I hope it won't disappoint her too much.

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## Friendship, Loyalty (cont.)

The book has to be in Knopf's hands March 1, 1942, so I am putting it together now. The story is tremendous, with all the cumulative inevitability of a Greek tragedy, and I feel small and mean and incompetent, although I have done my best to get at the truth...

In the meantime there are still some points that I'd like to talk over with you and Eleanor...I suspect by now that you and Eleanor are better sources than any remaining on the agency...<sup>10</sup>

*(Sandoz was not aware that Blish had died earlier that year.)*

By April 1941, Mari's index cards on the Crazy Horse materials exceeded 5,000 cards. In the fall of that year, Mari followed the route of the earlier trip and took her Crazy Horse manuscript to visit the scenes that were important in the book, a custom she followed with all of her historical works. In November, she traveled by pack horse to see what Sioux camps were like when they were snowbound and to absorb the atmosphere. (pp. 149)

By then, most of the old-timers she and Eleanor and Helen had talked to were gone. They now had the most complete records of the events and people. (pp. 150)

Throughout Mari's writing, Eleanor continued to send material and to point out inconsistencies and ambiguities in the historical research. She supplied information on Sioux folklore and myth and reminded Mari that understanding Crazy Horse's religion was important to understanding him. (pp. 151) (There are numerous entries in the Hinman collection at Love Library regarding Mari's and Eleanor's exchanges of questions and materials.)

And it was Eleanor whom Mari sought out to determine the hero's physical characteristics since no research had turned up any photographs. Eleanor had talked to people who had seen him and she gave information generously from her notes. (pp. 151)

After reading an initial draft in 1942, Eleanor said that she could not express how pleased she was

with it, saying, "It is true that I got somewhat emotionally involved in this yarn, partly because my feeling about CH was to some extent a reflection of my feeling about a certain Mari Sandoz; I liked some of the same things in both of them." (pp. 152)

Mari was ahead of her time by writing the biography from within the Lakota world-view, using Lakota concepts and metaphors, and even replicating Lakota patterns of speech. Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas was published in 1942.

In 1944 at age 48, Mari was determined to join the war effort, but she was rejected from the Women's Army Corps (WACS) because of her blind eye. This made her furious, perhaps because Eleanor was serving as a psychiatric social worker in the WACS. (pp. 169)

In 1965, as Mari's health was declining, Eleanor remembered places she and young Mari had shared all over Lincoln. "A place where a young Mari Sandoz and a young Eleanor Hinman sit under a tree in Pioneer Park, smoking together, looking at the distant State Capitol tower and discussing the universe. A place at the Munny Swimming Pool where a young Mari Sandoz slips out of her worries

*"The story is tremendous, with all the cumulative inevitability of a Greek tragedy..."*

and frustrations into the water. A place downtown where a slim Mari Sandoz whirls around the corner of Miller & Paine's, buffeted by the wind and leaning on

it, walking faster than anybody else in town." (pp. 254-255)

Giving to the end, Eleanor's obituary in the Lincoln Journal (7/18/83) stated that she left a \$100,000 bequest to Nebraska Foundation to support philosophy students.

Eleanor Hinman was Mari Sandoz's closest friend, as close a friend as Mari would allow anyway.

She was a published author in her own right, but believed that Mari was the superior author and was the one to complete the Crazy Horse work. What Eleanor's biography on Crazy Horse might have contributed to literature cannot be known, but because of her continued dedication and loyalty to her friend Mari Sandoz, the literary world is a richer place. ✂

*Continued on Page 5*

## Friendship, Loyalty Citations and Information

### Works Cited

<sup>1</sup>Stauffer, Helen Winter. Letters of Mari Sandoz. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska. 1992. pp. 20

<sup>2</sup>Riley, Paul D., Oglala Sources on the Life of the Crazy Horse: Interviews Given to Eleanor H. Hinman. pp. 180. R. Eli Paul. The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865-1877, Part 4. Sioux War Saga, Chapter 10. University of Nebraska Press. 1998.

<sup>3</sup>Riley, Sources pp.180

<sup>4</sup>Riley, Sources pp.181

<sup>5</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.15-16

<sup>6</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.42

<sup>7</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.68-70

<sup>8</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.165

<sup>9</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.166

<sup>10</sup>Stauffer, Letters pp.185-186

For more information visit the following places:

The Nebraska Historical Society houses a collection of interviews and correspondence by Eleanor Hinman, as well as six folders of manuscripts. The collection relates to the life and death of Crazy Horse. The most significant portion of the collection is the volume of interviews with various Indians at the Oglala and Pine Ridge Reservations, conducted by Eleanor Hinman in July of 1930. The annotations in the typescript were done by Hinman. These interviews were published in Nebraska History, vol.57, 1976.

The Caroline Sandoz Pifer Collection of Mari Sandoz Papers at Chadron State College, Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center.

The Mari Sandoz Collection, University of Nebraska Love Library, Dates: 1864-1976 (bulk 931-1966)

Quantity: 199 boxes (186 linear feet)

Collection Number: Spec MS 080

## Susan Maher Joins Sandoz Board

New board member Susan Naramore Maher has deep experience teaching Great Plains authors—including Mari Sandoz—as well as publishing research on them.

A fellow of the Center for Great Plains Studies on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus, she chaired the Interdisciplinary Symposium for 2008, held in Omaha, entitled “Death, Murder, and Mayhem: Stories of Violence and Healing on the Plains.”

Maher, who has a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has published widely on Plains writers, including recent articles in Western American Literature, Great Plains Quarterly, and Studies in Canadian Literature. As chair of the English Department, she teaches courses at the University of Nebraska at Omaha on Great Plains Literature, Women Writers of the American West, and 20th-Century Western American Fiction, which include works by Mari Sandoz.



Sue Maher

Her work for the UNO Lifelong Learning Initiative included a course this last spring on Nebraska Writers. Reading Slogum House was the highlight of the class.

In 2005, Dr. Maher headed up the first One Book/One Nebraska statewide reading of My Ántonia for the Willa Cather Foundation. She serves as Vice President of their board, and also serves on the Board of the Loren Eiseley Society.

A former president of the Western Literature Association, Maher has served with passion and dedication to promote the literature of the Great Plains region. Since she feels that one cannot understand the history and culture of the Great Plains without reading Sandoz’s works, she said she is delighted to be joining the Board of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. ✂

## New Board Member Follows in Mother's Footsteps

When Christy Chamberlin's mom, Lloy, opened the Mari Sandoz Room in the Chamberlin Furniture Store in Gordon, Neb. in 1972, Christy was a teenager.



Lloy along with Sybil Malberg Berndt and Caroline Sandoz, was determined to make sure that the life and literature of Mari Sandoz would not be forgotten. Christy was drafted into helping set up and decorate the little museum with Mari's books, magazines, research material, clothing and furniture from Mari's New York apartment and all those great hats.

"At first, I thought it the concept was pretty boring, but then all of these people started coming to view Mari's personal items and the information about her," she said. "There were grade school classes, college students and literature professors from across the country."

Soon, she remembers helping host groups from European countries and Japan.

"Then, when Dick Cavett showed up one day, I knew I'd better find out what all the fuss was about," Chamberlin said. "I read Old Jules and Crazy Horse and became a Mari fan, too."

Her mother, Lloy, was a long-time board member of the Mari Sandoz Society.

"I admired my mother's dedication and years of hard work honoring Mari and it will be an honor for me, in some small way, to continue her work by serving on the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Board of Directors," Chamberlin said.

Chamberlin has a BA degree in journalism and English from the University of Nebraska where she lived in the Mari Sandoz dorm for two years. She has a Series 7 license and has been a Financial Advisor for Edward Jones for 22 years.

Although she has lived in New Mexico for more than 20 years, her heart is still in the Plains. She and her husband, Bob, travel to Nebraska often and also have a home in Hot Springs, SD. ✂

### A Good and Talented Servant

According to Sandoz Society board member, Sybil Malmberg Berndt, Lloy Chamberlin wanted to keep Mari Sandoz's memory alive by finding a place to display her works and personal items. She convinced her husband, Fred, that the Chamberlin Furniture Store in Gordon, Neb., was the perfect place for a little museum filled with Mari's clothes, books, manuscripts, maps, and pictures.

For over 20 years, the Mari Sandoz Room brought in throngs of people who wanted to learn about Mari.

Berndt remembers Lloy, "humming and dancing along, leading the delighted troops of researchers, historians, tourists, and others through rooms of furniture to the little haven."

When Lloy passed away in 2000, a reporter with the Lincoln Journal Star called her "A Renaissance woman of the High Plains. She was a businesswoman, dancer, artist, newspaper editor, historian but best known for promoting the life and work of Mari Sandoz."

"It was a blessing for the Sandoz Society to have a good and loving, talented and faithful servant like Lloy," Berndt said. ✂



Lloy Chamberlin (l) and Sybil Berndt accompanied Mari's things to Chadron State College when they were donated by Caroline Sandoz Pifer.



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## Helen Blish Contributed to Sandoz's Success

Because her father was a teacher in Native American schools, Helen Heather Blish (1898-1941) grew up among the Native people and their culture. As the daughter of an Indian Bureau employee, she spent much of her early life on reservations including 10 years on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

In 1926, Helen Blish, a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was searching for examples of Plains art. W. O. Roberts of the Pine Ridge Agency told her about a pictograph created by Amos Bad Heart Bull (1869-1913), an Oglala Lakota Sioux tribal historian and artist known for his drawings depicting tribal events.

Pictographs, which were quite common among the Plains Indians showed warfare, ceremonials, hunting and daily life of this major Plains Indian tribe during the 19th century.

After the artist's death, the ledger had been given to his sister, Dolly Pretty Cloud. Speaking through an interpreter, Blish spent her summer vacations from teaching in a Detroit high school, studying the art of Pretty Cloud's brother, kept in a trunk on the dirt floor of the one-room reservation cabin.

Blish was analyzing the renderings for her master's thesis under the direction of Hartley Burr Alexander, the noted art historian and chairman of the UNL philosophy department. She completed her thesis at the University of Nebraska in 1928.

In 1927 after receiving two grants from the Carnegie Foundation to finance her fieldwork and with much persuasion, Blish was permitted to "rent" the book for short intervals for a modest annual fee. While she studied and interpreted the drawings, Alexander photographed the 400 priceless pictographs page-by-page and had about 30 enlargements hand-colored.

For her book, Blish was fortunate to be able to interview two of the artist's uncles, He Dog (Sunka Bloka) and Short Bull (Tatanka Ptecela), on the Pine Ridge.

The ledger was returned to Pretty Cloud in 1940, but Burr and Blish are considered to have rescued the pictographs because following Lakota custom, the prized ledger book was buried with Pretty Cloud upon her death in 1947.

These illustrations were collated with Blish's manuscript and published in *Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* in 1967 by the University Of Nebraska Press. The book features 32 color plates and 383 in black and white.

Through her intervention, she was able to relate the transition of these proud Plains warriors into reservation Indians.

Mari Sandoz, the biographer of Bad Heart Bull's cousin, Crazy Horse, encouraged the project from its inception, and wrote the introduction to Blish's book in the last year of her life. She saw the book often while Blish was working on it and the artist's pictures of Chief Crazy Horse, his cousin, are the only surviving likenesses since the chief never allowed himself to be photographed.

Blish's work was given to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City before her death in 1941.

Like every Sioux child, Bad Heart Bull grew up hearing and drawing the stories told by his father and uncles. The Sioux had no written language and depended upon oral histories and corroborating drawings to preserve their traditions and history.

Although Blish believed many of the pictographs were drawn from stories Bad Heart Bull heard from his ancestors and not personally seen, Sandoz said, "Without doubt, the Amos Bad Heart Bull picture history is the most comprehensive, the finest statement as art and as report of the North American Indian so far discovered anywhere."

Although she published other works, *Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* was a winner of the Award of Merit American Associated for State and Local History 1968. ❧

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Mari Sandoz Heritage Society  
1208 Laramie Street  
Alliance, NE 69301.  
marisandoz\_society@windstream.net  
www.marisandoz.org

Non-Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 1359  
Lincoln, NE 68516

## Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Membership Form

Yes! I would like to support the work of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. I have enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Your membership payment/gift is tax deductible according to IRS guidelines. We will provide a receipt for tax purposes. To join, mail this form with your check, payable to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, to Treasurer, Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, 1208 Laramie Avenue, Alliance, NE 69301.

Type of Membership:     Renewal     New  
 Gift Membership     Company Matching Gift (form is enclosed)

Please list my/our name(s) as: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address	City	State	Zip Code
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\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone	E-mail
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If Student, Name of Institution attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Library/Corporation/School contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Address for person giving gift membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check level of support.**     \$40 - Family/Library  
 \$10 - Student     \$100 - Corporations/Schools  
 \$30 - Individual     \$200-\$10,000 - Patron Level