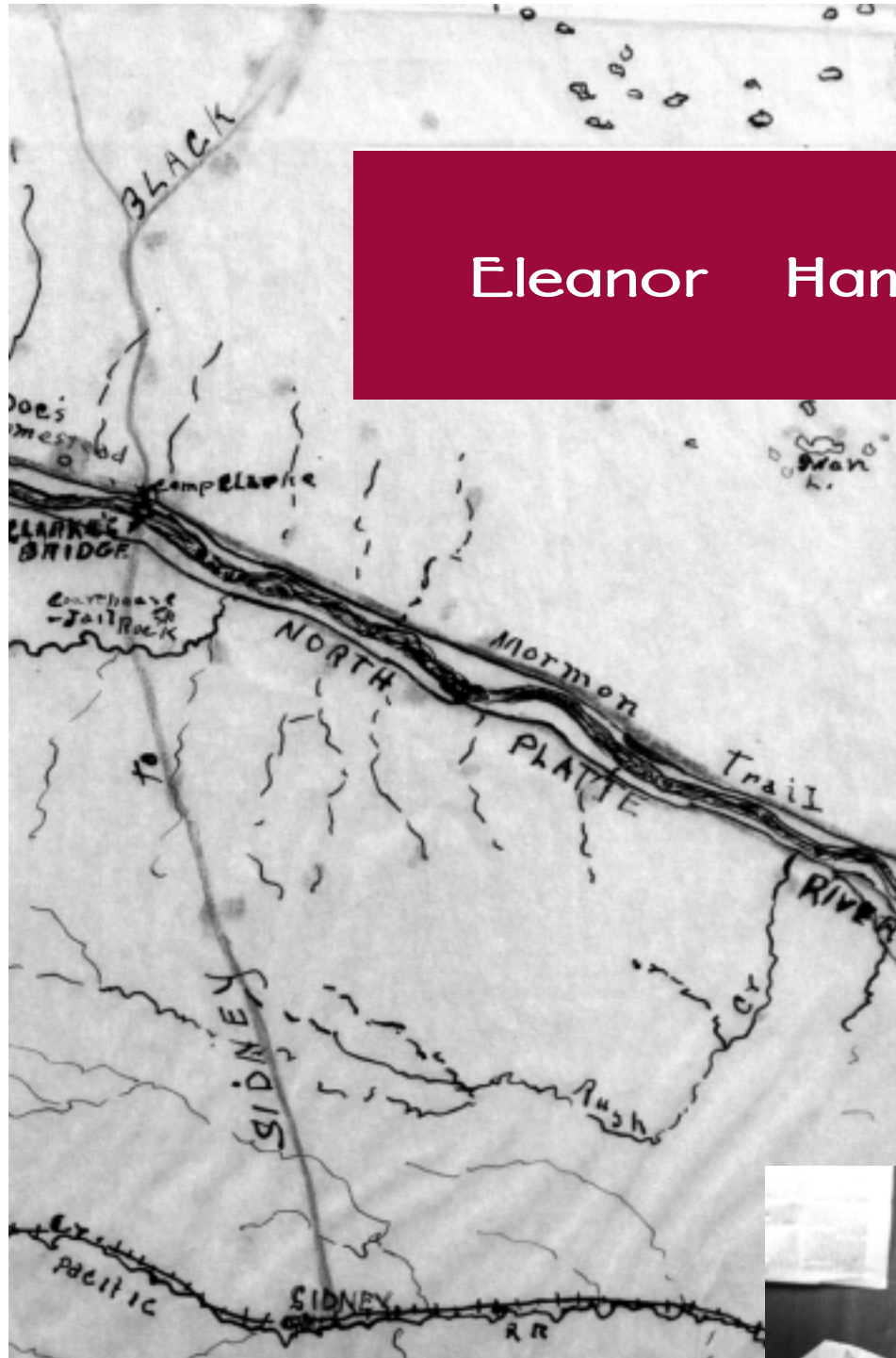


Eleanor Hamilton's Special Connection to a Special "Treasure"



The map of the Cheyenne Indian Territories and the picture of Mari Sandoz are from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Archives and Special Collections.



One donor to the "Saving Our Treasures" campaign has a special connection to the maps drawn by Mari Sandoz. Eleanor (Pifer) Hamilton graduated from UNL in 1958 and is the daughter of Caroline Sandoz Pifer, sister to Mari Sandoz. Eleanor was very enthusiastic to support the campaign and help preserve her aunt's creative and historical legacy.

"Her maps are very important to preserve. They are more than our family's heritage. Each map shows the history of the Midwest and its peoples. They are a legacy to Nebraska," Eleanor Hamilton states.

During a telephone conversation Eleanor Hamilton reminisced about the expeditions she took with her Aunt Mari in Cherry County Nebraska. "Aunt Mari lived in New York City and would travel out to Nebraska for 2 or 3 days at a time to do research for one of her books. Mother and Dad drove her around a lot to find things."

She shared memories of a time when Mari Sandoz was doing research for her book, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and visited Eleanor's family in Gordon, Nebraska. It was summer because Eleanor wasn't in school at the time. Mari was looking for evidence that the Cheyenne Indians had passed through that part of Nebraska to return to their ancestral home in Montana and in particular the valley where the Indians stayed the winter.

determined that the Indians spent the winter at Lost Chokecherry Valley (#36 on the map in the book *Cheyenne Autumn*). This beautiful valley with the big lake borders the Pifer ranch. I have sat on my horse on the high hills overlooking this valley and tried to visualize the winter of 1878-1879."



Eleanor Hamilton with her Arabian stallion Crown Muse

Going on these expeditions had a profound effect on Eleanor. "Mari was a superb storyteller. She could make up stories and keep you spellbound." Eleanor's aunt also gave her an appreciation for history and historical places. "Long after my aunt passed away and her book, *The Battle of Little Bighorn* was published, every time I walk that battle field I feel something that is indescribable."

Eleanor recalled another expedition that she took with both her Aunt Mari and Aunt Flora to Fort Robinson where they spent the day exploring and learning about Crazy Horse. She also described receiving correspondence from her Aunt that would contain 4 or 5 lines of text from her brown ink pen.

Eleanor Hamilton now lives in Minneapolis, MN and is married to Harold Hamilton, who graduated from UNL in 1960 on the GI Bill. They own Micro Control Company, a private company employing 140 people. Eleanor runs the Human Resources department. Her contribution to the Friends campaign ensures that Mari Sandoz's legacy lives on.

