

Get to Know....
PETER OSBORNE
Owner of



Peter Osborne opened Moonstone Bookstore in May 2018 in the former Taylor's Drugstore (also formerly Red Brick Café, Café Amooore, etc) building. Osborne is an independent historian, writer, and lecturer who has worked in the public history field for more than thirty five years. Born in Paterson, New Jersey, he holds a B.A. degree from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Osborne's interests include regional history, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Osborne was the executive director of the Minisink Valley Historical Society in Port Jervis, NY from 1981-2009.

Why did you decide to start a small business in Red Cloud?

I fell in love with Red Cloud and Nebraska when I moved here in 2016 from Easton, Pennsylvania. Having been a historic site administrator, public historian and writer with a long interest in heritage tourism I have watched with great admiration all of the hard work being done by so many to

bring about a renaissance here. I have been coming here for a little more than twenty years so have seen the ups and downs that have happened here. I remember for example in 2008 when I was here I went to the bookstore but a few years later when I came back it was gone.



That said, I am bullish on Red Cloud's future as the success of the Cather Center and the child development center and now the hotel project all look very positive. I can see a time when a hotel visitor who does not want to sit and watch television in his or her room might see my lights on and come over to the bookstore and have a cup of coffee and hopefully buy a book or two and have a conversation.

What is your favorite thing about Red Cloud so far?

I came to Nebraska and Red Cloud in particular because of my love of Willa Cather and her books and the West. I always wondered what it would be like to live here, especially since I am an Easterner and most of my friends and relatives back East just think of this as flyover country. My favorite things about Red Cloud include visiting the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie, which I try to do a couple of days a week to watch the sunset, the programs offered by the Cather Center and Opera House, dinners by the Methodist women (I live in the former Methodist parsonage from the church in Cowles that was moved here), and my friendship with Bob Beardslee. I love living in such a tight-knit community and its friendliness.

Do you have any advice for community leaders to help get new businesses to start up in Red Cloud?

In all honesty it is a challenging environment especially given what is happening all across the Great Plains with these small ag towns. While the larger metropolitan areas are doing well the small towns created in the late nineteenth century are slowly but surely disappearing. In the last few months three businesses have closed which shows how difficult it is to try and make a go of it. There is that saying that the darkest part of the night comes before the dawn and that is where we are here in Red Cloud

What are some of your favorite businesses to shop at in Red Cloud? Why?

I loved Lizzy's and had coffee regularly there and miss seeing Tiffany. Love On The Brix and was partly inspired by what they did to do what I am doing. The Cather Center's gift shop is fabulous, lots of great things to buy. Love to get my hair cut at Guys and Gals, eat at The Palace and Fat Fox's. And go food shopping at the Hometown Market.

What do you wish everyone knew about Moonstone Bookstore and Emporium?

We have a great collection of books that are owned by Dr. Amy Springer who also owns the historic 1913 building it is located in. I have been bringing books from my collection to the store as well. We have the famous Beardslee kolaches which are a big hit (created by Bob Beardslee) and we have begun to offer regularly scheduled programming which is going to be expanded in the coming months to include readings, lectures, music and other events. We hope to serve as a gathering place to encourage conversations and promote our region, its history and cultural activities.



If you could have a superpower what would it be and why?

I would love to be able to talk history with George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt because I have written about them. There are also other historical figures that I have written about and would love to find out if I got the stories right!

Do you have any hobbies or interests you'd like to share?

I love to hike when I have the chance, and kayak but unlike the East which has lots of rivers to kayak on, there is not much here in south central Nebraska. I have been working on my family genealogy for many years, it is now hundreds of

pages. Also love to travel, especially cross-country trips which I have done eight times and experience our great land. And, when I get a chance, to read.

Do you have any pets?

No, although I love my sister's dogs. Until now I have been traveling a lot and having a pet was not practical. However, that said, I would love to have a golden Labrador retriever someday.



What would your high school teachers or guidance counselor say about you if we asked?

What the heck is he doing in Nebraska? He was such a Jersey boy.

What are you most proud of?

Having lived a life that was well lived and having been in public service and public life for a number of decades. The books I have written have become important resources for the historic sites we have worked at and I have been to archives where people are reading my books and am thrilled to death. Am proud of my son and what he has done with his life, my step-children and the relationship I had with my late wife Janis. We were together for almost thirty years.

Do you have a mantra or mission statement you live by?

I have several, that was a bad question to ask, because I could go on and on:

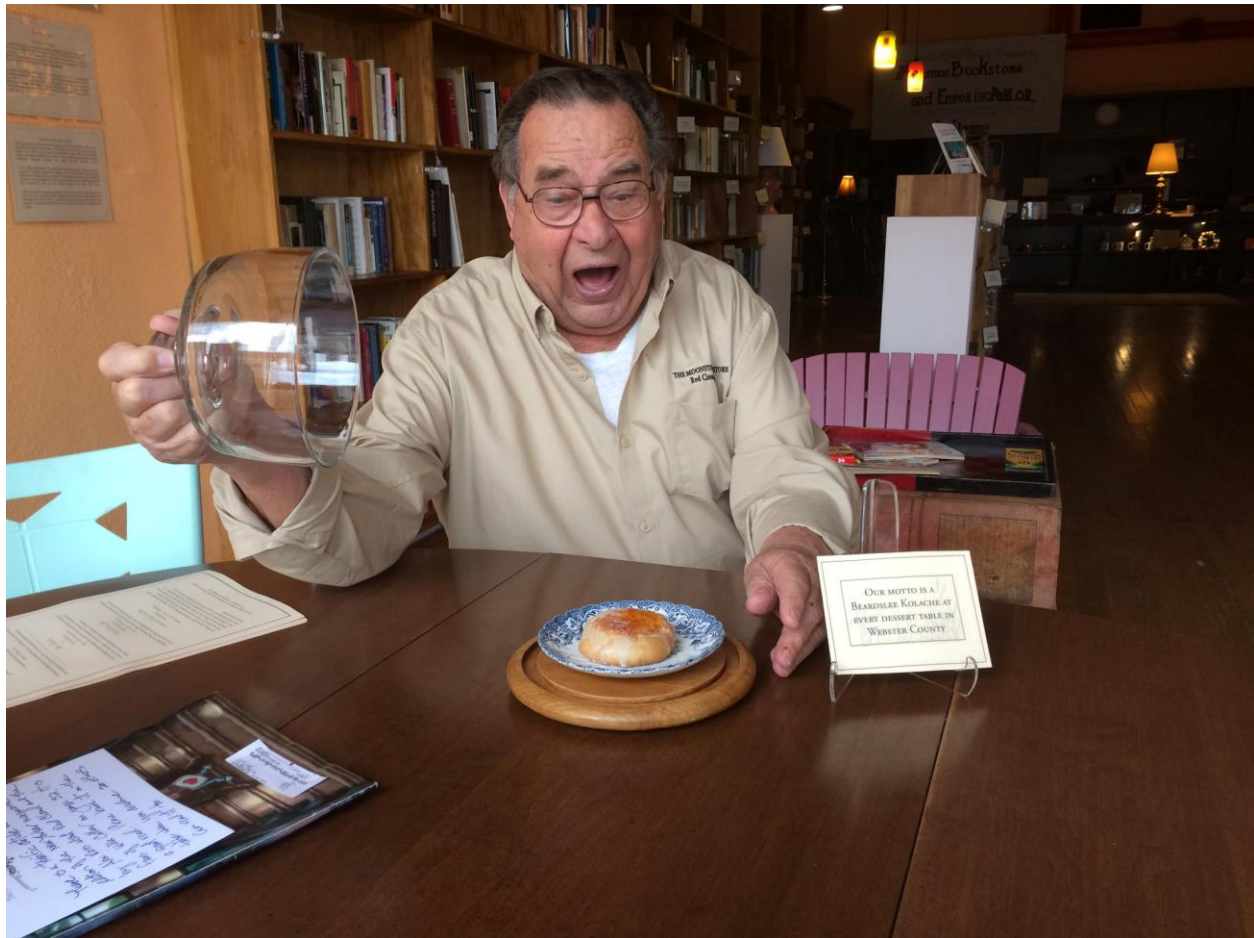
The Way Will Come from the Quakers

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of thing occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have

dreamed would have come his way. from W. H. Murray, Leader of the Scottish Himalayan Expedition

Seek the higher elevations – Reverend Richard Avery

You can only step into the river once, an opportunity lost is an opportunity lost forever – from ancient Chinese proverb



What historical figure or celebrity would you most like to have dinner with? Why?

I would like to have a big dinner, the notion of just one person would not work for me. Jesus, Ghandi, Kahil Gibran, Mohammed, Buddha, and Confucius. What a great conversation that would be and how much fun would it be to

talk to these men who have inspired billions over the millennia. But then I would also want Eleanor Roosevelt, Willa Cather, the Delaney sisters and my late mother Barbara who would get a kick out of meeting all these luminaries. Plus, it would have to be a long dinner, many courses, because the conversations would be wide ranging and deep.

The meal would be guided by Mrs. Roosevelt who said: *Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.* Go Mrs. Roosevelt.

That is how my dinner would go and because there were so many questions raised we would have to have a follow up dinner.

Do you have any advice for someone looking to relocate to rural Nebraska?

If you are an Easterner realize that on your first day or so here you will feel like you were in a foreign land but the welcome that you will receive will make you feel right at home. Then, fall in love with the place and its people and you will realize that you made the right decision as I have.

What is your favorite song and/or recording artist?

John Denver - Poems, Prayers and Promises
Garrison Keillor and Prairie Home Companion

Favorite Movies – Under the Tuscan Sun and The River Runs Through It

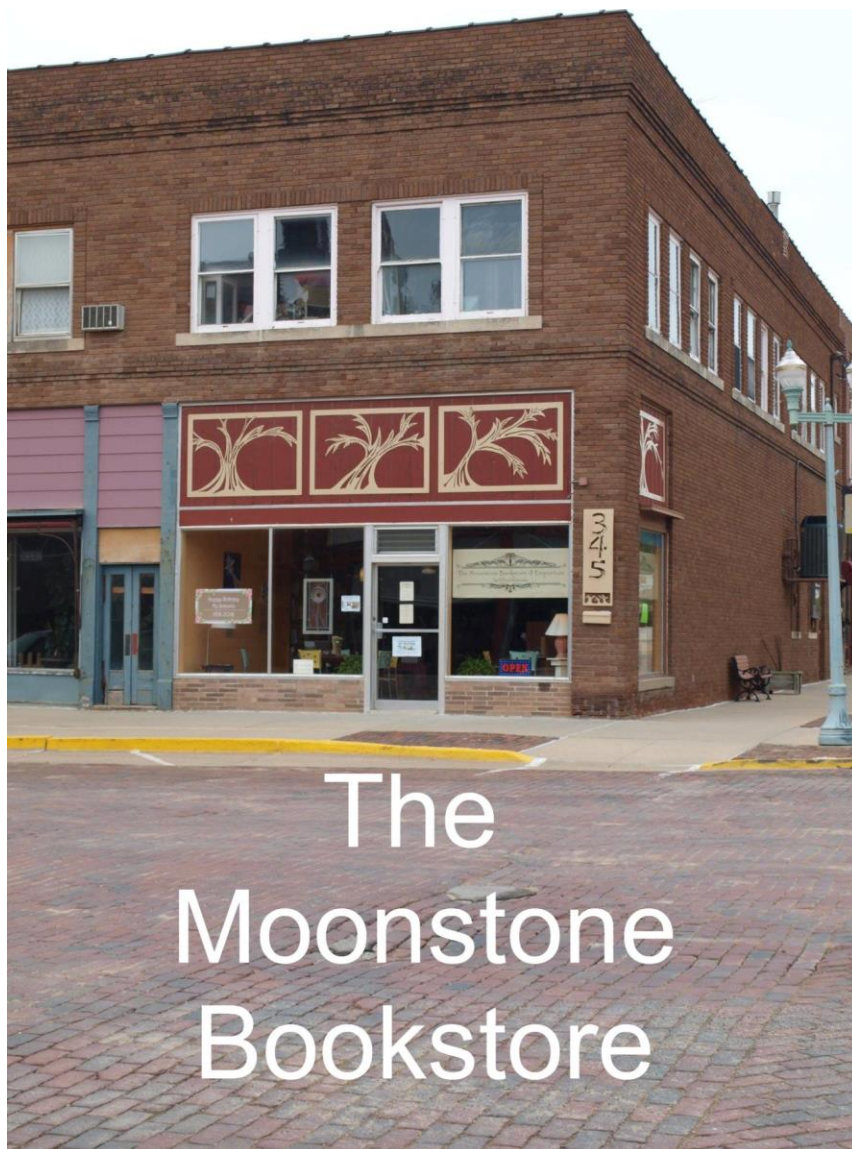
Who is your favorite writer?

A River Runs Through It - Norman McClean, *My Antonia* and *The Bohemian Girl* by Willa Cather, of course

Roger Housden's books whose books on poetry are wonderful

Walden by Henry David Thoreau

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Album



What is your dream vacation?

Following the trail of Lewis and Clark from Philadelphia to the Pacific and back, something I have done once but would do again in a heartbeat. Next, to spend a long vacation in Montana where my mother's family's roots are. Nothing like the Montana Rockies and hiking the Natchez Trail and following the footsteps of Lewis and Clark. Yellowstone, the Beartooth Mountains and Route 212 are all on the list as well as visiting Helena. And then a week on the Jersey shore with the hordes, the sand, the noise and Snooky.

What's your favorite place to visit in Nebraska?

So far I would have to say Lincoln because of all of the great architecture, cultural activities, museums, UNL, the Sheldon Art Museum and the Haymarket section. That said, I am looking forward to exploring northern Nebraska in the future and going to the Marie Sandoz center there.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life? Explain why.

The two main women in my life, my late mother Barbara and my late wife Janis. Both were strong women, trend-setters in their lives, ahead of the arc of history and travelers, who had a profound impact on my life and who sadly both met grim endings.

They both blessed me deeply and were wonderful and talented people to be inspired by. We all traveled across the country together and had an ever-expanding desire for new

knowledge and new experiences. Janis was a fabulous writer and editor and winner of various awards for her weekly columns of her newspaper. She introduced me to Willa Cather thirty plus years ago because she knew of my love of the West. Our careers in public life were very intertwined and our interests in bettering the community were also tied together.

There is a saying I keep in my mind when thinking about my love for both of them and it is: That which abides. And, they continue to abide.

Contact Info

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The Moonstone Bookstore & Emporium is located at 345 N. Webster St.

Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 9am to 6pm; Saturday 9am-9pm



: facebook.com/TheMoonstoneBookstore

Learn more about the store, special events, and the building itself by visiting Peter's website:

www.themoonstonebookstore.com

Learn more about Peter and his other endeavors by visiting this website:

<http://www.wildhorsecreekcompany.com/>