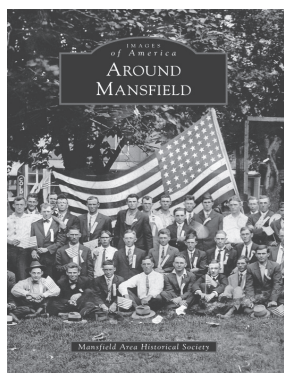


Laura Wilder of Mansfield
by
William Anderson



Around Mansfield
by
The Mansfield
Historical Society

New Books

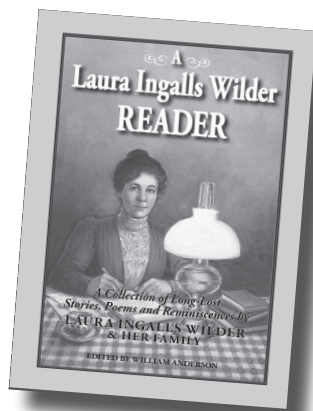
Laura Wilder of Mansfield by William Anderson was the first actual biography ever written on Laura Ingalls Wilder. It has been out of print for many years. Using the same title, Anderson has totally rewritten the book with a focus on the lives of Almanzo and Laura in their adopted hometown. Here are hitherto unpublished facts, anecdotes and stories about the Wilders who were “just plain folks” in their community. The new edition includes many unpublished photos and material which Anderson says, “was too detailed to be included in my Harper Collins books ... the editor’s blue pencil would have slashed out much of this!”

\$5.95 from the Museum
bookstore + \$2.00 shipping

Another reprint just issued is **A Laura Ingalls Wilder Reader**, formerly **The Little House Reader**. The book was dropped by Harper Collins, and seems too good to be lost, as it includes many

rare writings by the Ingalls-Wilder families, Laura’s poetry, and many choice historic photos. New jacket art by Missouri author-illustrator Cheryl Harness seems to catch the essence of Laura as a beginning author.

\$12.95 from the Museum
bookstore + \$3.00 shipping



A Laura Ingalls Wilder Reader
by William Anderson

The ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW

Laura Ingalls Wilder – Rose Wilder Lane Home Association, Mansfield, Missouri 65704 Spring 2013

“Little House” Books Create Long-Lasting Memories

(Article based on Dave Bakke’s feature story in the Springfield, IL State Journal)



How many millions of American children were exposed to the American pioneer tales of the Ingalls and Wilder families can never actually be known, but the teachers who presented these books to their students made a lasting impact. For 25 years Carlinville, Illinois students listened to their teacher, Janet Burns, read the books aloud.

The reading sessions remain an indelible memory to former students, now middle-aged. “I remember looking forward to lunch time and recess, coming back in, everyone settling down and waiting for the next chapter,” says one of Ms. Burns’ pupils. Another says, “It was an absolute joy with which this special teacher introduced us to the “Little House” series.”

Many of the students now have the books in their own homes, and have trekked to the mid-west homes of the book characters.

Teacher Janet Burns remarks, “I read those books to my classes for 25 years.

That’s what they remember. Do you think they remember social studies? Math? No!” Ms. Burns went on to present Wilder programs to schools throughout Illinois. This summer, one of her former students, Peggy Garrison, visited the Wilder Home and Museum in Mansfield. Peggy noticed that the museum is planning to build a new facility. And in the current museum, a metal tree exists, with leaves indicating donations.

Back in Carlinville, Peggy used facebook to suggest that former students band together to contribute \$200 to purchase a leaf to honor their third grade teacher. More than \$200 was contributed, purchasing a leaf for Janet Burns and a membership to the Association.

Ms. Burns learned of her former students’ devotion when she was invited to a Book Club Meeting. Instead of book discussion, she was presented with the news of her name as part of the Wilder Home project. “That night was about celebrating a special place this teacher has in our lives,” said Cheryl Ogden.

Do you have a special person in your life you would like to honor with a donation to the Wilder Home building project? The current tree will be moved to the new archive-museum building. A \$200 donation ensures your name, your group, business, or honoree to appear on a leaf of this important tree.



WILDER HOME ASSOCIATION BECOME A MEMBER!

The Wilder Home Association is accepting contributions in the form of annual and lifetime memberships to the association. The Wilder Home Association is a not-for-profit organization with a 501-C-3 classification, and your gift is a charitable contribution. You are welcome to contribute online, or feel free to contact us.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

These levels of membership entitle bearer to a membership card, free admission on regular Home & Museum tours and 10% discount on purchases over \$10.00 in the Little House Bookstore: • Student \$25.00 • Individual \$50.00 • Supporter \$100.00

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

• SPONSOR: \$500.00 Membership entitles bearer to all benefits of annual membership, plus voting privileges in person or by proxy, at yearly association meetings. • PATRON: \$1,000.00 Membership entitles bearer to all the above benefits, plus a brick with member’s name to be placed outside the new museum. • BENEFACTOR: \$5,000.00 Membership entitles bearer to all the above benefits plus, member’s name to be placed on a permanent plaque inside the new museum.

Laura Ingalls Wilder - Rose Wilder Lane
HOME & MUSEUM
3068 Highway A
Mansfield, MO 65704
www.laurawilderhome.com





News from the Home & Museum

A heartfelt thanks to the group of “Laura’s Angels” who are generous with their time and labor in performing many needed tasks around the Home and Museum throughout the year! You are the best! ... **Opening Day** this year was March 1, and we must institute a raise in admission prices. Accounting has shown that the cost of ushering each person through the site is \$13 per. With increased costs of maintenance we can no longer operate at this deficit. The new admission price of \$10 per adult and \$8 per child includes guided tours of the two homes, and unlimited browsing in the museum and on the grounds. The Walking Path from the Museum grounds to the Rock House is temporarily closed due to erosion. It is hoped to be back in shape early in the season. It is also expected that ground-breaking for the new museum-archive will happen this spring. This is a fitting year to take on the new challenge, a century after the Wilders finished the Rocky Ridge Farmhouse. What a great way to start Century II!

Wilder Day on September 15 soldiered on, despite rainy weather; 466 people braved the weather to attend events at the Wilder Home. David Scrivener again played Pa’s fiddle, with the program held in a crowded video room. The Ozark Mountain Players performed and local craftspersons demonstrated in the Wilder parlor. Dulcimer music and music played on the Wilder organ was a part of the day. Special guest was Charlotte Stewart, who played “Miss Beadle” on the “Little House” television program; she signed autographs and visited with our guests.

Little House site tours, now in their 12th season of operation, is currently taking reservations for the 2013 summer tours to various Wilder sites. Check out their

website www.lhsitetours.homestead.com for details.

Two longtime employees of the Wilder Home have recently retired: Judy Cantrell and Karen Amundsen. Thanks to both of them for their service, and everyone wishes them a happy retirement.

Has everyone seen the widespread publicity (in daily papers; NPR radio broadcast) regarding research conducted by the University of Michigan Pediatric Division on the cause of Mary Ingalls’ blindness? Google the topic if you haven’t. There are many theories of the cause of her blindness, and it is generally believed that Laura cited scarlet fever for a simple and understandable cause in her books geared for children.

Museum director Kathleen Forte and her husband Sal celebrated their 60th anniversary; a celebration was held by the Wilder Home employees. Kathleen used the Wilder books in her teaching, and recalls meeting Laura on one of the local school visits. Also, Director Jean Coday did a 30 minute interview on Ozark Public Television about the history of the Wilder Home and future plans for the site. It can still be viewed at: <http://video.optv.orgvdeo/2312545694>.

Antiques Road Show will include artist Harvey Dunn and Laura Ingalls Wilder in their broadcast airing in late April or early May, depending on your locale. The segment was filmed in Rapid City and guests are Robert and Phyllis Bell from De Smet, whose family had close connections with Wilder and Dunn. Heritage Auctions of Dallas will resume auctioning off **Garth Williams** original art this fall. The lot will contain Garth’s drawings from Little Town on the Prairie. The Wilder Home was fortunate in obtaining art from Farmer Boy, which will mesh well with the original manuscript in our possession. Board member William Anderson will include Wilder in his sessions at the **Children’s Literature Festival at Central Missouri University**

on March 16-17, and at International Reading Association conference in Greeley, CO February 5-8, 2014.

Check out the new website www.lauraingallswilderhome.com. We are also now on **facebook**. Looking forward to welcoming you at this historic site during the coming season!

The Board of Directors and Employees of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association

Historic Photo

This photograph of Laura Ingalls Wilder in the Rocky Ridge parlor was made for a feature article in the Springfield News and Leader in the spring of 1949. A year later, another article on Mrs. Wilder’s books appeared in the July 4, 1950 issue of the St. Louis Globe and Democrat, penned by Lucile Morris, a friend of Laura and Rose. The photo was re-used. Unfortunately, the original print has vanished, but this little-known photo of Laura at age 82 is reproduced from a clipping of the St. Louis article.



Ready for its centennial: the Wilder home is freshly painted. The house was completed in 1913, just one hundred years ago.

Tree Maintenance on the Wilder Property

We know that Almanzo and Laura spent their first winter clearing trees and brush on their new land in 1894-1895, using an ax and a crosscut saw. This December, the same process was repeated with the help of high-tech work by Ryan’s Tree Service of Springfield, Missouri. The Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Community Forestry Council, along with the U.S. Forestry Service banded together to fund a TRIM award to the Wilder Home. TRIM stands for “Tree Resource Improvement & Maintenance Grant”.

The project was a long needed job here on the heavily treed grounds near the Wilder Home. Appearance, conservation, and visitor safety all are impacted.

Dr. Susan Essman of Springfield volunteered her service coordinating this project for the Wilder Home Association, and applied for grant opportunities. “We received \$9876 out of a maximum \$10,000 grant,” reports Dr. Essman. “Ryan Tree Service essentially agreed to work at their cost. Six men worked for four days, starting with the most dangerous and hazardous limb removal, and worked down our priority list.”

Disposal of the trimmings was designated in useful ways. Exceptional wood will be incorporated in the planned-for museum-archive building. Mulch is stored away for use on the grounds. Other wood was given away to those willing to pick it up for use as firewood.

What a cycle! The Wilders cleared their property to create open farmland. So many years later, the modern tree trimming project was accomplished to maintain and beautify the historic Wilder farm, Rocky Ridge.



top: Mr. Shane Rice, Missouri Department of Conservation, “dating” the cedar tree for visiting students. below: Tree maintenance project.



“Pioneer Girl” to be Published in 2013

Many Wilder admirers know that before Laura started the classic “Little House” books she composed an apprentice book-length autobiography, written in the first person. She wrote this book on lined tablets, while living at the Rock House, circa 1929-30. The Association owns the original manuscript, now carefully preserved in a fireproof vault. The manuscript was microfilmed in the 1980s.

An earlier attempt to publish an annotated version of this book was first accepted, and then rejected by Harper Collins. The final decision was based on a fear that the book would hurt the readership of the nine “Little House” books, and dismay the already established audience.

Pioneer Girl lacks the storytelling power and charm which developed in the ensuing volumes. It is, however, a fascinating look at an author’s developing writing prowess, and included incidents which were not used in the “Little House” books. Its value as an historic document is great.

Pamela Smith Hill has edited and annotated Wilder’s words, providing a rich commentary to accompany the autobiography. She has done extensive research, including time spent at Mansfield, where she studied the original penciled tablets. The South Dakota State Historical Society Press is publisher, under direction of Nancy Tystad Koupal. Koupal is a lifelong Wilder scholar and reader.

Copies of the new book can be purchased from the Museum Shop, direct from the same place where Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote her first — and long unpublished — book.

New Mansfield History Book

The Wilders are well documented here at the Home and Museum, and their lives on Rocky Ridge Farm are chronicled with great detail. But what of the life they shared with their community of Mansfield, just a mile away? We know that Almanzo and Laura were very active in their early years, in community betterment, clubs, church, social life and agricultural improvement. Now we can experience that small town life in the new book **Around Mansfield**.

Produced by the Mansfield Historical Society from their archives, and the generosity of local people, the book truly re-creates Mansfield during the late 1800s through the 20th century. The book is published by Arcadia, which specializes in local history productions of this sort.

You may order your copy of this significant historical book directly from the Wilder Home and Museum. Price: \$21.95 + \$4.00 shipping. And when you visit Mansfield, be sure to include a stop at the Mansfield Historical Society on the town square.