



*The Selected Letters of
Laura Ingalls Wilder*
by William Anderson

First edition copies will be available from the
Musuem Store around March 8, 2016.

New Book for 2016

**THE SELECTED LETTERS OF
LAURA INGALLS WILDER**
(416 pp. \$26.99) by William Anderson

Available for the first time and collected in one volume are the letters of one of America's most beloved authors, Laura Ingalls Wilder; a treasure trove that offers new and unexpected understanding of her life and work.

"The Selected Letters of Laura Ingalls Wilder" is a vibrant, deeply personal portrait of this revered American author, illuminating her thoughts, travels, philosophies, writing career, and dealings with family, friends, and fans as never before.

This is a fresh look at the adult life of the author in her own words. Gathered from museums and archives and personal collections, the letters span over sixty years of Wilder's life, from 1894–1956 and shed new light on Wilder's day-to-day life. Here we see her as a businesswoman and author — including her beloved *Little House* books, her legend-

ary editor, Ursula Nordstrom, and her readers — as a wife, and as a friend. In her letters, Wilder shares her philosophies, political opinions, and reminiscences of life as a frontier child. Also included are letters to her daughter, writer Rose Wilder Lane, who filled a silent role as editor and collaborator while the famous Little House books were being written.

Wilder biographer William Anderson collected and researched references throughout these letters and the result is an invaluable historical collection, tracing Wilder's life through the final days of covered wagon travel, her life as a farm woman, a country journalist, Depression-era author, and years of fame as the writer of the Little House books. This collection is a sequel to her beloved books, and a snapshot into twentieth-century living.

Laura Ingalls Wilder - Rose Wilder Lane
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The ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW

Laura Ingalls Wilder - Rose Wilder Lane Home Association, Mansfield, Missouri 65704

Winter 2015-16

New Library/Museum Building! ☺

Dear Friends,

Our construction project is nearly done! The Wilder Library/Museum building is taking on the shape of a barn, complete with a weathervane. Thanks to each one of you for your generous contributions; it would not have been possible without your help. We consider our donors to be partners and hope you feel great pride in this Museum and will have a lifelong interest in the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association, its projects, and activities.

With the help of USDA we have adequate money to provide the entire building with first rate furnishings and fixtures. A museum designer is on board and we are anticipating a beautifully designed gallery to display Wilder artifacts, and present an accurate view of the life and legacy of Laura Ingalls Wilder.

We have entered into a "crowd funding" operation that we hope will produce the funds to pave our parking lot and surface walking trails that will connect the new Museum to the historic farm home and the Rock House.

To make these walking paths a reality, you can show your support by making a contribution right here at:

www.indiegogo.com/projects/laura-ingalls-wilder-pathways-to-the-past/x/8114987#/

View a video explaining the project at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt4BV6idFdl

Feel free to forward this news to anyone interested in helping with our fundraising.

Sincerely, Jean Coday



Ground-breaking Day





News from Rocky Ridge

UPCOMING EVENT DATES FOR ROCKY RIDGE FARM

- **2015 Closing:** November 15, 2015
(Mail orders and phone orders taken and filled until mid-December)
- **Christmas at Rocky Ridge Farm**
this year's theme is "*A Farmer Boy Christmas*" **December 4th, 5-8pm**
- Laura's birthday, February 7, 1867
- Almanzo's birthday, February 13, 1857
- **2016 Opening** **March 1, 2016**
- **Closed Easter Sunday**
- Future Teachers Group meets at Rocky Ridge Farm **April 8, 2016**
- Laura Ingalls Wilder inducted into Missouri State University Public Affairs Hall of Fame **April 14, 2016**
- **Grand Opening Celebration** for the new Museum **April 22, 2016**

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Leona Writes Laura, Laura Writes Leona

Some "baby boomers" are in a mode of deciding what to do with Mom and Dad's precious belongings, some of which are letters from Laura Ingalls Wilder, received by boys and girls who read her books in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. The Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association recently received such a donation from the family of Leona R. Cherner, facilitated by her daughter Amy Roth.

In 1942, Leona Roth of Birmingham, Alabama was vexed. She had waited five months to read the final Little House book, *These Happy Golden Years*. The book was delayed for several reasons, including wartime edicts affecting manufacturing and printing, and paper used during the escalating World War II. Leona wrote to Harper & Brothers, demanding to know why the book was not appearing in a more timely manner. "I wish to know the reason..." she asked in her letter. Harper responded, explaining the wartime restrictions. When the book was published in 1943, Leona wrote again, this time to the author herself. Laura's response was written on December 11, 1943:

My Dear Leona,

You are right, The "Little House books" tell the story of my life until I was eighteen years old. I am glad you like them.

Almanzo is sitting in a sunny window in the next room. He is very well. We are old folks now and have been married fifty-eight years. I still have my wedding ring.

Sister Carrie and I are the only ones of my family now living. Her home is in the Black Hills of South Dakota. She is a widow with no children. Grace married but had no children. We have only one, our daughter Rose Wilder Lane of whom you may have heard or have read some of her books.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am

*Yours sincerely,
Laura Ingalls Wilder*

Leona's daughter Amy tells us: "My mother cherished this letter and kept it until her death at the age of 80. I was raised on the *Little House* books and own a complete set. Laura's stories had a lasting impression on me, as they have for millions of others." The letter is indeed a treasure, and a valued donation to the Museum. Sincere thanks to the Cherner family!

Do you have a letter or artifact directly related to Laura, Almanzo or Rose? If so, our new facility is a perfect place for its proper preservation!



Two interior areas of the new Museum under construction ...

Big Plans for Big Woods on Rocky Ridge

by Dr. Susan Essman

(Susan Essman has served on the Board of Directors for several years. Her college-aged son Hank has been a tour guide for two summer seasons).

The Wilders were early conservationists and stewards of their acres on Rocky Ridge Farm. Many of the trees they originally knew on the farm have been victims of wind and ice storms, and among future plans are to re-forest the farm. Almanzo did not allow hunting on his land, and once wrote: "the quail were thick in the orchard and used to wallow and dust themselves like chickens in the fine dust."

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has studied both our forested areas and open fields at the Wilder Home and has developed a long term stewardship plan. Most of our fields and forested areas are overgrown with invasive plants and have few desirable trees. With the help of the MDC and a 10 year program we hope to slowly get rid of unwanted undergrowth and plant or cultivate more Missouri native trees such as oak and pine. Our overall goal is to manage for quality trees while maintaining food source and cover for deer and turkey. In many of our open fields our goal is to convert from fescue to native warm season grasses. Fescue fields are considered "biological deserts" for Missouri wild life. These native grasses provide nesting habitat and food sources that fescue doesn't. Warm season grasses have many wildlife benefits to deer and turkey but are particularly beneficial to ground nesting birds like quail, as well as song birds and rabbits. With guidance and funding help from the MDC, the Wilder Home Association hopes to return the wildlife, fields and forest on the farm much closer to the land that Almanzo and Laura loved.



*Almanzo on Rocky Ridge.
He was an early conservationist.*

2ND ANNUAL

Laura Ingalls Wilder Fiddle Off Report

The 2nd Annual Laura Ingalls Wilder Fiddle Off competition was held September 19, 2015 at Rocky Ridge Farm.

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Home, in association with Marriott Music in Ava, Missouri, sponsored the competition that drew contestants from as far as Kentucky and Arkansas.

Splinter Middleton, Branson entertainer, returned this year to be Master of Ceremonies. Cathy Marriott and Vicki Johnston shared score keeping duties. Judges were: William Schull, former President of the Missouri State Ol' Time Fiddler's Association; Clifford Hill, Eldon, Missouri; and Junior Marriott of Marriott Music. The judges looked for tone, difficulty, correct bowing, and overall execution in the 30 contestants as they performed for the crowd.

Taking top honors this year were:

- PeeWee Division: **Tanner Marriott**, Ava, MO
- Junior Division: **Kate Ward**, Kattawa, KY
- Senior Division: **Gary Johnston**, Nevada, MO
- Accompanist: **Anthony Wilson**, Rocheport, MO
- Open Division: **Trustin Baker**, Birch Tree, MO
- Grand Champion Winner: **Cody Marriott**, Ava, MO
(Cody takes home \$800 and a custom-made Bob Berg Buckle)

Junior and Cathy Marriott help organize the Laura Ingalls Wilder Fiddle Off, and we look forward to seeing everyone again next year!



top: Lily Monroe, 12, from Stark City, playing Pa's fiddle; below: Lily and her sister Sophie, 8, along with KSPR 33 anchor Melody Pettitt



Clint Jackson, Museum employee and Fiddle-Off Event Coordinator, and Junior Marriott, Marriott Music, visit with KSPR 33 anchor Melody Pettitt. Pa's original fiddle was carefully transported to the TV Studio and was played on the segment.

