

The ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW

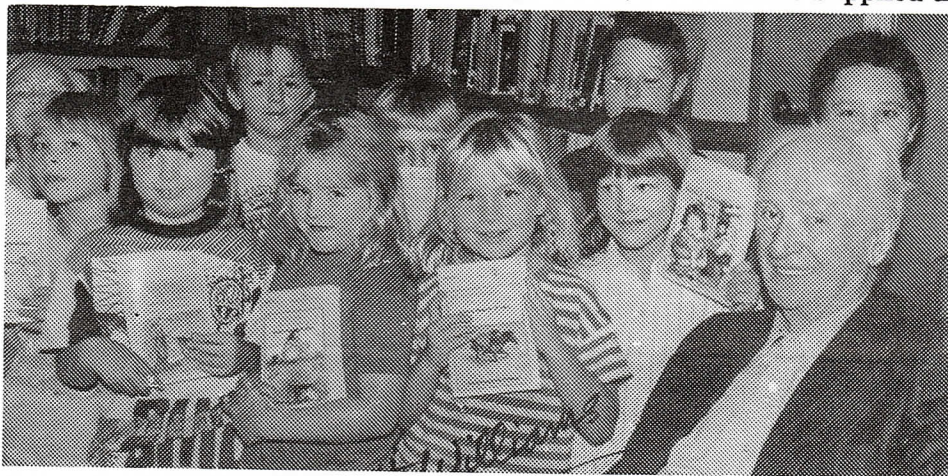
Summer 1996

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

GARTH WILLIAMS, LITTLE HOUSE ILLUSTRATOR, DIES AT 84

Garth Williams, who illustrated all of Laura Ingalls Wilder's books and dozens of others, died May 8 at his home in Guanajuato, Mexico. He had celebrated his 84th birthday the previous month.

Garth was asked to re-illustrate the *Little House* books in the late 1940's, following the success of E. B. White's *Stuart Little*, for which he supplied the



Garth Williams with Mansfield students during his 1991 visit.

whimsical pictures. He at first questioned his ability to illustrate the historical Wilder stories since his previous work was so unlike the pioneer accounts of Midwest living. But Harper and Brothers' Editor Ursula Nordstrom persisted, and send Garth on a fact-finding journey to the Wilder country. After a visit with Rose Wilder Lane, Garth and his family drove west, stopping first at Mansfield during the fall of 1947 to pay a visit to Laura and Almanzo Wilder. "Here I stood with the hero and heroine of Mrs. Wilder's books," he recalled. "What could be more exciting!"

The Wilders answered questions, shared their family photos, and gave him advice on the next leg of his journey, which led him to De Smet.

In 1953, the re-illustrated versions of the *Little House* books appeared to great acclaim. They have continued to be loved and appreciated through the years and helped the books to achieve their classic status.

Through the years, Garth worked in studios in Aspen, Colorado, New York City, San Antonio, Santa Fe and in a fortress-like home he renovated from a former Mexican silver mine. He illustrated books for such authors as Margaret Wise Brown, George Selden, Jack Prelutsky and E. B. White. He was one of the original illustrators of the *Golden Book* series when they were first launched. In addition to creating art, he also wrote his own books, including *The Rabbit's Wedding*.

Garth Williams was no stranger to Missouri. He appeared at children's literature festivals in Warrensburg and Springfield. In 1991 he made a return to Mansfield and drew hundreds of delighted visitors when he appeared at the first annual Rocky Ridge Day, held at the Wilder home. Long lines of autograph seekers dominated his day, with one boy announcing that he, too, was named Garth -- a namesake his parents had chosen.

The illustrator is survived by his wife, Leticia, five daughters and one son. Burial will be in Aspen, Colorado.

CHINA SHEPHERDESS A NEW ADDITION FOR THE SEASON



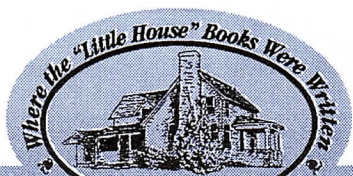
A beautiful replica of the prized figurine which was always a part of the Ingalls home has now been replicated exclusively for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association by artist Cheryl Harness.

Patterned from descriptions in the books and other historical data, the delicate pink, blue and white figure measures 6 1/4 inches tall.

Laura told inquiring readers that since the shepherdess was Ma's, she did not bring it with her to Mansfield, but her sister Carrie was the last member of the family to have it.

Orders will be filled after 8/1/96. Price: \$19.95, plus \$5 shipping & handling.

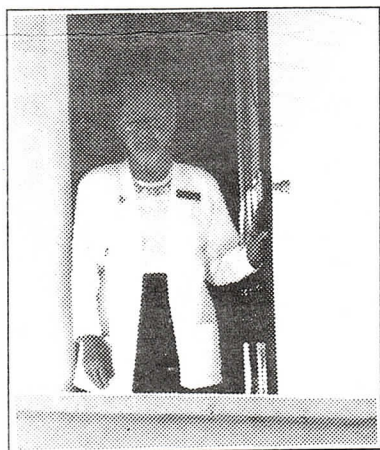




THE WILDER HOME NEWS FROM THE HOME & MUSEUM

MUSEUM SEASON OFF TO A GREAT START

Elva Bogart reported to the Board of Directors that 11,904 visitors toured the Wilder home from the March opening until June 14. Visitors from 50 states and 13 countries have already arrived for a tour. School tours were, as usual a feature of the spring. This year, museum staff has offered story-telling, and demonstrations for the children, including: rag rug making, embroidery, quilt-making, corn-cob dolls, and Laura's Bible verses.



Tour guide Vi Wood is often mistaken for "the real Laura". With her 4'10" stature and white hair, she does resemble Laura Ingalls Wilder, especially for school children!

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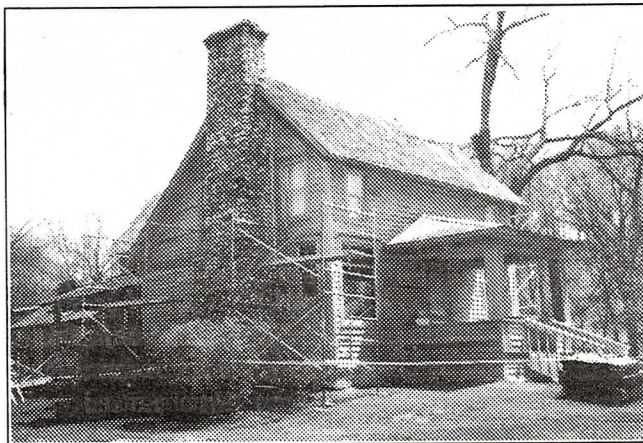
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Check pattern on front page streamer is duplicated from
flyleaves of original Harper & Brothers editions of the
Wilder books and favored by Laura

A FACE LIFT FOR THE WILDER HOME

Early this spring, the historic Wilder home looked as it has not looked in 83 years. The normally white-painted farmhouse was stripped completely



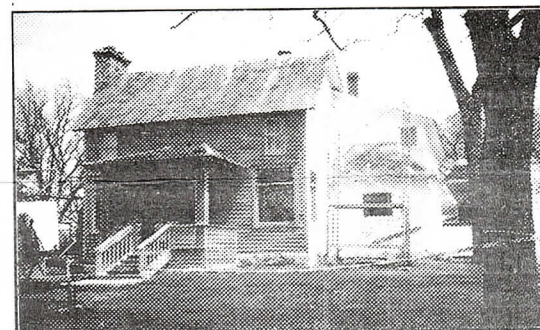
of its many layers of paint and sanded down to the original pine boards. This was a major undertaking, but was needed to repair some of the siding and remove the paint which had taken on a "fish-scale" patina with its many coats of paint.

A stripper was sprayed on the house and then covered with

a chemical paper and plastic. Then, scraping and power spraying with 2500 pounds of water pressure and a 210 degree temperature was completed. Sanding, two coats of primer and two coats of white paint were the next steps. The house now sits snowy white atop its Ozark knoll perch.

Also this spring, old shingles were removed and a new cedar shake roof was added to the Wilder home.

The necessary maintenance of this historic property will help assure the safety and appearance of the home for many years to come.



Cost for the improvements was around \$37,000, with a portion of the needed amount supplied through a grant from the National Park Association.

A special thanks to our tour leaders who carried on inside, despite all of the "ruktion" (Ozark talk), just outside the house!



WILDER INDUCTED INTO MISSOURI WRITERS HALL OF FAME

Laura Ingalls Wilder was inducted into the Missouri Writers' Hall of Fame in ceremonies held at the Highland Hills Country Club of Springfield, Missouri in April. Laura's award was in the posthumous category, with Mark Twain a previous honoree.

Association President Jean Coday accepted the award at a special banquet and responded on behalf of the Association. A reader's theater group performed stories from Laura's books. The award plaque is now on display in the museum.

RUMBLINGS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

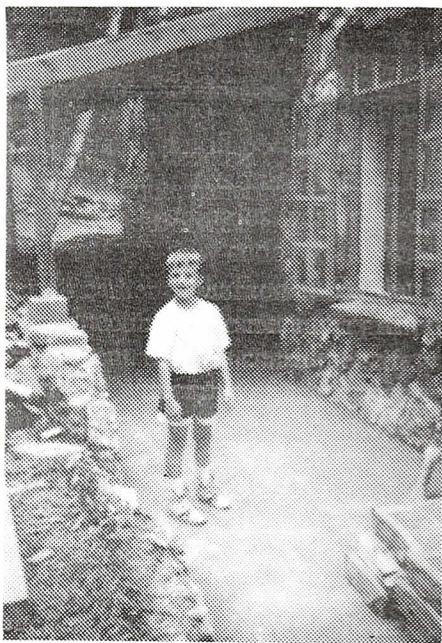
The Wilder rock house, across the ridge from the historic farmhouse has been the scene of much activity through the winter and spring. Slowly, but surely, the house is being returned to its former beauty.

Gaylerd Miller has overseen and performed much of the work on the "other" Wilder home. He reported much of the progress at the June meeting of the Board of Directors. Among the interior projects were:

repairing and replacing plaster, painting, replacement of tile, repair of the wood flooring, chimney repair, work in the bathroom (which fortunately retained the original green tile work!) and wiring to be ready for replacement of the light fixtures. An exciting development was Mr. Miller's discovery of original kitchen cabinets in an outbuilding. There is no doubt of authenticity for the original delivery tag was still attached to the wood. The

Springfield Mill and Lumber Co. tag was hand-addressed to "A. J. Wilder, Mansfield". These cupboards will enable us to restore the kitchen. A search is on for a 1928 Norge refrigerator and a 1928 Westinghouse electric stove on legs.

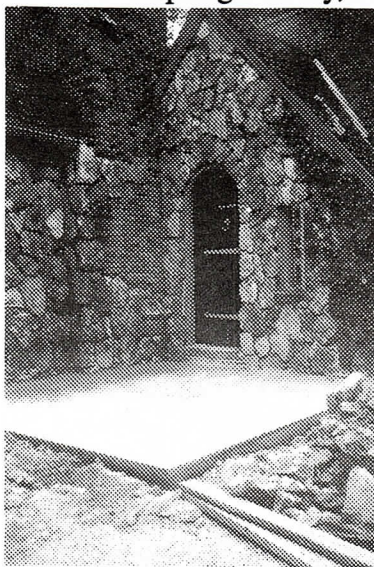
Mr. Miller shared the following thought with the Board, quoted from the Scottish theologian William Barclay: "It frequently happens that the value of a thing lies in the fact that someone has possessed it. In any museum we find quite ordinary things -- clothes, a walking



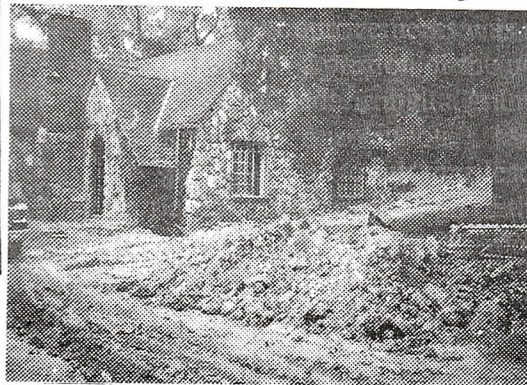
The new back porch and porch floor. The handsome guy is Steven Coday.

stick, a pen, books, pieces of furniture -- which are of value only because they were once possessed by some great person."

Thank you, Gaylerd Miller.



The front porch has been re-bricked. Wayne Decker made a trip to Iowa to secure the correct brick for the project.



Earth moved in the process of keeping rainwater away from the house and excavation for water and electric lines.

ILLUSTRATOR DONATES ART WORK



Missouri artist Cheryl Harness, in addition to designing the prototype for the China Shepherdess, has made two gifts to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association recently. One is a sketch of Laura and Almanzo in front of their newly completed home. Another is a beautiful color painting of the Ingalls family at the time of *By the Shores of Silver Lake*.

Presentation was made at a meeting of the Board of Directors on June 15.

It is planned to develop Cheryl's art into prints and note paper for sale in the Little House Bookstore.

Cheryl's earlier pewter renditions are popular collectibles, on sale in the gift shop at present. She has considered Laura Ingalls Wilder one of her favorite authors since her childhood, and visited the home and museum in its early years of existence.

Among her many books are *Three Young Pilgrims*, *Ghosts in the White House*, *Papa's Christmas Gift* and *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington*.

Cheryl lives in the country near Independence, Missouri, with six pets! She will be a guest here at the Wilder home for Rocky Ridge Day on October 12, autographing and talking about her art and interest in the "Little House" stories.

We are honored to have two of her originals here at the museum.

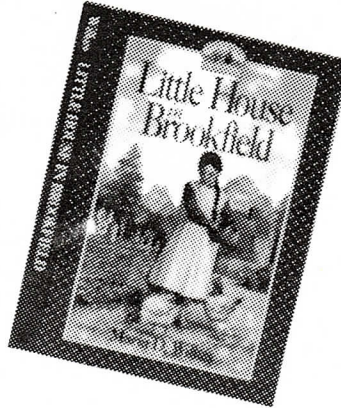
Thank you, Cheryl.



'LITTLE HOUSE IN BROOKFIELD' PUBLISHED

A new series of books launched by Harper Collins is called the "prequels". The first of the series by Maria Wilkes is *Little House in Brookfield*, which relates the life of Caroline Quiner and her family in pioneer Wisconsin. The book is fiction, based on historical research and what is known of the early life of the Quiners in the area surrounding Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Readers can expect the next volume in the "sequel" series, Roger Mac Bride's "Rocky Ridge" books, to appear this fall. *Little Town in the Ozarks* will chronicle the Wilder family move to Mansfield in the late 1890s.



NEW IN THE BOOK SHOP

Among the new items this season in our "Little House Bookstore" are 20/20 replica tablets as used by Laura, the China Shepherdess, the *Laura Ingalls Country Cookbook* and *Little House in Brookfield*. Our new collectible Christmas ornament for 1996 focuses on Plum Creek. Call or write for an updated price list.



YOU ARE INVITED

The Ozark Mountain Players will again present their "Little House Memories" pageant, now in its sixth season. This year's dates are August 23-24, August 30-31, September 6-7, and September 20-21 (Wilder Days). Among the favorite features are a square dance, a live campfire scene, an autograph party and a revival meeting. The play culminates in the arrival of the Wilders in Mansfield in 1894. For further information, write Ozark Mountain Players, P. O. Box 113, Mansfield, MO 65704.

This year's "Rocky Ridge Day" will be held on the grounds of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home and Museum on Saturday, October 12. Plans are being formulated for the day. Please write or call for further information later in the season.

SPREADING THE WILDER STORY

Elva Bogart, director of the Museum staff, has presented a Wilder program several times this spring. She appeared at the Ava Public Library, the Mansfield Wilder School and the Marshfield Public Library. Her audiences are especially interested when Elva mentions that "I knew her". She met Laura Wilder personally in the 1950s.

Board member Jane Decker of Columbia has given Wilder programs for many years throughout the state of Missouri. This spring she presented at the Children's Literature Festival in Branson. She has also presented in Columbia and Hannibal.

Another board member, William Anderson, presented at children's literature festivals in Springfield and Warrensburg, Missouri, the National Council of Teachers of English Convention in San Diego, and the Year-Round School Conference in Salt Lake City. At a special Laura Ingalls Wilder symposium held at Concordia College in St. Paul, he was pleased to meet a granddaughter of Lena, the cousin mentioned in *By the Shores of Silver Lake*.

