

The ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW

Winter 2001

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

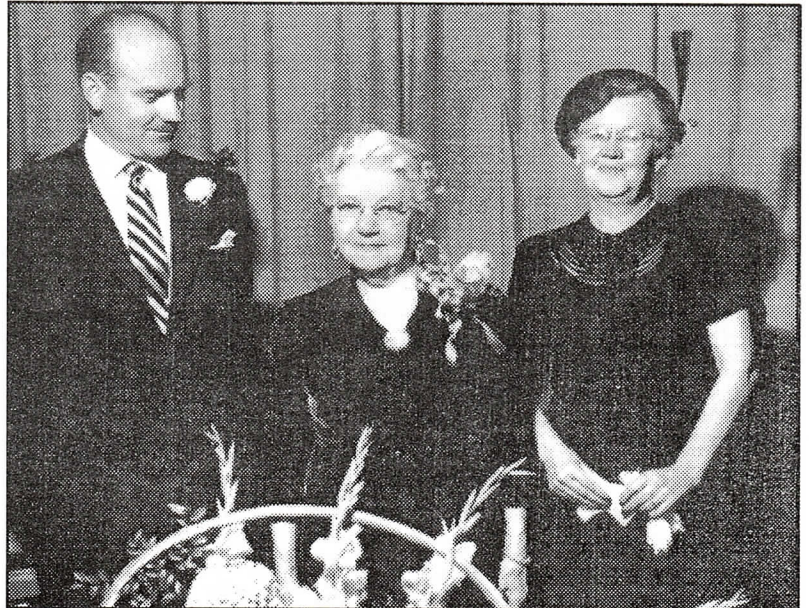
IT'S A HALF-CENTURY FOR MANSFIELD'S LAURA INGALLS WILDER LIBRARY

This fall marks the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of Laura's namesake library in her hometown. The Wright County Librarian, Docia Holland, had a radio show dealing with library programs and news. In the following text, she describes the honor which Laura enjoyed that autumn day a half century ago.

"This is Mrs. Holland, Wright County Librarian, speaking. On September 28, 1951, at the Mansfield High School, a day had been designated as the Laura Ingalls Wilder Day. The Wright County Library and the people of Mansfield wished to honor and pay tribute to this noted author who has lived on her little farm ½ mile east of Mansfield for fifty-seven years. It was here that she wrote her eight books which made her famous. The Mansfield branch of the Wright County Library was named the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library. It is the 3rd to be named for her in the U.S. This is the first dedication she has attended. In this program we heard the dedicatory address given by Paxton P. Price, Missouri State Librarian from Jefferson City. And in the same address he presented the library with a bookshelf to be placed in the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library. The shelf was given, by the Missouri Library Association, as a tribute to her outstanding contribution to children's literature. The Mansfield School children sang greeting to Mrs. Wilder at the beginning of the program. The music was furnished by the Mansfield High School band under the direction of Mr. Ferguson. The invocation was given by Rev. Knight. Mrs. Essa Findley, County Superintendent of Schools, introduced the visiting librarians and the Wright County Library staff after which she gave a sketch of Mrs. Wilder's life and a brief resume of her books. Mrs. Wilder very graciously responded to the honor given her by the speakers and the cheering crowd. The beautiful basket of flowers, directly in front of her, a large basket of gladioli, on the stage added to her charm and beauty. Her dress was of beautiful dark red velvet. She wore an orchid which was given to her by the Wright County Library.

The merchants of Mansfield sponsored the refreshments, under the direction of Jack Bay and Norval Wallen. After the program the crowd was invited to the library where open house was held for the remainder of the day.

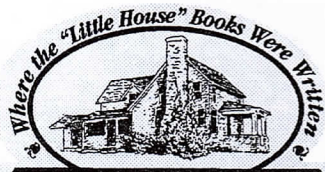
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Paxton Price, state librarian, Laura Ingalls Wilder and Docia Holland.



The basket of flowers re-creates Laura's 1951 bouquet at the Library (basket is the original). A display in the museum focuses on the Library dedication.



THE WILDER HOME

NEWS FROM THE HOME & MUSEUM

WILDER NEWS

This has been a busy year on Rocky Ridge, with over 55,000 people visiting the historic homes and the museum. The restored kitchen in the Wilder home is a project which was much needed. It turned out beautifully, and the many feet who pass through are on sturdy and safe ground now! Linoleum was matched with the original 1956 green and now covers the dining room and bathroom, making a more pleasing appearance.

New employees, Arnold Day and Jim Jackson, have done wonders around the grounds, clearing and cleaning the brush and dead trees away. They have also accomplished a number of much needed jobs around the museum. The Association owns its own truck! Yes, we have grown so much that a utility vehicle was needed and is now in use.

Association president Jean Coday was presented with a gift in recognition for serving nine seasons as volunteer director of the Home and Museum.

Jane Decker, of Columbia, MO has retired from the board of directors. Jane has served the board well over the years, and contributed many ideas and worked on important projects. A

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THE ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW
is published semi-annually by the
Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association
Mansfield, MO 65704
417-924-3626

Subscriptions are guaranteed free of charge to members of the Association

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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

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ROCKY RIDGE DAY FEATURES DOC BAKER

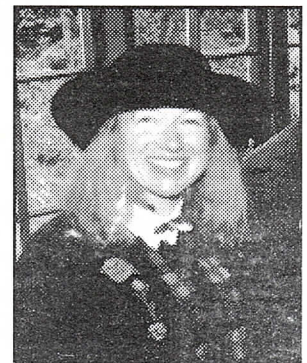


Kevin Hagen poses with replica of a frontier buggy on display during Rocky Ridge Day.

Kevin Hagen delighted Wilder Home visitors during the annual Rocky Ridge Day, 2001. Despite clouds and drizzle, hundreds of people arrived at the historic site to see the home and museum and meet the man they know as 'Doc Baker.'

Hagen played the fictional character of the affable country doctor for a decade on the 'Little House on the Prairie' television series. At his keynote presentation, he drew chuckles and guffaws as he presented doctoring in the 1800's. Later, the actor signed autographs and posed for visitors' cameras.

Renee Graef made her second visit to Rocky Ridge Day, along with



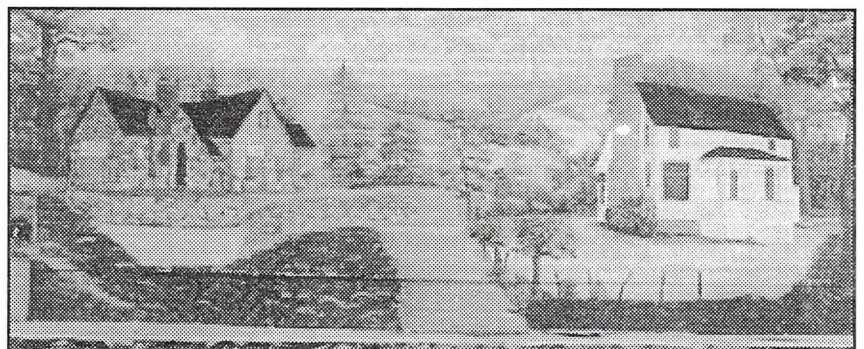
Renee Graef

her two children. Renee's art has become known in a new generation of Little House books and adaptations. Her new title, SANTA COMES TO LITTLE HOUSE, is a beautiful rendition of the beloved Wilder story "Mr. Edwards Meets Santa Claus."

Several members of the Ozark Mountain Players, presented vignettes from the annual Mansfield production of 'Little House Memories.' And the annual pleasure of hearing Pa's fiddle, played again this year by David Scrivner of Mansfield, was again a highlight of the event.



LOCAL ARTISTS PAINT MURAL IN MANSFIELD



Rita Fancher of Norwood, MO, along with help from Jeanne Shackelford, Janet Turney and Beverly Pratt-Shirley, designed and painted this mural in Mansfield over the summer and early fall.

The building which houses the China Garden, located on the Northeast side of the square, was chosen as the location for a mural which depicts several of Mansfield's area landmarks, including the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home and the Rock House.

NORMA LEE BROWNING, AUTHOR, FRIEND OF ROSE LANE AND LIW HOME ASSOCIATION, DIES AT 86



Norma Lee Browning shown during an autograph session during Rocky Ridge Day 2000.

She came to Rocky Ridge Day 2000, after many invitations and a strong desire to see the Wilder family home.

As it happened, Norma Lee Browning's visit to her native Missouri last fall was her last. The veteran journalist and author died in Palm Springs, CA on June 11. She was 86.

With her death, another of the dwindling group of people who can say, 'I knew them' is gone. For over thirty years, Norma Lee Browning was a close friend, confidante and admirer of Rose Wilder Lane. For over thirty years, following Mrs. Lane's death in 1968, Norma Lee continued to idolize the Wilders' talented daughter, promoting her ideas and sharing anecdotes of her whenever she could.

'She taught me how to write,' was Norma Lee's simple, yet profound assessment of Rose's role in her life.

The two met in Columbia, MO, in the 1930s. Norma Lee was a U of MO student, and Rose was there to research and write a book. Rose saw promise in the college student's writings, and urged her to forego a Master's degree at Radcliff and tackle free-lance writing.

After the M.A. was attained and Norma Lee married Russell Ogg, the relationship with Rose revived. The Oggs spent time with Rose in Danbury, CT, and later traveled with her by trailer to Texas.

All the while, Rose Lane coached and applauded Norma Lee's writing career and Russell's role as photographer. Together, they produced articles for Reader's Digest, Saturday Evening Post and collaborated on reporting assignments all over the world.

In 1944 Norma Lee joined the Chicago Tribune, where she was a Pulitzer-nominated investigative reporter for thirty years. Among her assignments were the exposing of quacks, religious frauds and other undercover assignments.

In the 1960s and 1970s, she became the Tribune's Hollywood entertainment columnist. Because of her fair reporting style and personable manner, she became the favorite of such luminaries as Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Richard Burton.

Among her thirteen books were varied topics: face lifts, biographies of Ann Miller, Peter Hurkos and Sen. Everett Dirksen. She wrote two books on Michigan's Interlochen music camp, where she and her husband were actively involved for decades.

All of her books were written on an ancient Underwood typewriter, a la Rose Wilder Lane. She refused to conform to modern technology, and was pounding out articles until her death.

One of her most enduring titles is I SAW A HUMMINGBIRD, written with her husband, and still available at the Wilder museum bookshop.

Like Rose Lane, the Oggs were supporters of individualistic philosophy and laissez-faire economics. For a number of years, Norma Lee served as Northwood Institute's public relations expert.

Like Rose Lane, she never let her gender interfere with a dynamic role in the male dominated world of journalism. Her longtime assistant, Vera Servi said, 'She never felt there was such a thing as woman's lib because she never felt she was discriminated against. She never looked to see if her competition was male or female. She looked to be the best at everything she did.'

Like Rose Lane, she was feisty, opinionated, and vitally interested in the world around her. She read four newspapers daily, and kept busy and active until the end.

Rose Wilder Lane would have been proud of her beloved protegee.

WILDER NEWS, cont.

parting gift was given to her at the October meeting, and an open invitation to return. We will also miss her husband, Dr. Wayne Decker, who accompanied Jane to Mansfield many times, and offered his help and friendship.

Kay Goss, High School Librarian is our new board member. Kay served as a tour guide during her student days, and we are happy to welcome her talents to the board of directors.

Several of the Wilder Home employees have experienced losses of family in the past few months. Matthew Amos, son of Diana Amos and grandson of JoAnn Gray, died suddenly in July. Alvin Bogart, husband of Elva, Museum Director, died in September. Craig Amundson, died on 9/11 at the Pentagon disaster in Washington, D.C. We offer sympathy to all their families.

For those who missed Kevin Hagen's appearance during Rocky Ridge Day this year, and would like to learn more of him, consult his website at www.docbaker.com. Be sure to look at the Wilder Home & Museum at www.lauraingallswilderhome.com ... and don't be shy in using our on-line buying offer. All items available in the museum bookstore can be purchased on-line.

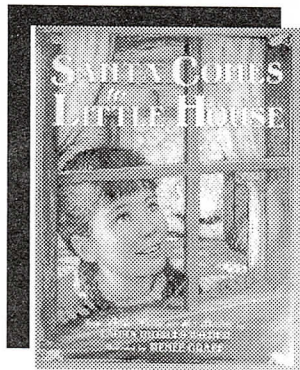
Board member William Anderson spoke at the New York State Reading Association on November 8-9.

It was wonderful to have so many visitors from the De Smet and Burr Oak sites present at Rocky Ridge Day 2001.

Rocky Ridge Farm is now a quiet and peaceful autumn pastoral in November, following closing on October 31. We look forward to welcoming you to the Christmas Open House from December 1 - 16 from 4 - 8 p.m. each evening, and seeing visitors in 2002.

Opening day for next season is set for March 1, 2002.

NEW ITEMS AVAILABLE IN OUR BOOKSTORE



SANTA COMES TO LITTLE HOUSE

With Illustrations by Renee Graef

Illustrated edition of the complete and unabridged Christmas chapter taken directly from Laura's beloved book LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE.

(Hardcover \$15.95)



BREAD & BUN WARMER WITH ROCKY RIDGE FARMHOUSE

Featuring Laura's beloved Rocky Ridge farmhouse, this charming bread and bun warmer makes a practical gift or keepsake. Dishwasher safe. Handcrafted by Heart Land Studios. Measures approx. 6" in diameter. Instructions and gift card included.

(\$8.50)



T-SHIRTS, SWEATSHIRTS AND TOTE BAGS WITH NEW WILDER HOME LOGO.

Call for sizing, pricing and ordering information.



OTHER NEW ITEMS:

- Counted Cross-Stitch Bookmark Kit
- LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE stamp bookmark

MANSFIELD LIBRARY, cont.

Refreshments were served by the Oetting Home Economics Club and Jewel Thompson, Home Demonstration Agent. The guest book showed 138, but due to the large crowds immediately after the program many didn't get to sign the guest book.

Mrs. Wilder made a beautiful picture as she stood in the library with her hand on the memorial shelf, her basket of flowers in the foreground and an array of greetings to her mounted on a bulletin board in the background. On top of the case, which encloses the memorial shelf are two dolls representing Laura and Almanzo at their wedding. These were presented by Elizabeth Spindler, Texas County Librarian, and her staff from Texas County. Inside the case are other character dolls made in Pomona, CA, and loaned by Miss Webber of the Children's Library of the Laura Ingalls Wilder room there. Given as favors to all the guests attending the open house the library gave an imitation book with Mrs. Wilder's photograph in the center. On the spine the words "Laura Ingalls Wilder Library" and below the picture a quotation from Voltaire which read:

'By appreciation we make excellence in others our own property. '"

Laura Ingalls Wilder -

Rose Wilder Lane Home & Museum

3068 Hwy. A

Mansfield, MO 65704

Visit us on-line @ www.lauraingallswilderhome.com

