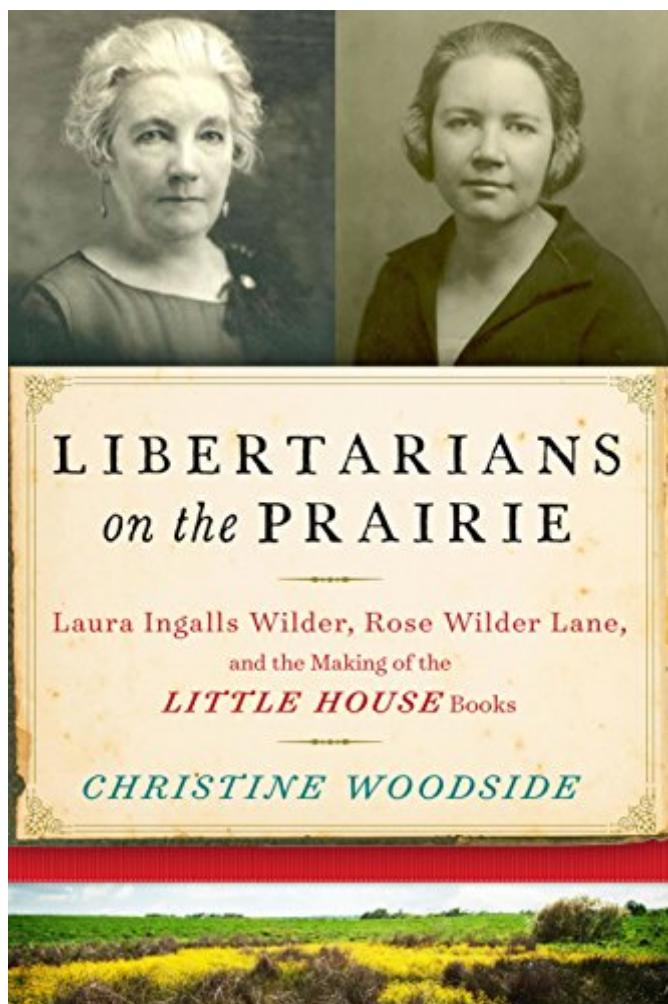


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# Libertarians On The Prairie: Laura Ingalls Wilder, Rose Wilder Lane, And The Making Of The Little House Books



## Synopsis

Generations of children have fallen in love with the pioneer saga of the Ingalls family, of Pa and Ma, Laura and her sisters, and their loyal dog, Jack. Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books have taught millions of Americans about frontier life, giving inspiration to many and in the process becoming icons of our national identity. Yet few realize that this cherished bestselling series wandered far from the actual history of the Ingalls family and from what Laura herself understood to be central truths about pioneer life. In this groundbreaking narrative of literary detection, Christine Woodside reveals for the first time the full extent of the collaboration between Laura and her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane. Rose hated farming and fled the family homestead as an adolescent, eventually becoming a nationally prominent magazine writer, biographer of Herbert Hoover, and successful novelist, who shared the political values of Ayn Rand and became mentor to Roger Lea MacBride, the second Libertarian presidential candidate. Drawing on original manuscripts and letters, Woodside shows how Rose reshaped her mother's story into a series of heroic tales that rebutted the policies of the New Deal. Their secret collaboration would lead in time to their estrangement. A fascinating look at the relationship between two strong-willed women, *Libertarians on the Prairie* is also the deconstruction of an American myth. Skyhorse Publishing, along with our Arcade, Good Books, Sports Publishing, and Yucca imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs. Our list includes biographies on well-known historical figures like Benjamin Franklin, Nelson Mandela, and Alexander Graham Bell, as well as villains from history, such as Heinrich Himmler, John Wayne Gacy, and O. J. Simpson. We have also published survivor stories of World War II, memoirs about overcoming adversity, first-hand tales of adventure, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a *New York Times* bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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## **Customer Reviews**

This was an interesting read. I knew some of the history of the Ingalls Wilder family, but this really did a nice job of filling in the unknown parts. I really wasn't aware of the extent that Rose played in editing her mother's early books. I knew she had a hand in the process, but it seems she did a whole lot more. She was quite an accomplished author in her own right, but chose to let me mother take the credit for the most part. This book also gave a good picture of the history of our country during this time frame. It was a very different time than what one might think was happening. I did feel that parts were redundant and the story line dragged a bit, but for the most part, it held my interest. Fans of the Little House stories who don't want to have their warm, fuzzy memories of the stories spoiled by the facts should probably pass on this book.

This gave a very human perspective on the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder as well as Laura. It just shows, once again, that we are all very flawed human beings, we do the best we can given the times we're born into, our basic personality and our parentage. I thought it was good take on talented, persistent people in two, if not more, generations.

Anytime I see a book with a new slant on Laura, I want to see what is new these many years after her death. The author had a connection with Laura same as me. Most of the material I had read before but the political slant was new. The author or editor needs to remove some of the repetitions.

I have always been a fan of the "little house" books. It is great to read the same information from

another perspective.

Good read, as a fan of LIW I found the book informative and useful, but I would have enjoyed some photos for the subjects the author spoke of, it would have awesome to see some of the the farm, or the documents she described etc

This book was very informative about Laura and Almanzo Wilder and their daughter Rose Wilder Lane. I enjoyed learning about Rose's independent spirit. I also enjoyed hearing about the revising of the stories Laura wrote to make the Little House series more suited to children. It was an excellent read.

I eagerly awaited this book, since the blurb about it seemed to imply that there was a lot of new information the author had dug up concerning Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane and their collaboration on the Little House books. I was disappointed. Much of the information about Rose Wilder Lane seemed to come from "A Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane" by William Holtz. I have a copy of the Holtz book and much of what I read here was information I already knew. (I'm just saying that it was information that was already out there, I in no way suggest the author borrowed from the Holtz book.) What really bothered me, however, were two glaring errors I caught. On page 104 in the hardcover edition, the author mentions "Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography" and gives it a release date of 2012, when the book was actually published in 2014, and is in fact cited in the bibliography with the correct date. Another error came later in the book. The author states that Almanzo Wilder, Laura's husband and Rose's father, suffered a heart attack in July, 1949. That's on page 152. The next page it is stated that Almanzo died later that year on October 23. But, on page 155, the author states "After Almanzo's death in July, 1948 Rose returned to Mansfield..." Don't know if the sloppiness was the fault of the author or editor but a mistake like that should have been caught. I did find the information about Roger Lea MacBride, who was a close friend of Rose Wilder Lane and who ran for President on the Libertarian party platform in 1976. I never knew that he had so much to do with the television show "Little House on the Prairie". Although there is much speculation concerning who exactly wrote the Little House books, after reading "Pioneer Girl" before it was published in book form, and reading "The First Four Years" I believe that Rose Wilder Lane did have a good deal to do with fashioning her mother's books into the charming classics we hold so dear. Whether Laura was a Libertarian I am not so sure. She did believe in hard work and fending for oneself, and she

certainly lived in an era of changing times...having gone from riding a covered wagon, to travelling on a train, to cars and airplanes and rockets capable of destroying the earth. Her books take us back to a time before Walmart and grocery stores and malls and trips to the moon. No matter how truthful her books are, and no matter who wrote them, they are sound, moral and true. Are they Libertarian books? I don't think they are written as Libertarian propaganda. I still enjoy them and still read them to this day. I just wish THIS book had proved the author's premise a bit more. For someone not knowledgeable about Rose Wilder Lane and unfamiliar with her work, this book will be an interesting read

The author sheds a lot of light on the story behind the Little House on the Prairie series. Absorbing read.

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