



The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Frontier Landscapes that Inspired the Little House Books

Marta McDowell

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“For gardeners, botanists, and fans of Laura Ingalls Wilder, this book looks at the beloved Little House on the Prairie author’s relationship to nature.” —*Publishers Weekly*

The universal appeal of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s books springs from a life lived in partnership with the land, on farms she and her family settled across the Northeast and Midwest. In this revealing exploration of Wilder’s deep connection with the natural world, Marta McDowell follows the wagon trail of the beloved Little House series. You’ll learn details about Wilder’s life and inspirations, pinpoint the Ingalls and Wilder homestead claims on authentic archival maps, and learn to grow the plants and vegetables featured in the series. Excerpts from Wilder’s books, letters, and diaries bring to light her profound appreciation for the landscapes at the heart of her world. Featuring the beloved illustrations by Helen Sewell and Garth Williams, plus hundreds of historic and contemporary photographs, *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder* is a treasure for anyone enchanted by Laura’s wild and beautiful life.

The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Frontier Landscapes that Inspired the Little House Books Details

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Author : Marta McDowell

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From Reader Review The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Frontier Landscapes that Inspired the Little House Books for online ebook

Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

This is a really cool book for those who are interested not only in the stories of the Little House in the Prairie, but also in the lifestyle of the day. There are tons of pictures, maps, even botanical drawings of the plants that grow in various places the Ingallses have lived in. You will also find pictures of the actual Ingalls sisters, Laura's husband Almanzo, as well as other members of the family. Aside from that though, it includes a lot of detail about life back then, in all its facets - foods, plants, weather and even pests, clothing, games and entertainment. It's even got a list of plants the Wilders grew so you could grow your own Wilders' garden! For any history, pioneer or just plain old Little House fan, this book has the right stuff.

Mandy says

A wonderfully evocative and informative account of Laura Ingalls Wilder's life and work, and her travels across America. Beautifully illustrated, reading it was such a joy. A must-read for anyone who loved – or indeed loves - the Little House on the Prairie books, but also for anyone interested in the history of the times and places Wilder knew so well.

Tamsen says

Lovely! I really loved this botany tour through the Ingalls books. I was glad to see pokeweed featured (I was educated in pokeweed by my neighbor as I have some growing wild in my front yard) and was so charmed by ground cherry, I immediately ordered some seeds from Seed Saver, and later McDowell even mentions Seed Saver and I thought damn, if you could "win" at this book, Tamsen, you did it.

Renata says

ok this is kind of on me because I just saw "The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder" on the new books list and requested it because I loved those books and she's my problematic fave, but then when the book came in I was like "oh it's like.....literally the world?" Like literally Marta McDowell combed through all the books and found all the plants she mentioned and it's about those plants.

It's...an impressive work....of plants...but I don't like....care that much about plants, so I kind of heavy-skimmed this. There are a lot of great photos and illustrations, and it was kind of interesting?

Also the author seemed way hype about the ~sustainable lifestyle~ of the pioneers and made like, 1 throwaway mention of Native Americans, sooooo...not great. Last year's Annotated Pioneer Girl was much better about that I think.

Pick it up IF YOU LOVE PLANTS. Or if you're doing some kind of school project about plants.

Plants.

Maureen Timerman says

This year Laura Ingalls Wilder would be celebrating her 150th birthday, and this book shows just what the world she lived in was like.

We get a taste of just about everything here, from what the landscape looked like, what her gardens were like, and even a few cherished photos.

Not only do we see what life was like and about what it looked like for a young Laura, we do the same for Almanzo in this farm up by the St Lawrence River in New York.

Come and get lost in Laura's world, I loved this look into what inspired the Little House Books, and all we have come to love about this wonderful author.

I received this book through Library Thing, and was not required to give a positive review.

Lori says

I was a lucky giveaway winner of "The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Marta McDowell writes an interesting take on Laura Ingalls Wilder. She maps out all the places Laura lived and writes of what the land was like there. What kind of things they planted, what the weather could be like. She shared pictures of what farming tools etc they may have used. When possible, she even showed actual pictures of Laura, Almanzo, Rose and a couple of the rest of her family. There is even a gardening section called Growing a Wilder Garden. Kind of a fun book if you read any of Laura Ingalls Wilder books. I found this to be a very informative book to learn more about the places Laura Ingalls Wilder lived.

Rosanna says

Like many women in America, I grew up reading all of Wilder's "Little House" books. For my 10th birthday my mother made me a prairie dress and bonnet so I could pretend that I was Laura Ingalls, living on the prairie and struggling through the many hardships that she experienced with her family. Growing up in Southern California, I wasn't familiar with the places where the Ingalls family lived, but learned a bit about geography and plants through her books.

This book serves as an adult fix for me to learn more about Laura, where she lived, and her local resources. I am amazed at all of the hardships she had to go through, including long blizzards, drought, locust plagues, and more. This book puts a lot of these events in a historical and geographical context.

After reading this book, I am ready to jump into my car and visit each of the locations where the family lived. It has renewed my fascination with this incredible woman!

Thanks to NetGalley for an advanced copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Beth Cato says

I received this book through the LibraryThing Early Reviewers Program.

This book is a fascinating work of scholarship that focuses on a unique angle of Laura Ingalls Wilder's life: that of the flora and fauna described in her books and other personal writing. She had a wonderful knack for describing settings, making them come to life through her words, and this book takes that further by adding historical context and fantastically detailed descriptions and photographs.

McDowell goes through each Little House book and expands on Laura's descriptions, and fills in some blanks as well, such as going to places like Burr Oak, Iowa, which was not included in the fictionalized accounts. The book-by-book breakdown is thoroughly enjoyable, but the back of the book contains another treasure trove of information: a sort of tour guide of what you will find when you visit each of Laura's home sites today, and a detailed table of all plants mentioned across Laura's writing with full citations. Seriously, that alone is a jaw-dropping piece of work. The book will even tell you where to order vintage seeds so you can grow many of the plants yourself.

If you love the Little House books and want a different insight into that period of history in the upper Midwest, this book should be on your shelf. I also highly recommend this to any writers working in that area and period. I certainly will be keeping this on my shelf for future reference.

Jess says

I received an advanced reader's copy through NetGalley of this book in exchange for an honest review

McDowell explores Laura Ingalls Wilder's life through the flora and fauna found in the Little House books and at the homes and prairies of Wilder and her family. Along the way, McDowell offers historical notes about flora varieties and nineteenth and early twentieth century trends in agriculture. Vibrant illustrations and drawings appear throughout the text.

Before reading this book, I never thought about the landscapes and foliage Wilder writes about in the Little House books. It always seemed secondary to me, as a young reader who had more interest in a young Laura learning life lessons in a time period not my own. Now, I want to read the Little House books again, only to capture these pieces of information. I am not an outdoorsy person by any stretch of the imagination, but McDowell's writing makes me want to stand in the prairie fields or in the Ozarks and just breathe in the scenery. I absolutely loved the photographic contributions to this book – it really made the writing come to life.

This is perfect for fans of the Little House books, or those who enjoy reading about historic landscapes or historic agriculture, or even those who have a sense of adventure. McDowell concludes the book with a list of places to visit for Wilder fans, as well as a list of all the foliage and vegetation mentioned in the books or that could be found at a Wilder landmark.

Sunnie says

I grew up on Laura Ingalls Wilder. I was a Minnesota gal! My favorite teacher shared two wonderful book series with us. The Box Car Children and all things Laura Ingalls Wilder!

I fell in love with the pioneering spirit of these wonderful books. The trials, the joy, sadness and heartache that all was apart of their lives.

As an adult, I returned to Minnesota and we visited Burr Oak, in Iowa which was not far from my Minnesota border town home. Now I've shared my love of these books with my daughter and also my granddaughter.

These books are so special to me and I was so thrilled to see this commemorative book on behalf of Laura's 150th birthday.

The book is beautiful and does a real loving memory to this wonderful author and pioneering woman. Her illustrations and art work are just amazing and the text brought a few tears to my eyes as I remembered the stories and the details of the lives of these people who became a part of my growing up years. Such a beautiful book, the kind you want to leave on your coffee table for all to browse through.

And as a genealogist, I loved looking at the plat maps, seeing where they lived throughout their lives. I never really realized how often they started over, although I knew that there were several homes.

This book is truly a reminder of the many happy childhood memories this author shared with me and many others who have loved and treasured her books. So happy to have had a chance to see this wonderful tribute to Laura Ingalls Wilder.

I received an e-book version of this book from NetGalley for my honest review, which I have given. All thoughts are my own.

Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says

Great cover on this one. Obviously it is a fantastic representation of the subject matter. It has great composition and graphics use as well.

This book was supremely cool! I am a HUGE fan of *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE*. I grew up reading the books and watching the TV show. I am pretty sure I have seen the repeats so often I could give you the dialogue from whole episodes verbatim. *lol* So I knew the minute I saw this one available for review that it was meant to be mine.

This book was stuffed full of cool information. Drawings, photos, newspaper clippings, and maps. Information about their life back in the day (food, clothing, weather, games, etc.). Personal photos of the Ingalls. Sometimes this type of book can make for dry reading, but the way it was written with the Little House tie-in kept it charming and fresh. It would make the perfect gift for any fan of the books or TV show.

Angelique Simonsen says

a cute book that depicts Laura's life with gorgeous pics of the wildflowers and parts of the prairie life did get bored at the end though

Dorine says

I wasn't able to finish this as my review copy expired while traveling. It wasn't available on my Kindle, so I read it on Adobe Digital Editions. I have difficulty with that software. It just doesn't flow as well as using my Kindle. My laptop has too many distractions and it doesn't go camping with me. Hopefully, I'll get this book out at the library and I can finish it then. I enjoyed the illustrations that I think would be better viewed in print. So, in fairness, I'm not rating the book until I'm able to read it in full.

Karen says

This book gives an in-depth look into the background of the Little House stories and the lives of the Ingalls/Wilder families, with a focus on the agricultural details touched on in the books.

I found this a fascinating read, as it meticulously follows the timeline of Laura and Almanzo Wilder's lives, including maps of their travels, townships and homesteads over the years. The author has done a lot of research, weaving together parts of the fiction series and Laura's biography, *Pioneer Girl*, with anecdotes of her own that add color to the story. Beautiful botanical drawings, photographs and other vintage prints throughout make this a quality book to leave out on the coffee table. It would be a nice addition to any library, especially if someone has an interest in history and rural living. Recommend!

(An e-book was provided by NetGalley and the publisher. All opinions are my own.)

Janilyn Kocher says

2017 is the 150th Birthday of Laura Ingalls Wilder and there are a profusion of blogs, posts, and books out or forthcoming. *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder* is part of the trend. It's a nice book full of descriptions of the flora, fauna, and terrain of the regions Wilder resided. One of the aspects I liked the best was the author's interspersed vignettes of her own family's garden, flowers, and produce harvests. I found the charts listing all the plants grown at Rocky Ridge derived from Rose Wilder Lane's journals, diaries, family letters, and other sources one of the most original aspects. However, as far as any new revelations, the author shares the same information found in the bibliography of Wilder's life and works. The ARC I read from NetGalley had a page for photo credits, but it was blank. The author used many photos that need to be credited, so I hope the published version includes that.
