



Laura Ingalls Wilder
Author of Little House on the Prairie Series, Daughter of
Homesteaders
1867-1957
De Smet, South Dakota

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born to Charles and Caroline Ingalls in Wisconsin in 1867. While she was growing up, her family moved several times before settling on 160 acres of homesteading land in South Dakota. Besides Wisconsin, they also lived in Kansas, Iowa, and Minnesota before becoming homesteaders.

While homesteading in De Smet, the Ingalls family faced many of the same hardships that nearly all homesteaders experienced. Backbreaking labor, solitude, and natural disasters were commonplace to most homesteading families, and the Ingalls' were no exception. One winter, the entire community of De Smet was cut off from the rest of the area by continuous blizzards.

Laura Ingalls went to school for a time and began working as a teacher when she was only 15 years old. There she met Almanzo Wilder, who she married when she was 18. They had a daughter and a son, but the little boy died in infancy. Like her parents before her, Laura and her family moved around quite a bit, living in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Florida before finally settling down on a farm in Mansfield, Missouri.

Laura and Almanzo's daughter grew up to be the famous novelist Rose Wilder Lane. It was Rose who encouraged her mother to begin writing stories about her days growing up on the prairie. Laura liked the idea and wrote her first book, *Little House in the Big Woods*. The book was very popular with children and young adults, so she kept writing. *Farmer boy*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, *The Long Winter*, *Little Town On the Prairie*, and *Those Happy Golden Years* all followed. She was 63 years old when she started writing her books. The last was published when she was 76.

Laura Ingalls Wilder lived to be 90 years old. She had learned much from her experiences growing up as the daughter of homesteaders, and she turned those experiences into stories still loved by millions today.