

5-1989

Laura and Almanzo Wilder's Friendship with Local Citizens

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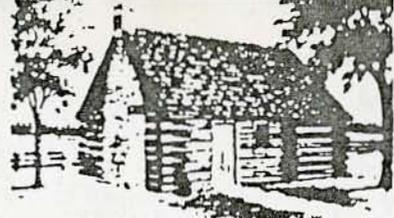


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Recommended Citation

Thurman, Mary Evelyn, "Laura and Almanzo Wilder's Friendship with Local Citizens" (1989). *Publications*. Paper 6.
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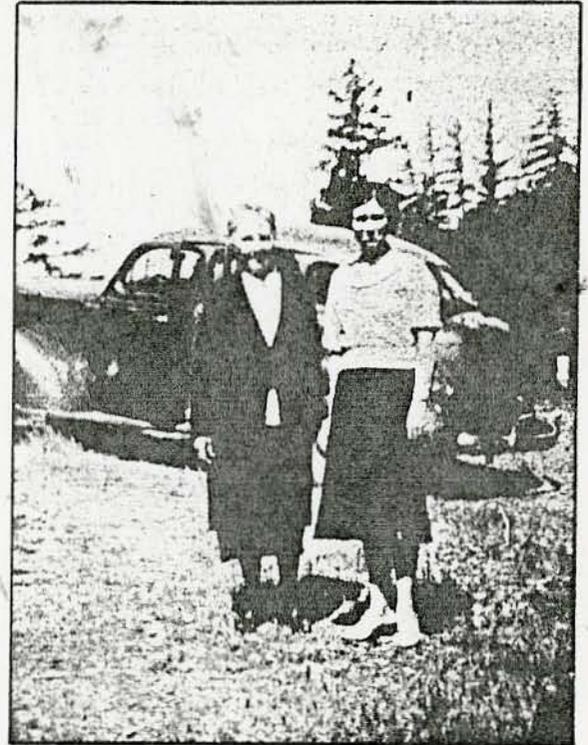


Birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder

I just received!
The very best!!
This is the first time
for these
pictures to
be in print.

Evelyn
Thurman

Laura and Almanzo Wilder's Friendship With Local Citizens



By Evelyn Thurman

Over the years I have found that a large part of the joy of research is the wonderful people you meet. A number of years ago when I started research for THE INGALLS WILDER HOMESITES I met Mrs. Neta Seal who was a personal friend of Laura and Almanzo Wilder.

Mrs. Seal and her husband, Silas, grew up near Mansfield, Missouri. After their marriage they lived some years in Detroit, Michigan, but they returned to Mansfield in 1928. Shortly after their return to Mansfield, they met Laura and Almanzo Wilder at Mr. Seal's automobile business. A strong friendship developed between the Seals and Wilders because of Mr. Seal's care of the Wilder's Chrysler.

Mrs. Seal has many treasured items that Laura gave her during their many years of friendship.

I know Laura enjoyed Mrs. Seal's enthusiasm for living, and her very relaxed manner of conversation. I can imagine that Mrs. Seal seemed almost like a

daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Wilder; however, she said she always addressed them as Mr. and Mrs. Wilder.

Mr. and Mrs. Seal drove for the Wilders as they grew older. The long trip to California and Oregon in 1938, was a memorable experience. Mrs. Seal let me borrow some pictures to use with this article. Picture (1) shows Mrs. Seal with Mr. and Mrs. Wilder in a rose garden in Portland, Oregon. Picture (2) shows Mrs. Wilder and Mrs. Seal in the Idaho mountains. After the California and Oregon tour, the four traveled on to Keystone, South Dakota for the Wilders to visit Mrs. Wilder's sister Carrie, and her family. The trip also included a stop at DeSmet to visit Grace, Mrs. Wilder's youngest sister. Mrs. Seal said she did not know Grace very well, but she did remember Carrie's visit with her sister and husband at Mansfield in 1940 or 1941.

Mr. Seal drove the Wilders to

Detroit, Michigan when the Wilder Branch library was dedicated on May 12, 1949. Mrs. Seal was unable to go because of illness.

The Seals were the first to arrive at the farm shortly after Mr. Wilder's death in 1949. The years that followed were very lonesome for Laura. Mrs. Seal faithfully called Laura each morning and evening, after Mr. Wilder's death.

Mrs. Seal has happy memories of their birthday dinners, picnics, and everyday conversations with her dear friends of days gone by.

(Editor's Note)

We are grateful to Evelyn Thurman for contributing to this issue of our newsletter. Ms. Thurman is author of THE INGALLS WILDER HOMESITES, which is for sale at our museum. She is also one of the Western Kentucky University faculty authors.