

PIONEER GIRL A NOVEL 1ST EDITION Read Free



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It is safe to say that the Little House series would never have been produced without her help—in the editing, in finding an agent, and in facilitating publication. Further, there are strong arguments suggesting that Lane had a larger hand in the writing than this edition of Pioneer Girl acknowledges. To take a deeper look at this, Susan Wittig Albert has published *A Wilder Rose*, an historical novel based on Lane's diaries and letters and other documentary evidence, which convincingly demonstrates her participation as her mother's silent partner in authoring the Little House books. Whether or not a reader is concerned with this controversy, what Pioneer Girl provides is Laura's unedited and original voice.

The writing is not polished or professional, but she is telling her life experience as she recalls it. As always, a true story makes for compelling and engaging reading, and for those of us who grew up with Laura Ingalls as our heroine, Pioneer Girl adds the spice of adult reality to the childhood saga. Sep 28, Crizzle rated it it was amazing Shelves: biographies, non-fiction, books-about-books. This publication "presents new insights into Wilder's past, but it also helps to document her growth as an important American artist who grew from farm journalist to novelist to literary legend". This was a super slow but fascinating read, due to the intro and hundreds of footnotes. It was SO well-researched that I wonder what Laura would think!

I would like to read it sometime without the interruption of footnotes, but I'm not a person who is easily bothered by them. I appreciated Hill's points This publication "presents new insights into Wilder's past, but it also helps to document her growth as an important American artist who grew from farm journalist to novelist to literary legend". I appreciated Hill's points in the intro to lead us to the conclusion that although daughter Rose was instrumental in her mother's journey to becoming an author, Laura DID write her own books.

The theory that Rose was the true author plagued me last summer when I was immersed in Little House books and other writings by both Laura and Rose I am strangely relieved that I can rest assured of the authorship! The "Hard Winter" of and winter stories in general from back then are so amazing; living in the same vicinity as Laura did, it's hard to imagine how people survived. Dec 13, Claire rated it really liked it. Well, that was a slow but exceedingly well-researched read! I'm glad to have read the whole series recently enough to remember it well: if you haven't, I recommend reading the series first. After so many articles about Rose and the fictional elements of the Little House books, it was really a pleasure to read the original text. More importantly, it made me appreciate how much more successful the fictionalized versions are, literarily. One appendix is images of the full typewritten text of the "J Well, that was a slow but exceedingly well-researched read!

One appendix is images of the full typewritten text of the "juvenile Pioneer Girl," the prototype of Big Woods, and it's amazing how successfully it flows and conveys the setting and experience she's trying for. One weird change is little details that paint Ma poorly and paint Pa well. There are several situations where Ma does something that gets changed to Pa doing it in the books, or where Pa gets credit for something a neighbor did. I think it's less about vilifying Ma than about painting Pa as a hero Ma seems like she was pretty badass in real life. Mar 26, Anne Osterlund rated it really liked it. This was quite smashing. Prior to writing her Little House books, Laura Ingalls Wilder submitted an autobiography for publication. It was turned down, and an editor recommended revising the autobiography into a set of children's stories.

Which is what Laura did. This is the original autobiography. It is easy to see where the Little House books came from--how this manuscript developed into the stories we know and love today. A great deal of the story is the same, but some of the differences are fas This was quite smashing. A great deal of the story is the same, but some of the differences are fascinating. The description of the long winter, especially. How impossible that they survived in those conditions! And yet they did. I read the manuscript as I usually would, using the annotations as a helpful guide only when I had more questions or wished to learn more about a particular topic. It was easy to see that Laura kept the heart of her story intact for the books we know and love today. This was a fascinating chance to delve back into the stories I've always loved and yet learn something new in the voice of one of my favorite authors of all time.

Jan 03, Shari Larsen rated it it was amazing Shelves: challenge-books, nonfiction This autobiography is the first attempt by Laura Ingalls Wilder to tell her life story, written even before the Little House series of books, but it is her last book-length manuscript to ever be printed. It reveals the true stories behind the events that took place in the Little House books, and also the many true stories that were left out for one reason or another. Adding to memoir are census data, newspaper reports, photos, and other historical documents. The editor did a very thorough job wit This autobiography is the first attempt by Laura Ingalls Wilder to tell her life story, written even before the Little House series of books, but it is her last book-length manuscript to ever be printed.

The editor did a very thorough job with her research and her extensive notes throughout the autobiography. Some readers may feel this bogs the story down, but for fans of the Little House series of books, or those who just want to know more about the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder, this is a fascinating read. A lot of what was left out of the children's books were subjects that at least back at the time when the books were published, were subjects considered to be "not appropriate" for children, such as divorce one of Laura's aunts was divorced, Laura being nearly molested at the age of 13 Laura was staying with another family at the time to help the mother with her housework and other children, and a neighbor having a baby out of wedlock. So, her life was not as "wholesome" as pictured in the Little House books, but it sure was interesting!

But learning about the darker side of her life does not, in my opinion, take away from the enjoyment of the series of the Little House books. The Little House series of books were favorites of mine when I was a girl, and the first "chapter books" I remember reading. My favorite part of Pioneer Girl was reading about Laura and Almanzo's courtship; not nearly as drama filled as depicted in the TV series, but it was very sweet and realistic. Of course, for TV, "sweet and realistic" are not what a lot of people consider to be interesting television. Dec 07, Sarah rated it really liked it Shelves: history, non-fiction.

I asked Google: "person obsessed with Laura Ingalls" but there isn't a term, like kathisomania a mania for sitting, or gephyromania a mania for crossing bridges. Let's call ourselves Ingallphiles. Well, Ingallphiles, this book is your fix. Pioneer Girl, the original uncut version of the Little House series, has been dissected, annotated, footnoted, bibliographed and indexed to your heart's content. So much so that I might not be an Ingallphile after all. I admit that I did not read every si I asked Google: "person obsessed with Laura Ingalls" but there isn't a term, like kathisomania a mania for sitting, or gephyromania a mania for crossing bridges. I admit that I did not read every single note and maybe wondered about therapy for the author who worked harder at this than anything I have ever done in my life. It's a lot to take in. I'm quite sure I don't even want to know this much

about my own family. But the pictures are great, and re-reading about Laura's life makes me realize that my own life has been quite dull.

All the moving around and building new houses. Pa seemed to be a bit of a drifter. I didn't read closely enough to see if Ma ever said, "Enough damn moving. I don't think they had time for odd manias and phobias. Pioneer Girl is a worthy book for our beloved Laura. She dominated so much of our childhoods about being strong, perseverance and what is possible in life. May 30, Girl with her Head in a Book rated it it was amazing Shelves: history , memoir , beautiful , challenge.

By far and away, this was the book that I was most excited to receive for Christmas - although due to a very silly date of publication, it didn't actually turn up until a few weeks later. Since I first discovered that the Little House series was based upon an adult memoir, I looked high and low for the original. Surely in the age of the internet, it would be available somewhere? But no. It was not until now, almost sixty years after Wilder's death, that it has finally found a readership but it w By far and away, this was the book that I was most excited to receive for Christmas - although due to a very silly date of publication, it didn't actually turn up until a few weeks later.

It was not until now, almost sixty years after Wilder's death, that it has finally found a readership but it was well worth the wait. Pioneer Girl has not just been shoved out as an afterthought or worse a gimmicky publicity stunt - Pamela Smith Hill has done a masterful job in editing and annotating this to bring Laura's story to a new level, a new audience and a whole new understanding of Laura herself. I read the first Little House book as a five year-old and have re-read one or other of them every year since but am always surprised by how few other people have. Being a fan of Laura Ingalls Wilder seems to be regarded as akin to liking The Archers, knitting and other grannyish pursuits i. The overly wholesome Little House on the Prairie tv series did not exactly help though with Melissa Gilbert and company skipping around 'Walnut Grove' and Learning Lessons About Life - to be clear, every episode I have ever seen of this show left me bristling with Reader Rage.

Laura Ingalls was a very early heroine for me - when there was a blizzard, she got not just one or two logs into the house, but the entire woodpile. Laura's adventures were rooted in the real world but set in a world utterly different to my own - I was hooked right from the very beginning. Forget Cowboys and Indians, I used to play at being Laura. Laura and her sisters Wilder's writing always seemed to celebrate and honour the work of women; although Laura herself told her future husband Almanzo that she did not wish to vote, time and again her writing emphasises the hard work of keeping up a home, a family and a life under the harsh conditions of the frontier. My mother always recalled the way that Laura's mother would iron her daughters' dresses even if she had to do it in the wagon itself - standards had to be maintained. The Ingalls family were never idle, always had a task to do and a song to sing while they went about it and no matter how hard the situation, they came through it together.

She was not born until the events of Laura's last book, The First Four Years, a story which was left unfinished due to Wilder's death and then Rose herself took over the reins of the narration which I found even stranger. To me, Rose felt like an interloper. Worse still, as I got older and read more about her, I discovered the theory that Wilder had only contributed the outline of the Little House series and that the majority had been written by Lane. Cue bristling of Reader Rage once again. Rose Wilder Lane became fixed in my mind as a bossyboots who tried to snatch away her mother's glory and who Spoiled Things. Yet through reading this book, I realised that although absent from the events, Rose's part in the story is just as integral as Ma or Mary - or indeed any of the other characters. Rose is another pioneer girl, but the frontier she pioneered was a literary one. The lengthy preface details the process via which Pioneer Girl came to be written, how an idea that seems to have 'simmered' in Wilder's mind for twenty-odd years finally came to fruition.

The death of Laura's beloved Pa seems to have first inspired her but it was not until twenty years later when Mary died too that Wilder seems to have decided to take the bull by the horns and actually put her memories down on paper. By this point though, it was her daughter who had the established and 'successful' literary career and Rose seems to have had a briskly patronising attitude towards her mother's writing, claiming that her mother sought 'prestige rather than money' and giving it all her trademark ruthless edit. More hurtfully, as Pioneer Girl struggled to find a publisher - squatting uncomfortably with no clear market - Lane unabashedly pillaged her mother's work for interesting events which she then re-fashioned into adult novels of her own.

Lane made it clear that she regarded her mother's child-oriented memoirs as 'lesser' than her own writing, but her most successful adult fiction was based on events borrowed from her mother's life. Now who's copying who? What Hill also made clear in the preface was how distinctive Laura's own voice as a writer was, making it clear how far the story truly was her own rather than one picked over by her daughter. Reading Pioneer Girl felt at times a slightly eerie shift in perspective, catching snatches of Laura but this time in the first person. It was very comforting to settle back into the familiar cadence of Wilder's prose; in These Happy Golden Years, Wilder told of how as a teenager, she was marked highly for the very first composition she ever wrote and it is obvious that she was a naturally highly talented writer. Still, tonally speaking, Pioneer Girl is a very different book to its siblings.

We have a far greater sense of Laura's position as a child surrounded by adults, of the snippets of overheard and only half-understood adult conversation and the grimmer realities of life in a land that is still making up its rules. From suggestions of possible adultery, elopement, a woman's apparent death seeking an abortion - life on the prairie was nowhere near as squeaky clean as Melissa Gilbert would have had you believe. Most terrifying of all was when the ten year-old Laura was sent to help the Masters family whose mother was ill and woke up to find the father standing over her with whiskey on his breath.

He told her to 'lie down and be still', she threatened to scream if he did not go away. He did, and the next day Laura went back home to Ma. Yet more than anything, else, this book makes clear that Wilder's work was a dialogue between mother and daughter, not only through Hill's copious annotations concerning revisions but also through the text itself. There are various points in the manuscript which are directly addressed to Rose herself, including one in the midst of a description of the prairie in spring: In June the wild roses bloomed. They were a low-growing bush and, when in bloom the blossoms made masses of wonderful color, all shades of pink, all over the prairie. And the sweetest roses that ever bloomed. You are their namesake, my dear. Rose today is a forgotten writer aside from her relation to her mother and even in her own lifetime, she was criticised for falsifying facts to make a better story quite a serious fault for a biographer but Pioneer Girl seemed to bring a softer side of Rose to the fore and it gave the book itself a very warm core.

It feels very fitting that I received this book from my own mother. Probably one of the main reasons why I have always loved Wilder's books so much all my life is that is essentially a series of stories about someone's family. I love stories about people's families - having heard Laura's stories from when I was so little, I sometimes have to think about it to separate them out from the mythology which comes from my maternal grandparents who both grew up on farms. This is actually true and has happened; aged seven, I was half way through explaining how Father Christmas had visited my Grandma when she was a little girl when I remembered that this was something that had happened to Laura instead.

Oddly enough, my Grandma has written a few things about her childhood and early life and tonally speaking, I do find her writing reminiscent of Wilder. A lot of stories made reappearances in *Pioneer Girl* but the tone of them often felt very different, written as wry reminiscences rather than a linear story. In the afterword, Hill noted that Wilder's genuine talents as a writer are often dismissed by those who claim that she only wrote what happened in her own life but Hill makes it clear how much thought she put into crafting a streamlined story.

The fictional Ingalls family were not the same as the one that Laura grew up in, their story was guided carefully to fit the requirements of a good story and although Wilder felt her responsibility in using the names of real people, she was not afraid to alter the facts. The three tough years during which her baby brother died and her sister Mary went blind did not serve the story and so were discarded. Laura had two dolls rather than one and preferred one called Roxie over Charlotte.

Jack the Dog did not remain the family's beloved and loyal companion until death but was instead sold along with some horses - this was a bit of a kicker given that his first disappearance, return and eventual death were all very emotional for me. Clearly effective writing but reading all this now, I do feel slightly manipulated all those years ago! However, although Lane advised her mother to drop the part about Mary going blind, Wilder argued against it, pointing out that the whole course of the family changed after that. A major goal within the series is the battle to raise the funds to send Mary to the College for the Blind, this was why Laura went out to teach. I was fascinated though by the lengthy discussion on how to explain Mary's blindness; Wilder was herself hazy on the details after all those years and thought it might have been due to a stroke; so mother and daughter settled on blaming scarlet fever, partly inspired by Beth's fate in *Little Women*.

That's right, we can blame Louisa Alcott for that one. I was most surprised though to read that during *The Long Winter*, there were three other people in the house with the Ingalls family. When the blizzards broke out, Pa and Ma had given shelter to a young couple who had recently gone through a shotgun wedding, George and Maggie, and then shortly very shortly afterwards, they had a baby. Half a century on, we sense Wilder's pursed lips as she recalls how the two failed to help around the house, how George stayed in bed til nine while Pa was working chopping wood or later simply twisting straw to make a fire.

The rest of the family would ration themselves so Maggie and the baby could have more food but George would bound to the pan of potatoes and stuff himself before anybody else, becoming a byword for selfishness ever afterward. Again, she reminds me of my Grandma. Reading this, I winced and thought that this sounded even worse than the original, but I can see how George and Maggie failed to make the cut to get into fiction. As the annotations point out, *The Long Winter* is a story of a isolation, starvation and being pushed to one's limits the town is cut off and stuck in perpetual blizzards for seven months.

The Ingalls family sticks together throughout it all. Three interlopers would only have undermined that - and as Wilder notes, if she had re-written George and Maggie to be better than they were, it would have detracted from the heroism of Cap Garland and Laura's eventual husband Almanzo Wilder who went after the grain to save the town from starving.

Yet still, I had to laugh along with Rose when Hill explained that the publishers rejected Wilder's initial title of *The Hard Winter* as 'too depressing' for young readers - as Lane exclaimed incredulously, if people were depressed by the title, how on earth did they expect to get through the book? Even Wilder confessed that writing it had been 'trying', in having to relive such harrowing events. Laura's courtship with her husband Almanzo also takes place in a different way in *Pioneer Girl*. Hill's annotations detail Wilder's uncertainty on how to write it, as well as some of Lane's personal observations about her parents' clearly very loving marriage - Wilder always seemed very shy about presenting this more personal side of herself but her love for her husband does sneak through similarities to my Grandma once more abound.

Yet, unlike the fiction series, the real life Laura heads out to events with other young men until she decides that actually, Almanzo is the one for her. Again, we have more of a sense of Laura herself growing up and growing in confidence in *Pioneer Girl* - it feels less structured in many ways but yet there is a keener sense of Laura the person rather than Laura the reader-proxy. This is a memoir of Laura Ingalls rather than a series of books that allow young girls to imagine themselves into prairie life - the purpose is different and so it feels different too.

I have read *Pioneer Girl* to the end now but I would hesitate to say that I finished it. With so many footnotes, annotations and appendices, this is no just-read-once kind of book and I preferred to get the flow of Wilder's words and then go back over it again to pick up the references. Hill has been exhaustive in chasing down virtually every named person from the text and providing their background history and later fate. Wherever possible photos have been provided of the main players, pictures of the various artefacts - the detail is truly extraordinary. I am pretty certain that this is the most impressive book that I own - my very first coffee table book.

Although if anybody drinks coffee anywhere near it I may very well throw a hissy fit - it is so very pretty as is. Books that I Treasure may take a bashing but this is more of a book that I Revere. I read a review somewhere that likened *Pioneer Girl* to the forthcoming *Go Tell A Watchman*, implying that as an unfinished draft, this book is of a lesser quality than the original material and so not worth reading. I don't know what Harper Lee's new book will be like but I think that whoever that was has missed the point of *Pioneer Girl* - we have here the most in-depth analysis possible of the background behind *Little House on a Prairie* and Laura Ingalls Wilder herself.

Pamela Smith Hill's annotations underline that Wilder was a true artist - Hill has worked with exacting and scholarly standards without ever seeming dry or didactic. Without Hill, *Pioneer Girl* would have been an interesting companion piece, with her annotations though, it becomes something else entirely - part biography, part memoir, part literary analysis but whatever else, it is an essential read for anyone who has ever longed

to fling off their bonnet, let their braids fly out behind them and go scampering across the prairie - eg. This book is a real labour of love, confirming once again that this is what was always at the heart of Little House in the first place. Oct 30, Dawn rated it really liked it Shelves: non-fiction , autobiography , reviewed. My very first concrete memories of chapter books were those in the Little House series. I remember longingly visiting the boxed set in its little slipcover every time we stopped in a book store.

My father didn't have a lot of money to spare and this was a luxury even a small child could understand. At the mall with my grandparents one time, my Gramp caught me sitting beside the children's shelves with the cellophane-wrapped set on my lap, looking it over hungrily for probably the hundredth time. My very first concrete memories of chapter books were those in the Little House series. At the mall with my grandparents one time, my Gramp caught me sitting beside the children's shelves with the cellophane-wrapped set on my lap, looking it over hungrily for probably the hundredth time in my young life. He asked me if I'd like it and I looked at him in astonishment, nodding. He asked if I would read them all, every page, and again I nodded, mute with awe at the prospect.

He purchased that set for me and I made good on my promise to read them all. I devoured them, cover to cover, and then started over again from the beginning immediately. I read that series at least twice a year until I was in high school. Even since then, I have revisited my old friends every few years, and it is like coming home every time. Getting my hands on this book and finally learning Laura's real story was such a treat.

I knew her children's series was somewhat fictionalized and softened for young minds. There were many things the real Laura encountered that would be unsuitable for an immature audience, though it wasn't presented distastefully in Pioneer Girl at all. I found it fascinating to discover where, how, and why she fictionalized parts of her story. As for the annotations, they are plentiful. You can tell deep and extensive research was conducted to verify, and in some cases, correct what Laura remembers of her early life.

There are notes on every imaginable topic, from background on people and places Laura mentions, the history of music she recalls, to scientific facts on weather, flora, and fauna. I didn't read every single one of them, but focused on those that were of interest to me personally. I know that some reviews were critical of the sheer volume of annotations and how they weren't all interesting to read about, but I don't think there was any need to delve into expanded detail when you weren't compelled to do so. I felt the notes were really there as a benefit to a reader wishing to know more when more was available. One final thought as, in current American society, Laura Ingalls Wilder has come under scrutiny and criticism.

If people would take the time read Laura's own words and reflections, as well as the history of her writing this series and conversing with her daughter as they waded through all of the memories in the process, it is plain to see that Laura was aware that certain things which were said and done were not socially acceptable any longer. Some she changed for the sake of this, but others she felt best left alone because they reflected her honest childlike perceptions and thoughts, not intended in a disrespectful way at all. Later in the book, in the conclusion, we can see Laura's attempt to be sensitive to cultural shifts while remaining honest about history: In Wilder's view, her daughter did not fully grasp the literary significance of historical and cultural context in the ongoing series and had made editorial suggestions that were 'all wrong Remember this was a little more than 60 years ago,' Wilder admonished Lane.

What girls would do now had no bearing whatever. This is a true story and supposed to show a different almost civilization. I have given you a true picture of the times and the place and the people. Please don't blur it. Mar 31, Sharon Barrow Wilfong rated it it was amazing. For those of us who have fond memories of reading the Little House on the Prairie books to ourselves and later to our children, Pioneer Girl is a heavily annotated book that provides the original manuscript Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote with every page filled with background comments by the editor.

Some reviews stated they found the annotations to be cumbersome reading but I thought the notes were what made the book worth reading at all. In the 's, after the death of Wilder's mother and a few yea For those of us who have fond memories of reading the Little House on the Prairie books to ourselves and later to our children, Pioneer Girl is a heavily annotated book that provides the original manuscript Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote with every page filled with background comments by the editor. In the 's, after the death of Wilder's mother and a few years later of her sister, Mary, Laura may have developed a sense of her own mortality since by that time she was in her sixties. With the encouragement of her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, Wilder began writing down all her memories and putting them in book form. The work was non-fiction and she was scrupulous about making sure her facts about names and places were accurate. She later remarked that she wished she had not used real names so she wouldn't be beholden to keeping facts straight.

Even with the combined research of Rose and Laura, there were certain discrepancies which the notes point out. Hill's notes show that she researched all available records in available newspapers, census bureaus, and town obituaries, marriages and land ownership. She points out when she could not find any record of people Laura mentions in her book or if she got her dates wrong. A lot of the early passages, Laura was simply too young to remember and had to rely on family stories and tradition.

The book begins with a long introduction which traces the inspiration for the book and how it came to be written. It also offers insight into the character of Laura Ingalls and her daughter Rose. There has been speculation that Rose had a heavy hand in writing the Little House books but after reading Pioneer Girl I conclude that, while Rose served as a valuable editor, she ultimately did not write the stories.

She was not above, however, plagiarizing her mother's work. Rose Wilder Lane was already a successful writer and it was through her contacts that Laura was able to find a publisher. However, gaining access to her mother's writings, Lane rewrote the stories and had them published under her own name in various magazines. When Laura discovered this, she was not pleased, but Rose made it clear that she saw nothing wrong in what she did and furthermore would do as she pleased. This led Laura to concede defeat but also to getting Rose to agree to allow Laura to collaborate with her on developing the stories.

Laura finally finished her own version of her stories and Rose enthusiastically promoted it, taking her mother to different publishers. They submitted a variety of versions but could not generate interest in the book. One publisher told Laura that she should rewrite the book as a collection of children stories, told in the third person, rather than first person non fiction as Pioneer Girl was written. As we all know, this is what Laura did and

the rest is history.

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