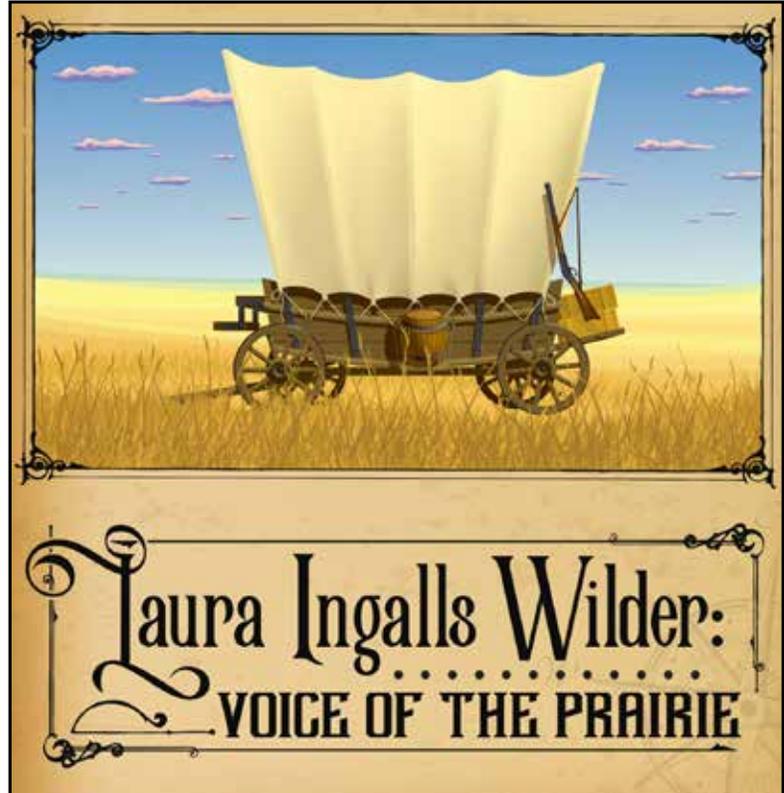


2017-18 SEASON  
PRESENTED BY



MONSANTO FUND



BY KATHRYN SCHULTZ MILLER  
DIRECTED BY ALAN KNOLL

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BY KATHRYN SCHULTZ MILLER  
 DIRECTED BY ALAN KNOLL

Scenic Designer	Scott Loebel
Costume Designer	Marci Franklin
Sound Designer	Edward Drury
Stage Manager	J.M. Bock*
Director of Education	Marsha Coplon
Associate Director of Education	Sarah Brandt
Education Programs Associate	Brian Coats

**THE COMPANY**

Aaron Orion Baker*	NARRATOR, ALMANZO
Charlie Barron*	PA, ALFRED
Lana Dvorak*	LAURA
Jeanitta Perkins*	MA, ROSE

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



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## Setting the Scene



In the 19th century, Laura and her family were part of a great movement toward westward expansion in the United States. In those days, America was still a young country, with new territory being discovered every day. Like Laura's father, many men wanted to take their families west to find their own land. This pioneer spirit was born of stories related by explorers and missionaries, full of images of vast, open landscapes, abundant game, rich soil and pristine rivers.

During this time, young America was a country of progress. It was growing by leaps and bounds as new territory was discovered and acquired. Some of the very first pioneers settled in Oregon in 1842 after traveling the Oregon Trail. The gold rush of 1849 saw thousands of prospectors heading toward California. In 1860 the Pony Express began operation, and delivered mail across the country in the fastest time ever. In 1861, the telegraph was invented and saw the end of the Pony Express, as information was sent over the wires. By 1869, easterners could

stop writing letters to their relatives in the west and go on a cross-country rail trip via the transcontinental railroad.

Though new and exciting things were happening everyday, early American pioneers saw their share of hardships as well. In the large, open west, settlers saw very harsh weather, with blizzards, hail storms and insects often destroying whole crops. Because of this crop loss, many new farmers went bankrupt and were unable to keep the land they had traveled across the country to acquire. Disease and illness were also a problem for settlers in the new territories. In small towns there were far fewer doctors and hospitals than in the large eastern cities, and diseases such as scarlet fever and diphtheria saw the death of many. Native Americans also presented a dangerous challenge for pioneers. As Americans moved west and invaded Native American lands, bloody battles were fought, resulting in many deaths on both sides.



✿ ✿ ✿ **Words to the Wise** ✿ ✿ ✿



Rose Wilder

**COVERED WAGON:** a large wagon covered with an arched canvas top, used especially for prairie travel

**SCARLET FEVER:** a disease occurring predominantly among children and characterized by a high fever

**PIONEER:** someone who ventures into unclaimed or unknown territory to settle

**DAKOTA TERRITORY:** a territory of the north-central United States, organized in 1861 and divided into the states of North Dakota and South Dakota in 1889

**BUSHEL:** a unit of dry measure equal to four pecks or 2,152.42 cubic inches

**DIPHTHERIA:** a disease of the throat and other respiratory passages, causing difficulty breathing, high fever and weakness

**MANUSCRIPT:** a typewritten or handwritten version of a book, especially the author's own copy, prepared and submitted for publication in print

**HALF-PINT:** slang for a small person or animal, also Pa's nickname for Laura

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.



## What's the Story?



Mary & Laura

The year Charles and Caroline Ingalls are married, the country is in turmoil, nearing a civil war. A young Charles reads the headlines and hears the call of freedom ring throughout the nation. Though Caroline is wary about leaving her home, Charles convinces her that they can find a better life if they go west in search of land. The young couple packs their belongings and departs.

A few years later, Charles and Caroline are settled on a farm in Wisconsin, and are living happily with their two daughters, Laura and Mary. One night Laura hears her parents talking about moving and she worries about leaving her home. Pa comforts her, telling her that they will always be safe as long as they are together.

Pa packs the covered wagon to move his family, and as they ride, they pass through several years of their lives. The family moves through many states and homes before settling again in a new house that Pa built. The girls admire their new home, complete with metal door hinges and glass windows, but through the new windows they see their family's next challenge. As the family watches helplessly, all of their hard work is destroyed as a swarm of hungry grasshoppers destroys their wheat crop.

Later that year, Mary falls ill with scarlet fever. Though they try, Ma, Pa, and the town Doctor cannot help Mary and she has a stroke, which results in the loss of her sight. Laura is very saddened by her sister's loss, but is resolved to help her see again



by explaining everything that she sees in the world. As Laura describes all of the colors in a beautiful sunset, Mary tells Laura that someday she should be an artist, because she can paint with words. As the girls talk, Ma and Pa discuss the possibility of another move. Ma wants to live in a safe place where the girls can go to school and church. Pa convinces her that they can find the perfect land further west, and then they won't ever move again.

In the new town, Pa enters a General Store to buy salt pork. At the store, he sees an old Indian man who warns Pa that there is a terrible storm approaching. Pa takes the news home to Ma, who doesn't believe the Indian, but Pa is worried. Days later a blizzard sweeps through town covering everything with snow. The family burns through most of their firewood and has to resort to making logs out of straw. Pa fears that they will run out of food and asks a young farmer in town for help. The farmer, Almonzo Wilder, has no wheat to spare, but agrees to help Pa buy some from another farmer. Laura is very grateful to the young Almonzo, and though the two are shy, they strike up a long friendship that results years later in a marriage proposal. Laura loves Almonzo, but she worries about spending her life farming like her parents. Laura consents to marry Almonzo, but only after he agrees to her one requirement: if, after three years, they are unable to make a life of farming, he must promise to try another way of life.

The young couple is married and moves into a beautiful little house that Almonzo has made for Laura. A year later, the wheat crop is bountiful and Laura gives birth to a healthy baby girl, Rose. It seems as though their luck is changing, until suddenly, an early winter hail storm sweeps through

destroying all of their hard work. To make matters worse, Laura and Almonzo are both stricken with diphtheria. Ma and Pa take Rose to their house to keep her from catching the illness. After a few weeks in bed, the young couple is on the mend, but Almonzo, fearing the loss of their farm, returns to work too early and has a stroke resulting in a crippled leg. Laura worries about her family, but Almonzo soon heals and returns to work on the farm. One day, while he is working far from the house, an accident in the kitchen results in a fire that burns down their house. Laura saves the deed box with their possessions and money, but they lose everything else to the flames. Since they have been trying to farm for three years, Almonzo honors their wedding agreement, and consents to move with Laura to find a new life. As they pack to leave, Ma and Pa give Laura the gift of a writing desk and encourage her to write about her life and adventures.

As they travel, several years pass and Laura decides that farming is the best life for her family. They settle in the Ozarks of Missouri on Rocky Ridge Farm, and a grown Rose persuades her mother to finally use that writing desk. Laura writes a memoir of her life, which, with a little help from Rose, becomes a published bestseller.

Rose, who is a writer herself, travels all over the world writing and living a life away from the farm. One day, far into the future, an elderly Laura is asked to speak at a book fair. While a nervous Laura approaches the stage, Almonzo hopes that Rose will come home to see her mother speak. As Laura speaks about her books, she sees her daughter in the crowd. Happily, Laura continues to reminisce about the life she has led, and Rose hopes that she can live up to her mother's example.



Young Laura & Almonzo



Laura at Rocky Ridge Farm



Elderly Laura & Almonzo





# Who's Who



**LAURA INGALLS WILDER** is a strong-willed, intelligent girl, who grows up in the wilderness of the American Frontier.

**CAROLINE INGALLS (MA)** is Laura's mother. She is a brave woman who works hard to keep her family safe.

**CHARLES INGALLS (PA)** is Laura's father. He has a strong sense of adventure and longs to build a good life for his family.

**MARY INGALLS** is Laura's older sister. She is a kind soul who becomes blind after suffering a stroke brought on by scarlet fever.

**ALMONZO WILDER (MANLY)** is a good, young farmer who helps the Ingalls family after a hard winter. He and Laura fall in love and are later married.

**ROSE WILDER** is the daughter of Laura and Manly. She has the same sense of adventure as her grandfather, which takes her on travels around the world. Rose is a gifted writer who publishes many books of her own.

**ALFRED KNOPF** is a publisher whom Rose convinces to publish her mother's manuscript.

## Read More About It



Want to learn more about Laura's life or read some of her works? Check out these selections, available at your local St. Louis County Library.

***Little House on the Prairie***  
by Laura Ingalls Wilder

***On the Way Home: The Diary of a Trip from South Dakota to Mansfield, Missouri in 1894***  
by Laura Ingalls Wilder, with a setting by Rose Wilder Lane

***Pioneer Girl: The Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder***  
by William Anderson

***The World of Little House***  
by Carolyn Strom Collins and Christina Wyss Eriksson

***Borrowed Names: Poems About Laura Ingalls Wilder, Madam CJ Walker, Marie Curie and Their Daughters***  
by Jeannine Atkins

***Laura's Album: A Remembrance Scrapbook of Laura Ingalls Wilder***  
compiled by William Anderson

***Little Author in the Big Woods: A Biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder***  
by Yona Zeldis McDonough, illustrated by Jennifer Thermes

# From the Playwright



Laura Ingalls was born just after the Civil War to a time of national grief and hope. As a young woman, she saw a great forward motion of energy, a whirlwind of frontiers conquered, railroads forged, then telephones, radios, even television. She lived through two horrific World Wars and a crushing Depression. At the end of her life, U.S. advisors had touched down in Vietnam and satellites circled the planet.

In the writing of *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Voice of the Prairie*, I tried to set down American events in the context of Laura's life. But this is not a history for schoolbooks—this is the inner, gently rolling landscape of an American heart and soul. One of the most fascinating aspects to her books is the detail she imparts to ordinary things. How to do the laundry properly and which day of the week it should be done. How to mold a pat of butter so that the pretty side is on top. And in the midst of ordeal, how to twist hay for fuel and how to use a coffee grinder to make meal for bread.

Laura did not like to teach school but she surely educated us all, showing us how to cherish the peaceful history of our nation,

one small accomplishment at a time. Laura knew she had the talent and the desire to write, but it was her daughter Rose who knew how much Americans would clamor for her books. Rose was a thoroughly modern woman who rejected much of the life Laura loved. But in the end it was the writing that brought them together. There is a lot of speculation as to how much of the writing should be attributed to Rose. I don't care much about that—the two women held hands across a sea of change and left us with a marvelous gift.

As a girl, Laura hated to think that the events then happening would one day be gone and lost to the distant past. But Laura found a way to keep that from happening. She set it all down, simply and gently, so that we could enter her long-ago world any time we liked. I hope this play will send young readers to the library to visit Laura again and pass her gift along to the next generation—and the next and the next.

Kathryn Shultz Miller  
Playwright



# Pioneer Playtime



Pioneer children didn't have all the toys and electronic devices that children have today, but they still had fun—when they were not working on their numerous chores. The list below includes a few of the toys and crafts they liked to make, and a few of the games they liked to play. Choose one of the items on the list and do some research to find out more about it.

**Write a short description of your item on the lines below, and then draw a picture of your item in the box.**

Cornhusk Doll  
Whirligig  
Pincushion  
Thaumatrope  
Family Tree

Block Puzzle  
Whimmydiddle  
Jacob's Ladder  
Hopscotch  
Blind Man's Buff

Jump rope  
Marbles  
Jackstraws  
Hide and Seek  
Game of Graces

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# Pack Your Wagon

Laura spent much of her life in a covered wagon, moving from place to place in search of the ideal homestead. As a girl, Laura traveled with her family from Wisconsin to Missouri and through Kansas, Minnesota and South Dakota before finally settling with her husband in the Ozarks of Missouri. With each move, Laura and her family had to decide what was most important to take with them, and what they must leave behind. They had to take necessities such as food, water and blankets, while trying to leave room for their most prized possessions, like Pa's fiddle.

In the spirit of Laura and her family, pack a covered wagon for yourself. What can you leave behind? What is necessary for survival? What will you need to face challenges like rivers and wild animals?

In packing your wagon, you can only take 1,500 pounds worth of items. Use the table below to get the weights of common items. Compare your list of items to the lists of others in the class. Did they pack something important that you forgot?

<b>FOOD</b>	<b>LBS.</b>	<b>TOOLS</b>	<b>LBS.</b>	<b>HOUSEHOLD ITEMS</b>	<b>LBS.</b>	<b>PERSONAL ITEMS</b>	<b>LBS.</b>
apples	45	animal trap	20	baby cradle	60	banjo	4
bacon	100	animal whip	1	bench	75	bible	4
barrel of water	355	anvil	200	blankets	20	books	2
buffalo meat	300	axle	23	bookcase	90	boots	6
carrots	12	fishing pole	1	broom	2	box of hair clips	2
chicken	4	grinding stone	80	butter churn	45	doll	1
chocolate	20	hammer	4	candles (set of 20)	2	dress	4
coffee	20	hatchet	10	chest of drawers	125	fiddle	4
cornmeal	50	hoe	4	clock	1	first aid kit	6
dried beans	50	hunting knife	2	coffee grinder	6	harmonica	1
dried beef	55	pick ax	8	coffee pot	1	jump rope	1
flour	100	pistol	5	cooking utensils	3	kaleidoscope	1
nuts	13	pitch fork	6	curtains	2	long johns	3
oatmeal	85	plow	63	dishes (set of 8)	25	pair of pants	4
cooking oil	8	rifle	8	feather mattress	10	shirt	3
onions	12	rope	3	hope chest	125	shoes	4
peaches	28	saw	8	iron cooking stove	1,200	snowshoes	7
pickles	15	shovel	8	kitchen chair	25	stationery	1
potatoes	100	wagon canvas	24	kitchen table	175	wooden top	1
pumpkin	9	wagon wheel	16	lantern	3	wool coat	10
raisins	10			mirror	30		
raspberries	8			piano	1,000		
salt	20			picture frame	2		
salt pork	25			pitcher and bowl	6		
spices	4			rocking chair	55		
split peas	23			rug	35		
squash	35			soup kettle	60		
strawberries	18			spinning wheel	75		
sugar	50			stool	8		
tea	7			wooden bucket	15		

# The Ingalls' Travels

Laura's travels took her over much of the Midwest in her lifetime. With the help of a map, find out the distances Laura traveled between each of the locations listed below. A covered wagon could travel about 15 miles a day. **At that rate, how long would each trip have taken? Record the mileage and time required for each trip.**



- 1867 – Laura is born in Pepin, Wisconsin.
- 1869 – The family moves to Independence in Montgomery County, Kansas.
- 1871 – Ingalls family returns to Pepin, Wisconsin.
- 1874 – Family moves to Walnut Grove, Minnesota.
- 1879 – Family moves to the Dakota Territory near DeSmet, South Dakota.
- 1894 – Laura, Almanzo and Rose leave DeSmet for Mansfield, Missouri.



# A-maze-ing Journey

It's time for the Ingalls family to start another journey.  
Help Laura get Pa's fiddle to their wagon before it's time to leave!

