

*Laura Ingalls Wilder, Farm Journalist: Writings from the Ozarks*, edited by Stephen W. Hines. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007. xi, 330 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Pamela Riney-Kehrberg is professor of history at Iowa State University. Her most recent book is *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest* (2005).

In *Laura Ingalls Wilder, Farm Journalist*, editor Stephen W. Hines has brought together all of the known writings by Laura Ingalls Wilder to appear in the *Missouri Ruralist*. She was a quite active author for the publication between 1911 and 1924 and even had her own byline, an unusual feature in a farm paper. Hines has reproduced each of these writings in its entirety, providing the only complete collection of the pre-Little House publications available.

For anyone interested in Laura Ingalls Wilder, or in rural women's history, this should be interesting reading. Fans of Wilder's children's books will easily spot the stories that appeared later in the Little House series. That, however, is just a minor part of the book's appeal. Wilder's columns tackled a wide variety of subjects, helping to illuminate the issues concerning rural women in the early years of the twentieth century. Neighboring, successful parenting, and community development all appear in the volume. Farm politics and farm prices are much in evidence, including discussions about the necessity of child labor on the farm and the improvidence of state legislation against agricultural child labor. There is a lot of interesting commentary on farm women and the necessity, or even advisability, of their vote. It is difficult in places to tell what is editorial comment and what is Wilder's position, but Wilder was apparently no suffragist in the early years. By the time women received the vote, however, Wilder was arguing for the education of women voters and a strong presence at the polls. World War I is also prominent during those years, with Wilder promoting farm activities as the front line of the domestic war effort.

What will be particularly interesting to many are the detailed discussions of just how to accomplish many farm tasks. Wilder wrote extensively on cooking, food preservation, garden planning, care of poultry, and many other farm household tasks. With the hows and whys of many of these tasks long since lost to new technology and modernization, Wilder's articles provide an important link to a nearly forgotten past. Her discussions of designing the farm home and the farm kitchen to better serve the needs of the homemaker are very much in line with home extension efforts of the same era.

Not all parts of *Laura Ingalls Wilder, Farm Journalist* are equally useful or interesting, but it is, on the whole, a rich compilation. Hines

has pulled together all of the writings from a single (very famous) columnist and followed the development of her ideas over more than a decade. The book will be interesting to the casual reader, but it is also useful to scholars who wish to know more about female opinion from the early twentieth-century countryside. Wilder's pieces about travel may have limited usefulness, but her writings about farm life and farm politics are worth reading and using again and again.

*A Sesquicentennial History of Iowa State University: Tradition and Transformation*, edited by Dorothy Schwieder and Gretchen Van Houten. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 2007. xvi, 368 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$49.99 cloth.

Reviewer John L. Rury is professor of education at the University of Kansas. He has written extensively about secondary and higher education.

This well-conceived collection of essays commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Iowa Agricultural College and Farm, the predecessor of today's Iowa State University, will appeal to a wide range of readers. Although alumni and present and former staff members of the university will doubtless find it most interesting, it also will prove illuminating to anyone interested in the development of American higher education, particularly land grant institutions. The rise of Iowa State from a small and highly specialized institute for aspiring farmers to a world-renowned research and training center is a vital chapter in Iowa's history. Dorothy Schwieder, Gretchen Van Houten, and the other contributors to this book have helped to document the university's many contributions to Iowa and to the world.

Unlike traditional institutional histories, which often focus on administrative issues and "bricks and mortar" campus enhancements, the authors of this book paint a variegated picture of campus life as it evolved over the years. Separate chapters deal with such topics as student life, athletics, the faculty, cooperative extension and the physical development of the campus, along with accounts of presidential leadership during various eras in the institution's history. This approach results in overlapping accounts of some events and a certain degree of repetition, but it also offers compelling portraits of the diverse constituencies that a modern state university inevitably comes to serve. Each of the book's ten chapters is written by a different author, bringing special expertise and perspective to the task and adding to the book's originality and depth of insight. Brief "vignettes" about various events, personalities, and accomplishments add zest and variety to the mix.