Episode 1,221: Laura Ingalls Wilder, Erased by Library Association, Deserves Her Place in Literary History

Guest: Dedra Birzer

WOODS: I'm so pleased about your new course with Liberty Classroom, and everybody loves the subject matter. And it's a bit of a departure for us. We haven't done anything strictly on literature up to now. Now, if we have, I'm going to be embarrassed and feel bad that I said that, but I'm pretty sure we haven't. So this is really great, and I want to talk both about Laura Ingalls Wilder's works, as well as, let's say, her private views on numerous subjects. And of course, I also want to talk about Rose Wilder Lane, who's significant and who's a name that should be better-known, as I'm sure you'll agree.

BIRZER: Absolutely, yes.

WOODS: And certainly among people who listen to my show, they should know Rose Wilder Lane, so this will be a great opportunity to introduce them. But why don't we start right away with the controversy that arose not too long ago when the American Library Association voted to remove Laura Ingalls Wilder's name from a major children's book award. And in fact, I won't even set that up. I'll let you talk to us about it. Do you think that was a reasonable decision on their part?

BIRZER: Not at all [laughing], and I was able t to write a little bit about that. The American Library Association set up a committee to study this issue in I think February. So they spent some months thinking it over and talking it over before the annual meeting in late June. And I believe it was June 25th when they announced that they decided to remove Wilder's name from the Wilder Medal, and the medal was created in 1943 to honor her own work and the legacy that Wilder left for children's literature and to honor people who sort of emulated that. And so to take her name off the medal is double, I think, a strike against her, because it was not just awarded to her, but created in her honor because of the work she did.

So the claim was that her books are now kind of racist, which I just think is not accurate, to put it nicely [laughing]. And it's also [sighs] just such a pan to everything that's offensive these days. Instead of people actually reading Wilder's work and seeing the nuances there and the way that she really does deal with race on a lot of different levels, they just want to forget that it ever existed.

WOODS: I want to read one of the offending passages, because what's so interesting is that, at the time when it pointed out to her, she said, "Oh, my goodness, I had no idea I'd written it that way," you know, but basically, nobody has complained about it in 20 years [laughing].

BIRZER: Right, exactly. And all the editors at Harpers said the same thing, and they immediately changed it.

WOODS: Yeah, so here it is. This is from a *Little House on the Prairie*, 1935:

"There the wild animals wandered and fed as though they were in a pasture that stretch much farther than a man could see, and there were no settlers. Only Indians live there." Now, that's the that's the version that we have now. But until 1953, the text read: "There were no people. Only Indians lived there." And so in 1952, somebody complained.

And I'm reading now from your article from *National Review* online, in which she says, "I must admit to you that no one here realized that these words read as they did. Reading them now, it seems unbelievable to me that you were the only person has picked them up and written us about them in the 20 years since the book was published." And then her letter emphasized the response of everyone at Harper & Row: "We were disturbed by your letter. We knew that Mrs. Wilder had not meant to imply that Indians were not people." And then Wilder wrote: "Your letter came this morning. You were perfectly right about the fault in *Little House on the Prairie* and have my permission to make the correction as you suggest. It was a stupid blunder of mine. Of course Indians are people and I did not intend to imply they were not." So boom, there it is [laughing].

BIRZER: Exactly, exactly. I actually got an email from somebody who said that that my piece in *National Review* online, that I was going into histrionics and that, you know, times change and people change, and so we need to think about our literature and what we're having our children read. [laughing] Like, oh my gosh.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah.

BIRZER: Yes, and so people apparently are not allowed to rethink things they've written.

WOODS: But she apologized and fixed it. I mean, what, 70 years ago almost at this point? 60-something years ago?

BIRZER: Yes. And the sad thing is I think that people just read that and stopped. They didn't read the rest of the book. In the book, I think that Wilder went to great pains to show different reactions to Indians in the book. And she has that whole passage about when she talks to Ma, her Ma, who was very reluctant, we'll say, about the Indians, who, of course, she's the one who deals with them when they show up and demand that she cooks, and it's very scary, and Pa's usually out hunting or something when this happens. Then Laura says, "Well, if you hate Indians, why did we move here?" And so there are things that are in there that are not really that subtle.

And then that's juxtaposed against Pa, who is very interested in befriending Indians and spends time especially with one that they call Soldat du Chene, that Wilder and Rose, her daughter, spent a lot of time doing some research on trying to find who that was. And they didn't exactly find what they needed, but they kind of went with her memory of family stories from that. And then we see, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" point-of-view from the Scotts, who are neighbors in the book. And they had recently come from Minnesota, where

they had been in the middle of the Dakota Massacre in Minnesota. So they had that in their experience. So we get these kind of different ideas.

And then Laura throughout the novel, she wants to have her own papoose, baby Indian, and her mother is so bewildered. Why would you want to have your own papoose? And there's a lot of interesting theories about what was going on there, but I think that the novel overall shows huge gradations in the way that late 19th century American pioneers saw Indians and dealt with them on a daily basis. And I think it's really valuable as a teaching tool to look at. This is how people were thinking

WOODS: Of course it is [laughing].

BIRZER: It's not all the same, right? And they grow. And also, you know, things develop that, you know, Pa says: If we had known the Indians were still here, we would never have come. We were told by the government that they had been removed. This is their land. And I think that they kind of feel really tense about what's going to happen with Indians.

And one of the beauties of Wilder's writing — and there's so many beautiful aspects to it. But when you're reading that book, you can feel the drums at night and their sleeplessness and their worry. You know, what are these Osage going to do? And what would the Ingalls or any other white settlers do if the tides were reversed in the same kind of situation?

So, yes, I think it's quite a travesty that Wilders' name was removed from that and that people are so willing to dismiss it. And I think there's some folks out there who are saying, well, you know, it's just a medal and Wilders' name doesn't reflect what it does anymore. And if you look at who has received the medal recently, it's really become more of a, oh, who's the most diverse writer we can honor of late? But what it means is, I think, bookstores and libraries are going to stop featuring my Wilder's books, and so we, the reading public, have to make sure that there's still a demand.

WOODS: You know, I sensed a discomfort among the folks who did this. Like, almost like they knew they were being naughty, because they said, *Yeah, we have to do this for sensitivity, but we're not saying that kids shouldn't keep reading her books.* But you should be if you're taking her name.

BIRZER: Right.

WOODS: That is what you're saying

BIRZER: That is what they're saying.

WOODS: So you should be saying that. So I think it's almost like they knew this is stupid, even by our standards, but yet, we feel like we probably have to do it, but yet, we don't dare tell parents don't — So that was an awfully weird thing to — normally, when you strip somebody's name from something, it's to make them and unperson and we never read their works again.

BIRZER: Right. And it makes so many people question things about their childhood. Like I loved these books growing up. Now what are you saying about how I was brought up?

WOODS: Right.

BIRZER: So you're trying to kind of insert this whole white privilege thing in there, which is crazy. If you read all of the Ingalls books and books about the Ingalls, they were so poor. They were beyond dirt poor. They were starving. So there is no privilege there.

WOODS: In fact, that's actually an interesting segue. I of course want to get back to the books in a minute, but what was the Wilder family's view of the New Deal? That's very interesting to me.

BIRZER: Laura and Rose hated, *hated* the New Deal with a passion. And so the books are actually written against the backdrop of the New Deal and are partly as a way of showing that people can maintain their dignity in the face of poverty so much better if they're not given handouts. They stood on their own feet and made it, and that's the best way forward.

WOODS: So how do we know what their views are? Is this from private correspondence? Or is this from public writings?

BIRZER: Lots of letter-writing. Rose especially was very, very much a correspondent. I think she's probably up there with Russell Kirk with the numbers of letters that she had going back and forth. And of course, when she was living in Mansfield, Missouri, with her parents, as they were aging and trying to help them and she's an only child, she was pretty isolated in the '30s. And so that was her way of continuing an intellectual community. And she also had lots of writer friends who would come and stay at the farmhouse in Mansfield. And so she was also a very good diarist, s she's got a lot of her diary. And then she was writing things and hanging out with Garet Garrett and all kinds of people who were very anti-New Deal. And those two traveled around to check out Dust Bowl conditions, and so she wrote about that.

And so from Laura, we also have letters and things that Rose recorded that her mother said, and also just, yeah, lots of things in her own writings. So we have selected letters that have been published fairly recently from Laura Ingalls Wilder that have survived. A lot of things were destroyed, but those that have survived. So there is a pretty big evidence trail of how they felt that Roosevelt and the New Deal.

WOODS: Tell me — and I know you did a whole course on this, and I know this could be a long answer. But in brief, what makes the *Little House* books great and worth reading?

BIRZER: So many things [laughing]. I'd say, when you're looking at the whole genre of American children's literature that bridges into adults — because how many of us as parents have read these out loud? — there aren't very many heroines in the great American literature. Right, we have Laura Ingalls, and we have Jo March from *Little Women*, and we have Antonia from Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, and that's about it. There are not a lot of heroines. And so she becomes — because the books are so well distributed and so many children have read them for so many generations, because we're on, you know — they started being published in early '30s through the early '40s — so, fourth-generation readers now? And Laura, she's a heroine that everybody can identify with when they read her, boys and girls. She's kind of naughty [laughing], and she's definitely not perfect, and she's not a Pollyanna. So she has a lot to her personality and her character that people can identify with and want to be like. And so I think she's this character that you just want to stick with and find out what happens to her.

And so as Wilder was writing the books, as Laura Ingalls Wilder was writing the book, she received so many letters from school children, just wanting to know, because she didn't know when she started that it was going to be an eight-book series. And then the ninth was not really supposed to be part of the series. That's another story, kind of a publication decision that probably should not have been made after both Laura and Rose had died. So I think that's one of the things that makes the book so great, is just the longevity of wonderful character development of Laura in the whole series.

And then the writing. The writing is just beautiful and so descriptive. And most scholars who've looked at the writing really think that it's Laura's years — and this this is the part that corresponds with what really happened — but Laura's years of having to be her sister Mary's eyes. Because Mary went blind, and so Laura was her guide. She described everything to Mary. And so she developed this really wonderful vocabulary of descriptive writing that she transferred onto paper later in life.

I'll add to that one more thing —

WOODS: Yeah, go ahead.

BIRZER: — about a great novel. It's also the story of the development of America that people love. So the frontier and then becoming this kind of settled Western place and the continual movement West. This is a story that Wilder wanted to tell. It doesn't quite match up with her family's movements, but she saw when she looked back on her life that she had basically lived this very, very important segment of American history, going from pioneer days to trains, and then when she was his writing this, they had cars. So I think that was really important for students or children and adults to read, because there hadn't been a lot of fictional or somewhat fictional accounts of those pioneers when she started writing in the 1930s.

WOODS: Right, right, indeed. By the way, what was your opinion of the TV adaptation?

BIRZER: [laughing] I think the pilot was really good, which it followed very closely, *Little House on the Prairie*, the book. But then once you get into the series, it gets very far away. So it's called *Little House on the Prairie,* but it's really more about *On the Banks of Plum Creek*. So they're in Walnut Grove, Minnesota, and it just really kind of runs away with all kinds of storylines that never happened. And sometimes they're good and sometimes they're bad, but it kind of seems to me the farther they got — and a lot of this was Michael Landon's imagination, but I'm Rose's heir was Roger McBride, and he was part of creating this television series and worked a little bit with Michael Landon on that. And it just seems like the further they got from the novels, the more, I don't know, kind of crazy the storylines became.

But you know, it was a great family show. I never missed it. We own the entire series on DVD. And you know, I wouldn't mind if something like that came back.

WOODS: Sure.

BIRZER: Disney did a four-part series on *Little House on the Prairie* maybe ten years ago. And that's pretty good, as well. It's very close to the book.

WOODS: Let's talk about her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane. And in particular, with her, it's much easier, I think, to get her own personal views, because she did write a book called *The Discovery of Freedom*. Can you say something about that book?

BIRZER: Yes. So I'm actually rereading that currently. This was her first big nonfiction book for Rose. She had been quite a well-known fiction writer since early 1900s. And in 1919, she published her first novel, which was called *Virgin Roads*. And I don't know why that is in print anymore. You can get it since, there are all these wonderful outlets now that do print on-demand of these out-of-print books. But it's a great novel. It really shows so much about just that late World War I into the '20s kind of period. It's a great novel.

So I think that in a lot of roses fiction, she started working out these ideas that she brings all together in *The Discovery of Freedom*. So this comes after she wrote *Free Land*, which did really, really well, and a book called *Let the Hurricane Roar* that has been retitled *Young Pioneers*. And she used a lot of her family stories from their pioneering homesteading years in South Dakota. And so *The Discovery of Freedom* comes out in 1943, the same year as Isabel Paterson's *God of the Machine* and Ayn Rand's — oh, which one was this now?

WOODS: *The Fountainhead*.

BIRZER: *The Fountainhead*, yes. So 1943 was this really big year for these women writers who were part of this intellectual community. And Rose and Isabel Paterson were friends. Some of the crazy critics have tried to say that Rose stole the ideas from Isabel Paterson, which would not have been possible because if Paterson thought that Rose had stolen those ideas from her, she was not known to be kind. She would have let Rose have it, and that didn't happen, so I think we can pretty well see a trajectory of how Rose came to these ideas.

So really, she's asking how it is that each individual controls his or her own energy, and she looks at that versus authority. And she really sets up Old World versus New World and says the Old World is very much about this belief in, there's some kind of authority, capital A authority, that controls things. And then looking at America's questioning that authority to some extent, and so the authorities always have to figure out how to control all of the individual energies. And up to very recent in the past, they hadn't done that so well, because most of the history of mankind has been one of being very hungry, starvation. So she looks at what has to change in individual energy and individuals getting to decide what to do with that energy in order for everybody to have enough to eat.

WOODS: So as I looked through — I actually have not read this book, and I've read a lot of the Old Right literature, but I have not read this book. So just looking through the table of contents, it looks like she's kind of taking you through a history of the world. I mean, she does start off topically at the beginning. She's got some stuff on communism. But then she's going from it looks like the Middle Ages to today, and then she runs through constitutions and republics and the present situation, and then she has something to say about the Industrial Revolution.

And I mean, not having read it, I don't know, but I wonder — like there's a guy named Bertrand de Jouvenel who wrote a book on power and also have a book on sovereignty, where he thinks it's just facile to say that, because now we have representative institutions, this automatically means that things are going to be better, but you know, they have their own problems. And, and at least with the king, you knew you weren't the king and you weren't

ever going to be the king. It was very clear that was a power that had nothing to do with you and was separate from you.

But here, we're kind of — it's, you know, this is your government too, and they're just doing what you tell them. I think that kind of brainwashes people into thinking things are better than they are. And I think we glide over that sometimes, because we're so dying to pat ourselves on the back for how much better our system is.

BIRZER: Rose would absolutely agree with that.

WOODS: Okay, good [laughing].

BIRZER: So she says, just reading from her interesting production. She says, "This is the human dilemma. Each individual is the source and control of human energy, but one individual cannot generate enough energy. To live at all and then to get the values that he wants in living, he must combine his energy with the energies of others. But in doing this, he always encounters an obstacle to the direct use of his energy to achieve his own desires. This obstacle is a problem of controlling the combined energies." So that's when you get into authority with a capital A. So she recounts history of humankind, right, as you were going through the table contents, noting, and looking at — she says when people rebelled against authority, they just replaced it with a different authority over and over and over and over and not really changing anything.

WOODS: All right, yeah, that's what I want to hear.

BIRZER: So that's where she's going with all of this. A lot of people credit her with being the mover and shaker for libertarian thought in the 20th century, so that this book started a lot of thinking. But she was really good friends with Albert Jay Nock, and so this came out two years before he died, and then she took over for him *The Economic Review of Literature* — and might be butchering that name. But so she did a lot of thinking after she wrote this book, and there were some corrections that she wanted to put in as she kept thinking about it. But Nock had some really great things to say about this book too, so he thought it was really, really remarkable — and that's the word he uses. Let's see if I can find his quote. In his review of the book, he says, "When it comes to anything fundamental. Mrs. Lane never makes a mistake. She is always right. In this respect, the book is really remarkable. So I think that's high praise, coming from Albert Jay Nock. So I think she's very much in that tradition of from sort of Nockian thinking about authority and individualism. She comes out of that.

WOODS: I was just looking because I want to get links to the different books to put them on the show notes page, so I was on Amazon and apparently — because I like a box set. If there are going to be nine or eight or whatever volumes and something, I want all of them, and I want them all in one purchase. And it says here, "You ordered this on June such-and-such, 2011." I didn't even realize that. I forgot. Seven years ago, apparently I ordered these.

BIRZER: You have a box set somewhere in the house.

WOODS: Somewhere in the house. Actually, I don't know. Regina has them, and of course, yeah, I bought these. I completely forgot that I bought these. But anyway, a couple of other things about Rose. Do we know what, if any, her role was in the *Little House* series itself?

BIRZER: That is quite the controversy. In fact, when you were talking about controversy a little while ago, I thought you're going to go there. So Rose's biographer, main biographer, William Holtz, who is a professor at University of Missouri — I'm not sure if he's still alive living or not. But he wrote a book called *The Ghost in the Little House*. And so he contends that Rose actually wrote the books. And so this is the beginning of this huge line of scholarship, much of which has an agenda behind it. I don't think he necessarily had the agenda. We really have him to thank for putting a lot of Rose's writings out there for the public.

So he put together some of her journals about — she spent some years in the 1920s living in Albania and has just a hilarious account of that called *Travels With Zenobia*. Zenobia was a car that she and her friend, who lived with her in Albania, bought in Paris and then tried to drive to Albania in the 1920s. So try to picture that [laughing]. And then some volumes of letters between Dorothy Thompson and Rose and — what else has he put out? a couple of other things. So he really spent many years going through the correspondence and diaries and journals, all of Rose's papers, which are at the Hoover Presidential Library, because she and Hoover were friends. So that's also where all of Laura Ingalls Wilder's papers are, except some that are at the museum in Mansfield, Missouri.

So the next round then of scholarship is trying to figure out just how much Rose did on these books and was that some kind of subterfuge and was it kind of a lie in a sense. And so a lot of this is trying to take away from the power of these books and the place of the books and kind of leading actually in a trajectory to where they took Wilder's name off the American Library Association award.

So most recently, Caroline Fraser wrote a book called *Prairie Fires*, which won the Pulitzer award this past year. And so she comes down with collaboration, is what she claims. And so a lot of people pored over the manuscripts to see — they went back and forth between Lauren and Rose, and especially when Rose moved to Danbury, Connecticut in the late 1930s, then Rose would comment on the major script pages that her mother sent to her and send them back. And so we have a few more kind of substantial things to look at with that.

So Rose came out of kind of the yellow journalism school in San Francisco. And she was an editor and as she was schooled in the very heavy editing that newspapers bring out in people, especially in San Francisco in the early 1910s, when she was working there, and that's where she really learned to write. So some scholars have said this is exactly what Rose brought to her mother's manuscripts, this kind of heavy editing that she learned in newspapers. And she often took on kind of a mentorship role with would-be writers, and so she does that with her mother, as well.

But Laura had written farm journalism. She had a column in *The Missouri Ruralist* for well over a decade, so she was writing publicly throughout the 1910s and 1920s. And around 1930, she wrote this kind of autobiographical manuscript that she called *Pioneer Girl* and then sent that to Rose, or gave it to Rose, because they were both living in Mansfield at that time. And Rose sent it around to all of her publishing friends and agents in New York, and it didn't really go anywhere. But there were some pieces in it that Rose kind of pulled out, thinking it would make a short story that a magazine might pick up.

And she called that "When Grandmother Was a Little Girl." And it was all centered around the stories that Laura's pa had told that she thought were so wonderful that they really needed to be saved. And when that was accepted, the publishers asked her to kind of fill that in a little

bit, asked Laura to fill that out a little bit, and tell some things about how people lived. And this was about their young childhood days in Wisconsin, in the big woods of Wisconsin. So that's where we get *Little House in the Big Woods*.

So Laura added in as a writer all kinds of how they did things, how they smoked venison, and how they butchered the pig, and all kinds of things. In fact, in the first chapter, you get the butchering of the pig, which is a little bit disconcerting for some people [laughing]. And the girls are playing with the bladder; you know, that's a balloon for them. But it's a great picture that's really kind of a liturgical picture, in a sense of pioneer life. It goes through the seasons. It doesn't really have kind of a big action arc, where you have a climax or a beginning, a middle, and an end. It's very seasonal. So Rose helped quite a bit with that.

And then the next book was the *Farmer Boy* book, which is about Almonzo, but kind of the same sort of liturgical look, except there's a lot more of coming of age, kind of maturing stories there. And I know that Rose helped with that, even going to Malone, New York, where Armando had grown up, and trying to find the farm house. And I think the house burned down by that point, but she was able to find a lot of material. And then Alonzo helped quite a bit, filling in things with that.

So we have some books that seem to have more of Rose's hand in them than others, and then there are parts in some of the later books that some scholars think Rose just, that's Rose right there. There's a part in *These Happy Golden Years* — no, in *Little Town on the Prairie*, excuse me, in which there's a Fourth of July celebration, and Laura comes to this realization in the book that God is our king in America, and when she becomes an adult and there's nobody who can make her behave, she has to do that on her own. And there's a big long discussion about her thoughts on all of that, and a lot of scholars have said, well, that's got to be Rose, because Laura's never written anything about that.

It's really hard to say where that line is, and I think Rose was not really big on collaboration. At least in some of her letters to Dorothy Thompson in the 1920s, she didn't like that idea at all. But I think one of the things that motivated her to help her mother was it's the '30s. It's the Depression. Rose had been financially responsible for her parents for a long time, and I think she wanted to help them find a way to be more independent financially, and having her mother write these books was a good way to do that. And it worked.

WOODS: All right, I have a couple more things I want to ask you. One is just a quick one. Did Rose know Ayn Rand, as far as you know?

BIRZER: I don't know if they knew each other personally, but I do know she did social things, Rose did, with Isabel Paterson, and Isabel Paterson was very close friends with Ayn Rand, so I wouldn't be surprised. And from 1939 on, Rose lived in Danbury, Connecticut and very close to New York and would go back and forth, and I know she held teas in the 1950s that people like Clare Boothe Luce and Isabel Paterson came to. So I haven't found direct evidence, but it would not surprise me if they knew each other. I think there's something Ayn Rand has written where she kind of dismissed Rose or Rose's writings. Maybe she reviewed something. I'm not remembering exactly at this moment.

WOODS: Okay. I was just wondering.

BIRZER: They're definitely part of the same larger intellectual community.

WOODS: And now finally, here's a question that I have almost hesitate to ask, because I guess I'm just not the kind of person who will say: I want to go see that movie because I heard it's a libertarian movie. I want to see how — Tell me, as a libertarian, what did you think of this movie? Or: how did you enjoy this book? Are there libertarian themes? And to me, that just, you know, there are parts of my life that don't have to constantly obsessed with this stuff. I can just enjoy myself. So I don't I don't care if a movie is libertarian.

BIRZER: [laughing]

WOODS: I'm not interested. And especially when it's some strained effort. *No, if you really think about it, he represents the state and that guy represents* — Come on. You're sucking all the life out of life when you do stuff like that. But I do want to ask, though: is there a particular appeal that the *Little House* books might have for an audience that has a libertarian outlook?

BIRZER: I think so. And the course I did for liberty classroom, I called it "Little Houses of Liberty," and I think the books speak very directly to a lot of libertarian themes and really thinking about success and failure, for example, and taking that Hayekian look at that. And one of the things that Rose talks about a lot in *The Discovery of Freedom* is the problems with planned economies, right? How can you plan an economy when you don't know what you as an individual are going to do in the next five minutes? So how can you plan an economy? And I think there's a lot of underlying questions as the Ingalls family faces disaster after disaster, mostly, due — you know, they've got locusts invasions, which really happened, and there were years, in 1875 especially, when 1.5 trillion locusts descended upon the Great Plains. And many farmers, like 60% of farmers decided that they were just not going to plant, because whatever they planted would get eaten by these bugs.

So there are all these things out of their control. And this underlying question through a lot of the books is: what is success for a farmer? And at one point, Wilders says, well, we were always pioneers, not farmers, which wasn't actually true, because those years in Minnesota on Plum Creek, Pa Ingalls definitely saw himself as a farmer and was farming big wheat fields.

But there's this question, especially in the first four years, which is the manuscript I was alluding to earlier, that Laura probably wrote in 1932, 1933 — we're not really sure — she meant it as an adult book, not as a juvenile book like her other ones. And so it has a very different tone. But I think it was pretty clear that it wasn't up to the standard of her other books, and so she never did anything about publishing it. And then Rose, when she inherited all of her mother's papers, never did anything about publishing it. In fact, she gave it to Roger McBride for safekeeping to keep it out of the other papers. And then he went and published it in 1972, after Rose died in 1968, and presented it to Harper's as this lost manuscript of Laura Ingalls Wilder. And so they have slapped it on to the other eight volumes and I think confused every school child in America by doing so, because it's a very bitter story and it's not for children.

But it really asks that question in a very libertarian kind of sense, I think, about what is success and what is failure, and if you have planned economies, then you have this certain idea about what means success. And none of that fits together with pioneer experiences on the Great Plains. And so I think a lot of that actually helped Rose develop her thinking that

she comes to in *The Discovery of Freedom*, having all of this in her background, and then she really studied it when she wrote the novels, *Free Land* and *Young Pioneers*, which she wrote as *Let the Hurricane Roar*.

So I think that your readers will, without having to really pull things out of thin air, find a lot of libertarian ideas. And *Free Land* is definitely considered a libertarian novel, and I'd recommend that as well. That's Rose's take.

WOODS: Okay, so I'm going to have a whole bunch of links to books at TomWoods.com/1221, the show notes page, so everybody trying to keep track of all these titles, I've got them up there; I've got them linked; you can buy them, check them out. And I'm also going to link to your article that you wrote in response to the Library Association. So it's going to be great — this show notes page is like the king of all show notes pages. So you're definitely going to want to check that out at TomWoods.com/1221.

And of course, you'll also want to check out LibertyClassroom.com, because that's where we've got Dedra's new course on Laura Ingalls Wilder and her work. So we're just growing and expanding and broadening our horizons all the time over there. And I'll tell you there is a disproportionate burden being carried in the development of Liberty Classroom by the Birzer household, and don't think we don't appreciate that. We do very much, and I certainly appreciate your time this morning. Thanks so much.

BIRZER: You're welcome. We appreciate being on Liberty Classroom.

WOODS: Hooray! That's what I want to hear. All right. Great. Thanks again for your time.

BIRZER: You're welcome, anytime.