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## **Laura Ingalls Wilder’s ‘Pioneer Girl’ Resonates with Donors Across South Dakota**

PIERRE, S.D.—The South Dakota State Historical Society will soon release Laura Ingalls Wilder’s “Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography.” Though the journeys of the Ingalls family ended at De Smet, Wilder’s story resonates with donors across South Dakota.

“We are one of the many Dakota Territory families who owe a lot to ‘pioneer girls,’” said Jeb Clarkson, senior vice president and senior trust officer and director of Pioneer Bank and Trust in Buffalo. “It is because of women like my grandmother, Maude Moriarty, and her sister Gertrude, who decided to prove up a claim in Harding County in the early 1900s and live in a sod house and teach school, that we Clarksons are here today.”

In 1912, Maude married Ferman M. Clarkson who, with his brother, Herbert W. Clarkson, started what is now Pioneer Bank and Trust in 1913. Their stories and those of Laura Ingalls Wilder inspired the family’s support of the Pioneer Girl Project and their excitement over the upcoming release of Wilder’s autobiography.

“Wilder’s writing defined the pioneer experience for millions around the world,” said Michael Lewis, president of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fund-raising partner of the State Historical Society. “Her experiences as a pioneer girl and woman resound with readers because they are based on her life, but “Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography” is the first time the non-fiction version of her life will be available. Without Pioneer Bank and Trust and the continued support of other donors, her true story would not be heard.”

More information about the Pioneer Girl Project can be found at [pioneergirlproject.org](http://pioneergirlproject.org) or by contacting the South Dakota Historical Society Press at (605) 773-6009 or [info@sdshspress.com](mailto:info@sdshspress.com). To donate, please contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation at (605) 773-3458 or [info@sdhsf.org](mailto:info@sdhsf.org). Donations can also be made on the foundation website at [http://www.sdhsf.org/special\\_projects/pioneer.html](http://www.sdhsf.org/special_projects/pioneer.html). To pre-order “Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography,” email [orders@sdshspress.com](mailto:orders@sdshspress.com) or call (605) 773-6009.

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*The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society’s world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and*

*administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit [www.history.sd.gov](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*