PortraitsFromRuralWisconsin01AlauraIngallsWilder

- Pepin County is home to the revered birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder. –

- Julie Miller: *Laura was born here* in 1867.

- Little House in the Big Woods *is set here,* *the first book of Wilder's* *influential* Little House *series* *on pioneer life.*

[bell ringing]

- Julie Miller: Any boys and girls that want to come in *for a quilt block story...*

- *Thousands come annually to celebrate the author.*

- People come from all over.

- *They're drawn by the chance* *to get a taste of the past.*

- *Doing what Laura did.* Run through the fields with your bonnet flying off and having a good time.

- Maggie Glynn: If you could, would you try living like a pioneer?

- Festival attendee: Yes.

- Festival attendee: She would.

[laughter]

- *But it may be more than playing pioneer* *that brings out Wilder's fans.* *The book's celebration* *of simple virtues also resonates,* *according to celebration organizers* *like 92-year-old Maxine Johnson.*

- Well, I think they like that homespun philosophy that Laura had.

*She always pointed out* *that even though many years have gone by,* those principles that were taught at that time are still the things that we should rely on today.

[marching band music playing]

- *Today the village of Pepin* *celebrates their connection to Wilder and her legacy* *in classic small-town fashion.* *The community puts on a parade* *and they hold old-fashioned events* *like fiddle contests* *and spelling bees.*

- "Chocolate."

- "Chocolate." C-H-O... C-O-L-A-T-E. "Chocolate."

- Okay, I guess we have our winner.

[applause]

- *Children learn about Wilder's* *hardscrabble life and then make* *a mad scramble for Life Savers and lollipops.*

*[slow fiddle music]*

*It's easy to see all that's changed* *since Wilder's day,* *but her influence remains.*

- *And the values.* I think her values are just what families and the world needs to get back to.