

**HERITAGE TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF  
THE LAURA INGALLS WILDER  
HERITAGE TOURISM SITE  
AT PEPIN, WISCONSIN**

by

**Valerie A. Erickson**

**A Research Paper**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Requirements for the  
Masters of Science Degree  
With a Major in**

**Hospitality and Tourism**

**Approved: 3 Semester Credits**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynette Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**The Graduate College  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
December, 2001**

The Graduate College  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751

## **ABSTRACT**

Erickson, Valerie A.

Heritage Tourism: A Case Study of the Laura Ingalls Wilder site at Pepin, Wisconsin

Hospitality and Tourism Dr. Lynette Brouwer 11/01 64 pages

APA Style Manual

Many things must be taken into consideration when developing a heritage tourism site. It can be a wonderful opportunity for the community involved to benefit economically and historically. Heritage tourism can keep alive the heritage and traditions of the communities past. When it is discovered that a heritage site exists, the first step is to consult with the community. A site will not succeed without the acceptance and assistance from the community involved. Once the interest is known, the development process can proceed.

After determining that there is a heritage tourism site possibility in their area, a community must do research to determine the feasibility of the site, what will make it a success, and how to obtain that success.

This study will examine a community with a heritage tourism site that has been successful in developing and maintaining it's site. By conducting this study, other communities seeking information for developing their site will have an example and tool to work with.

The site chosen for this study is the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, Wisconsin. The town is rich with it's heritage associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder. The development and success for this town will be documented through this study.

Laura Ingalls Wilder is a perfect choice for examining heritage tourism. The author of many American Pioneer books, she has become famous all over the world. In turn all places that she or her family members lived are or are becoming heritage tourism sites. There are older ones that have been in progress for some years, such as the one in Pepin, and there are ones that are being discovered through the popularity of new books written about Laura's family. These communities would benefit greatly from the information this study will produce. Without the benefit of this knowledge communities who are unaccustomed to tourism or the way the other Laura Ingalls Wilder sites operate, may make terrible errors in development, tarnishing the site. This may also reflect badly on the other Laura Ingalls Wilder sites. It is important for new Wilder sites to examine all information and know exactly what they are doing when developing the site.

If all the Laura Ingalls Wilder sites can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience it will greatly increase the market for all sites. The more detailed and expansive the sites are about their knowledge and sites to see, the more people are going to want to travel to as many sites as possible, learning all they can about the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family. These sites not only attract Laura Ingalls Wilder fans but all people that are interested in the American Pioneer period of the United States history.

This study will provide the knowledge for communities who are developing heritage tourism sites, especially those focusing on Laura Ingalls Wilder. This is a very important study for tourism and especially heritage tourism. When a heritage site is discovered communities run into the barrier of not having the experience and knowledge to develop the site properly. This study will analyze tourism in Pepin, Wisconsin to determine it's successfulness due to the fact that it is a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site, and if it was developed in a way to provide tourists with a view of Laura Ingalls Wilder's past and the past of many Pioneer Americans. By

studying this subject it will allow for many people to benefit. Tourist who are seeking the pleasure of the knowledge of the past, and communities who want to preserve their past and profit from tourism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
TABLE OF GRAPHS.....	ii
CHAPTER ONE	
The Problem and Its Setting.....	1
CHAPTER TWO	
Review of Literature.....	6
CHAPTER THREE	
Research Methodology.....	29
CHAPTER FOUR	
Research Findings.....	35
CHAPTER FIVE	
Interpretations, Recommendations and Conclusion.....	50
REFERENCES.....	57
APPENDIX ONE	
Interview questions for visitors.....	61
APPENDIX TWO	
Interview questions for development and maintenance.....	63

TABLE OF CHARTS

NO.	CHART TITLE	
1	Likes.....	37
2	Improvements.....	41

CHAPTER ONE  
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In society today, many people are traveling more than ever, for many different reasons. Some travel for business, relaxation, or adventure. Others travel to learn and experience other ways of life and the historical aspect of tourism. Heritage tourism is discovering a cultures past and present through tourism.

Many things must be taken into consideration when developing a heritage tourism site. It can be a wonderful opportunity for the community involved to benefit economically and historically. Heritage tourism can restore an old building that has become an eyesore, or keep alive the heritage and traditions of the communities past. When it is discovered that a historical or heritage site exists, the first step before any development can occur, is to consult with the community. A heritage tourism site will not succeed without the acceptance and assistance from the community involved. Once the interest is known, the development process can proceed. After determining that there is a heritage tourism site possibility in their area, a community must do research to determine the feasibility of the site, what will make it a success, and how to obtain that success.

This study will examine a community with a heritage tourism site that has been successful in developing and maintaining its site. By conducting this study, other communities seeking information for developing their site will have an example and tool to work with. The study will be done through interviews.

The site chosen for this study is the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, Wisconsin. The site consists of The Little House Wayside, which is a three-room replica cabin of the one the family built in 1863 and a historical museum which features exhibits on Laura Ingalls Wilder with a fully stocked book shop with Little House books and related items (Anderson, 1996).



The town is rich with its heritage associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder. The third weekend in September is the Laura Ingalls Wilder Days Festival. Entertainment includes antiques, a crafts and flea market, a parade, a Laura look-alike pageant and a play based on Little House in the Big Woods. In Pepin's Oakwood Cemetery there are relatives buried along with some characters from Laura's books. The development and success for this town will be documented through this study. Such questions will be answered such as "How did they develop their small town into a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage site?" And "How did they make it a success?"

Laura Ingalls Wilder is a perfect choice for examining heritage tourism. The author of many American Pioneer books, she has become famous all over the world. In turn all places that she or her family members lived are or are becoming heritage tourism sites. There are older ones that have been in progress for some years, such as the one in Pepin, and there are ones that are being discovered through the popularity of new books written about Laura's family. These communities would benefit greatly from the information this study will produce. Without the benefit of this knowledge communities who are unaccustomed to tourism or the way the other Laura Ingalls Wilder sites operate, may make terrible errors in development, tarnishing the site. This may also reflect badly on the other Laura Ingalls Wilder sites. It is important for new Wilder sites to examine all information and know exactly what they are doing when developing the site.

If all the Laura Ingalls Wilder sites can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience it will greatly increase the market for all sites. Many tours have been developed to take travelers to the existing sites. The researcher herself developed a tour that traveled to six different states, and to eight different Laura Ingalls Wilder sites while working as a group coordinator at a travel agency. The more detailed and expansive the sites are about their knowledge and sites to see, the more people are going to want to travel to as many sites as

possible, learning all they can about the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family. These sites not only attract Laura Ingalls Wilder fans, but all people that are interested in the American Pioneer period of the United States history. People want to discover what it was like back then and how the people lived. That is the essence of heritage tourism.

Through the review of literature, the researcher will explain the importance of heritage tourism. It will be viewed through three types of cultural heritage tourism.

- African American Heritage Tourism
- Native American Heritage Tourism
- American Pioneer Heritage Tourism

It will then go more in-depth into the American Pioneer and Laura Ingalls Wilder. This study combines the importance of developing a heritage tourism site and the interest it possesses to many tourists and communities alike.

This study will provide the knowledge for communities who are developing heritage tourism sites, especially those focusing on Laura Ingalls Wilder. This is a very important study for tourism and especially heritage tourism. When a heritage site is discovered, communities run into the barrier of not having the experience and knowledge to develop the site properly. This study will analyze tourism in Pepin, Wisconsin to determine its successfulness due to the fact that it is a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site, and if it was developed in a way to provide tourists with a view of Laura Ingalls Wilder's past and the past of many Pioneer Americans. By studying this subject it will allow for many people to benefit. Tourists who are seeking the pleasure of the knowledge of the past, and communities who want to preserve their past and profit from tourism. It is the researcher's hope to be able to present this study to a community

that has discovered that they have a heritage tourism site associated with Laura Ingalls Wilders' family that has not yet been developed.

The purpose of this study is to describe the factors that are involved in the development of the Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site in Pepin, Wisconsin as measured by interview. This study will focus on the following objectives:

1. To determine the development process for this site.
2. To determine key characteristics of this site which make it a successful Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site.
3. To determine key characteristics of this Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site that can be improved upon.
4. To determine existing plans to maintain feasibility of this site.

CHAPTER TWO  
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Heritage tourism is a growing trend for the tourism industry. It is continually growing all over the world, especially in the United States. This chapter will discuss the following areas: Introduction to and definitions of heritage tourism, examples and programs dealing with heritage tourism, communities involvement and planning in heritage tourism, challenges of heritage tourism, and cultural heritage tourism. In the last area, cultural heritage tourism, three groups will be studied. They are African American heritage tourism, Native American heritage tourism, and American Pioneer heritage tourism.

### Introduction to Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism, or visiting an area's historical sites, is the hottest trend in the travel industry (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). Heritage tourism is most assuredly big business in the business of travel and tourism (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). Heritage sites not only have intrinsic beauty and value, they are among the key assets of tourism (Johnson, 1992). Tourists want to experience unique places, traditions, and history, and learn about their cultural sites (Dickinson, 1996). Lakshman Ratnaplal states that heritage and tourism enjoy a very special symbiotic relationship with each enriching the other (Johnson, 1992). Recent studies of cultural heritage and tourism have tended to concentrate on the power of tradition, which implies stability or continuity, whereas tourism involves change (Nuryanti, 1996). Takayuki Wakaki states that heritage sites are "the common treasures of all peoples. They hold and explain history, society, the passions and purposes of the peoples whose civilizations are bound up with them. More than any book, more than any movie, more than any college course-they are living sessions for all who see them" (Johnson, 1992).

What is heritage tourism? Through the research many definitions were cited. The word heritage in its broader meaning is generally associated with the word inheritance meaning something transferred from one generation to another (Nuryanti, 1996). Heritage tourism

classification has expanded since the mid-1980's so that heritage is now defined as anything that "reflects a heterogeneous nostalgia for the past as imagined or presented" (Rudd & Davis, 1998).

Heritage is viewed as part of the cultural tradition of society (Nuryanti, 1996). Heritage tourism is a destination with a story (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). It offers opportunities to portray the past in the present (Nuryanti, 1996). It has potential to enrich appreciation of the past and to forge stronger links between the past, present and future (Nuryanti, 1996).

The idea behind heritage tourism (also known as cultural tourism) is that communities identify their historical and cultural resources and then develop these resources with the intent of sharing them with travelers (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). Traditions and cultural heritage are the most important commodities to sell through tourism (Detter, 1985). Heritage requires more than preservation: its significance should be conveyed to the visitor leading to an enriched understanding in the context of the present (Nuryanti, 1996).

Characteristics of cultural/heritage tourism may vary, but the common themes are: effective promotion incorporates the concept of sustainable tourism, the economic benefits of tourism should accrue to the local communities that host those activities, small-scale activities best provide the authentic travel experiences which attract tourists with considerable time and money to spend, and cultural attractions, when properly packaged and marketed, can flourish in off-season times and make up for a lack of traditional destination appeals (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). In much of the world, cultural tourism is linked closely to built heritage (Seale, 1996). Built heritage refers to historic buildings and structures. It is often recognized simply as one form of cultural heritage. It is comprised of human-made fixed elements, possessing historical values and meaning derived from the setting in which they occur and societal values that ascribe worth to

them (Nuryanti, 1996). Integrated efforts, bringing together natural and cultural heritage interest, do exist, and are becoming increasingly important within the heritage field (Seale, 1996).

### Examples of Heritage Tourism

This paper will show some of the various examples of heritage tourism from states around the country. Wisconsin is the first area that will be discussed. Wisconsin's Heritage Tourism Initiative has helped increase awareness of heritage tourism during its three years as a national pilot program. It has also provided four unique project areas with the opportunity and assistance to identify and preserve pieces of the state's heritage and make these areas accessible to citizens and travelers. In 1990, Wisconsin began its Heritage Tourism Program when it was selected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to participate in a three-year demonstration program. The pilot program was designed as a partnership between the preservation community and the tourism industry to demonstrate that historic places can be major attractions when properly preserved, packaged, and marketed.

The projects received technical assistance through a six-point development program that included: 1) Resource Identification; 2) Investigation of Opportunities; 3) Program Design and Administration; 4) Product Development; 5) Marketing and Communications; 6) Research. Pilot areas in Wisconsin were: Lac du Flambeau Chippewa Reservation in north-central Wisconsin; Fox and Wisconsin Rivers Heritage Corridor, an historic inland waterway explored by Marquette and Joliet; Wisconsin Ethnic Settlement Trails, Inc., including a variety of ethnic settlements in 12 counties along the eastern border of the state; and Frank Lloyd Wright Heritage Tour, including sites designed by the architect in his native state (Wisconsin's Heritage Tourism Initiative, 1993). Also, every year Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Program sponsors "Wright and Like: A Century in Racine" home tour. The tour features four homes and four public buildings

and attracts Wright enthusiasts throughout the country. Wright's Usonian philosophy was to attempt to bring attractive, well designed home into the price range of ordinary people (Herrick, 1998).

The western neighboring state to Wisconsin, Minnesota, is also promoting heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is touching such small Minnesota towns as Lanesboro, river cities such as Red Wing, and communities along Hwy. 14, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway. Some folks in western Minnesota hope that a new image, based on their prairie town's past will inspire tourists to visit Madison, Minnesota. Prairie Heritage Coalition was organized to promote communities near Hwy. 75 near Minnesota's western border. The road follows the route of a 17th century fur-trading trail from Winnipeg to the Gulf of Mexico and an early 20th century auto club route called the "King of Trails." There is plenty to promote from quarries in Pipestone and wind towers around Lake Benton to prairie preservation near the Canadian border (Franklin, 1998).

Montana is also working to promote their heritage tourism. Due to a story about Skip the dog, Fort Benton, Montana citizens decided to raise \$100,000 for a sculpture of Skip in heroic bronze. Their efforts paid off and now Skip is the biggest draw for international visitors (Cass & Jahrig, 1998).

Deep under Havre, Montana streets lies a remarkable early 1900's underground city complete with a bakery, drug store, butcher shop, saddle shop, blacksmith shop, barber shop, laundry, saloon, bordello, and opium den. The Havre community opened the underground exhibit in 1994, after five years of planning, developing, and collecting authentic items to fill the empty underground rooms. The underground city tells the story of Montana in the rugged early days, with railroaders, bootleggers, and immigrants. Nobody knows the exact history of the tunnels and



the underground rooms, but there are many theories. About the time the Great Northern Railroad was being built in 1887, Havre had a lot of Chinese immigrants who had moved West to find work as the story goes, people used to see Chinese people all over town during the day, but at night they disappeared. Speculation was that the Chinese used the tunnels at night to hide from the cowboys who persecuted them, cutting off their pigtailed and such. Another story was that bootleggers used the tunnels to smuggle moonshine. Then, after the 1904 fire leveled downtown Havre, part of the city's business district moved beneath the streets. Instead of rebuilding their stores and offices above ground, shopkeepers, accountants, lawyers, and doctors moved to their basements. Since building materials were expensive they decided it would be better to operate from their basements. Tunnels linked businesses' together and formed an underground city. Many stayed there until the 1930's or 1940's. In the past five years, more than 50,000 visitors have toured the underground exhibit proving, not all towns need trees, mountains and spectacular landscapes to attract tourists. In previous years most tourists passed through Havre on there way to Glacier Park. But a unique and authentic attraction like Havre Beneath the Streets gives people a reason to stay (Cass & Jahrig, 1998).

Montana has 1,000 wonderful stories, each community needs to figure out what their story is and tell it. The Yellowstone Heritage Partnership is a heritage tourism area geographically determined by the Yellowstone drainage. The partnerships goal is to help foster proactive heritage tourism activities while striving to maintain the quality of life in the Yellowstone Valley. In 1997, the Montana State Legislature authorized a new state agency called the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commission. The commission is responsible for coordinating and promoting the states bicentennial observance of the Lewis and Clark expedition, which will take place from 2003 to 2006. The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana

has already attracted 63,000 visitors since its opening a few months ago. Travel experts believe that the Center has seen such a high visitation because tourists have already started their Lewis and Clark theme vacations, stopping at attractions along the famous trail to collect historical tidbits (Cass & Jahrig, 1998).

In Maryland tourism is a \$6 billion a year industry and visiting historic sites is one of the top three activities of visitors throughout the state (Historic Preservation's Payoff, 1998). The project to promote the 350-mile length of U.S. 441 as the first statewide cultural and heritage tourism trail has received a big boost of local-level confidence and commitment. Most towns and cities along the corridor are richer than they realize, in terms of heritage tourism assets (Osinski, 1998). Also on the east coast, Fairfield Historic House Museum Collaborative was formed to meet, share ideas, produce cooperative projects and promote heritage tourism in Fairfield county. By joining together they were able to produce a brochure of ten historic houses (Liebenson, 1997).

A very unique example of heritage tourism can be found in a colonial town called London Town. It is becoming a heritage tourism spot because of their 250-year-old garbage. Promoters envision a place where visitors will come to get their hands muddy sifting for artifacts that could date back to 1725. Archaeologists and volunteers have been digging since April 1996. London Town spent more than 200 years buried in something of a natural time capsule. It is a wonderful opportunity for a person who is interested in seeing the virtually untouched colonial site. It is an opportunity to rediscover the town of London Town and its people. Visitors have doubled since word spread about the finds (Jones, 1997). This town must be careful not to destroy their own tourism as will be discussed later in the paper.

Industrial tourism is a popular subsection of the heritage tourism industry. An increasing number of tourist attractions are focusing on the Western world's industrial heritage. Younger generations view manufacturing with curiosity because they have never experienced that type of work. Older generations view the industrial era with nostalgia as they remember the "good old days." Kennecott Utah Copper Corporation uses tourism as a public relations tool to generate a positive image of the copper industry. Successful industrial heritage sites share several characteristics. They thrive in area's with positive economic growth, well structured transportation systems, and existing accommodations (Rudd & Davis, 1998).

Some other programs that are helping to promote heritage tourism include, American Express Travel Related Services. They underwrote a special project by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help communities develop their historic and cultural sites (Dickinson, 1996). Four years ago the White House issued a position paper, recognizing heritage tourism as an important sector of the travel industry. Presented at the 1995 White House Conference on Travel & Tourism, the paper stresses the importance of developing historical and cultural resources and called for collaboration and partnership between different factions of the travel and tourism industry. The paper also emphasizes that all communities in American-rural areas, small towns, Native American reservations, and cities-can develop cultural tourism (Cass & Jahrig, 1998).

### Communities and Heritage Tourism

Communities play a very important part in heritage tourism especially where planning and developing is concerned. Ideally, heritage tourism projects are cooperative efforts, involving much of the community (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). Heritage sites belong, first and foremost, to the communities in which they rest, whose people are daily enriched by their presence (Johnson,

1992). Recent studies undertaken in several states across the country have documented the economic benefits generated by historic preservation through job creation, community revitalization, heritage tourism and appreciated property values (Historic Preservation's Payoff, 1998). Some communities have discovered that marketing their heritage can bring jobs, improve infrastructure, rejuvenate cultural appreciation, and revive craft industries (Johnson, 1992). A 350-page report details the economic benefits, both direct and indirect, nationally from such historic preservation activities as restoring and rehabilitating historic structures, heritage tourism and the operations of historic sites and organizations (Garbarine, 1997). Tourism may not offset such income sources as agriculture, but without it, small towns could become ghost towns (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). It's not easy to generate the money to maintain and rehabilitate hundreds of historic places and structures (Dickinson, 1996).

A key factor in developing heritage resources is to provide an authentic experience for the traveler while maintaining the quality of life in the community (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). A heritage site needs an official, accurate story line that will keep its image consistent and can be used for education and marketing purposes, the story should "breathe life" into the heritage site (Johnson, 1992). Each community must discover and value its own heritage and decide for itself what kind of tourism and how many tourists it wants to have, and what it wants to share with visitors. Each must tell its own story to its visitors through maps, tours, displays, publications, song, paintings and dances (Cass & Jahrig, 1998). Although heritage education can be mandated on the national level, it must begin with local citizens. It is their site, their culture, they are the ones whom visitors come in contact with and they are key to protecting, interpreting and communicating the essence of their heritage to the rest of the world (Johnson, 1992). If education is given a priority by site managers, tour operators and communities, not only will the visitor be a beneficiary but the

site itself, the adjacent communities and the region will benefit because of increased visitation, greater understanding and respect on the part of the visitors and the opportunity to share history and culture with international guests (Johnson, 1992). Planning, education and marketing are tools, that if used properly, can ensure sustainability of heritage sites as sources of pride and enrichment to their communities and as tourist attractions (Johnson, 1992). The tourism challenge is to make a visitor's experience accurate, meaningful and entertaining without allowing native cultures to become "tourist playthings" or degrading history and legends into manufactured "ghost stories" (Johnson, 1992).

Geography plays an important part in the success of those planning to create a heritage site (Rudd & Davis, 1998). A heritage site may not, itself, be compelling enough to attract large numbers of visitors especially if it is in an out of the way location (Johnson, 1992). Communities need to develop a critical mass of activities around historic sites, including services like restaurants and shops (Dickinson, 1996). Culture, its objects and activities being the asset to the "capital" to draw tourism from, its preservation and conservation should remain a priority. It should never be allowed to cheapen for the quick-profit purposes of tourism. For in the long run, this would damage tourism itself (Detter, 1985). Heritage will only be effectively conserved if people value their heritage sufficiently to want to keep it. Unless the motivation for conservation comes from within the community itself, long-term conservation will be difficult, if not impossible (Johnson, 1992). The development of tourism at a level and a manner that the respective environments are capable of sustaining, would allow for tourism without sacrificing the attractions upon which it subsists, and enable future generations the opportunities to benefit from their heritage (Drost, 1996).

### Challenges of Heritage Tourism

This leads us to the problems that communities must consider when developing heritage tourism. Heritage tourism has to deal with politically sensitive questions such as what to preserve from a former colonial era, property rights, and the interaction between the tourist and the host communities with their different social structure and expectations that can lead to misunderstandings and even conflict (Nuryanti, 1996). The question of colonial heritage is a vexed one. There are understandable tensions arising from the conflicting interests and traditions of the Colonizer and the Colonized (Detter, 1985). The unprecedented growth of tourism raises a number of concerns over the environmental and cultural integrity of destination area and had led to a reexamination of tourism development in light of the increasingly popular concept of sustainable development (Drost, 1996). Sheer masses of people, uncontrolled tourism and ill-planned development can do irreversible physical and cultural damage to heritage sites, large and small, and the communities surrounding them while lessening their appeal to visitors (Johnson, 1992). The more recognized a heritage site becomes, the more environmental and social pressure is exerted upon it (Johnson, 1992).

Cultural heritage is the essence of tourism in many destination areas worldwide. Heritage restores a sense of a time when people were more innocent and had simpler pleasures, reflecting the values longed for in today's complex society (Timothy, 1996). This is why heritage and cultural tourism are becoming popular. Visits to ancient monuments are largely motivated by the belief that such objects really are linked to the remote past. Personal heritage attractions draw people who possess emotional connections to a particular place. These also include heritage associated with specific interest groups to which a traveler belongs, including religious societies, ethnic groups, and career groups (Timothy, 1996). It is the celebration of culture through the

restoration of buildings, historical monuments, local pageants and special events (Hayes, 1997). It not only provides an economic source for many communities, but it also allows people to explore their past ancestry and the past ancestry of others. In “Weighing the Risks and Rewards of Involvement in Cultural Conservation and Heritage Tourism,” Howell states that many towns in the United States are embracing heritage tourism in order to simulate economic growth and enhance quality of life, hoping to attract new business and industry (Howell, 1994).

### African American Heritage Tourism

African American heritage tourism is especially important today because much of the African American heritage has been hidden and down played over the years. Many people want to explore that past which in turn creates tourism. African Americans are waking up to the value of their heritage, establishing landmarks, refurbishing art and history museums, and honoring their forebear's and the vital role they played in shaping this nation. The cultural richness of African Americans has become in recent years a serious contender for attracting tourists (Hays, 1997). Places where black heroes were born and buried, where protesters marched for civil rights, and even where leaders were killed are promoting themselves to tour operators and meeting planners (Marketing News, 1998). The African American preservation movement, seems to have picked up momentum, with focus on developing various historical and cultural sites and then marketing them to tourists (Hayes, 1997). It was found that pleasure dominates black travelers' plans and that African Americans are more likely than average to live in the country's 50 largest metro markets, where many cultural institutions are located (Hayes, 1997). This portion of the paper will explore four different areas in the United States that are working to promote African American heritage tourism; Taft, Oklahoma, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina and Archer's Hope, Virginia.

Today grants are helping spruce up some of the towns of Oklahoma, and state officials are beginning to recognize their allure amid a nationwide surge in heritage tourism. The towns hope to get a boost from author Toni Morrison, who is setting a novel in the fictional black town of Ruby, Oklahoma. Taft, Oklahoma was founded by African-American Pioneers. Nearly 30 such towns rose from the hands of Oklahoma's black settlers before statehood in 1907. Heritage tourism is happening and is a gold mine for African Americans. It allows them to tell their story and connect to their roots. Oklahoma's tourism department recently developed a brochure and map describing the state's black heritage and historical sites (Seay, 1997).

Philadelphia is one of the nations largest cities and is known for their multicultural tourism, especially African American history. In fact, the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau created "Share the Heritage" package to promote tourism (Ebony Man, 1995). Some of the sites that can be seen are; Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church which is on the oldest parcel of land owned by African Americans and was a significant site in the underground railroad movement. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge is the city's first African American Masonic lodge. The Johnson House is the only known structure in the city that served as a place to hide runaway slaves. Tourists also visit Washington Square where slaves were taken before they were sold. Also recommended is the Freedom Theater which is the oldest and most distinguished African American theater in the state (Ebony Man, 1995). As shown there are many opportunities in Philadelphia for African American heritage tourism.

For more than one third of the African Slaves shipped to the 13 colonies, life in American began in a small quarantine station on the barrier island just across the harbor from Charleston, SC. known as Sullivan's Island. Duke University Professor Peter H. Wood dubs this land "Ellis Island of Black Americans" (Paulsen, 1997). There are many proposals to reconstruct the area.



One is to make a large museum examining the span of history from the African Diaspora through the civil rights movement. Visitors would enter through the massive octagonal pillars of the downtown slave market, where blacks were bought and sold until 1863. Sightseers would then visit nearby slave quarters before concluding their tour at the restored Avery Normal Institute, established in 1868 as one of the nation's first schools for freed slaves (Paulsen, 1997). If plans go forward this site would be the first to mostly deal with slave trade. People behind the project want to look at slavery as a source of motivation. Saying that if they could endure it maybe our lives are not so bad today. It may seem odd that African Americans would be interested in sites that bring up such a dark period of their history, but everyone's ancestry is important. Each person would like to learn about the "true" history and what it was like to live back then. People can learn from the painful past (Paulsen, 1997).

The white south has long been on display for tourism but the region's black history has remained deeply buried. Mansions are all over but slave quarters were converted to garages or pool houses. Most heritage tourism has made slavery appear not as bad as it was because it is hard to make enslavement a tourist attraction (Paulsen, 1997). This is why in Archer's Hope, Virginia a project is being considered for one of the premier African American historical sites in the United States. It was started in the 1930s during the Franklin Roosevelt administration. However, a lack of money and World War II and its efforts stalled the project for the next six decades. Due to community activists and public attention the project was unveiled in 1998. The African American Civil War Memorial will recognize the black military role in the civil war. It will be located in a historical elite black neighborhood and will consist of two semicircular stone walls mounted with stainless-steel plaques bearing the names of all 185,000 officers and men of the 166 regiments of the U.S. Colored Troops, with a bronze statue of three infantrymen and a

sailor on one side of the curve wall and a soldier saying good-bye to his family on the other (Hayes, 1997).

These cities are just the latest in a string of areas building museums to celebrate their African American heritage. The National Civil Rights Museum where Martin Luther King, Jr. was fatally shot, opened its doors in 1991. The Birmingham, Alabama Civil Rights Institute opened across the street from the 16th Street Baptist Church, where a bomb killed four black girls in 1963. In Atlanta, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic site was formed and in Detroit the world's largest black historical and cultural museum, with exhibits covering hundreds of years of African American history is scheduled to open. These new museums hope to profit from the blossoming interest in "multicultural tourism," in which both domestic and foreign travelers seek to experience ethnic culture--anything from historic sites to food festivals (Paulsen, 1997).

As shown through the examples of African Americans developing their heritage into tourism not only provides them with the economic benefits, it also creates awareness of their heritage. It is very important for everyone to know their heritage and the heritage of others to fully understand where people have been and where they are going. Many ways of doing this have been discussed through tourism. Some examples being; museums that concentrate on history, festivals that re-enact a time long ago, rebuilt homes and buildings that represent a time of the past, along with many more. Any of these examples would be a perfect opportunity for African Americans to come together and explore their heritage among themselves and with others. African American heritage has many resources to draw from when developing tourism.

#### Native American Heritage Tourism

The American Indian Heritage Foundation was founded in 1973, by Princess Pale Moon. One reason the Foundation was created was to address the specific need to communicate to

non-Indians the values, customs, philosophy and special circumstances of America's Invisible Minority. It endeavors to preserve Indian culture and heritage, promote understanding among non-Indians, and creatively share colorful multifaceted culture (Simmons, 1995).

Over the years, the American Indian Heritage Foundation has sponsored a variety of cultural events including an Indian Powwow on the Mall in our nation's capitol. This colorful event is an opportunity for thousands to see arts and crafts, dance and musical ceremonies. Princess Pale Moon makes public appearances either solo or with Miss Indian USA, and with two Native American groups--the White Eagle Dancers and the Cedartree Singers--on behalf of the Foundation's cultural program. She has appeared at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., and before diverse audiences around the world to sing and to share her people's culture and traditions. These programs yield a great deal of positive public exposure, allowing thousands of Americans to appreciate the rich legacy of the American Indian. Also in 1990, the Foundation worked closely with members of Congress to have a bill signed into law by President Bush, that recognizes November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." This bill serves as a vehicle to recognize contributions made by Native Americans (Simmons, 1995).

One thing that is very important to Native American's when promoting their culture for tourism is authenticity. So much of the history about Native Americans has been contaminated and the truth distorted. In 1993, the nine tribes in South Dakota created the Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates to assist them in responsible tourism development. Tour guides are also available for each of the nine reservations in the state by calling the Department of Tourism ("Native American Culture").

Powwows are a great way for Native Americans to celebrate their culture and for non-Indians to learn more about it. The powwow or wacipi (people's dance) is one of the most

important ways of preserving Indian culture in the U.S. today. The powwow consist of dancing and celebrating that can last a few hours or a few days. Some powwows offer prize money to dancers, singers and drum groups who compete in contest categories. Traditional powwows offer no prizes though. Certain dances are found in most powwows: Men's and Women's Traditional Dances, and Men's and Women's Fancy Dances. Dancers' attire include porcupine roaches, spinning eagle feathers, traditional buckskin, and traditionally designed cloth dresses and leggings decorated with shells, teeth and beads. Powwows frequently include craft displays, rodeos and Indian cultural exhibits ("Native American Culture").

A large tribute to the North American Indians that can be visited by all, is a gigantic mountain sculpture of Sioux warrior Crazy Horse astride a stallion. It is being blasted from a mountain in the Black Hills near Custer, SD. A 16-foot-high Crazy Horse scale model is on view at the Visitor Complex, nearly one mile from the mountain. The complex also contains the beautiful Indian Museum of North American representing 80 tribes, the sculptor's studio-home and workshop, and the unusual Black Hills Nature Gates ("Native American Culture").

Another historical site even closer to home is the Gibbs Farm Museum that depicts the connection between Jane DeBow Gibbs and the Mdewakanton Dakota. The farm interprets history from the 1830's to 1862 when the Native American Dakota and the new American settlers coexisted in this area. Jane DeBow was an intermediary between these two completely different cultures. Her parent's served as missionaries at Cloud Man's Village near Lakes Harriet and Calhoun, northwest of Ft. Snelling. Jane and the other missionary children immediately picked up the language and became familiar with the Dakota culture. They taught her to hunt and she served as an interpreter ("Gibbs Farm Museum").

The Gibbs Farm Museum currently interprets two major aspects of the Dakota in this area. The tioti and garden which are both owned and operated by Dakota women are present on the farm today. Most of the Native Americans near or on the Prairies lived, in bison hide tipi. The Dakota people of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers spent much time traveling in search of game, fish, and wild rice. Their sturdy, yet portable tioti is still the ideal way to live while on the move. The familiar Dakota word tipi is the plural form of tioti. Dakota women owned, built and maintained the tipi. The men provided raw hides and poles, then got out of the way. Dakota women worked together building each other's homes. When it was moving time, they again helped each other to take down the tipi by reversing the order of assembly. Tipi could be erected and taken down in just a few minutes. Sometimes, rocks were used to hold down the tioti. These rock circles are the origin of the "stone rings" sometimes found throughout the plains and mountains. In mid-May, 1998 a tioti was set up on the Gibbs farm. Like the tipi of long ago these to are frequently and easily moved to accommodate different events and schedules. The Dakota learned to rely on corn, squash and beans for their main source of food ("Gibbs Farm Museum").

In good times they enjoyed a healthy diet of vegetables, game and fish, supplemented by trading with other groups. Again the garden was also worked by Dakota women. Prayers and blessings accompanied planting and harvesting by putting prayer flags around the garden that represented the mutual blessings of growth and harvest. The Gibbs Farm Museum has chosen to feature a variety of traditional food crops. They have also put the Cundi Wapah'ta (prayer flags) in the center and at the four cardinal points of the garden. Traditionally, Dakota gardens were defended by the gardener and their daughters. Today a traditional ceremonial figure, Hayoka, has been placed in the garden ("Gibbs Farm Museum"). This is to serve the purpose of a scarecrow.

These are just a few of the many historical sites that are heritage tourism for Native Americans. Like the Gibbs farm many incorporate Native American culture and the American Pioneer past. The latter will be discussed in the next of this paper. Just as all forms of cultural tourism, it can be used as a source of economic growth for the Native Americans while still allowing for the authenticity to be kept (Jansen-Verbeke, 1998). They are doing an effective job with this through such things as powwows and cultural events. Native Americans are a huge part of this country's past and as with all cultures the past must be preserved for the future. Native American heritage tourism provides a wonderful way of doing this by allowing young Native Americans to keep in touch with their roots and also allowing non-Native Americans to learn the truth of the Native American history and culture.

#### American Pioneer Heritage Tourism

There are many sites that depict the life of the early pioneers that made their way across the great plains west. Due to the vast number of them, this paper will deal mostly with those sites associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder, the American pioneer author.

What is an American Pioneer? These are people such as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett (Faragher, 1992) who braved the wilderness with great heroism but it is also all the many men, women, and children who packed up their families, homes, and possessions to move west for a promise of a better life. Some were looking for farm land, others were looking for gold to strike it rich. Bingham Copper Mine is an excellent example of how they have turned their pioneer heritage into tourism (Rudd, 1998).

Laura Ingalls Wilder is a prime example of a pioneer girl. Laura Elizabeth Ingalls was born February 7, 1867, in a little log house in the Big Woods of Wisconsin. Laura's childhood was spent traveling west by covered wagon, into Indian Territory in Kansas, to Grasshopper

Country in Minnesota, and then to Dakota Territory, where she met and married Almanzo Wilder. They also traveled by covered wagon along with their daughter Rose to Mansfield, Missouri in the Ozarks. This is where she wrote her books about the pioneer days (Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Frontier Girl*, 1998).

Today children (and adults) all over the world read her books and learn what it was like to be an American pioneer. But their interest does not stop there. Laura Ingalls Wilder has become a huge tourist attraction with at least twelve sites and more being constructed every year. Here in Menomonie we have the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway Information Center.

In Pepin, Wisconsin there is a replica of the cabin on the site where Laura was born. There is also a historical marker and picnic area. This has become known as “Little House Wayside.” The Pepin Historical Museum features Laura Ingalls Wilder exhibits. During the third weekend in September, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Days Festival is held (Anderson, 1996).

After living in the Big Woods, Laura and her family traveled to Independence, Kansas. Today a log cabin replica can be visited on the exact site where Laura lived. Near the cabin are two buildings from Laura’s era, a post office and Sunnyside School (Anderson, 1996).

The family made a trip back to the Big Woods for a short time, then they were off again this time to Walnut Grove, Minnesota. On the banks of Plum Creek tourists can see the depression where the dugout was that Laura lived in when first coming to Walnut Grove before building their house. Today the dugout is sunken in but the presence of it is an amazing thing to see. In Walnut Grove the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum displays some of Laura’s things. During the first three weekends in July “Fragments of a Dream” is held. Residents present a two-act pageant about the Ingalls family and friends. There is also a Pioneer Festival held on the second

and third weekends in July. This features craft demonstrations, live music, children's activities, as well as souvenirs and crafts for sale (Anderson, 1996).

In between living in Walnut Grove the family lived in Burr Oak, Iowa for a short time. Today the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, formally known as the Burr Oak Masters Hotel, can be visited. This is where the family helped run the hotel and lived for about a year (Anderson, 1996).

For the Ingalls, the last stop on their journey was De Smet, South Dakota. Many sites can be visited there. The Surveyor's House is the oldest building in De Smet and has been restored to look like it did when the Ingalls lived there for five months before moving to their homestead. The De Smet Depot Museum has many Ingalls relics, including Laura's sister Mary's raised print bible volume. The Ingalls Homestead site has a rock monument placed on the original site (Anderson, 1996). De Smet also has a reenactment about when Laura lived on the shores of Silver Lake. There are also many more sites in this town, too many to name, proving that heritage tourism is a huge source of economic benefit for such a small community.

Laura, her husband Almanzo and daughter Rose, traveled to the Ozarks of Missouri in 1894. Laura named their farm Rocky Ridge and today it can be visited just as Laura left it when she died. On site is also the Little House Museum and bookstore. The Rock House is currently being restored. It was a gift from Rose to her parents in 1928. In late August and early September Ozark Mountain Players stage a musical pageant based on Laura's stories. The third weekend in September is the Laura Ingalls Wilder Festival. October 15, is Rocky Ridge Day. This town too, is filled with other numerous sites associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder (Anderson, 1996).

These are the main sites associated with Laura and her family but they do not end here. There is one in Spring Valley, Minnesota where Almanzo's parents lived, Malone, New York



where Almanzo grew up, Keystone, South Dakota where Laura's sister Carrie lived as an adult, the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, located in Vinton, Iowa where Laura's blind sister attended school, and ones in progress that deal with Laura's parents' childhood homes. There are also many libraries that may attract tourists. The Detroit Public Library was the first library in the world to name a branch for Laura Ingalls Wilder. Pamona Public Library in Pamona, California dedicated a Laura Ingalls Wilder room. It has a permanent exhibit space displaying various Little House memorabilia, including the original manuscript to *Little Town on the Prairie* (Anderson, 1996).

A quote can sum up how Laura Ingalls Wilder became a heritage tourism attraction. "After her *Little House* books became famous, Laura Ingalls Wilder was constantly visited by readers of her stories. During the summer months a steady trickle of cars arrived at Rocky Ridge Farm, bearing children and parents who wanted to meet their favorite writer. Following Laura's death in 1957, the house on Rocky Ridge Farm became a memorial to the Wilders, preserved as they left it. Since then, many other sites connected with the Ingalls-Wilder families have joined the Little House sites (Anderson, 1996).

Heritage tourism is providing many with a glimpse of the American frontier past. Some may visit these sites to know what it was like when their grandparents or great-grandparents went west in a covered wagon. Others may just want to experience how it was way back then. When Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote her books she just wanted to preserve the past for the future and to tell the story of her families struggles and joys as they pioneered in the woodlands and prairies of frontier America during the 1870's and 1880's. Little did she know how popular her books would become, or that she would become an American pioneer hero from our history, or that

every place she lived and places that her family lived would become a major heritage tourism attraction.

### Conclusion

Heritage tourism will continue to grow and become a very important part of the tourism industry. As authors continue to tell stories of Laura and her family bringing about more places that her ancestors lived, there will continue to be more tourism sites constructed to pay tribute to the famous author and her family.

As shown in this paper, heritage tourism is a growing trend in the tourism industry. Heritage tourism can be defined in many ways which basically all mean the same thing; visiting the past and present culture. There are many examples of heritage tourism. The communities in which these attractions lie are very important and they must consider the development process very seriously. There are some major problems that can arise from all types of tourism and heritage tourism is not exempt from these. Cultural heritage tourism is the most common, and can be seen through African American, Native American, and American Pioneer heritage tourism just to name a few. Heritage tourism is a sector of the industry that if developed properly can last forever. As generations continue to grow older, new heritage tourism sites will be formed.

CHAPTER THREE  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Site

The site chosen for this study is the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, Wisconsin. This site is described in Laura's writings as the "Big Woods." It is the first place Laura lived and has many historical ties to her. It was chosen because it is one of the first sites to organize and promote tourism directly around Laura Ingalls Wilder. It will provide the necessary information on Laura Ingalls Wilder and how the community came together to promote her birthplace for tourism.

The site consists of two locations. The Laura Ingalls Wilder museum is located in downtown Pepin, WI. It has artifacts dealing with Laura Ingalls Wilder, as well as things from members of the community. The museum also sells items associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder such as books and clothing with the site insignia on them. The second location is about seven miles east of the village of Pepin. It is the location where Laura's family actually lived. A replica cabin has been built similar to the one the Ingalls would have lived in. It is also a nice rest area with a plaque explaining the Ingalls history on this site. There is a modern outhouse, antique water pump, and partially enclosed picnic area.

Pepin, WI is located along the Mississippi River in Southwestern Wisconsin. Highway 35 runs straight through the small town, and is known for its scenic beauty, making it a tourism attraction in itself. This fact combined with the historical ties to Laura Ingalls Wilder make Pepin an ideal place for tourism research to be done.

Since many people travel to this site, it is likely that enough research will be gathered from the site to be able to study what makes this a successful Laura Ingalls Wilder Heritage Tourism site. Visitors can provide insight into what they like about the site and what things they would also like to see there. It also is a wonderful view into the development of a site like this.

### Research Technique

The research technique used in this study will be interviewing using a set of questions. Interviewing will be done to find out what travelers like about the site, what else they would like to see at the site; as well as how the site was started, what it entailed to get it up and running, and how they keep it running efficiently.

Interviewing was chosen as the research technique for a number of reasons. It allows for personal interaction between the researcher and the subjects. Visitors to the site may be more likely to respond to a few quick questions rather than filling out a long questionnaire. When interviewing the LIW board member it provided the ease of allowing the respondent to answer the open ended questions with which ever direction she saw fit. A tape recorder will be used in this case to capture the entire conversation. This will allow for the entire interview to be transcribed and reviewed later (Poynter, 1993). Tape recording of the visitors' answers was not done due to the fact that their answers were not as long and were easily able to be written down.

For the interview with the board member, personal interviewing was chosen over phone interviewing or sending out the questions because the researcher felt the response rate would be better in person. Sometimes things are not heard correctly over phone and response timing can be a problem with mailings. This was also the reason the researcher visited the sites and interviewed instead of sending out a survey to people listed in the guest book. The response rate is important. If you send questionnaires to 1,000 people throughout the United States, you can expect to receive more than 500 responses. This is enough on which to base a statistically valid research study (Poynter, 1993). However, with personal interviewing the researcher expects the percentage of responses to be much higher.

## Participants

The participants that will be involved in this study will be a board member of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society and visitors to the site. The board member was chosen as a key informant for the site on a recommendation from the museum staff. The board member has been involved heavily with the operations of the site for a number of years. The visitors to the sites will be interviewed upon exiting from viewing the site. A sincere attempt will be made to interview every visitor to the site on the chosen days of research, between the allotted hours. The goal for each of the six days of scheduled research is to conduct at least 50 interviews a day, resulting in at least 300 interviews. These numbers were decided on based on the reality of how many travelers visit the site on any given day.

A conscious effort will be made to interview adults and children alike since many of the visitors are children due to the fact that Laura Ingalls Wilder's books were written for children. Since the children may be a deciding factor in their parents traveling to the site, it is important to get the children's opinions about what they liked about it and would like to see that was not already there.

Along with Laura Ingalls Wilder fans, there may be travelers who are site-seeing in the area, people who travel to many historical sites, teachers getting information for their classes, or people just stopping by to use the rest area for a picnic. All these groups and others are important for the study. A wide picture needs to be drawn about what all travelers like about the site and what else they would like to see. When a tourism site can be generalized to the majority of the population it will have more chance for success. Therefore, any group of people who comes to the site will be interviewed.

### Time Frame

Expected time frame will be three months during the summer of 2001. This time frame will allow for observation in peak season. The research will be carried out periodically through the summer. Six days were chosen as the number of days that research will be conducted at this site. That number was chosen to average two days a month. This will allow for different types of travelers through the summer. For example in June there may be a few bus tours before the height of the season. In July there may be quite a lot of travelers that travel to all the sites, taking in the pageants. During August there may be more families looking for education purposes due to the fact that school will be starting soon. Since there may be different types of travelers at different times during the summer the researcher felt it was important to do research in each month.

It was decided to conduct the surveys for five hours each day, generally between the hours of 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Five hours was decided upon because being that it is summer and the research will be done outside, the researcher felt that would be the maximum amount of sun and heat that should be taken in for one day. The times were approximate and were chosen because that would be the peak travel time of the day.

The exact dates of study are Saturday June 23, 2001 at the wayside cabin site, Sunday June 24, 2001 at the museum, Wednesday July 25, 2001 at the museum, Thursday July 26, 2001 at the wayside cabin site, Wednesday August 8, 2001 at the museum and Saturday August 11, 2001 at the wayside cabin site. This equals three weekend days and three weekdays, which is important because there may be different types of travelers during the week then on weekends. For example, during the week there maybe more retired people and on weekends more young families. Each of these populations is important to the study.

### Instrumentation

Instrumentation used will be a set of questions to be asked to participants to find out the information for this study. This instrument will be developed by the researcher. It will aid in collecting information to complete the study. Open-ended questions are used to provide maximum opportunity for participants to respond from their personal experience, to allow for "freedom and variability" in responses (McCracken, 1988).

The questions to be asked to the visitors to the site can be seen in appendix one on page 61. The questions that are asked are very basic. One reason for this was the fact that these questions will be asked to children as well as adults. Since some children may have short attention spans it is beneficial to keep it as short as possible and simple to understand, while still being able to obtain the data. At the same time adults may be preoccupied watching over their children to spend a great deal of time answering questions. The questions asked of the visitors, are direct open-ended questions that can result in participants answering them with as much or as little detail as they wish.

The list of questions for the Laura Ingalls Wilder board member can be viewed in appendix two on page 63. The researcher designed these questions to determine the objectives of how the site was developed and how they maintain it. They directly relate to the issues of development, problems, suggestions for doing things differently, how it is funded, how it is determined whether it will be open during the off season and advice for communities who would like to build a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site.

These two instruments were designed to gain the knowledge needed to meet the objectives of assisting a community with their heritage tourism development. They ask what visitors like and suggestions for improvements and how Pepin developed their site.



CHAPTER FOUR  
RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Introduction

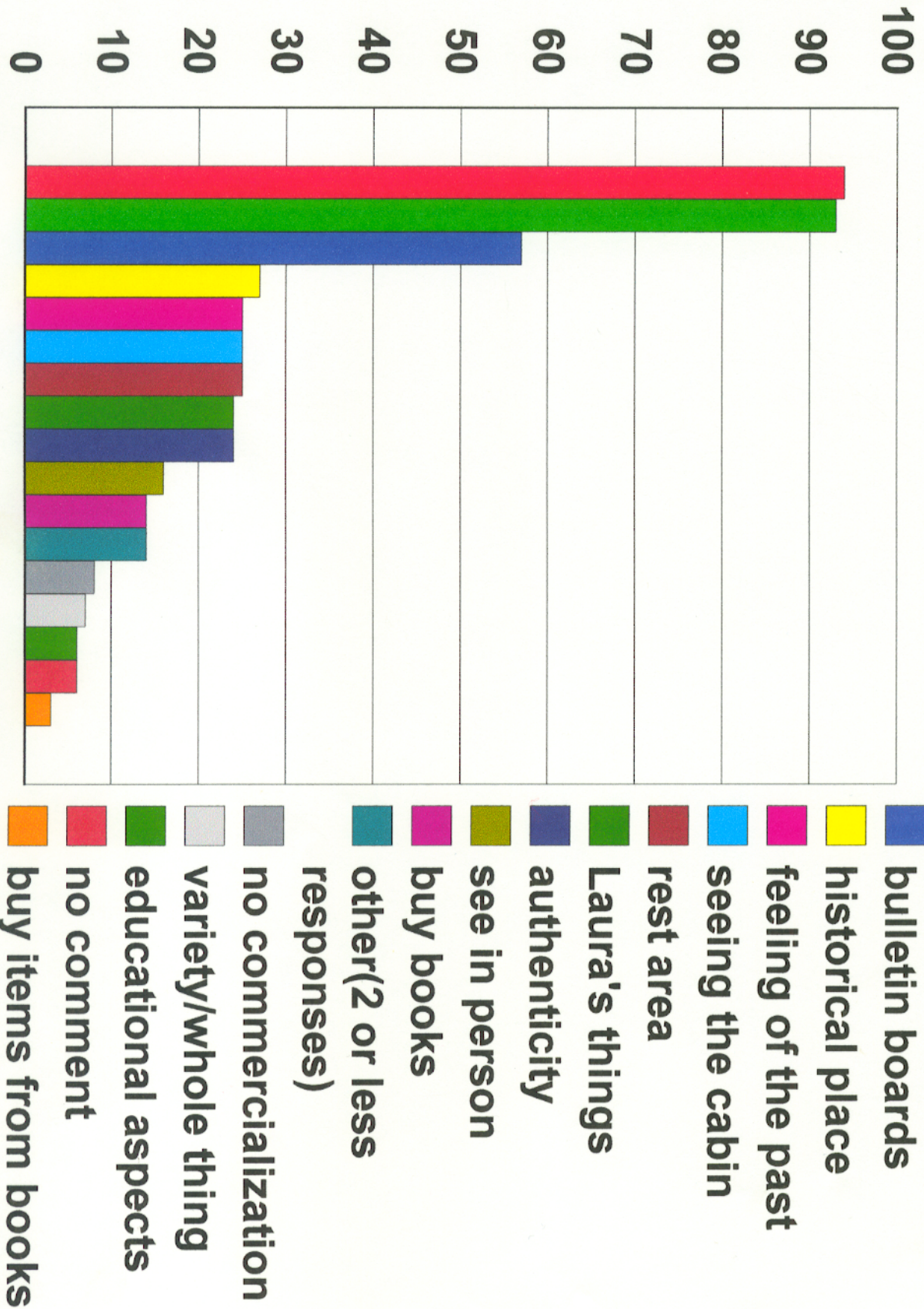
The research for this study was done in two parts. The first one involved interviewing visitors to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Wayside and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum in Pepin, WI. The second involved interviewing the person in charge of the operations of the site.

Interviewing of visitors to the site took place on six days between the dates of June 23, 2001 and August 10, 2001. Interviewing was done for five hours a day. This resulted in obtaining 361 interviews. The visitors were asked two questions. 1) What did you like best about this Laura Ingalls Wilder site? 2) What type of things would you like to see at this site that could improve it? They were asked these questions upon exiting from the site.

## Visitor's Likes

Results for the open-ended question, what did you like best about this Laura Ingalls Wilder site, can be viewed in chart form in the following graph on page 37.

# Likes - Graph 1



Statements of the results are as follows for the question, what did you like best about this Laura Ingalls Wilder site. Ninety-four people, or about 26% of the visitors, said that they liked seeing where Laura was born and how she had lived. Ninety-three people, or about 26%, said that they liked seeing how people lived back then, pertaining to antiques from that time period, seeing what they wore, tools that they used, and how they built their houses.

Fifty-seven people, or about 16%, indicated that they liked seeing the things posted on the bulletin board in the cabin and on the walls in the museum. These included, real photographs of the family, their history, letters from Laura, letters to Laura from her fans, and a map of the places the family lived, just to name a few.

Twenty-seven people, or roughly 7% of the visitors, said that they liked the fact that it was a historical place with a marker. Twenty-five people, or about 7% of the people interviewed, said that they liked the feeling of the past, which can be translated into a sense of place, nostalgia, and some reported “feeling close to her, or her presence.” Twenty-five people also indicated that they liked seeing the cabin, the size of it, how it was built, ect. Another 25 people stated that they liked the rest area. They said that the upkeep and parking was good. Twenty-four people, or about 7%, said that they liked seeing the real things that belonged to Laura and her family such as the quilts in the museum. Another 24 people said that they liked the authenticity of it. They appreciated the fact that the cabin was built like it was from Laura’s time frame and also that it was on her original birth site.

Sixteen visitors interviewed, or roughly about 4%, said that they liked being able to see the things in person that they read about. Some of these things named were, the land and area she lived on, and the things in the museum such as the pig’s bladder. Fourteen people, or again about 4%, said they liked that they could buy the books and the souvenirs at the bookstore.

Eight people, or 2%, indicated that they liked that there was no commercialization at the wayside cabin site. They liked the fact that it was in a small community without big attractions. Seven people, about 2%, said that they liked the variety of things and/or the whole thing. Six people, again about 2%, said that they like the educational aspects of the site. They stated that it was good material to teach in a classroom and then go on a field trip, and it was very educational for children to learn about past generations and Wisconsin history. Another six people had “no comment.” Three visitors, or about 1%, said that they liked the fact that they could buy items from the books such as bonnets.

The following answers had two people or about 1% state them.

- They are glad there is a new museum planned for expansion.
- They liked being able to see the site through their children’s eyes.
- They thought the museum had a nice presentation for their exhibits.
- They liked the local tourism including the Mississippi River.
- There was more stuff there than they anticipated.
- The signs were good.

The following answers had one person state them.

- The site is unique.
- The staff was knowledgeable.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Days Festival
- The site is close to home and not far like other Laura Ingalls Wilder sites.
- Shows pioneer women
- Free admission
- Continuity between Laura Ingalls Wilder sites

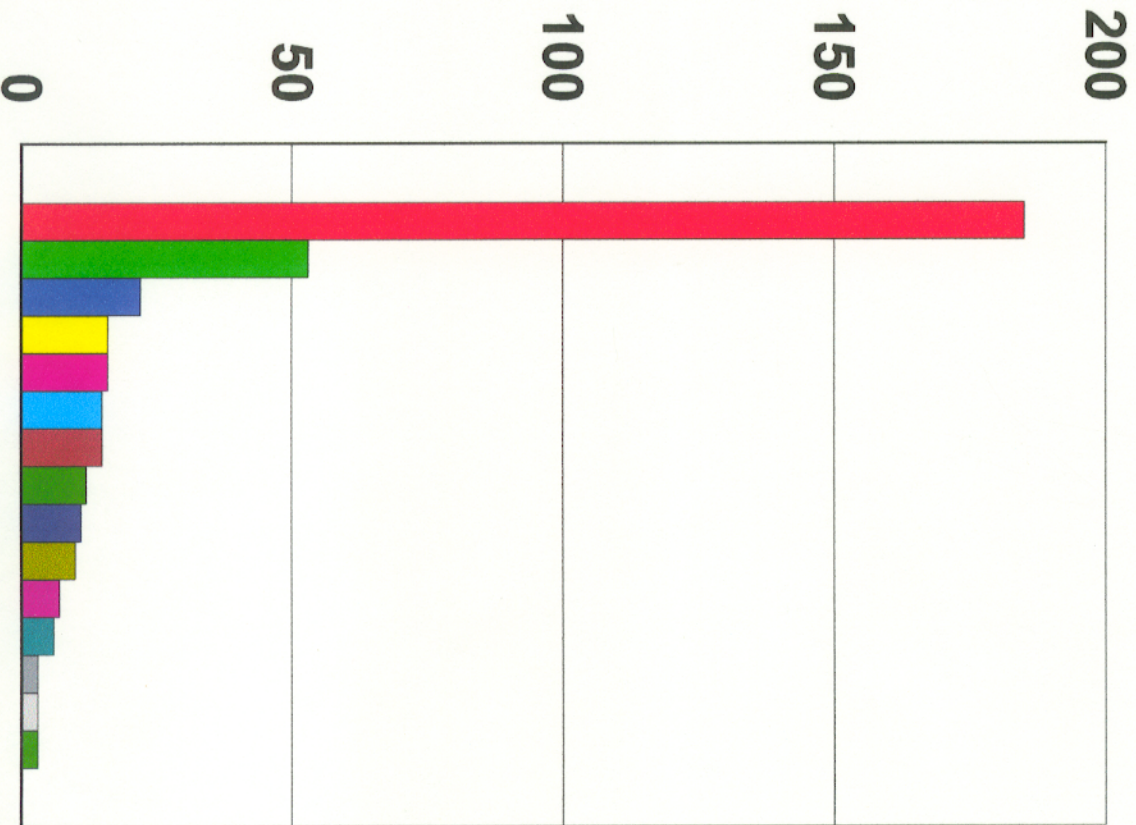
- Follows Laura Ingalls Wilder's books and not the Little House on the Prairie TV Show.

Visitor's Suggestions for Improvements

Results for the open-ended question, what type of things would you like to see at this site that could improve it, can be viewed in chart form in the following graph on page 41.



# Improvements - Graph 2



- liked the way it is
- more at cabin
- Laura's belongings
- diagram of cabin
- better interpretation
- better maintenance
- other(2 or less responses)
- better signs
- more trees
- hand-on exhibits
- museum chronological
- sell more from books
- no commercialization
- museum closer to cabin
- museum more LIW exhibits

Statement of results for the question, what type of things would you like to see at this site that could improve it, are as follows. One hundred and eighty-five of the 361 interviewed, about 51%, said that they liked the site just the way it is or they had no suggestions for improvement. Fifty-three visitors, about 15%, stated that they would like to see more stuff at the cabin homestead site. Some of these things included furniture, steps to the loft, things they used in the books, wax figures of the Ingalls family, more information and history, and wagon displayed outside. Twenty two people, or about 6% of the people interviewed, stated that they would like to see Laura and her family's things showcased better and to have more of their original belongings. They did not like that Laura's things were mixed in with all the other artifacts. They felt they should be on a different display because it was hard to know what was hers.

Sixteen people, or about 4%, said they would like a diagram hanging in the cabin of the original to be able to compare it to the replica, and to tell what each room was used for. Another 16 visitors said that they would have liked it more authentic. They did not feel that the replica cabin was built exactly the way the Ingalls would have built it. Sixteen people also stated that they would have liked better interpretation at the cabin wayside site. Some things suggested were: someone dressed like Laura and family members to tell visitors about it, an audio tape to listen to while going through it, or a TV monitor to watch a video about it. Fifteen people, again about 4%, said that they would like better maintenance at the cabin wayside site. They were very disappointed that the hand pump well did not work and would have liked better bathroom facilities, more security at night, and a sign that says to close door when exiting so that the environment doesn't erode the cabin. Twelve people, or roughly 3%, said that there should be better signs from the Interstate highways, to Pepin and the cabin wayside. Eleven people, 3%, said they would like the grounds of the cabin wayside to look more like it looked when the Ingalls



were there. Some suggestions were: plant more trees so it looked like the big woods, have a garden how they had it, let the natural grasses and flowers be there, and put up a barn and any buildings that the Ingalls had. Ten people, again 3%, said that they would have liked to see hands-on exhibits, like a working farm where children could churn butter and do the things that Laura did in the books. Seven visitors, 2%, said that they wished that the museum was laid out in chronological order with a handout explaining each exhibit and artifact. Six people, also 2%, said that they wished the museum sold more things such as Pa's fiddle tapes, dolls, clothes, and candy that Laura had in the books. Three people, 1%, said that they didn't want the site any more commercialized than it already was. Another three people said that they would like the museum closer to or at the cabin wayside site. Three more people said that they would like the museum to be bigger and have more Laura Ingalls Wilder exhibits. They would like the new part of the museum up and running.

The following statements were given by two people.

- They would like a museum just for Laura Ingalls Wilder and not the whole area.
- They would like more history about her family that stayed in the area such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.
- They would like the cabin wayside to be turned into a bed and breakfast where people could stay there overnight and sleep and cook just like the Ingalls did.

The following statements were given by one person.

- They would like books, etc sold at the cabin wayside site.
- They would like the state to promote the site as a heritage tourism site in their heritage tourism brochure and with signs.
- They would like better parking at the cabin wayside site.

- They would like more information on this being her birth site and not so much information that you can find at the other Laura Ingalls Wilder museums.
- They would like to see Laura Ingalls Wilder Days on a different weekend due to the motorcycle runs the same weekend.
- They would like replicas of things from the books such as Laura's dresses, etc.
- They felt the sites were not explained well enough for people who had not read the books.
- They would like events from books held such as the "sugar off" and old time dance like they had at Grandpa's.
- They would also like a restaurant that served only things made just like how they are made in the books.

#### Laura Ingalls Wilder Board Member

To answer the questions pertaining to the development and maintenance of the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, WI, the researcher spoke with a board member who is involved with the site. Six questions were asked of her; 1) What was the development process from beginning to end? 2) What problems arose along the way? 3) Would you do anything differently? 4) How is this site funded? 5) How is it determined if it is feasible to be open during the off season? 6) Do you have any closing remarks/advice to give to a community thinking about building a Wilder/Ingalls heritage site?

For the first question, what was the development process from beginning to end, she stated the following.

It started in the 70's with an individual from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area that had contacted the local library in Pepin. They asked for information on Laura Ingalls Wilder thinking that because it was the birthplace it would be a perfect place to get information.

All the librarian knew was what was in the books. The caller asked why not have something down there for people to come and see. So the librarian went to the PTA (parent teacher association) and suggested that they should try to do something about this. The school children then started a fund called "Pennies For Laura." They collected their pennies and used the money to do research on where the actual site was and asked local farmers to go through their deeds to see if they could find anything. They found the property and the farmer donated three acres of land to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society, Inc.

From there they started working on a grant from the state for a wayside. Then they found someone who could build a log cabin.

Five to seven years later they bought the museum building to start with "Laura's Lore and Pepin's Past." Most of the things in the museum belong to an individual from the community on loan from her family. A number of other items have been donated or are on loan from the community. They are always looking for more things.

Five years ago the adjoining building was purchased for more storage and parking space on a land contract to be affordable. Up until the last two years the museum has been open 7 days a week, staffed entirely by volunteers. Now there has been a lack of volunteers due to the fact that previous volunteers were retired homemakers or women that did not work outside the home. Now everyone works so there is not many people out there to volunteer so it forced the museum to hire staff which cuts into profits. This has slowed the process of opening the new building but eventually they will have enclosed booths inside that will have information.

Some examples of the booths will be one on boating on the Mississippi, one on fishing and the fish that are in the Mississippi, and on the first manufacturing company in town. They have

also acquired an old covered wagon that will be on display with a “big woods” mural behind it. It will be a walk through area that will not need to be manned, but the entrance will be through the old museum so it will only be open the museum hours.

What problems arose along the way, was the second question asked.

Money is the major problem for this site. Also a lot of volunteer labor is needed.

Financial backing is the key but the current group does not have fund-raisers and things due to lack of time of the volunteers. The board is all made up of volunteers and many have been on it for along time. It is very rewarding but time consuming. Another problem may be that occasionally they will get a visitor that will say is that cabin sitting on the same exact spot as the real one. For these types of questions they make the people understand the circumstances. Laura was 5 years old many years ago, they don't have many of Laura's things because the family traveled around so much and with six peoples things, they could not keep much. Once this is explained people understand. They only have the site that she was born on.

The next question that was asked was, would you do anything differently? More local people being involved was the answer.

So many people these days want to take vacations other places and do not stop to realize what they have in their backyards. Many people in the area do not realize what is in the museum and all the history in Pepin. Because of the financial situation there is not much more they could have done differently.

When asked the question how is this site funded, she replied that they do not charge admission so it is based on donations only and on any memberships, which are low, and the sales of the books and items in the museum. They do not know of any grants that are available for

them right now. Most grants have a specific criteria that would exclude them. For example they tried to get an art grant for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Days but couldn't because they do not have a building with art year round.

How is it determined if it is feasible to be open during the off season, was the next question that was asked. She responded that "The traffic through town determines when we are open. During the winter everything shuts down including the museum". At this point it is not feasible to be open during the off season. They are open May to October. Occasionally they will open if someone has time earlier. People do not start coming until May. The community is trying to advertise winter sports events and winter activities more to get the word out about winter tourism, but as of now they do not have enough visitors to stay open during the winter. Also winter activities depend on the snow so if it is too warm the people aren't going to come.

The last question asked was, do you have any closing remarks/advice to give to a community thinking about building a Wilder/Ingalls heritage site? She stated that research on the other sites is important.

See how they got started, what they feel are some of the good focal points, what people are looking for when they come to a Laura Ingalls Wilder site. Also do you have something authentic to show people. They need to do research on their facilities and look to the future, don't just plan for today. It takes along time, it doesn't happen overnight. Have someone that is knowledgeable about planning ahead help. Don't go overboard but don't be so conservative that you will never grow, get population information and look at, are you in a location that is going to continue to be highly traveled.

### Objectives Revisited

Four objectives were discussed as the purpose of the study. They are: 1) to determine the development process for this site, 2) to determine key characteristics of this site which make it a successful Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site, 3) to determine key characteristics of this Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site that can be improved upon, and 4) to determine existing plans to maintain feasibility of this site.

For the first objective that states to determine the development process for this site, an interview was done with a board member of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Society. She stated that a call from a fan to the local librarian sparked the interest. School children were involved in saving "pennies for Laura" and did the research to find the original site. The farmer donated the land and a wayside grant was obtained from the state. A museum was started a few years later and they are now looking to expand into the adjoining building with booth exhibits.

To determine the characteristics of this site that make it a successful Laura Ingalls Wilder site, we can look to the results of the interviews done at the cabin wayside site and museum. One of the biggest characteristics is the replica log cabin. People want to visit the place where Laura was actually born and see in person what that home looked like. Another major characteristic is that people are interested in seeing how people lived back then. The museum provides this service to people. They can see antiques, what people wore, tools that they used, and what their rooms would have looked like. The bulletin board in the cabin and the things posted on the walls in the museum is another notable characteristic. People enjoyed seeing the photograph's, reading their history, reading the letters, and seeing all the places the family lived. Other notable characteristics are that it is a historical place and has a marker and they liked that the cabin birth site was also a rest area.

Some characteristics of this site that people said could be improved upon can also be seen through the interview results of the visitors. The most notable was that people said that they liked it just the way it is or they had no comment about anything that needed to be changed. One characteristic that people did want changed was that they would have liked to see more things at the cabin wayside site. Some of these things are furniture, steps to the loft, things they used in the books, and a wagon outside. Another characteristic to be improved upon as stated by the visitors was they would like to see Laura's things showcased better at the museum and to have more of her belongings. They wanted a separate area for Laura's things. Other characteristics were people wished there was a diagram of the original cabin to show what room was used for what, and that they did not feel the cabin was authentic enough, and last they wished there had been more interpretation at the cabin wayside site. Some suggestions were to have someone dressed like Laura, or audio or TV to tell about the site.

The board member plans to maintain feasibility of this site by selling Laura Ingalls Wilder products, getting donations, and receiving membership dues. Also they are looking at improving winter tourism in the area.

Through the research method of interviews the characteristics and development process for the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, WI were obtained. This information will be useful for a community who would like to start a Laura Ingalls Wilder site in their community.

CHAPTER FIVE  
INTERPRETATION, RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND CONCLUSION



## Introduction

The results found in the previous chapter will now be interpreted starting with the interviews with the travelers and then moving on to the interview with the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society board member.

## Visitor Responses

Regarding what the visitors to the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin liked best about the site, it was found that people were either looking to see where Laura was born and actually lived, or just seeing how all people lived back then. They also liked seeing and reading about Laura. They liked there being a wealth of information about her life and travels. Other things that were mentioned were they liked that it was a historical place and they liked the sense of place. When looking at the statistics one might not think the percentages are very high for the travelers answers. This can be explained by the fact that some people gave more than one answer so the percentages will not add up to 100%. A community that is looking at building a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site should take all suggestions into consideration with the highest number of suggestions being the most important. Results from this study indicate that the site should:

- tell as much about her and her family as possible
- have belongings of Laura or her family
- have something to show what it was like back in that time period
- make sure to have a nice place for people to visit such as rest rooms and easy parking
- have artifacts and exhibits that are authentic and factual
- keep things simple as in Laura's time but have some souvenirs to be purchased
- make it educational for the children

The suggestions for improvements gives us a glimpse into what people are looking for when they visit a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site. The most significant aspect from this study shows that over half of the travelers liked the site in Pepin just the way it was or they could not think of anything that would improve it. This shows that people liked what they saw when they came to Pepin. Some suggestions for improvement were more things at the cabin, a better showcase of Laura things in the museum and acquire more of them, more information explaining the cabin and have it more authentic, and interpretation. These suggestions concur with the data regarding what visitors liked best about the site.

For a community starting a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site some things should be kept in mind. First they may wish to examine the site at Pepin further since many of the travelers liked what they saw. It would be beneficial to the community to have the original house that Laura or her family lived in and if that is not possible, one should be built exactly the way they would have built it back then. Visitors come to see how they did it back then. This house should be furnished exactly the way it says in the books or extensive research should be done to have it look exactly like it did when the family lived there. Pepin did not furnish their cabin for security purposes and people were disappointed in that. A suggestion would be to have it locked when a staff member is not present. This leads us into the suggestion that people want someone there to interpret the site. A person dressed like Laura telling what each room was used for and how it related to the books was mentioned. Some suggestions for doing this could be to have actors play the parts. Maybe an internship could be arranged with one of the nearby colleges to have a student actor play the part for a summer. If it is not possible to get volunteers then money should be set aside for hiring employees. A local theater group may be willing to help with fundraisers or provide assistance to the site.

Another thing to consider for a museum is to have Laura's things and have them showcased and not mixed in with other artifacts. Some problems that arise is that there is only so many of Laura and her family's belongings left, and the other LIW sites have them. A good idea would be to have an arrangement with the other sites where some of her things could "tour" the other sites. This would also help in getting repeat customers to the site. For example, if someone visited the site in Pepin they might not come back again because they say they have seen it. If an item was being showcased from another site, and advertised that it would be there on certain dates only, it could entice the person to return to see something they may not have been able to see because of the distance of the other site. Another interesting suggestion was to have hands-on exhibits for children and have the events that took place in the book. It would be very educational for children to actually be able to do the things Laura did, to see how different they are from how we do things today. Many wonderful suggestions were given by respondents, including using an old time butter churn, being able to help in the garden, help bake and cook the food they ate in the books and watch the maple sugar off. Visual Interpretation was a major factor throughout this study. Most of all the visitor's answers revolved around being able to see and do things that involved Laura Ingalls Wilder and how she lived her life.

#### Laura Ingalls Wilder Board Member

The interview with the LIW memorial society board member provides wonderful information to a community looking at developing a site. Pepin's start was very meager by having children collect "pennies for Laura." This shows that you don't need a huge sum of money to get started. It does help to apply for grants, do fundraising, and sell memberships though. The next big step is doing the research. This is very important because the travelers want things very authentic. Research also needs to be done for long term planning. Volunteers played a big role at

Pepin. Lots of thought must go into the planning to see if enough volunteers are available and will continue to be available, otherwise compensation to employees will need to be factored in. The community must be 100% behind the project for any tourism development to succeed. If they are involved from the beginning they will care much more and work harder for its success.

Seasonality is another thing that must be considered. In Pepin they are forced to close during the winter due to lack of tourism. The first step would be to boost winter tourism which they are working on. Something that a LIW site could do would be to have special events centered around winter activities in her books, for example, the sugar off and sledding parties. Using old time snowshoes or ice skates would be another suggestion.

With the information obtained in this study a community who is considering developing a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site could get a good start on what things they need to do and what needs to be at their site. This study shows how the development process can begin, characteristics for a successful site, elements travelers are looking for, and how to maintain feasibility of the site.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Suggestions for further study would be to repeat this study in all the current Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism sites. This would allow for a total view of how all the sites developed and operate. Comparisons can then be made to see what works and what does not between the sites.

#### Conclusion

In this chapter the data was interpreted for the visitor responses and the Laura Ingalls Wilder board member responses. From this information a community can benefit from gaining the knowledge of what the visitors to the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in Pepin, WI liked about the site

and what else they would like to see at the site. The community can also become aware of how the site at Pepin was formed, how it is funded, how it is determined whether it will stay open or not during the off-season, and very beneficial advice from a community who has been through the development process. For a complete picture of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Heritage Tourism community it would be beneficial to study all the sites.

This study shows how important heritage tourism is to our communities by showing it through three different cultures and then analyzing the Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site at Pepin, WI. This study successfully shows what is involved in developing a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage site or a heritage tourism site in general. Many of these concepts can be applied to any tourism development, thus the study's importance contributes to all aspects of tourism.

In chapter one of this study the problem was introduced and four objectives were identified as the purpose of this study.

1. To determine the development process for this site.
2. To determine key characteristics of this site which make it a successful Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site.
3. To determine key characteristics of this Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site that can be improved upon.
4. To determine existing plans to maintain feasibility of this site.

In chapter two relevant literature was reviewed focusing on definitions, programs and examples, communities involvement and challenges dealing with Heritage Tourism. It also took a look at Heritage Tourism through three different cultural groups; African American, Native American and Pioneer American. Chapter three details the methodology of the research by outlining the site selection of Pepin WI, selection of research technique being an interview,

selection of participants being the visitors to the Laura Ingalls Wilder site and the Laura Ingalls Wilder board member, time frame being June, July & August of 2001, and the instrumentation which was two lists of questions, one for the visitors and one for the board member. Chapter four details the research findings through graphs and explanation by showing what the visitors liked about the site and suggestions for improvements. It then explained the board members responses to the questions. And last in chapter five the data was interpreted with suggestions, recommendation for further study was given to do this same study at all the LIW sites and the conclusion to the study presented.

## REFERENCES

Anderson, W. (1990). Laura Ingalls Wilder country: the people and places behind Laura Ingalls Wilder's life and books. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Anderson, W. (1996). The little house guide book. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Black tourism power. (1998). Marketing News, 32, 1.

Cass, G. & Jahrig, S. (1998). Heritage tourism: Montana's hottest travel trend. Montana Business Quarterly, 36, 8-18.

Detter, L. (1985). Tourism and heritage conservation conference. Pacific Asia Travel Association.

Dickinson, R. (1996). Heritage tourism is hot. American Demographics, 18, 13-14.

Drost, A. (1996). Developing sustainable tourism for world heritage sites. Annals of Tourism Research, 23, 579-483

Faragher, J.M. (1992). Daniel Boone: the life and legend of an American Pioneer. Magill Book Reviews, 1-2.

Franklin, R. (1998, November 22). Back to the future. Star Tribune, pp.O1E.

Garbarine, R. (1997, August 3). A new report tells how preservation pays. New York Times, 9, pp.7.

Hayes, B.J. (1997). Claiming our heritage is a booming industry. American Visions, 12, 34-48.

Herrick, N.A. (1998, May 31). House makes itself at home on the prairie. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1.

Historic preservation's payoff. (1998, October 13). The Washington Post, p.A14.



- Howell, B.J. (1994). Weighing the risks and rewards of involvement in cultural conservation and heritage tourism. Human Organization, 53, 150-158.
- Jane DeBow Gibbs and the Mdewakanton Dakota*. (1998). Retrieved Fall, 1998, from <http://www.rchs.com/gbbsDak1.htm>
- Jansen-Verbeke, M. (1998). Tourismification of historical cities. Annals of Tourism Research, 25, 739-741.
- Jensen, J.W. (1993). Wisconsin's heritage tourism initiative. Wisconsin Department of Development Division of Tourism.
- Johnson, R. Tourism at heritage sites: a guide to planning, education, management and marketing. Pacific Asia Travel Association.
- Jones, T. (1997, April 6). Colonial town's trashy past comes alive. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 8.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, Frontier Girl*. (1998). Retrieved Fall, 1998, from <http://webpages.marshall.edu/~irby1/laura/index.html>
- Liebenson, B. (1997, August 3). The house, whether tavern or home and its place in history. New York Times, 13cn, 15.
- McCracken, G. (1988). The long interview. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Native American Culture*. (1998). Retrieved Fall, 1998, from <http://www.state.sd.us/state/executive/tourism/indian.htm>
- Nuryanti, W. (1996). Heritage and postmodern tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 23, 249-258.
- Osinski, B. (1998, April 8). 411 heritage corridor project gains momentum with conference. The Atlanta Constitution, c;0909.

Paulsen, M. (1997). A hidden history. U.S. News & World Report, 122,12-14.

Philadelphia. (1995). Ebony Man, 11, 54.

Poynter, J.M. (1993). How to research and write a thesis in hospitality and tourism: a step-by-step guide for college students. United States: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Rudd, M.A., & Davis, J.A. (1998). Industrial heritage tourism at the Bigham Canyon Copper mine. Journal of Travel Research, 84-88.

Seale, R.G. (1996). A perspective from Canada on heritage and tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 23,484-488.

Seay, E. (1997, November 10). A fading Taft hopes its past will buy a shot at a future--Oklahoma's Black Pioneers raised many such places; can tourism save them. Wall Street Journal, p A1.

Simmons, J. (1995). *American Indian Heritage Foundation*. Retrieved Fall, 1998, from <http://www.indians.org/aihf/>

Timothy, D.J. (1996). Tourism and the personal heritage experience. Annals of Tourism Research, 751-753.

APPENDIX ONE  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR VISITORS

**Interview Questions for Visitors to the Laura Ingalls Wilder site at Pepin, WI  
(with consent statement attached)**

My name is Val Erickson and I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin Stout. I am doing my thesis on Laura Ingalls Wilder and this site here in Pepin, Wisconsin. I am trying to find out what characteristics people like about this site and suggestions for improvement. I will present this information to a community who is determining whether to develop a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site. Would it be all right if I were to ask you two questions? Your answers are completely voluntary. You have the freedom to withdraw at anytime. Your name will not be used in the study and there will be no way for anyone to identify what you have said. If you agree to this I will proceed with the questions. Parents, do you agree to allow me ask your children the questions also?

Questions:

1. What did you like best about this Laura Ingalls Wilder site?
2. What type of things would you like to see at this site that could improve it?

APPENDIX TWO

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

**Interview Questions for Development and Maintenance of the Laura Ingalls Wilder site at Pepin, WI (with consent statement attached)**

My name is Val Erickson and I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin Stout. I am doing my thesis on your site here in Pepin, Wisconsin to research what was involved in developing your site, what steps are necessary to keep the site running, and what characteristics people like about your site and suggestions for improvement. I will present this information to a community who is determining whether to develop a Laura Ingalls Wilder heritage tourism site. I would like to ask you some questions and your answers are completely voluntary. You have the freedom to withdraw at anytime. You should be aware that your name will not be used in the study but it may be possible for people to identify you through your job position. If you agree to these terms I will proceed with the interview.

Questions:

1. What was the development process from beginning to end?
2. What problems arose along the way?
3. Would you do anything differently?
4. How is this site funded?
5. How is it determined if it is feasible to be open during the off season?
6. Do you have any closing remarks/advice to give to a community thinking about building a Wilder/Ingalls heritage site?