



# Farmer Boy Goes West

*Heather Williams*

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Almanzo Wilder is going west! He and his family are moving all the way from their cozy farm in Malone, New York, to the bustling town of Spring Valley, Minnesota. Almanzo can't wait to explore, but life in Spring Valley isn't what he expected. The Wilders have to stay with relatives in a small, cramped house where Almanzo's aunt Martha is cold and unfriendly. Almanzo longs for the freedom he had back home, and he especially misses his horse, Starlight. Even as he makes new friends at school and helps his father pick a plot of land for the family to settle on, Almanzo can't help but wonder: Is Minnesota the right place for the Wilders? Or do they belong in New York?

First introduced in Laura Ingalls Wilder's classic Little House book *Farmer Boy*, Almanzo Wilder's adventures continue in *Farmer Boy Goes West*.

## Farmer Boy Goes West Details

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Author : Heather Williams

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# From Reader Review Farmer Boy Goes West for online ebook

## Martha says

This really fits in well with the original series! And a great addition especially for boys who want to know how people lived, building a new town from a wilderness. I think this story makes Almanzo very human and gives a good background for the man he becomes later.

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## Katie says

probably not fair to compare this book to the original Farmer Boy, because it's really no comparison at all. But a nice, quick read about how the Wilder family may have made their way closer to the Ingalls Family in the years before Laura and Almanzo met.

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## India says

The book is very good I gave it a four because It is not in my top three books but is in my top ten. The author gives so much good detail and description. Every time the other describes they way the pie tasted at dinner I the book my mouth starts to water.

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## Tiffany says

What a striking difference between the lives of Laura and Almanzo there is! The children and I were amazed at the life of plenty Almanzo's father and mother have created for their family through their industry.

I was astounded at the meals his mother produced regularly (so many pies!)

We laughed when the parents took a little trip and things went awry!

We laughed harder when Almanzo pulled a trick on his brother and father when they were all shearing sheep!

I loved the lessons his father taught him in how to manage money.

I loved learning about how they grew, preserved, and sold food, and used their bounties in the best way.

I felt for the children on the Sabbath day, and was grateful we are more relaxed in our time.

We thought the ice cutting story was fascinating, as well as Almanzo's milk-fed pumpkin!

A delightful read.

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## Christine says

The author did a pretty good job of staying true to Almanzo's character (though went a little overboard with Eliza Jane), tying together the parts of the series that we're already familiar with. You could tell she did her research, particularly in her note at the end.

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## **Elizabeth says**

For lovers of Farmer Boy, this is a great sequel!

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## **Cheryl Malandrinos says**

Farmer Boy Goes West is a superb addition to the Laura Ingalls Wilder and Little House legacy. Meant to serve as a sequel to Wilder's Farmer Boy, this story of a teenage Almanzo going West captures all the excitement and adventure of the original Little House books, while providing some insight into the man Laura Ingalls would eventually marry.

A healthy blend of fact and fiction, Williams captures the essence of the original Little House books, while maintaining an air of her own style. The events in this book are condensed to two years instead of the five years it actually took for the Wilders to make their move from New York to Minnesota. She also took liberties with some of the historical characters. I don't feel that had a negative impact on the story, but those who are sticklers for facts might have an issue with it. I'm hoping not, since this is a truly delightful story. The only thing that really made me stop for a second came in the second chapter, when it said, "One day in January, soon after Almanzo's fourteenth birthday..." Almanzo's birthday is in February. While Wilder did play around with the Wilder siblings' birthdays in Farmer Boy—making Almanzo closer in age to his older brother and sister—as far as I recall, she didn't change the month Almanzo was born.

As with any great story, things aren't always easy. Almanzo ends up having to attend a new school in Minnesota. He has to make new friends. He misses Starlight and Royal, maybe even his bossy older sister, Eliza Jane. He likes a girl at school, but is shy and has no idea how to get to know her. His Aunt Martha isn't very happy about jamming the Wilders into their tiny home.

There are also some neat surprises and interesting historical characters added in, but you won't know what or who those are unless you read the book.

I'm thrilled to add Farmer Boy Goes West to my Little House collection.

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## **Diane Houdeshell says**

Cute addition to the Laura Ingalls Wilder books that were my favorite series as a kid. The author did a good job making the characters similar to the way they were in Farmer Boy.

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## **Rebecca says**

This fictionalized continuation of Laura Ingalls Wilder's 'Farmer Boy' follows the life of Wilder's eventual husband Almanzo in his early teens, as his family decides to leave New York for Minnesota. Leaving Royal and Eliza Jane in NY to run the farm, Almanzo, Alice, his parents, and their new baby boy Perley, go to

Minnesota to join Almanzo's Uncle George and his frosty wife Martha. Almanzo's life doesn't actually change all that much, though he always misses his colt Starlight, left in NY. Almanzo and Alice start going to the local school, which is quite large for the time, and continue their lives as farmers living close to town. Some stories in this episodic recounting are tragic, when a death occurs, but most are just life in 19th century Minnesota, with basket socials, Christmas gifts, and a visit from a cousin who has grown up in India. There are even hints of romance for Almanzo and Alice, though in Almanzo's case, his love of horses gets in his way!

I enjoyed this, if not quite as much as Farmer Boy, which I read as a child. Williams (who is actually Tui Sutherland!) has done a lot of research into the Wilders' lives, and has adapted their story for this book much as Wilder adapted the first book--the ages of the Wilder children have been compressed, the eldest sister is left out entirely (her name was also Laura), and their time in Minnesota has also been compressed. I enjoyed the episodes about life at the time, though as must necessarily be the case in a book aimed at elementary level kids, Almanzo doesn't come across as the 15 year old he becomes in the last several chapters. At 15, Laura Ingalls was teaching school herself! Still, an enjoyable story--I missed having some Garth Williams illustrations!

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### **Story\_Girl says**

Based on a real trip to Spring Valley made by the Wilder's when they decided to move from Malone, this is intended to be a sequel to Farmer Boy and I really enjoyed it. Heather Williams succeeded in creating a teenage Almanzo we can picture growing into the man we all love from Laura's books. She even sets the stage for Almanzo and Laura's romance, by creating a girl to be Almanzo's first crush who is the complete opposite of Laura. I love the fact we get to meet Alice's future husband as well. And even Willy, Almanzo's cousin who came all the way from India to stay with them which is fascinating to read!

Yes, the author has fudged a few facts and created a few fictional characters but so did Laura so I didn't mind this at all.

Overall this is a great addition to a Little House fan's library and I liked it very much.

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### **Kathy says**

Almanzo is thirteen when his parents decide to travel from New York state to Minnesota to visit relatives and see if they would like to move out west. They travel by train taking Almanzo and Alice and baby Perley with them, leaving Royal and Eliza Jane at home to mind the farm. Almanzo loves the idea, except that he has to leave his horse, Starlight, behind. Spring Valley is much larger and more civilized than he expected, including an imposing school with many rooms for the different grades.

I have not been very happy with most of the books continuing the story of the Ingalls and the Wilders, but this one is an exception. It is very well done, and in notes at the end, the author (who helped write the Erin Hunter WARRIORS series, and has written WINGS OF FIRE under her own name Tui T. Sutherland) clearly explains what is true history, and what added to make the story more interesting. And interesting it is, from the descriptions of Pullman cars on trains to Almanzo's first crush. A worthwhile read.

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## **Eden Williams says**

I really enjoyed this book. In this book, Farmer Boy,( Almanzo), goes West with his parents and his elder sister Alice and his baby brother Perley. But his elder brother and sister, Royal and Eliza Jane, stay behind. Almanzo is disappointed when he finds out that there's a school in the town in the West, but he makes new friends and has lots of fun. He misses his horse, Starlight, and he wants Father to buy some good land in the West so Starlight can come join him. But Father hasn't decided whether or not to buy the land.....

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## **Lauri says**

More fiction than fact, but there are some nice moments in there.

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## **Steven says**

Review with pictures.

Today I picked up Farmer Boy Goes West from the library. The book is written by Heather Williams, which is the pen name of Tui Sutherland. Are you wondering why an author might use a pen name? In this case, one of the reasons is so that the book will show up on the book store shelf next to the rest of the Little House Books. The Little House Books are one of my favorite series of books. In fact, I have all of them in Hardback as well as other books that have been written as follow ups to the original series.

Farmer Boy Goes West is a sequel to Farmer Boy and follows the further adventures of Almanzo as his family moves to Minnesota. The story is well researched and based on actual facts about the family. The author did make a few changes to The actual story line, but no more than Laura did in here original books. I like the fact that at the end of the book, the author details the changes that she made.

I will not go into the details of the story, as I hope that many of you will read the story for yourself.

While reading the story and writing this review, I thought about why I like the Little House series. The underlying reason today, is that I can gain insight into my own ancestors lives by reading these stories. Why they migrated across the country and how they dealt with challenges in their lives. I catch a glimpse into their everyday life and the items they would use on a daily basis.

The Wilder family came from upper New York near the Canadian border. My Hotchkiss and Darling ancestors lived about 120 miles West of Malone where Farmer Boy took place. My Braman ancestors moved from New York to Wisconsin and lived in the same township as the parents of Caroline or Ma.

The one thing that I miss from this book is that it is not illustrated. One of the things that I love about the Little House books are the great illustrations by Garth Williams.

I will most likely order a copy of this book to add to my collection. It will be nice to have it available the next time I get the itch to read though the complete Little House story.

Steven

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**Sarah says**

We really enjoyed this additional look into Almanzo's life. It was well written, Ms. Williams did a good job. It gives a little bit of insight into some of the years that are missing from the time Farmer Boy leaves off until we see Almanzo again in Little Town on the Prairie.

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