



Rose Wilder Lane (1886–1968)

By Dedra McDonald Birzer

Rose Wilder Lane based her analysis of human liberty on her experiences and observations across the United States—and across the globe. In 1943, her always adventurous life took an unexpected turn. Not only did she publish *The Discovery of Freedom: Man's Struggle Against Authority* that year, but she also took on the Social Security system, the US Post Office, and the FBI.

On a sunny summer day in 1943, a uniformed state trooper, outfitted with gun and billy club, approached Rose Wilder Lane as she weeded her daisies. The Danbury, Connecticut Postmaster had reported Lane to the FBI for writing a postcard to a New York radio personality that criticized Social Security as a German program that originated with Bismarck. The FBI dispatched a state trooper to investigate. Instead of conducting initial research,

the trooper immediately confronted Lane, providing her with a perfect scenario for her always quick wit. “What is this, THE GESTAPO?” she roared. Though she had already written her magnum opus, *The Discovery of Freedom*, published earlier that year, the episode with the FBI fit perfectly into the analysis Lane put forth in that volume, as did many (perhaps every) adventure and event of her entire life (United States, Department of Justice, 1943; Lane, 1943; Lauters, 2017).

Both the Social Security origins that Lane pointed out on her postcard and the FBI response to it underscored her point in *The Discovery of Freedom*. Government is force, she argued, whether implied, as in the Social Security mandate, or actual, as in the armed state trooper interrogating Lane at her house. J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI unwittingly proved her point, that whether led by Fascists like Hitler or American politicians like Franklin D. Roosevelt, government exists to use force to ensure the cooperation of its citizen subjects with its plans. Few of these citizen subjects remember that they are individuals who are free. Lane took advantage of this encounter with the FBI, and with everything she wrote from then on, to remind her readers of this essential truth.

Born on December 5, 1886, on her parents’ homestead near De Smet, Dakota Territory, Rose Wilder Lane was the only surviving child of Laura Ingalls Wilder and Almanzo Wilder. A precocious youngster, Rose took to heart every disaster that befell her parents, blaming herself in her adult years for much that could not have been the fault of a small child. The onslaught of disasters came upon each other so quickly, however, that Lane’s young psyche could not have escaped undamaged. Lane’s mother describes them all in her posthumously published novel, *The First Four Years*. Though Wilder’s book does not match the tone or beauty of the other eight volumes in the Little House series, it does give us a fictionalized glimpse into the life and character of young Rose Wilder. Doted on by her Ingalls aunts, Mary, Carrie, and Grace, and by her Ingalls grandparents, Rose learned to read at a very young age and later claimed to remember a fateful day when her family’s home burned to the ground. She was two years old. Not long after the fire, Lane’s parents both contracted diphtheria and young Rose went to live with the Ingalls in De Smet while her parents recuperated. Almanzo Wilder pushed himself too hard too soon after recovering from the illness, and suffered a stroke that caused partial

paralysis in his legs. The harsh winters and intense labour he was used to in South Dakota had to be left behind (Wilder, 1971).

After living for almost a year in Spring Valley, Minnesota, with her Wilder grandparents, Lane's parents decided to join Laura's cousin Peter Ingalls in the Florida Panhandle. This was an attempt to find a place where Almanzo would have fewer health concerns. Florida, however, was not the answer. Lane's mother rather famously quipped that the biggest anomaly in that very foreign environment was herself, a Yankee woman. The Wilder family's sojourn in Florida provided the backdrop to one of Lane's most successful stories, "Innocence," which was awarded second place for the O. Henry Prize in 1922 (Lane, 1923, April 7). The Wilders returned to De Smet, South Dakota, only to join the massive exodus in 1894 of 44,000 Dakotans seeking better circumstances elsewhere. They traveled by hack buggy to Mansfield, Missouri, following the beacon trail laid by boosters who called the area the "Land of the Big Red Apple." The Wilders purchased a not-yet producing apple orchard and farm with a primitive cabin, calling it Rocky Ridge. Decades of hard work turned it into a showplace, but money was always tight and ruin always just around the corner (DeHamer, 1985; Holtz, 1993).

Rose Wilder attended school in Mansfield, Missouri, through the 8th grade, after which she lived in Crowley, Louisiana, with her aunt, Eliza Jane Wilder, and where she completed high school, graduating in 1904. Determined to be independent, Lane learned to be a telegraph operator, a skill that enabled her to move around the Midwest. By 1907, she held the position of manager at the Western Union office in Mount Vernon, Indiana. Two years later, Rose Wilder married Gillette Lane. They traveled extensively, focusing their attention on selling real estate in California's interior valleys. Lane's only pregnancy, a boy, ended in stillbirth in Salt Lake City. By 1915, the Lanes had settled in San Francisco, where Rose began her writing career with the *San Francisco Bulletin*, one of the leading voices of "yellow journalism," in which newspapers of the day sensationalized and embellished news stories, seeking to outdo one another in a contest for subscribers and fame. Lane learned writing and editing from her mentor, the *Bulletin's* managing editor, Fremont Older. Lane practiced a rather expansive, embellished form of journalism in which she manufactured dialogue and sought to illustrate larger truths with fictionalized elements. Biographical

serials soon became Lane's writing forte. Some of these first appeared as serials in *Sunset* magazine. Subjects included Jack London, Herbert Hoover, Charlie Chaplin, and Henry Ford. Lane's tendency to embellish facts and invent dialogue got her in trouble with her subjects and their families, but also built Lane's national reputation. In 1918, she published a somewhat autobiographical novel, *Diverging Roads*, that explored themes that shaped her own rise to maturity, including the tensions of "bachelor" working girls from rural areas suddenly thrust into a very fast-moving modern world. The deep-seated marital problems that Gillette and Rose Lane faced are laid bare in the novel, which was released in 1919, the same year that their divorce became final (Lauters, 2007; Koupal, 2017, 2021; Hill, 2014).

An offer to write publicity for the American Red Cross took Rose Wilder Lane east to New York City, where she flirted with Communism alongside her new writer friends, and, after six months in that city, to Europe. While the friendships she established during her brief sojourn in New York held for the rest of her life, her fling with Communism ended quickly. In later years, in both her publications and correspondence Lane attempted to explain the attraction of Communism.

Lane set sail for Europe in July 1919, beginning almost a decade of life abroad. In addition to her human interest pieces for the Red Cross newsletters, Lane wrote numerous short stories and nonfiction articles for American magazines. Her literary agent in New York worked diligently to get these stories and articles published, making Rose Wilder Lane quite a well-known literary figure and public intellectual. In Europe, Lane befriended American journalists and writers with whom she traveled to exotic locations and had adventures that framed much of her published writing at the time, and that provided the observations that led her to new understandings of human energy and individual freedom. Lane remained in Europe through the early 1920s, traveling extensively and writing enough to pay her bills. Travels included Russia, Armenia, Budapest, Albania, and Paris.

Returning to the United States in 1928, she lived at her parents' Rocky Ridge Farm until 1935. With the proceeds from her writing, Lane built a modern English-style cottage for her parents, who had been living in the farmhouse they had built themselves entirely with materials found on their farm. She

then set about modernizing the farmhouse, to which the Wilders returned as soon as their daughter moved out in 1935. This period overlapped the Great Depression, in which both Lane and her parents lost all of their investments. During these seven years, Lane hosted many writer friends for extended periods, which kept her from feeling completely isolated in rural Missouri. She also informally adopted two teenaged boys, Al and John Turner. This was Lane's second experience with adoption, having taken in an Albanian boy, Rexh Meta, during her long visit to that country. Building and remodeling homes became one central theme of Lane's life; taking in orphans became another. Lane had an expansive heart that she longed to fill with friends and family. Her homes reflected that love of hospitality and allowed her to act on her belief that the actions of unknown individuals, standing up and doing the right thing, could lead to revolution.

In 1933, in response to the hardship caused by the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) began implementing a series of programs and public works projects that were known as the New Deal. Lane and her parents detested the New Deal and saw it as an assault on liberty and the overturning of the American Republic. They thought government handouts were a travesty of liberty and believed that once people relinquished responsibility for themselves and their welfare, they gave up their liberty.

As was her wont, Lane acted on her convictions. With her typewriter, she supported, at least partially, her parents, the Turner boys, and Rexh Meta in Albania, even funding his education at Cambridge. She found it was harder to sell her stories in the 1930s, though. Publishers stopped buying manuscripts, opting instead to print the already-paid-for stories languishing in their vaults. Hoping to get her parents to become economically self-sufficient, Lane encouraged her mother to write about her life. And she did, with a lot of coaching and heavy editing help from Lane. Consumed by both a desperate need for income and a desire to remind Americans about the character of their ancestors that had been forged by their frontier experiences, Lane and her mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder, turned in the 1930s to Wilder's childhood for story material. Wilder had written regular columns for the *Missouri Ruralist* throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Now Lane urged her to write her memoir. Completed in the spring of 1930, this manuscript, *Pioneer Girl*, became the basis for almost every

fictional piece the two women wrote for the next decade. From her mother's memories, Lane crafted two novels about courage and individual perseverance on the western frontier. The first, *Let the Hurricane Roar* (later re-titled *Young Pioneers*) was released in 1933. *Free Land* followed in 1938, first as a serial in the *Saturday Evening Post* that spring. In book form, it became a best seller and its proceeds allowed Lane to purchase a permanent home in Danbury, Connecticut. *Free Land* extolled the virtues of homesteaders determined to make a success of their farms even while it critiqued the premise of the Homestead Act. The Act ostensibly enabled people in need of economic opportunities to move west and take up land that was previously government-owned—with no requirements other than that they agreed to live there on the land for five years and pay a filing fee. Would-be homesteaders often arrived without having any or enough of the cash reserves they needed to purchase the food and fuel supplies, building materials, and machinery that made a Great Plains homestead viable. In Lane's estimation, those unavoidable expenses meant that homesteading without cash reserves was impossible and hence the government land give-away was disingenuous at best. *Free Land* was Lane's last foray into published fiction (Holtz, 1993; Hill, 2007; DeHamer, 1985; Lane, 1932; Lane, 1938/1984).

Lane publicly declared her opposition to the New Deal in "Credo," which was solicited and published by the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1936 based on a remark she had made. Calling this her "first attempt at political writing," Lane discussed the attractions of communism and its inherent failures. Collectivism, she noted, had been the sole intellectual thought in the United States since the 1840s. Small wonder, then, that generations hungry for ideas found themselves oriented toward its darker corollary, Communism. "Credo" struck a chord with many readers. Lane received more than 3,000 letters in response, the biggest explosion of letters that the publication had ever received. "Credo" was lengthened and reprinted later that year by publisher Longmans, Green as a booklet titled *Give Me Liberty* (Lane, 1936). Sales were low, but the booklet introduced many of the ideas Lane expanded on in her seminal nonfiction work, *The Discovery of Freedom: Man's Struggle Against Authority*, published in 1943.

The Discovery of Freedom was a book based not on theory, but on Lane's wide-ranging reading, research, and observations from her travels across

the globe. In many ways, the book serves as a meta-history in the tradition of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians such as Christopher Dawson, Arnold Toynbee, and Edward Gibbon. Lane offers an interpretation of world history seen through the lens of almost continual obedience to Authority (always capitalized) versus the occasional recognition of the natural and inalienable human exercise of individual freedom. She seeks to explain the connection between the extensive application of human energy so apparent in the United States and the recognition of human freedom. The context of World War Two and the curtailing of freedoms in the name of the war effort gave rise to Lane's query and shaped her approach to its answer. In *The Discovery of Freedom*, Lane lays out an extended syllogism to make her case for why the conditions that allow creative human energy to rise exponentially are tied inexorably to individual understanding of his or her own natural, inalienable freedom (Lane, 1943/1993).

Most people throughout time and across the world have held a pagan belief (Lane's phrase) in the Authority that governs and controls every aspect of their lives. The Authority takes the form of rulers who are believed to be gods; rulers who are believed to be chosen by gods; or rulers who are believed to be superhuman. According to Lane, "every imaginable kind of living Authority has been tried, and is still being tried somewhere on earth now." The problem is that in each iteration, the subjects of The Authority "did not get enough to eat" (Lane, 1943/1993: 16).

Lane observed the vagaries of starvation as a reporter for the American Red Cross in war-torn Europe in 1919. World War I created massive numbers of refugees who were starving and homeless. Herbert Hoover directed efforts to feed and house them, and Lane, along with Dorothy Thompson and other American journalists, publicized their plight. In her travels to Paris, Eastern Europe, and Russia, Lane sought to exercise her common sense and American-frontier bred logic. In each place, she found frustrating curbs against the individual exercise of freedom. These experiences added to the wealth of observations Lane drew from for *Discovery of Freedom*.

Lane located the foundation of Old World thinking in the assumption that creation is over and done with and as a result no more creative energy exists. The power of The Authority is based entirely on this notion of the

universe as “completed, finished, motionless, changeless” (Lane, 1943/1993: 116). But, she posits, if “dynamic Energy is creatively operating; then a thing that is impossible at this instant will exist in the coming instant; then all things are changing into new, unprecedented things; tomorrow cannot be known today, and nothing that exists today can control tomorrow” (Lane, 1943/1993: 116). Lane ties the release of this creative human energy to freedom from The Authority and traces moments in history when no Authority controlled people. The key to these moments are humans who know that they are free. Lane begins with Abraham, who rejected the pagan gods as non-existent and declared “that God is One Creator-and-Judge... But God does not control any man, Abraham said; a man controls himself, he is free to do good or evil in the sight of God” (Lane, 1943/1993: 74). She next turns to Moses, who reminded his followers time and time again “that they were responsible for themselves; that each one of them was free; that they could not have a god nor a King to control them and be responsible for them” (Lane, 1943/1993: 75).

Knowledge of self-responsibility and control over one’s own actions, though, is not enough, Lane posited. For each individual’s energy to “be combined with the energies of others he must know a second fact, that all men are brothers” (Lane, 1943/1993: 77). Jesus Christ, she argues, continually reminded his followers that all people are free, and that all are members of the brotherhood of humankind. As she explained, “Christ spoke of the real nature of human beings, of the freedom, the responsibility, the dignity, and the power of the individual... [and] he spoke of the brotherhood of man. Love thy neighbor as thyself” (Lane, 1943/1993: 81). This Judeo-Christian understanding that “within each living man and woman, is the self-controlling energy that makes this human world” is what Lane termed “the First Attempt” (Lane, 1943/1993: 80).

According to Lane, “the second attempt to establish the fact of individual freedom in practical affairs” centered on Mohammed and his teaching against organization. “Each individual must recognize his direct relation to God, his self-controlling, personal responsibility” (Lane, 1943/1993: 83). Lane recounts the swiftness with which “the knowledge that men are free swept across the known world,” creating an “energetic, brilliant civilization” that for 900 years welcomed scientific exploration and supported universities offering “all of the learning of the past, translated into Arabic” (Lane, 1943/1993: 90).

Lane extols the many virtues of the long-lived and far-flung Saracen civilization, and finds many parallels to American civilization: “look for the people whose lives are adjusted to a fast tempo, the people who travel swiftly and far, who communicated with each other quickly over long distances, people who attack space and time and create a civilization rapid, vibrant, depending on speed. Two peoples have done this: the Saracens and the Americans” (Lane, 1943/1993: 107-108).

The “Third Attempt” is the American Revolution, called such by Lane because of the breadth and depth of the changes wrought by the declaration of American colonists that freedom is a fact, not a permission granted by any Authority. Liberty, she continued, is the individual control of human life-energy. It is inalienable (Lane, 1943/1993: 149). Lane bestowed credit for the American Revolution on individuals, citing the many instances over the course of 125 years in which individuals “fought against Government’s pretended control” (Lane, 1943/1993: 169). The documents that enshrined the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, protected every American’s exercise of his natural freedom by limiting the functions of government. Lane argued that the Declaration of Independence proclaims that there is no Authority. Those in Government cannot do anything without the permission of the individuals they govern. The Bill of Rights, Lane contends, is a misnomer. It is, rather, a Bill of Prohibitions, a “statement of the uses of force which American citizens do not permit to men in American government” (Lane, 1943/1993: 189). Without this statement, suspicious Americans would not agree to the US Constitution. Such denial of government force is the essential difference between the American Revolutionary government and all other governments. Such curbing of Government means that the life of every American is protected. “Human rights are natural rights, born in every human being with his life, and inseparable from his life; not rights and freedoms that can be granted by any power on earth” (Lane, 1943/1993: 190).

The recognition of human rights inherent in the American Revolution unleashed a torrent of human energy that has resulted in hitherto unimaginable material progress of an extent that could never have been planned. That Revolution, however, hinged on self-control and responsibility. Lane posits that

natural liberty is responsibility, and that control and responsibility cannot be separated. When humans relinquish responsibility for themselves and their well-being, they lose their natural liberty and “stop the effective working of human energy to satisfy normal human needs” (Lane, 1943/1993: 225). Once human action can no longer work effectively, this New World of economic abundance will quickly vanish. Lane explains that “human energy works to supply human needs and satisfy human desires only when, and precisely to the extent that Government is weak, so that individuals are least prevented from acting freely, from using their energy of body and mind under their own individual control” (Lane, 1943/1993: 224).

The *Discovery of Freedom* pulls together disparate ideas about freedom, human energy, liberty, individualism, and authority into one coherent package, using as a lens the importance of the unique and irreplaceable individual. Lane interprets world history around the theme of almost continual obedience to Authority versus the occasional recognition of the natural and inalienable human exercise of individual freedom. She expected few sales; she thought sheer luck of timing was the only way it got published: “the Stalin-Hitler pact threw the pink-to-reds into such confusion that the barrier cracked in spots,” she wrote to a friend. “But all I hoped was to get a few copies out. An idea is a seed; sometime, somewhere, it will grow into results, if it’s a true idea, and I think this one is.”¹

While Lane’s *Discovery of Freedom* made few waves when it was published, she saw it as an opening for creating networks. In August 1943, she wrote to her friend Joan Clark that “the best thing my book brings me is dozens, scores, of letters from all over the country. Contacts are really being established. I think the National Economic Council may be a rallying point for Americans. I am absolutely certain that a genuine American revival is gathering force and impetus.”² Seven months later, Lane declared that “we are living in the beginning of a genuine American renaissance.”³ A large part of that renaissance emerged with two other libertarian-minded books released in 1943: Isabel Paterson’s *The*

1 Rose Wilder Lane to Charlie Clark, August 11, 1943, Box 2, Folder 19, Rose Wilder Lane Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library [hereinafter RWL Papers].

2 Rose Wilder Lane to Charlie Clark, August 11, 1943, Box 2, Folder 19, RWL Papers.

3 Rose Wilder Lane to Charlie and Joan Clark, February 8, 1944, Box 2, Folder 19, RWL Papers.

God of The Machine and Ayn Rand's novel, *The Fountainhead*. One scholar has labeled these three writers as "the Libertarians of '43," explaining that "women were more important to the creation of the libertarian movement than they were to the creation of any political movement not strictly focused on women's rights" (Cox, 2004: 195. See also Beito and Beito, 2008).

Indeed, *Discovery of Freedom* launched Rose Wilder Lane into a whirlwind of new networks and opportunities. Lane had always been a prolific letter writer, pouring both her intellectual musings and her worries about the world into her correspondence. In the 1940s and 1950s, her circle widened to include leading Libertarians and Fusionists, who "fused" social conservatism with libertarianism. She discussed with her correspondents where her charitable funds would do the most good. She balked at the seemingly constant requests for donations from the *National Review* but paid for subscriptions for herself and others to journals ranging from *American Opinion* to *Human Events*. Lane saw these latter magazines as spreading the seeds of individualist thought in a way that the conservative *National Review* did not. She wrote to Joan Clark in 1958, "This country is not New Deal nor Modern Republican. Americans by and large are individualists even when they can't say, or think, that they are; and the little papers and magazines that are beginning in the American Horatio Alger way are doing all right, and I believe would grow to be big, in time."⁴

Even prior to the publication of *Discovery of Freedom*, Lane had been directly involved in the "world of little papers and magazines," editing the National Economic Council *Review of Books* and writing a column, "Rose Lane Says," from 1942 to 1945 for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the largest historically black newspaper in the country. With a circulation of over 270,000, the *Courier* brought Lane's arguments about freedom and liberty to a far wider audience than she reached through the paltry sales of *Discovery of Freedom*. In an early column, she wrote, "Here, at least, is a place where I belong. Here are Americans who know the meaning of equality and freedom." Subsequent columns extolled the virtues of free markets, antiracism, and the wisdom of early nineteenth century French economist Fredric Bastiat, while lambasting FDR's misunderstanding of the fundamental meaning of freedom, which, according

4 Rose Wilder Lane to Joan Clark, July 11, 1958, Box 2, Folder 19, RWL Papers.

to Lane, was “self-control; no more, no less” (Beito and Beito, 2010: 285). Her *Courier* columns revealed Lane’s ability to reach a variety of audiences with her message of liberty.

Lane’s print activism spread into her personal life as well. Rather than pay income taxes and succumb to wartime rationing, she became almost completely self-sufficient, reducing her income to \$60 per month (her salary from the *Pittsburgh Courier*), canning vegetables, and raising chickens. As an Associated Press wire story reported about Lane, “And why this Revolt of the Exile? Denying bitterness — from which save us all — she terms ‘current national activities’ nonsense and the income tax ‘the last straw’” (Associated Press, 1944, April 13).

Lane attended libertarian theorist Robert LeFevre’s Freedom School (a two-week course) in Manitou Springs, Colorado, in late summer 1958 and loved it so much that she helped make the mortgage payment that saved the school (\$1,500—she had only \$1,600 in the bank). As Lane explained to Joan Clark, “The last thing that anyone expected was that I could save it—at least for another year—but if you see it you will agree with me that it is ONE thing that absolutely MUST be kept going. Only think of 80 really understanding, comprehending, convinced individualists, young ones, from all over this country, going out of that school in only two years, most of them going back into colleges and universities.”⁵ She knew she was dabbling in small-time things (like Freedom School) but believed in radical individualism—the ripple effect of one person who knows she is free and in control of and responsible for her own actions.

Encouraged by her adopted grandson and heir Roger Lea MacBride, throughout the 1950s Lane worked on *The Discovery of Liberty*, which was to be her magnum opus and the means of correcting some erroneous details in *The Discovery of Freedom*. In 1953, she wrote to American philosopher and political activist Frank Meyer: “In the 1930s I made an attempt to place this country correctly in world-historical perspective and produced a result of which I am much less than proud: *Discovery of Freedom*. It is done in a ‘popular’ way and might be of some use to a child.... I don’t recommend this book to you,

5 Rose Wilder Lane to Joan Clark, 24 Sept. 1958, RWL Papers.

but, if it interested a child I believe he would get from it a correct view of the revolutionary character and value of this country, the fundamental difference between socialism and individualism. There is a desperate need for a good history.”⁶ Despite Lane’s good intentions, she did not complete *The Discovery of Liberty*. She did, however, lecture at colleges and for libertarian-minded organizations, taking care to meet students and encourage them. In 1963 she published the *Woman’s Day Book of American Needlework* (first serialized in *Woman’s Day* magazine) tying American liberty, freedom, and individualism to women’s needlework and sewing (Lane, 1963). She had written regularly for *Woman’s Day* magazine from its beginnings in 1937 and continued to do so through the 1960s. In fact, the magazine sent her to Vietnam as a reporter in 1965 at the age of 78 (Lane, 1965, December 29: 33, 93-94) and three years later, on the eve of her death, she had been scheduled to go on an around-the-world trip for *Woman’s Day*.

Through her writings, Rose Wilder Lane did far more than plant the seeds of ideas. Businessman Jasper Crane proclaimed that “the meaning of liberty was unknown and our heritage was almost wasted away. Then, a book appeared called *The Discovery of Freedom*. A new literature developed and has now reached great and influential volume.”⁷ Roger Lea MacBride noted that *The Discovery of Freedom* “laid the conceptual groundwork for virtually the entire libertarian school of thought, as well as for much of the then post-war ‘conservative’ movement. The author’s work on the principles and historical relationships set out in *Discovery* didn’t stop with this book. *Discovery* was rather the beginning: she devoted a large part of the next 25 years to testing and expanding her thought” (Lane, 1943/1993: Introduction). More important to Lane than the response to *Discovery*, however, was the network of correspondents that it inspired and the ripple effect of the many discussions that emanated from that network across generations of liberty-minded students and organizations. Her expansive heart and love for hospitality made her a founding mother of libertarian-minded Americans. Lane created connections, drew people in with her sharp wit and motherly care, and reminded everyone

6 Rose Wilder Lane to Frank S. Meyer, 5 Sept. 1953, Box 9, Folder 119, RWL Papers.

7 Quotes on Lane’s *Discovery of Freedom* appear in the Introduction to the 50th anniversary edition of that volume (Lane, 1943/1993).

of the central importance of individuals who know that they are free. Marking the fiftieth anniversary of *Discovery of Freedom* in 1993, Hans Sennholz commented, “There never appear more than a few great individuals in any age, spirits of discovery and intellect, great minds in advance of their time, and pioneers for generations to come. Rose Wilder Lane was such an individual” (Lane, 1943/1993: Introduction). Indeed, Lane’s influence has spread far and wide in the half century since her death. Her guiding hand on her mother’s *Little House* novels introduces generation after generation of readers to stories of pioneer perseverance and individual responsibility. Moreover, with her wide-ranging correspondence and public speaking, she created a small republic of letters that continues to resound with the lessons of liberty today.

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