

PIONEER LIFE IN KIPLING...CONTINUED

And arranged credit at the local general store, paying the bill after the harvest was done and the grain sold or the husband came back from working out of town. Years later thanks to Eaton's mail order catalogue, one could order everything from underwear to bologna.

Pioneer women grew and tended very large gardens, usually growing enough vegetables and fruit to feed their family for the whole year and enough to barter with at the local store. Vegetables like potatoes, carrots, onions, turnips and beets were stored in a root cellar while peas and beans were dried or canned. Pickles and sauerkraut were also made and stored in crocks. Salt and pepper were the primary, sometimes the only seasonings used, with some additions such as dill and parsley.

Fruits were canned or dried. The eating of fresh fruit during the winter months was virtually unheard of except for those families who could afford the luxury of buying a barrel of apples which would be stored in the cellar or root cellar. Oranges were a definite luxury and grapefruit unknown to most pioneers.

Dishes were washed in a basin on the kitchen table or cupboard. The water was heated on the wood stove or taken from the water reservoir for dishes and laundry or once a week a fire was made outside in summer for heating the laundry water. Monday was "wash day" and it took all day and taxed the strength and stamina of the women. Scrubbing on the washboard and later by agitating the clothes in a dolly tub took time. The white clothes were washed first then boiled to whiten them. The soap used was lye soap made from rendered beef grease and wood ashes. The clothes were rinsed and wrung out by hand. In winter you would find the clothes drying inside hung on lines, in the kitchen. The pioneer women ironed everything. Generally a home had two or more sad irons and when the ironing was being done one could see a couple irons warming on the stove while a third was being used. Ironing was done on the kitchen table using folded sheets as pads or on covered boards between two chairs. Sad irons were followed by charcoal irons, then gas and eventually electric irons.

Most of the family's clothing was homemade. Most women sewed by hand although some were fortunate to have a hand crank sewing machine. Some of the cooking, cleaning, mending, knitting etc. was done at night, often by the light of candles or coal-oil lamps. As some these chores were done sitting down, they were often viewed as a form of relaxation.