

Pioneer Life in Kipling....continued

The bedrooms were very sparsely furnished, the bed being the most important piece of furniture in the pioneers' life. They were conceived there, born there and died there.

The bed had ropes on laced canvas stretching across the bed frame with a mattress on top. At the end of the bed was a handle which was used to adjust the tension of the ropes or canvass. The mattress on the bed usually was burlap sacks or ticks filled with straw or feathers. Using Oats heated in the oven, placed in bags made a good bed warmer considering there was very little heat in winter that made it to the second floor. They also used warmed bricks, to help warm the bed. The use of hot water bottles and copper bedpans came later for more convenience.

Today we should have a more comfortable night of sleep, thanks to our box spring and mattress and water floatation beds.

Some bedrooms also had washstands with a basin and jug for water for washing. There were no inside washrooms so the chamber pot was used and stored in this washstand or under the bed for use only at night. The rest of the time an outdoor bathroom was used.

The pioneer's clothes were hung on hooks on the wall. In more recent years wardrobes and closets were built.

Some of the wealthier families had a room which they called the parlour. The room was used for formal occasions and usually held a couch, a piano, a fireplace, a smoking cabinet and on display were all the family pictures. Pioneer women were excellent cooks, preparing large meals noon and evening. They baked all their bread, churned their own butter and made their own cheese. The bread batter was usually mixed up the night before and to keep the dough warm, was covered with all the blankets and sheets not needed on the beds. The dough was prepared and baked first thing in the morning, thus having fresh warm bread for breakfast. That meant Mother had to be up early to make the rounds or loaves ready for another rise before baking.

Butter making was a regular chore of a pioneer women's life. Churning was hard work but since butter could be sold or traded for other foods the family need, making butter was part of the regular routine. If a cream separator was not available, cream was separated by allowing the milk to stand until the cream rose to the top and then skimmed off into a jar or churn. Cream was also separated by draining the milk from the contained through a spigot at the bottom.