

**Legends of Freeborn County**  
**Life Without Pizza Could Be Tough**

Thirteenth in a monthly series of Freeborn County Legends - April, 2001

By Bev Jackson

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"Wow! How did they live with our pizza?" This question from one of the students on a museum tour, brought chuckles to us all afternoon.

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We anticipate questions like "Why did they take a bath in the barber shop?" or "Why did they have to go to the bathroom outside?" But pizza? That brought up a whole new scenario.

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When is the last time your dinner consisted of a freshly fried chicken, potatoes, carrots, lettuce and radishes from the garden, bread right from the oven, milk from your own cow, and a cake baked from scratch?

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When is the last time you ate a meal that didn't have at least one item from a package?

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When the young people first enter the pioneer village, we ask them to adjust their thinking back more than a hundred years. Back to a time before paved roads, underground telephone cables, cars, and power poles.

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We ask them to imagine that, instead of getting off the school bus, they are climbing down from a covered wagon. Maybe they even had to walk beside it for miles and miles that day. That wagon was pulled by oxen or horses, and it contained all of the items needed for their families to make a home in this Minnesota prairie land.

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When they got hungry, dad shot a rabbit and mom made stew for lunch. They couldn't stop at McDonald's.

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When they finally arrived at their homestead and built a new house, it would have no electricity. Consequently, there would be no lights, no radio, no microwave oven, no blow dryers, no heat, no washers, no television, no Nintendo, and no computers.

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They hear this definition of another life style, and it's as if it happened in a different world. It couldn't possibly happen here, not our relatives.

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The "thank you" notes we receive, and the drawings and stories the students do after returning to class give us a great handle on their understanding. The schoolhouse makes the biggest impact on groups of all ages. Then probably in this order we read about the jail, church, and the log cabin. Occasionally, a student's personal interest surfaces and the John Deere, railroad depot, barbershop, or general store receives extra attention.

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Approximately a thousand kids tour the museum and pioneer village every spring. Each comes from a little different home environment, and consequently, has different thoughts on how life should be.

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There is one thing they all agree on however, While it might be fun to live like a pioneer for awhile, they don't want a steady diet of it. They could manage for a time without television and maybe even a Big Mac and fries, but life without pizza would be a real hardship