

History & Legends of Freeborn County□ Christmas Memories

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From the Albert Lea Tribune, December 24, 1947

Memories of Alice Bolton, resident of Gordonsville, born in 1877

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"As a young child I went to my uncle's log house to spend Christmas, and how well I remember the merry tinkle of the sleigh bells, the prancing horses, and the fresh straw under the robes and blankets.

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Mother and we children piled into the sleigh and were soon tucked under shawls, more robes, and more blankets and maybe a patchwork bed comforter or two.

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The roads were so badly drifted that father, the boys and the hired man were obliged to cut a wire fence, and we traveled some distance through a farmer's field and then back onto the road and finally reached our destination.

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I can't recall much about the dinner, but as there were not enough chairs to go around, planks were used on either side of the table to seat the guests.

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In the large parlor the logs in the wall were whitewashed and a bright rag carpet covered the floor. In one corner of the room stood a comfortable looking bed with goose feather thick and square pillows. On each pillow sham was embroidered a large peacock in red.

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One Christmas I received a doll with a sawdust body, kid feet and hands and a china head. My doll had dark hair and eyes while my sisters doll was blonde with light china curls and blue eyes. I think I had a little envy in my heart, but I suffered in silence.

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And then there always seemed to be a wide silk hair ribbon which was then tied in stiff bows and fastened at the ends of long braids which hung down my back. These ribbons, however, were only worn on Sundays and special occasions; a string was good enough for school or everyday wear.

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Santa sometimes brought me a story book or two and "Mother Goose" and "Who Killed Cock Robin?" were my favorites. I think I memorized almost every word from cover to cover.

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There were candy and nuts, and how thrilled we were to get an orange!

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One Christmas Eve I sat by the kitchen table and watched Mother prepare a plum pudding, and among other things I remember the suet was chopped in a wooden bowl and the luscious raisins came packed in layers in a low wooden box.

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The mixture was poured into muslin bags which had been dipped in water and sprinkled with flour to keep out the air. In the morning the bags were popped into a large kettle or boiler and were steamed until dinner was ready to be served.

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As time speeds by our methods of living change, but how grateful we feel for the modern conveniences we now enjoy and for the comforts of home and friends. One thing never changes, the old familiar **greeting: Merry Christmas to all!"**