

**Document A: "Such a Christmas"**

**Source:** Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, 1935.

**Note:** Laura Ingalls was 12 years old when she moved with her family onto the Great Plains in Dakota Territory. Her novel *Little House on the Prairie* was built around many of her childhood memories.

**S**omething was shining bright in the top of Laura's stocking. She squealed and jumped out of bed. So did Mary, but Laura beat her to the fireplace. And the shining thing was a glittering new tin cup.

Mary had one exactly like it.

These new tin cups were their very own. Now they each had a cup to drink out of. Laura jumped up and down and shouted and laughed, but Mary stood still and looked with shining eyes at her own tin cup.

Then they plunged their hands into the stockings again. And they pulled out two long, long sticks of candy. It was peppermint candy, striped red and white. They looked and looked at the beautiful candy, and Laura licked her stick, just one lick. But Mary was not so greedy. She didn't even take one lick of her stick.

Those stockings weren't empty yet. Mary and Laura pulled out two small packages. They unwrapped them, and each found a little heart-shaped cake. Over their delicate brown tops was sprinkled white sugar. The sparkling grains lay like tiny drifts of snow.

The cakes were too pretty to eat. Mary and Laura just looked at them. But at last Laura turned hers over, and she nibbled a tiny nibble from underneath, where it wouldn't show. And the inside of the little cakes was white!

It had been made of pure white flour, and sweetened with white sugar.

Laura and Mary would never have looked in their stockings again. The cakes and the cups and the candy were almost too much. They were too happy to speak. But Ma asked if they were sure the stockings were empty.

Then they put their hands down inside them, to make sure.

And in the toe of each stocking was a shining bright, new penny!

They had never even thought of such a thing as having a penny. Think of having a whole penny for your very own. Think of having a cup and a cake and a stick of candy *and* a penny.

There had never been such a Christmas.

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**Document Analysis**

1. What holiday are Laura and her family celebrating on the Plains?
2. What presents do Laura and Mary find in their stockings?
3. How does the author, Laura Ingalls, let us know that these gifts are very special? Pick one gift and explain.
4. Which details in this document might you include in your letter to cousin Clara or Clyde?