



It Happened Near Me: For Sale at Purcell's Store

County: Loudoun

Date: 1860

Topic : Impact of industrial & transportation revolutions

Background: By 1860, the impact of industrialization in the U.S. was beginning to make big changes in daily life. Purcell's store in the tiny western Loudoun village of Purcellville was 38 years old that year. Near the intersection of two turnpike (toll) roads, it had easy access to bigger towns such as Alexandria and Baltimore with factories and ships that went 'round the world. By turnpike and railroad, Purcellville was five hours from Baltimore (it's under 2 hours by car today). Here is their 1860 price list at the store. Note what's being sold in a country store~and what it costs. A free man earns \$.40 to 1.00/day in 1860.

tea kettles.....75 cents each
Crocks.....12 cents each
Gallon jugs.....25 cents each
brooms.....31.25 cents each
water buckets.....31.25 cents each
candles.....2 for 5 cents
iron shovels.....75 cents
soap.....6 cents/lb.

ball of thread.....10 cents
calico cotton cloth...9 cents/yd.
cashmere.....\$1.23/yd.
cotton.....12.5 cents/yd.
gingham.....12.5 cents/yd.
muslin.....55 cents/yd.
ribbon.....55 cents/yd.
scissors.....50 cents/pair
sewing needle.....6 cents each

bonnet.....87.5 cents
gloves.....\$1.00/pair
ready-made coats...\$2.25 to 4.00
shoes, men's.....\$.62 to 1.40 per pair
silk Vail.....\$1.50
cotton socks.....33 cents/pair

cheese.....12.5 cents/lb.
cone sugar.....15 cents/lb
crackers.....12.5 cents/ lb.
tea.....\$1.00/lb.
coffee.....12.5 cents/lb.
molasses.....\$1.00/gallon
candy.....31.25 cents/lb.
cantaloupes.....6 cents each
tobacco.....50 cents/lb.
cigars.....\$5.00 per box of 100
wine.....50 cents/bottle
port wine.....\$1.50/bottle
whiskey.....\$4.00/gallon
Jamaica run.....37.5 cents/pint
brandy.....50 cents/pint
coffee pots.....30 cents each

shirt collars.....15 cents each
cotton suspenders....60 cents/pair
men's ready-made dress shirts....\$1.25
ready-made work shirts...65 cents each
ready-made nightshirts...\$.75-1.00
panama hats.....\$2.50
vests, silk.....\$4.50 each
ties.....35 cents each
vests, cotton.....90 cents ea.

Making Sense of Evidence from the Past.

1. What is “ready-made” clothing? Where would it be made? Is it expensive? How can you tell?
2. Are people only wearing ready-made clothing by 1860? How do you know?
3. What beverages can be purchased at a store for America’s largely rural (farm-based) population?
4. Where would an “iron shovel” be made? How did it get here? Is it expensive?
5. To which items did slave labor likely contribute? How do you know?
6. Which items were sold in 1860 that people don’t buy anymore?



Purcell's Store, built 1822, Main Street and Hatcher Ave., Purcellville VA