

I'm not taking a bath!

Pre Visit Discussion

Childhood today is very different from what it was a century or more ago. Children as young as 6 or 8 years old might work in a mine, or they might run errands and make deliveries for a store keeper, they may be apprenticed to a skilled craftsman or woman, or they could be hired out as a servant. Many children in rural parts of the country worked on farms alongside the adults.

Their work day started before the sun came up and boys' tasks might include cutting, splitting, or carrying firewood for the stove or fireplace, tending to the farm animals, carrying water to the house, putting up or repairing fencing, working in the gardens, fields or orchards, and hunting, trapping or fishing to provide food for the family.

Girls spent long days cooking, milking cows or goats, collecting eggs, churning butter, making breads and cheeses, preserving foods, cleaning, doing laundry, making candles, sewing clothes for the family, preparing fibers like wool and flax to spin and weave, caring for younger brothers and sisters and helping elderly family members.

Do you do any of these chores?

How much time each day do you spend doing chores?

Post Visit Discussion

After your visit to the Silver City Museum, ask students to research information on the tools or technology used to carry out each chore they learned to do. An example could be a broom used for sweeping, or the vacuum cleaner used for cleaning today. The contrast of activities and machines or tools used can be shared.

Questions for discussion during share time could include:

Are chores today similar or different to those in territorial New Mexico?

How do tools or machines help with household chores?

As a class, discuss the topic: 'Are chores easier today compared to 1881?'

Ask students to write a paragraph about why chores are easier to carry out in today's society and then share their points of view with the class.