WHAT DID A DOLLAR BUY IN 1897?

During the late 1890’s and early 1900’s, the general store was an important part of small town America. The little farming and logging communities relied on it for news and mail as well as goods. Sometimes if the store didn’t have an item a customer wanted, it could be ordered from a catalogue.

Prices during this time were very different from today. Look at the catalogue advertisement from the 1897 Sears Catalogue. Now look at the price list for some of the different styles and extras.

**Grade A Columbus Top Buggy**
This buggy is made of second growth hickory wheels, ash and poplar body and quarter leather top. Guaranteed for 2 years…… $55.00

**Grade AA Columbus Top Buggy**
This buggy is made of second growth hickory wheels, leather-covered prop nuts and handles, 13 coats of paint, velvet carpet, all wool English cloth on seats. …… $65.00

Extras:
- Full leather top $5.00
- Leather cushions $1.50
- Full length Brussels carpet $1.00

1. Your father wants to buy the $39.00 buggy, but wants to get a full leather top and leather cushions. How many dollars does he need to buy everything?

2. Make up your own math problem.
Your mother is an operator at the Sunset Telephone Company. She makes $.25 an hour and works 8 hours a day. She wants to buy you a bike. Here are some prices for different styles plus some extras.

1. How many hours must she work to buy you a bike? ________ hours.
2. Your mother has saved $40.00. What bike and extras can she buy?

Bicycle suits were popular at the turn of the century. So were suits. Look at the prices above. What could your mother afford to buy? Write on a piece of paper.

©Skagit County Historical Museum