Victorian Math Lesson

Unlike today, pioneer children were responsible for buying their own text books and bringing them to school with them. You can see some of these books on sale in the General Store. However, families couldn't always afford to purchase new books so many children came to school without their own text books.

For arithmetic problems, children would have to listen very carefully to the teacher read the questions then write down the information they would need to solve the problem on their slates. They would need to pick out the numbers and determine if they would be adding or subtracting. The teacher would give the students a couple of minutes to work out the answers. When the students were finished solving the problem they would hold up their slates.

Let's try a couple of questions from an 1887 math text book. Listen carefully to the questions and write down the information you will need to solve the problems. When you have finished please hold up your slate boards.

When students have completed, the interpreter should select a student to come and solve the problem on the blackboard.

Grade 3 Questions:

From *Public School Arithmetic 1887*

Addition Exercises Pg. 11 – 13

6. John had 8 marbles, his uncle gave him 19, and on his way to school he bought 26. How many had he then? (the answer is 53)

17. Annie paid 18 cents for milk, 35 cents for cream, 48 cents for eggs, 37 cents for butter, and 26 cents for cheese. How much did she pay in all? (the answer is 164 cents or $1.64)

32. In a cattle train there were two cars with 17 head of cattle in each, three cars with 19 head in each, one car with 22 head, and two cars with 21 head in each. How many head were in each car? (the answer is 155)

Subtraction Exercises Pg. 17 – 19

3. Of 57 pupils present at a school examination 29 were boys. How many were girls? (the answer is 28)

32. Annie had 51 nuts. She gave 14 to Bessie, 12 to Fannie, ate 11 herself, and gave the rest to her little brother Harry. How many did she give Harry? (the answer is 14)

36. A man bought a horse for $97 and another for $85. He sold the two for $163. How much money did he lose on them? (the answer is $19 or $97+$85=$182 and $182-$163=$19)