

THE COUNTRY HOUSES

DeVore Farm House—An established middle class farm family

Wulf House—Newly arrived immigrant living on the edge of class family town.

THE TOWN HOUSES

Story-and-a-Half House—Lower middle class family with aspirations to rise in class

Murdock House—Upper middle class family of means and social standing.

CHILDREN AND OCCUPATIONS

The 1870s were a time in which education was having more of an impact on employment. As men moved from the farms and small craft businesses to become employees of factories and companies, there was less of an expectation that their sons would *follow in their footsteps*, but would choose their own careers instead. Some trades, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, printers, and farmers, still incorporated their sons in their businesses. They had a higher need and desire that children who grew up doing this type of work would continue their businesses and support them in their old age.

For girls, in both town and country, there was still a high expectation that they would become wives and mothers who would manage their own homes. Many who lived in the country had hopes of leaving the physical hard work of the farm for less rigorous, but more socially challenging, work in town.

1. BLACKSMITH SHOP (19)

While there was not a true guild system, boys who wanted to learn blacksmithing, typesetting, and carpentry did have an informal *apprenticeship* system. These boys often did the most menial and tedious unskilled tasks. They were also permitted to watch other more experienced men do the more technical work.

On the farm, in addition to helping the men with their farm work, boys were given their own plots of ground or some livestock—calves or pigs with which they could experiment and eventually sell. Most were permitted to keep the profits and encouraged to reinvest in some type of farming activity. It was more than *on-the-job training* but less than beginning to farm on their own with all the economic risks.



2. MEAT MARKET (21)

Hunted food: pheasant, deer, elk, buffalo, catfish

Farm-raised food: beef, pork (bacon, sausage)

Food from another part of the nation: oysters

3. FARM CHORES (15)

Milk the cow

Feed pigs, chickens, cows, etc.

Collect kindling and split firewood

Haul coal

Empty ashes

Help wash clothes

Churn butter

Work in the garden

Sit with younger brothers and sisters

Pump and carry water

Study school lessons

Help with field work

Groom and care for horses



children were similar in style and design. Their *everyday* clothing was where they differed. As expected, clothing on the farm was meant for work and getting dirty.

Clothing for boys was sturdy and durable and not valued for its color or fashion. Girls had many more choices in the color and print of fabrics as you can see in comparing the fabrics in the cases with the ready-made clothes for boys. Still the final approval rested with the adults. Country girls had fewer dresses and adornments.

13. DRUGSTORE (31)

The people in town made more use of the doctor and pharmacist partially because they were close and were becoming more comfortable letting these professionals deal with such matters.

People in town were more prone to communicable diseases because of the larger concentration of people. Those on the farm were more likely to experience accidents as opposed to contagious disease since dealing with livestock had its own hazards. Most people were visited by doctors at their homes, and many doctors came from visits to farm families with eggs, chickens, milk, or other produce as payment for their services. With less access to the medical profession, farmers were often the source of, and one who continued to use, many of the home remedies.

14. GENERAL STORE (12)—Personal Answers

15. TOWN CHORES

Work in the garden	Buy things at the General Store
Collect kindling and split firewood	Pump and carry water
Haul coal	Study school lessons
Empty ashes	Help wash clothes
Run errands for mother	Sit with younger brothers and sisters

4. VISITING FRIENDS IN TOWN AND IN THE COUNTRY (15)

While it was considered a special room like the town parlor, the sitting room in the 1880s DeVore farmhouse was used in an informal manner, like a modern family room. The room was designed to be comfortable. All members of the family were welcome to use the room. Because guests traveled longer distances and were infrequent, their visits were longer and more informal. Visits had fewer *rules* about topics and personal discussions than in the town parlor. With all efforts on a farm preoccupied with making a living and the isolation caused by being separated from towns by distances, a visit maintained the ladies' contact with society and the outer world.

5. DEPOT (24)

6. HENRY WULF HOUSE (25)

This house represents the first house of immigrants on the edge of town. The man of the house had a job in town and did some farming after hours. He raised chickens and had a crop on the west side of the house. While the family's livestock and crops were minimal, the children's activity in caring for them was invaluable.

The immigrant family was large with 2-4 children, all sharing a modest house. With the cramped living conditions, the children often slept in the attic space while the parents and younger children slept in the bedroom downstairs. As he prospered, the man of the house would add other rooms to this start of a house.

7. STORY-AND-A-HALF HOUSE (40)

How many bedrooms are in this house? **2 (upstairs)—There are 6 total rooms in the house (2 upstairs bedrooms, 3 rooms downstairs, and 1 outside).**

Who has the *most* privacy? **the parents**

8. MURDOCK HOUSE (41)

“Children are to be seen and not heard. The children of this upper middle class family were expected to diligently follow the rules of etiquette more closely than other children in order to maintain the family's place in society.

The children in this house had lots of manufactured toys and games and had little need to rely on their own creativity for playthings as did the children who lived in the DeVore farm house and the story-and-a-half house. Your students should have noticed the games and toys they saw in those houses.

baseball

marbles

X-Box

doll

toy stove

football

baby bed

Barbie doll

Legos

basketball

tea set

Tonka truck

Visiting in the front parlor—The parlor was a room that was used for visiting only and was off-limits on other occasions. The family spent a lot of money to decorate the room while the rest of the house was plain. Children did not enter the room when adults were not present, and the behavior was harshly restricted.

Visits were formal with more rules of etiquette. Ladies had strict times when they were *at home* and ready to receive guests. Visits lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. Topics of conversation were also limited to *very* impersonal topics. A visit served to establish and maintain social connections and one's place in society.

9. **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (43)**

Most people went to church. It was the expected thing for good members in society and good citizens to do. People, even children, wore their *Sunday best* because it was such a public gathering. Services were longer than today. The benches were hard, and children were expected to sit quietly, not fidget, and not be a bother to the adults.

For many farm children who did not have many chances to socialize with other children, going to church was something to be endured in order to have fun with friends afterwards. It was also a day in which country families went visiting with their neighbors, as it was expected that no one would be working—other than daily chores and the care of animals. For many farm kids in the summer, church was a painful time to try and force feet into rarely worn good shoes.

10. **ONE-ROOM SCHOOL (38)**

Though education was important, it was also icing on the cake. It was more important for a woman to find a good husband to provide for her. While being smart was good, it was more important that a man be honest, loyal, and hard-working.

Children were required by law to be in school. School was very strict, and children were expected to obey the teacher's instructions and rules. If jobs at home required their participation, missing school was not unexpected. Both town and country children missed quite a bit of school. Country children missed more school than those in town because their labor was needed to help with the farm operation; their labor was just as valuable to the farm as their education.

11. **THE WICHITA CITY EAGLE PRINTING OFFICE (35)**

The four-page newspaper was the main source of information as well as written entertainment. Local, national, and sensational global news was carried along with poems, serial stories, and tales of local interest. Unfortunately, the paper was originally delivered weekly, and if the news was slow or the printer ran out of time, whole pages would be repeated from week to week. This meant that most of the local news was relayed from person to person by what today we call *gossip*.

City children were less isolated and had more opportunity to share and learn much about their neighbors and other town members. **Children in the country** spent more of their time actively involved in running the farm and, therefore, had less news about their neighbors to share but more about their crops, livestock, and projects.

12. **FECHHEIMER CLOTHING STORE (34)**

While children at this time were no longer considered miniature adults, their clothing still reflected the adult styles and look of the time. This was part of the preparation of children for their eventual role as adults. The clothing that children in the town and country wore was similar although they differed in the amounts and types that they owned. The *Sunday best* of city and country