**General Store**

1. Call out to student with fake name and tell them they have a **letter arrived by post**. Have them read one of the letters on the wall: address = name, city, state; paper sealed with wax stamp/no envelope
2. After person reads letter, thank for reading and say how everyone loves to share letters so can hear from people back East. Writing is one way people **communicate** here. Anyone know what the other method of communication is? (oral) – *have people hold signs*
3. Pass around horseshoe or other **transportation** object. Ask what the three sources of transportation "are" (animals, people, water/boats)
4. Show washboard to show how things were **powered by** then (people, animals, water mills)
5. Point out or pass around toy in store (wooden puppet, doll, etc). Talk about how most left their toys behind. There was not a lot of time for **recreation**, as the chores and school keeps everyone busy. But when there was time, there were three types of recreation – handmade items like these, games using objects found around house/farm, and those not requiring objects, such as tag)
6. Define **artifacts**: something made by a human being or used by a human being
7. Define goods, consumers, producers, markets
   * **Goods**: objects that are capable of satisfying people’s wants.
   * **Producers**: people or businesses that use resources to make goods and services.
   * **Consumers**: people who use goods and services to meet a need they have.
   * **Markets**: places where buyers and sellers exchange goods or services.
8. Have wood/ashes in store. Discuss how valuable wood is (largest natural resource).
   * **Corn** - feed cows, grind, whisky, eating, cornhusk doll, etc
   * See the many **wood** objects in the room? What notice? (various tools, recreation objects) One may not notice are the ashes
     + polish pewter
     + pot ash - used to make (lye) soap, (flint) glass, dyes, drugs, etc
     + pearl ash - saleratus (sal-uh-rey-tuh s) - precursor to baking soda when baking
     + Anticipating when Erie Canal open. Ashes more value (back east/Europe – for lye, porcelain glaze); also can get goods from back East - more & cheaper
9. Talk about how got something in store not likely to sell (ie. china) because cow died and traded this important object of family for money so could be horse/cow from other family; define scarcity, economic choice, opportunity cost, benefit
   * **Wants unlimited and resources limited**. Therefore, people make choices because they cannot have everything they want
   * **Scarcity**: lack of sufficient resources to produce all the goods and services that people desire
   * **Opportunity cost**: something you give up to get something else
   * **Benefit:** the something else you get which is better than what gave up.
10. Play “survival” game (Takes about 7-10 minutes)
    * Transactions are largely done by barter, or trade, since most people do not have much money. People bartered goods, labor, transportation…whatever they had to trade. We are going to play a game to see how good you would have been @ bartering. It will mean your very survival.

**Ashes – Additional Information (FYI)**

Before thinking about farming or earning a living the first settlers had to put a roof over their heads and cut enough firewood to heat their homes and cook their food. During the colonial period the average homestead consumed 20-30 cords of wood per year. If they had energy left they could attempt to clear and till five acres of land in three years, one of the conditions of sale imposed by the Kennebec Proprietors. Once the timber was cut and the house and barn built, was there anything of value left?

The economy of early non-native settlers was built on the barter system. Hard currency was scarce. There was, however, one commodity available to the settlers that required only hard work, fire, and trees that had ten times the value of wheat: wood ashes.

In short order a huge market for wood ashes was created and the American colonies, awash in wood ash, were ready to meet it. A settler could either collect and sell the plain wood ash, or they could blanch it in a large vat, and boil it down to produce pot-ash (potash). If that residue was baked in an oven, the carbon in the residue would cook off, leaving a product called pearl-ash. Both pot-ash and pearl-ash were worth more than any other product a farmer could produce, and large quantities were shipped from Hallowell until the middle of the 19th century.

Huge quantities of raw wool were being produced in England in the mid to late 1700s just as Hallowell was being settled. The wool needed to be cleaned before it could be used. The cleaning process is known as “fulling” and the cleaning agent is Fuller’s Soap. The soap making recipe uses fat or oils and an essential ingredient scarce in nearly treeless Europe - wood ashes.

An early Hallowell newspaper, the *American Advocate*, featured an advertisement placed by a local businessman searching for the raw material of the much needed soap. The product was still being shipped from Hallowell’s docks into the 1850s. (<http://historichallowell.mainememory.net/page/1730/display.html>)

**Lye Soap** - Lye is a very caustic chemical capable of causing serious damage. It can burn skin, cause blindness, and even cause death if ingested. And yet, this dangerous chemical is one of the main components of homemade soaps. Old timers will tell stories of how harsh lye soap is on the skin, but how well it cleans clothes.

The other main ingredient of soap is fat – tallow, olive oil, coconut or palm oil, for example. When fat and lye are combined in proper proportions, a chemical reaction called saponification occurs. The end result is soap plus glycerin. (Glycerin is often removed from factory produced soaps which is why soap is often drying to the skin). When properly prepared and cured for several weeks, no lye remains in the final product.

So why does “lye soap” have a reputation of being harsh? In days past, homemakers made soap using lye made from wood ash. Sophisticated scales for measuring were not available and often too much lye was used. When saponification occurred, some lye was left in the soap, making it harsh on the skin. It is vitally important to measure carefully so that the correct amount of lye is used

When the ashes were filtered out, the water would hold enough lye for purposes such as dissolving the fat left on animal furs or mixing with other ingredients to make body soap.

**Making Lye Soap:**

To make lye in the kitchen, boil the ashes from a hardwood fire (soft woods are too resinous to mix with fat) in a little soft water, rain water is best, for about half an hour. Allow the ashes to settle to the bottom of the pan and then skim the liquid lye off the top. Do this daily until you have enough of the weak solution. Then, boil the liquid down until it will float an egg.

Next, put meat fat, left-over cooking lard, or vegetable oil into a kettle not over half full, and heat the whole mess until all the liquid has been rendered out of the solid scraps. While it's still hot, add this clean grease to the bubbling lye and continue to boil the mixture—stirring all the while—until it reaches the consistency of thick corn meal mush.

Use a wooden box as a mold. Cover the bottom of the box with waxed paper or grease to keep the soap from sticking, pour in the mushy mixture and let it cool. If you want hard soap, add a little salt to the mushy mixture as you pour it into the mold.