

1890 Survival Ideas for Now

Natural disasters, wars, etc. still happen.
We are told to pack a getaway kit of essentials.
Learning some skills would be a good idea too.

Some may actually be better than what we do now, at least in terms of sustainability.

1) always grown some of your own fruit and vegetables

fruit and vegetables were still seasonal. most 'rations' for the keepers still came in cans or dried.

2) played a musical instrument(s)

no radio etc. wax cylinder recordings were rare and expensive.

3) driven a horse drawn carriage or wagon

the principle means of travel if you could not walk there. horse driven equivalent of a 'bus' was for tourists or large groups

4) saddled a horse

unless you had servants, you took care of your own

5) used a communal outhouse (digging your own hole does not count)

no flush toilets yet.

6) toilet paper came in sheets and was rough in texture

brown and scratchy, still better than pages from a catalog or corn cobs

7) used a cast iron wood or coal burning stove for cooking and baking

start the fire in the morning and do not dampen till evening, slow cooking is still better tasting than modern methods

8) used and maintained kerosene lanterns for light (and lighthouse light)

smelled, very flammable, poisonous, but worked. use adequate ventilation though

9) gotten fresh meat at local butcher shop you could walk to

most people still raised chickens, primarily for eggs, but town we close enough now you did not need to

10) taken a steam powered train into a major city (SF for PPLH)

Del Monte train ran everyday to San Francisco and back. Emily Fish was a regular.

11) hand crafts for pleasure: painting, sewing, carving, etc.

doing anything with your hands is still more satisfying than buying everything

12) sutured a wound with available needle and thread

local docs now, but people tended to be self reliant for most small things.

13) used stereoscope to view 3D scenes

very popular item since 1861 to view scenes, people, plays (with dialog on back)

14) could read and play sheet music for a piano

no sound recording, so had to make the music yourself. sheet music was very popular and new tunes much sought after

15) joined a local social club for entertainment and company

the lighthouse was on the edge of town now (Pacific Grove). keepers were not so isolated anymore

16) made bread using commercial brewer's yeast

minimal ingredients, nothing 'funny' and tasted like heaven

17) drank water from a local spring

safer than cisterns and could afford to bath more often, but still might be contaminated with 'minerals' like lead, arsenic or mercury

18) bought whole chickens or fish and cleaned them yourself

keepers were not rich. the more they could do themselves, the more money they had left over for needs.

19) used a roll film box camera and sent it in to have pictures processed

Kodak Brownie box cameras came in. not longer had to be a professional to record your life.

20) bought ready made cloth to make clothes from

still limited to wool, cotton, flax, etc. but more print patterns were available from catalogs like Sears Roebuck

21) used a mechanical foot powered sewing machine

took practice, but much faster and more uniform than doing by hand

22) washed your clothes in a tub with homemade soap

soaking all day is still better than half hour with a spin cycle

23) been with someone when they died

people still die, but not so quick yet to ship them off to hospital yet

24) saw your first 'movie' on an Edison Kinetoscope

no sound and short. Had to look through lenses to see in a box one person at a time.

25) made lumber for use from a fallen tree, using only hand tools

with oak, pine, elm and other trees local, no reason not to make use of wind falls

26) made candles from beef fat

paraffin wax came with use of kerosene and was starting to be used for candles.

27) ever sent or received a telegram

way faster than a letter, but more expensive. only for emergencies

28) hung clothes on an outside line to dry

way better smelling and softer than a 'dryer', but weather dependent

29) heard of 'horseless carriages' but never seen one

both electric and fuel versions, but more an upper class novelty still

30) used well maintained roads to town, but not paved yet.

better than a dirt path. wagons could be used. and safer. city was less than a mile away now.

31) can read and write in full handwritten cursive script

no texting yet, sorry. there is a real physical pleasure to writing this way that cannot be explained

32) kept accounts in a ledger book by hand

no calculators or computers yet. typewriters were just making it in the US with the QWERTY keyboards arranged to slow down the typist.

33) had measles, chickenpox and/or mumps

backlash to vaccines currently, only smallpox vaccine was common at this time

34) taken material to local printer to have printed, with images

halftone screens and line drawings could now be printed locally for news, fliers, announcements and advertising.

35) depended on a hand wound pocket watch to tell time

sold through the Sear catalog or local watch repair, most people relied on a watch personally or key wound clock at home/business to tell time

36) used a mass produced refillable fountain pen

dip pens were still used, but being less portable, there were limits. the 'cool' people started using fountain pens

Robert Louis Stevenson on his visit with keeper Alan Luce in 1879:

"Westward is Point Pinos, with a lighthouse in the wilderness of sand, where you will find the light-keeper playing the piano, making models and bows and arrows, studying dawn and sunrise in amateur oil-painting, and with a dozen other elegant pursuits and interests to surprise his brave, old county rivals."

Typewriters were just coming in to use, but not everyone could afford one, nor capable of using one (takes a LOT of practice to get good and accurate)

Some of these questions are the same as the previous 1855 quiz. Not EVERYTHING changes in 35 years and old skills will always find a use, even now.

My own great grand mother was born in 1890 and took the morning stage to school in the morning. Though cars were just starting to make an appearance, they were not reliable enough for everyday use outside paved roads. (none in Pacific Grove yet)

No player pianos yet. Sheet music of popular songs was very popular and everyone wanted the latest tunes to play at home.

The first great depression was to occur in 1893 only second to the Great Depression of 1929 in terms of unemployment, etc. Same reasons though, over reach by people trying to get rich quick led to poor decisions of money managers, etc.

Though they could now print images in newspapers (halftone process), most camera work was still done by experienced professionals. Not quite to the 'snap shot' and 'family pic' times yet. People still went to a local 'studio' to have images made of important events and people.

At least they had my favorite fountain pens at last!