

'Rithmetic

by Lynne Belluscio

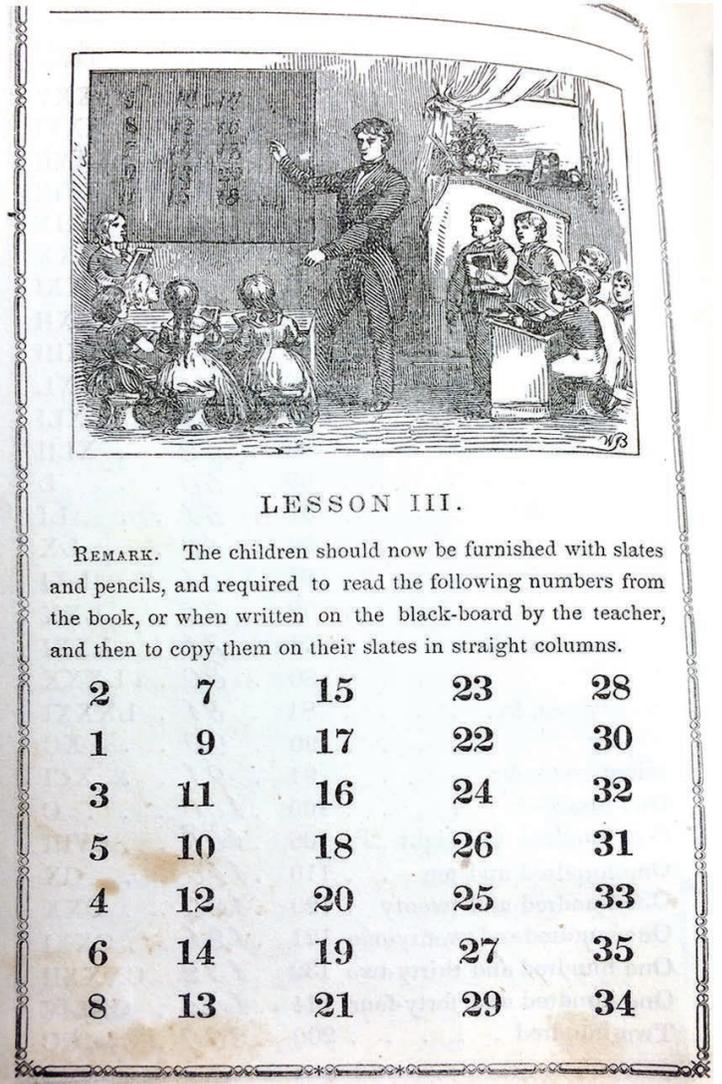
This last Wednesday and Thursday, the basement kitchen at LeRoy was transformed into a one-room school house for the fourth graders. It's always fun to share this history with the kids, who enthusiastically participate in a spelling B and learn how to write cursive with a steel-tipped pen. (And no one spilled ink!) And since most of them print, they also discover that printing is hard with a pen. And if they push down too hard, the tip could break or it digs into the paper. The kids that are left handed are always dragging their hand through the ink.

This year I asked the teachers to participate too. I gave them a copy of fourteen problems from a 1849 arithmetic book. (Part of my reasoning, was that last year, I discovered that with the new math, I wasn't speaking the same language that the kids were using today to solve problems, and I didn't want to confuse the issue - - for that matter I was confused listening to how they solved the

problem.) First we had to go over the word "arithmetic" because it's not commonly used today. The word "math" is more popular and began replacing "arithmetic" in the 1950s.

After the brief discussion about arithmetic and math we had to take a minute to talk about how to use the slates. We don't use chalk. Instead we use slate pencils which are made of stone. There is nothing worse than the screech of a slate pencil on the stone slate surface. "Make sure you don't press hard with the pencils. And its easier if you hold the pencil on an angle. Don't expect to have a bold mark. The pencils make a little scratch that you can erase with your finger. "

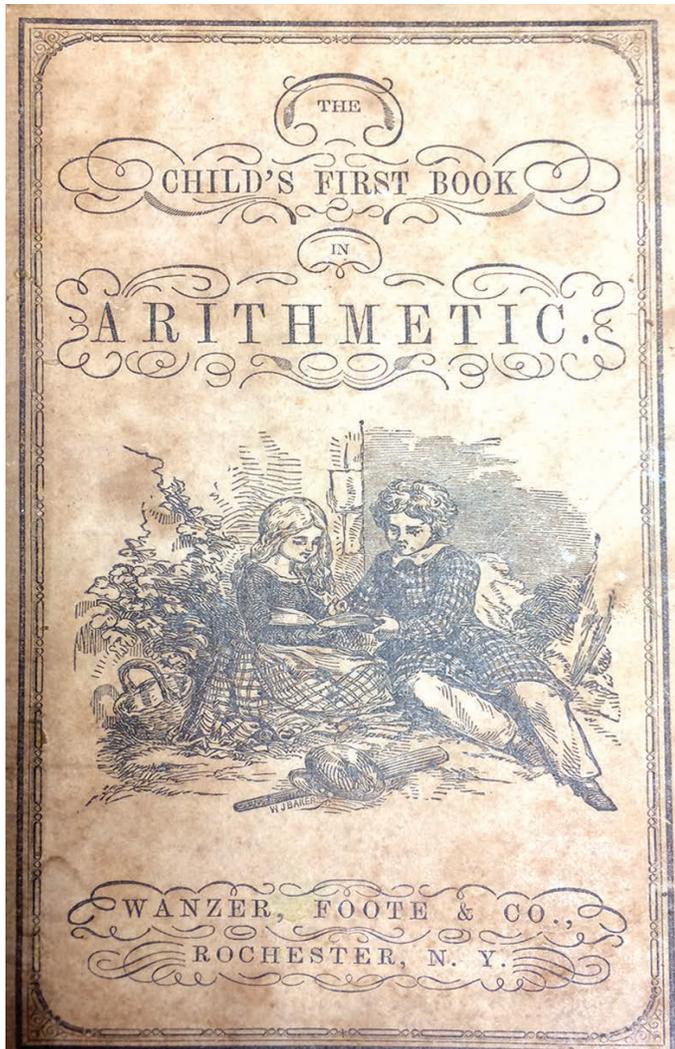
Here are the fourteen problems that the kids solved. I have to admit, that from where I was sitting, there were five teachers and five different solutions - - not different answers. But different ways to explain the process. Maybe that's why it's called modern math. And



LESSON III.

REMARK. The children should now be furnished with slates and pencils, and required to read the following numbers from the book, or when written on the black-board by the teacher, and then to copy them on their slates in straight columns.

2	7	15	23	28
1	9	17	22	30
3	11	16	24	32
5	10	18	26	31
4	12	20	25	33
6	14	19	27	35
8	13	21	29	34



don't forget to label your answer.

1. Which is the most, 6 times 6 or 4 times 9? (Trick question.)

2. John had 15 pears and he gave 6 to Cyrus and 5 to Ralph. How many did he have left? (This was confusing to a couple of kids, because they heard "pair" not pear.)

3. Thomas gave 11 cents for a top and 6 cents for a string to spin it with, and then sold them both for 21 cents. How many cents did he gain by his bargain?

4. A grocer sold a chest of tea for 25 dollars and took in payment 12 dollars worth of wheat, 8 dollars worth of oats and the remainder in money. How much money did he receive?

5. A man bought a wagon for 40 dollars, paid 10 dollars for having it painted, and then sold it for 60 dollars. Did he gain or lose by his bargain and how much?

6. At 2 dollars a day how much will a man earn in five days? In 6 days?

7. There are 7 days in a week; how many days in 5 weeks? In 6 weeks?

8. When hay is worth 10 dollars a ton, what will 5 tons cost? What will 6 tons cost?

9. How much will 5 pounds of honey cost, at 11 cents a pound? How much will 6 pounds cost?

10. When Daniel uses 6 sheets of paper in a week, how, many sheets will he use in 7 weeks? How many in 8 weeks?

11. Milford bought 7 oranges at 3 cents apiece ; how many cents did they cost him?

12. What will 7 hats cost, at 5 dollars apiece? What will 8 hats cost at the same price?

13. How much will 9 pounds of sugar cost, at 9 cents a pound? How much will 10 pounds cost at the same price?

14. At 7 cents a quart, how many cents must be paid for 10 quarts of blackberries? How many for 11 quarts?