

Laundresses in the Revolutionary War

Laundresses did not use washboards during the Revolutionary War as they were not patented in America until 1833.

18th-Century Laundry Methods

- **Hand Rubbing:** Laundresses soaked clothes in wooden tubs and rubbed dirty spots or applied soap directly by hand.
- **Washing Bats:** Women sometimes used flat wooden paddles with ridges, known as laundry bats, to help agitate and move clothes in the water.
- **Boiling and Lye:** Heavily soiled items or durable linens were boiled in large copper or iron pots and treated with homemade lye soap.

The work of the laundress contributed greatly to sanitation and disease control in the military.