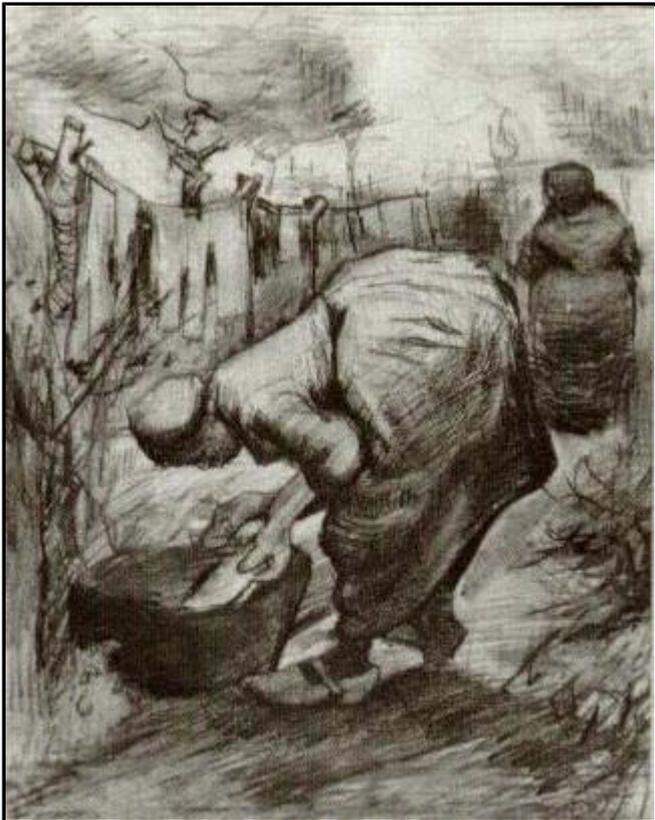


# Wash Day...And No Electricity!

Well it's wash day again and you've got piles and piles of laundry that needs to be taken care of right away! But you have no electricity! Now what?

First of all, don't despair! Great Grandmother did it, so can you! She had the tools of the trade though, and you can too with a little ingenuity...



The very first thing to do is gather all your equipment. You will need: 3 large tubs, water tight. These can be made of any material. Years ago iron pots were used for this, but I use galvanized tubs or even plastic for rinsing. Laundry Soap. Of course, lye soap was used many years ago, but if you only have regular laundry soap, so much the better! You can even use bar soap like Ivory. A washing board. Yep, you really need this little contraption. Unless that is, you want to take your clothes and pound the dirt out of them with a club! Yes, some ladies actually did this to clean their clothes! Wore the fabric out pretty quickly, I'd say. Believe me, you will get very tired of rubbing your clothes on your hands, get a wash board. You might want to get a bottle of bluing for the whites, and some fabric softener. You'll need a supply of wood for a fire and a safe place to build a fire. One of your pans needs to be able to sit over a fire. You will also need a long stick with which to move clothes out of the hot water, and to stir them in the wash water.

Now, you're ready to start!

Build a good hot fire. Wait a little while and let it burn down a bit so that there are plenty of hot coals. Fashion a way that you can set the tub on the fire, keeping the fire underneath the tub. It is really best to have a tub with feet on it, but you can rig up a good set up using an old grill off of a BBQ or something. Even cinder blocks or large rocks can be used. While the fire is heating, you can separate your clothes, by color and by least to most dirty.

Fill two rinse tubs with cool, clean water, away from the fire.

Fill the wash tub about 2/3 with water. Let it heat until very hot, even boiling. You may even want to boil very dirty clothes like work pants, jeans or white socks. Add laundry soap. Remove carefully from the fire and to a table or to the ground. This normally takes two people.

Pretreat any stains as you normally would. Add your clothes to the hot water, starting with the least dirty ones first like shirts and underwear.

Be careful of burning your hands in the hot water! Rub the clothes on the washboard. Adding soap as needed. Rub then plunge, rub, then plunge.....remember Far and Away?

Take the hot clothes out of the wash water with your stick, place them in the first rinse. Rinse and

wring as best as you can. Place the clothes in the second rinse, adding fabric softener or bluing if desired. Don't wear yourself out wringing, just hang up the clothes, dripping, outside. If it is in winter or rainy weather, you will have to wring them as well as you can.

Continue through the dirtiest clothes, re-using the wash water as many times as you can get away with it. Just re-heat it until you have to start over with clean water. You can use the second rinse water many, many times. The first rinse water will have to be changed frequently depending on how much soap you use.

When I get to the point that I need to change my wash water, I try to find something I can use it for instead of throwing it out. Usually I end up washing the porch, patio or outside of the house. You could wash your deck, boat, or dog kennel, I guess.

The key to clean clothes is plenty of elbow grease and plenty of rinsing!  
Happy Washing!

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**By S. Britton**