

Clothesline Trivia (Answer Key) (Grades 5-8)

1. What was the common name for the large, metal cauldrons (or pots) that the laundresses used to heat water and wash clothes? (**“coppers”**)
2. One of the main ingredients used to make soap was animal fat. Name one of the sources that a laundress might have used to acquire fat for making soap. (**her own kitchen or the slaughterhouse**)
3. What was the name of the alkaline liquid created when rainwater mixed with ashes that laundresses used to make their soap? (**Lye**)
4. How could a laundress test the strength of her lye and know if it was strong enough to make soap? (**if a raw potato or egg would float in it**)
5. During downtime, washboards were sometimes used as a musical instruments and mockingly referred to as _____ . (**Army pianos**)
6. What was a “mangle used for?” (**to ring water out of clothes before laying them out to dry**)
7. What year was Fort Stanton established? (**1855**)
8. Name one of the common nicknames given to the laundresses quarters and work area. (**Options: Sudsville, Tub Town, Soap Suds Row**)
9. What military rank did a soldier have to achieve before his salary was equal to his laundress wife? (**First Sergeant**)
10. In 1802, an act of congress set the ratio of 1 laundress to (how many) men? (**25**)
11. Name another role that a laundress might have filled while working for the military? (**Possible answers: midwife, caregiver, cook, housekeeper, or nanny**)
12. How much water would a laundress haul for all the wash? (**60-100 gallons**)
13. A wooden crosspiece that went across the neck and over the shoulders to balance the weight of two water buckets was known as a _____? (**Yoke**)

14. True or false? Soldiers would go out on wood detail, collect firewood for the barracks, officers' quarters, kitchens and would cut and split the wood for the laundresses. **(False-they would deliver the wood, but it was up to the laundresses split and chop their own wood and kindling.)**
15. Sodium hydroxide is the chemical name for _____ which the laundresses mixed with animal fat to make their soap. **(lye)**
16. During the war of 1812, some garrisons regulated that a soldier could not go longer than (how many) days before washing his uniform? **(3)**
17. True or False: Some early laundresses used bats to pound the clothes clean? **(True! They used "laundry bats")**
18. A forerunner to the agitator in modern washing machines, a laundress would use a long, wooden pole with 4 wooden pegs at the bottom to manually twist and agitate clothes through the water. What was this early agitating device called? **(a washing dolly)**
19. True or false: A laundress usually plugged in one iron so that it could be heating while she used the other. **(False! There was no electricity, so it wasn't possible to use an iron that needed a plug.)**
20. At a rate of \$1 per month, per man, a laundress could make about \$20 per month. How much would that be in today's money? **(About \$600 per mo.)**
21. Laundresses at Austin, Texas "Suds Row" were given accommodations in a barn that had formerly housed a military experiment using what exotic animals? **(Camels)**
22. What was the secret that a laundress named Mrs. Nash kept from all of the soldiers and her 3 husbands? **(she was actually a man!)**