

### Washboard



Each month The California Museum will introduce a new artifact with accompanying information and questions, which will consist of three different difficulty levels to choose from. To be used as a sponge or opening activity, you can use the artifact of the month for your students to study, question and form ideas. You can also print the image and place it on each student's desk, have them work in teams or project the image for a class activity.

Use the provided questions to help your students learn more about the artifact and its importance to California -- or make up your own questions. Most importantly, have fun!

Be sure to check out our web site, [CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://CaliforniaMuseum.org), for other interesting and unique activities for your students.

### Washboard



Mansions were destroyed by the great earthquake and fire that rocked San Francisco on April 18, 1906, but humble washboards survived. Many who had lost their homes carried them to the tent city that sprang up in Golden Gate Park. Contemporary newspaper pictures show these hardy refugees using the boards within days of the disaster.

Washboards were called "...a great American invention" by the *New York Times* in 1868, yet some historians claim the device originated in Scandinavia. The zinc scrubbing panel version was surely an American invention and was patented by Stephen Manlius in 1833. The few in use today feature a corrugated glass scrubbing panel.

How were these woman-powered (yes, laundry was the task of females in the era) machines, as they were sometimes referred to in the 19th century, used? The washerwoman scrubbed every part of the garments on the inset panel, then hung them to dry on an outdoor or indoor clothesline. A famous painting depicts First Lady Abigail Adams, wife of second United States President John Adams, hanging her laundry on a piece of rope strung across the East Room of the White House!

Washing machines would become popular during the first half of the 20th century and automatic dryers in the second half.

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### Elementary

- 1) When was the first United States patent for a washboard issued?
- 2) In which century did washing machines become popular?

### Middle

- 1) Why do you think it is virtually impossible to accurately trace the invention of the washboard?
- 2) Compare and contrast laundry practices in the 19th century with those in your home today.

### High School

- 1) Why did "Laundromats" spring up around the nation after World War II?
- 2) Have people today really gained more leisure time because of all these inventions? Why or why not?

# Word Search!

L I N V E N T I O N B D S L R  
O A E N I H C A M F R U U X V  
B M U H G Z H M E A D F R M X  
Y I Z N C N A P O I T B V C X  
P S X F D L G B J C Y B I A S  
I D R Y E R H G L U K Y V N U  
D W R Z S S Y O U G K N E M X  
J T Q K A M T A H I J R L N Z  
G U R W B H U Y W U E Q T S X  
G N U B E Q N W T D W C L Y T  
P E V S I A F O E Z L M Q A M  
L M Z P E A E S Y U W D N Q U  
C O M L K Q O L R O T H B X K  
M W C L C D N R O M P M E Q O  
R T W D H Z A K P J H J P T E

CLEAN  
INVENTION  
SCRUB  
WOMEN

CLOTHES  
LAUNDRY  
SURVIVE

DRYER  
MACHINE  
WASHBOARD

