Excerpts from Stories: Laundry and Bathing

Here are a couple of excerpts from D. Schreiber’s memoirs that give a picture of what doing the laundry and bathing were like in the household

“Among mother’s many burdens, laundry was the worst. For a family as large as ours, mother was washing clothes almost daily. For big laundry, we had a container similar to the wooden container in which the dough for bread was prepared. For smaller laundry we had a variety of pans. (This laundry container and these pans were also used for bathing.) They were always standing in a corner of the kitchen ready for daily use. And mother used them daily. Father finally put an end to this. He arranged with a peasant woman, the wife of a client of his, to do all the laundry. On days when she could not come, I would carry the laundry (and soap) to her and call for it in a few days.”

“Mother was also solely responsible for maintaining sanitation under the most primitive conditions. The normal steam-bath days were Wednesdays for women and Fridays for men. In the intervals, however, we used a container similar to the wooden container in which the dough for bread was prepared, as a tub (we had no regular bathtub). We also had a variety of pans for bathing the smaller children. These served for laundry purposes as well as bathing.”

By David B. Schreiber

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