

## *The Outhouse*



Though the term outhouse can also be used to describe a small building separate from a main building, it is typically used in North America to describe the small shed that would contain some manner of a simple toilet. There would often be a seat over the toilet with two holes of different sizes, one for adults and a smaller one for children.

In order to reduce the odour that was noticeable from the main house, most outhouses were built between 50 and 150 feet away. For times when this distance was too inconvenient, a chamber pot was often used. They were large bowl-like containers, often with a lid, that was used as a urinal. They were typically kept either underneath the bed or in the cabinet of a nightstand.

The hole cut in the door of an outhouse, often in the shape of a crescent moon, was used for ventilation and illumination. Lime powder was sprinkled into the outhouse through these holes to help reduce the odour and to ward off flies.

## *End of an Era*

While these fixtures of the home were in everyday life 150 years ago, advancements in technology and changes in society have led to their decline and eventual removal from modern households.

Production began in the 1890s on electric fans for domestic use, allowing for homes to be cooled mechanically. This coupled with the invention of the modern electric air conditioner within the proceeding decades meant that a house could be kept cool during the summer even when cooking in the winter kitchen, removing the need for a summer kitchen.



Two factors contributed to the decline of the parlour in the 1900s: modern innovations, such as the telephone and automobile, made visiting easier while society became more casual. The need for a formal reception room was lost, and the other functions of a parlour were easily taken on by other sitting rooms. This led to the rise in popularity of the living room in Canada and the drawing room in Britain.

Early flush toilet systems began to emerge in western society in the late 1500s. It was not until the 1850s that they became increasingly popular in Britain, and included as part of modern building code practices. Outhouses still remained in rural areas, even well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as indoor plumbing and the flush toilet began to replace them.

## *Whatnots' to Chamber Pots*



## *Everyday Life in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century*

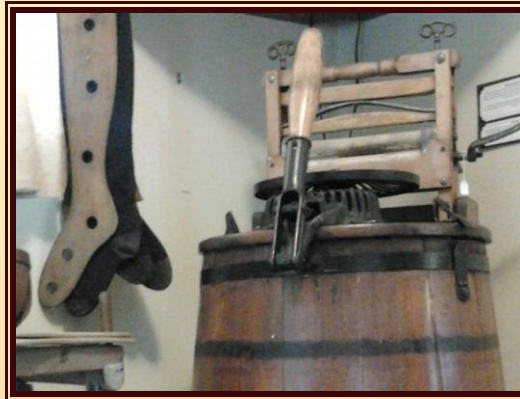
## *How Things Have Changed*

During the time when the Fultz House was built, many facts of everyday life were quite different. Utilities that we take for granted, such as electricity and indoor plumbing, were luxuries only the most wealthy could afford. Cooking was done over wood-burning or coal stoves, which were also needed to heat the house during the winter months. Entertainment came in the form of games and live performances. Life was simpler without our modern technology, but it also took more work to complete everyday tasks.



There are certain conventions of a Victorian house, ones you will not find in a modern dwelling, that are preserved here in the museum. These rooms were once vital to everyday living, but have become obsolete due to technological advancements such as air conditioning, indoor plumbing, and television. Take a step back in time, and see how much everyday life has changed in 150 years.

## *The Summer Kitchen*



The summer kitchen was used during the summer months for cooking and cleaning in an effort to keep the house from overheating. They were typically fairly small rooms with plenty of windows to improve ventilation. Meals were often prepared over an iron cook stove or an open hearth, and there would be a large wooden table for the women to work at.

Though it's primary use was for preparing meals, a summer kitchen was used for plenty of other chores, most of which generated a fair bit of heat. Canning was a process that gained significant popularity during the late 1800s, where jars of food were heated then sealed to preserve them. This would have been another chore for the summer kitchen, along with washing and ironing of laundry. It was also a popular place for women to gather and share recipes, tips, and stories.

During the winter months, the summer kitchen was mostly used for storing food and firewood. As they were typically not well insulated, they made for excellent cold rooms. At the end of the summer, all of the kitchen tools were moved back to the winter kitchen, sometimes even the iron stove!

## *The Parlour*



Unlike a modern living room, a parlour was a very formal room, often used only on special occasions or to receive guests, such as a member of the clergy. The decor of a parlour typically matched its formal purpose. The walls would be painted in dark, rich colours, the windows would be covered by heavy drapes, and the furniture would be very ornate. It would often contain a family's most prized possessions, and display them as a way of showcasing their wealth.

Entertainment was a very different, but still necessary thing in the Victorian era. Parlour games were a popular form of entertainment, and would often include guessing, running around, or embarrassing acts. A few examples include blind man's bluff and charades.

In the event of a family member's death, a parlour was also an important part of the mourning process. The body of the deceased would be laid out in the parlour, and family and neighbours would come to pay their respects. It is from this tradition that modern funeral parlours are derived.