



## CHAMBER POTS

Where would you go to the bathroom if there wasn't one? In the country, many people dug holes in the ground for their waste. Most placed wooden shacks over the holes so they could have some privacy. These shacks were called "outhouses" because they were outside the house! What would you do if you lived in a city in an apartment on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor? What was available "in the house"?

People used containers called "chamber pots" for their waste if they lived in a city or in an apartment. Most chamber pots were made of fired clay and were shaped like a large bowl. Most pots had a handle and a lid, but some did not. A member of the family was in charge of emptying the pots each day. Wealthy people hired "chamber maids" whose first duty each day was to empty all the chamber pots in the house. How would you like to have that job?

Chamber pots were dumped into special barrels on the street. "Night soil" collectors came around every few days to empty the barrels into a wagon and carry it to the countryside. If the "night soil collectors" did not come, or if the barrels were full, people dumped their chamber pots out their windows and onto the street. This meant that cities could be very unhealthy places to live. Diseases like cholera and typhoid were regular visitors to cities until sewer systems were built and clean running water was provided. The flush toilet replaced the chamber pot.