



Yes, that is indeed a toilet seat cover. It once graced an outhouse at the old Avondale Mills Dairy in the Sunnybrook community, at the end of Twin Street. The cast iron base of the toilet and the inscribed plate were made at the Eagle Iron Works, a small foundry on Third Street, now part of the Shepard Shopping Center. Also made there in late 1929 were the 'White Way' posts, tall cast iron light posts which still line the street in front of the First Baptist Church. These light posts were initially installed up north Broadway and across Third Street so people who traveled at night on the passenger trains of the Central of Georgia and L&N railroads could see how well developed the city had become.

This little discourse on the privy would not be complete without first mentioning the hogs which once roamed our fair city. Sanitation had been a priority since the Civil War, and no one liked the hog problem less than the extraordinary Dr. Felix Hood Craddock, father and grandfather to French Hood Craddock, Sr., and F. H. Craddock, Jr., respectively. Dr. Craddock had been chosen by the Board of Aldermen (the City Council) in 1904 to fill the newly created position of 'City Physician'. The job paid \$100. per year. Thereafter, he signed his official correspondence with the proud mantle "First City Physician of the City of Sylacauga, Alabama". As you might imagine, he was "unequivocally opposed" to hogs roaming the streets; but, after a lengthy debate, the Board of Aldermen acceded to public demand, giving us Ordinance #296. Our pigs could stay, but only in pens no smaller than thirty feet square. And only two per pen.

Oddly, Dr. Craddock was overruled on the hog issue, even though he had recently managed, and managed well, a smallpox epidemic in the 'mill town' of the Marble City Yarn & Hosiery Mills, just behind the present day office of Judge Vaughn, on unpaved Norton Avenue and Second Street. He was more than just a small town doctor. But lets take the short walk back to the outhouse.

You had your 'dry closet' inside the building, or the outside version, the outhouse or privy. The city began laying water and sewer lines in 1904 and with those came the newest innovation, the watercloset, a toilet with running water. And again, in steps our inimitable Board of Aldermen. Up to this point, citizens and businessmen could sign a contract with the city and have their dry closet cleaned and limed for \$.25 per month (to be paid quarterly). But in a progressive move in 1906 the City Fathers made it mandatory that all dry closets become waterclosets, and, as if that were not bad enough, the next step was to mandate the use of another innovation, "Toilet Paper", to wit:

"It shall be unlawful... for any person to use in any watercloset... any rags, newspaper, wrapping paper or substance other than toilet paper."

It was the duty of the Chief of Police to visit all the waterclosets of the City from time to time to insure compliance with the ordinance. Those unlucky souls who were found in violation, those who did not have toilet paper "in view and accessible at all times", could be fined not less than \$1.00, nor more than one hundred dollars. Even with the efforts of the esteemed Dr. Craddock, it would be another year before these modern conveniences reached the State Secondary Agricultural School, way up on Eight Street, and only then because the place was found to be "in a most filthy condition from a sanitary standpoint". The city built two fine outhouses for the school, ten feet by 12, for \$30. each. It was about the same time that Electric Lines were run to the school for incandescent lights.

Dr. Craddock was later re-appointed as the City Physician, and, to his credit, was chosen for the office over a worthy opponent, Dr. J.E. Pearson, who not only had been president of the Bank of Sylacauga, but was also the man responsible for building the McDonald Cotton Mills (which became Avondale Mills).

As you can see, "History" does not always come out of a book. It is with this thought in mind that we invite you to visit the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum in Sylacauga, and again ask your help in keeping our history not only alive, but interesting. We continue to search for relics and artifacts from our past for displays and exhibits. If you have an object of historical interest to donate or loan or share, please call Donna Rentfrow, the Museum Curator, at 256-245-4016. Museum hours are 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Tue.-Fri.