



OFFICE OF  
MEDICAL OFFICER IN CHARGE

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

WILMINGTON, N. C.

SB

July 17, 1913.



Dr. Wickliffe Rose,

Southern Building,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Doctor Rose:

The privy problem is solved, at least for the small towns. Please read the enclosed carbon letter confidentially.

Respectfully,

*ENStil*

Professor in temporary charge.

Enc.

Medical Inspection of Children.  
Re- Conditions that have  
arisen.

Wilmington, N. C.

M. H.

SB

July 17th, 1913.

The Surgeon-General,

U. S. Public Health Service,

Washington, D. C.

Sir: (Through Director)

You will, I am sure, be interested in a development in connection with the inspection of the children at this Hospital.

You will recall that I explained to you that I had found a method of microscopic examination whereby we could state definitely that a given person has been eating food contaminated with human feces.

In the examinations we have made thus far the test has been positive in perhaps one case out of four in all of the children examined. After we have our test completed I write a letter to the parents, giving them the general results of the examination, and in the cases that give positive response to the test, showing that the child has been eating human feces, I add a sentence practically as follows:

"The microscopic examination has given us positive evidence that Johnny has been eating food contaminated, probably by flies, with human feces. It is only a matter of chance that



Surgeon-General,

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the infection found is a harmless one, instead of typhoid fever. There must be some insanitary privies near your house, and I would suggest that you request the Health Officer to inspect your entire block in order to determine whether there are insanitary privies there to which flies have access, and which are supplying the food on your table with human excreta."

The results of the foregoing notifications are exactly what I expected. The Health Officer, Dr. Nesbitt, called yesterday, and he stated that his life was being made a burden for him. Children of several prominent families in town have responded to the test, and the parents have appeared at the Health office greatly disturbed over the matter, and have demanded that every surface privy in town be immediately removed. People have called him up over telephone, declining to give their names, but demanding that he put every surface privy in town out of commission. He is now referring all of these people to the Mayor, to the members of the City Council, and to the Legal Department of the City, and advising them to demand of the City Attorney that the Law in regard to surface privies be strictly enforced.

The mothers are calling me up on the telephone, thanking me for the information, and asking whether I would not go down and see the City Council about it. I have had several personal conversations with the mothers, and they are absolutely indignant, but they are very grateful to me for calling their attention to the subject, and one lady has just given me about 15 minutes telephone con-



Surgeon-General,

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versation and stating that this inspection is the greatest thing that has ever come to Wilmington, and that she is going to show her letter, stating that her child has been eating human excreta, to every mother she can find, and that she is going to carry on a campaign, and make it as warm for the Mayor, the City Council, and the Legal Department, as possible.

Dr. Nesbitt seems floored; part of the population has been hammering him because he has been trying to get rid of the privies, and the rest of them are hammering him because he has not gotten rid of them. He has a number of warrants sworn out, but the local court keeps postponing the cases. He tells me that he is going to refer all of these cases to the City Recorder, and the City Attorney.

From the present conditions, and the indignation of the parents, because of the fact that their children have actually been eating feces, I think it will soon be a sanitary town.

Respectfully,

[Signed] C. W. STILES.

Professor in temporary charge.

Copy for Dr. Wickliffe Rose,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.