

FAMILY AFFAIR

SLOAN RANGERS

THE TOILET FLUSH THAT CHANGED AMERICA

In 1906, a man named W.E. Sloan had a good idea that, 111 years later, impacts the lives of millions of Americans on a daily basis. To put it simply, Sloan came up with a better way to flush a toilet, and he called it the Royal Flushometer. The name and the concept aren't glamorous, but they've changed our world and environment.



THE SLOAN FAMILY EXECUTIVE TEAM (LEFT TO RIGHT): GRAHAM, KIRK, CHUCK AND JIM ALLEN.

SLOAN WAS A PIPE fitter born in Liberty, Missouri in 1847. After moving to Chicago and starting his own plumbing company, he came up with his revolutionary idea. "When our great-grandfather developed the Royal Flushometer, public bathrooms were very different," says Kirk Allen, one of the presidents of Sloan. "Every toilet in a public environment was flushed with a gravity tank that was mounted high on the wall. These kinds of tanks had

big problems: They required seven gallons of water to flush, they took a long time to refill, and they leaked and were difficult to maintain. The Royal Flushometer solved all of these troublesome issues."

What W. E. Sloan figured out was that you could flush a water closet using water pressure rather than gravity to create a strong flush that would use less water and provide for a quicker repeat flush, if necessary. For commercial applications this

was much better than the high tank and pull chain that our great-grandparents were accustomed to.

The idea had big repercussions. "By reducing the amount of water required down to four gallons per flush—and that's now down to as little as 1.1 gallons—and by dramatically reducing the amount of water lost through leakage, what we now call the Royal became one of the first water-conserving plumbing devices. Public restrooms around the country became more efficient, and this contributed to the urbanization of America," says Kirk.

A grand claim, but not an overstatement. As America grew in the early 20th century, the concept became the norm, and Royal Flushometers found a home in the new high-rises that changed the look and feel of cities. And, as the family says with pride, many of the Flushometers installed in the early 1900s still work today.

The Sloan spirit of innovation didn't end with W.E.'s idea. Over the generations the family-owned company has proved they are no one-hit wonders. A partial list of their accomplishments includes: hands-free flush sensors, hands-free sink faucets, water-saving dual flush capabilities, waterless urinals and, most recently, a toilet that

uses reclaimed water. These are things that you've likely used without a second thought, but the technology is saving water every day.

"Our company was founded with water conservation as a driving force. We continue to pursue every opportunity to conserve our planet's most precious resource," Kirk says. "For Sloan, being sensitive to the environment is more than just what the product does in the field; it's also about how we manufacture the products themselves. All of our manual flush valves are made in the U.S.A. in factory environments that are safe and healthy for all of our workers. We strive to eliminate all waste, and are well on the way to becoming a zero waste to landfill operation."

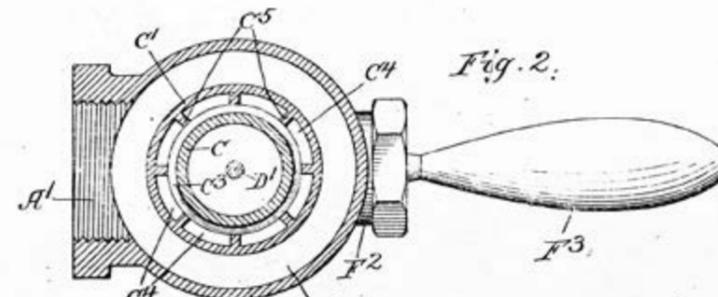
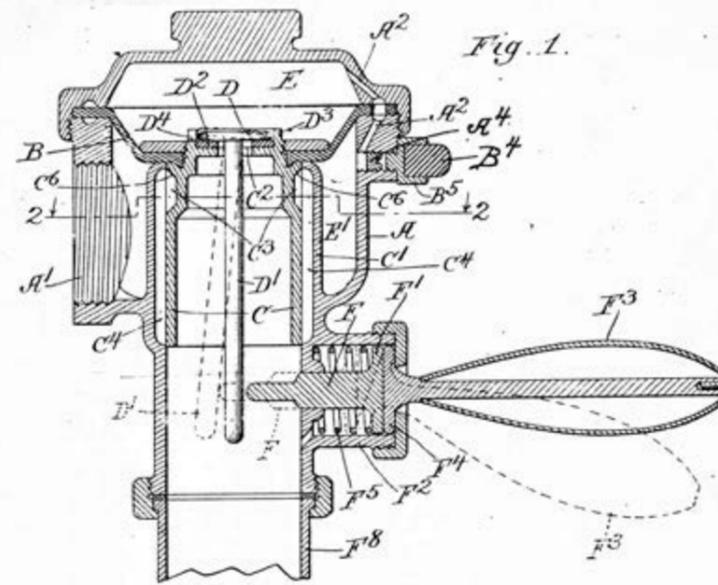
Today, the company is run by three brothers: Graham, Kirk and Jim; along with their father Chuck Allen—who is the chairman of the company. "The three of us are very close, and our father still comes into work every day. Not many families are run by a fourth generation, and it's a shared vision that keeps us together," says Kirk. "This company has pioneered many technologies beyond the Royal valves we are known for; because here we believe innovation is a requirement."

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SLOAN



TOP, LEFT: THE PLANT CONVERTED TO A WAR PRODUCTION FACILITY IN 1944 FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF MORTAR FUSES. TOP, RIGHT: FOUNDER, WILLIAM ELVIS SLOAN I.

W. E. SLOAN.
VALVE.
APPLICATION FILED JUNE 13, 1906.
Patented Dec. 6, 1910.



Witnesses, A E'
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