

PALMER CLINIC ANNIVERSARY

By David Patton

The Palmer Clinic on Hwy. 108 next to the First Baptist Church of Palmer marks 50 years of service to the area this Labor Day (2006).

According to newspaper accounts of the Day, the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company and the United Mine Workers of America (U.M.W.A.) led the effort with the money and materials and mobilized local miners and others who donated building skills to make the much-needed facility a reality with the Grand Opening on Labor Day 1956.

Dr. Walter Huling moved his family to Palmer that year after the area had been without a full time physician since Dr. Oscar Howell Clements closed his well known Clements Clinic in 1948 and moved his practice to Chattanooga. Dr. Walter Huling faithfully served the medical needs of the people until about 1977-78 when illness forced his retirement and subsequent death in the summer of 1979.

In late 1980, Dr. Vin Paul Hua, a native of China, came to Palmer, and preparations were made to re-open the clinic, which officially welcomed back patients in January 1981.

For over a quarter-century, Dr. Hua has served the medical needs of the Palmer area, and in 2005 was honored by the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce with a "Distinguished Citizen" plaque in recognition of his tenure as the longest serving physician in Palmer's history.

Dr. David Bryan, a cousin of Mrs. Hattie Hampton Swann, was Palmer's first physician and was followed by Dr. C.W. Hembree and Dr. William Perry Stone. Dr. Stone was the father of Mrs. Everett B. Roberts, Sr., who was known state wide for her work in the P.T.A. where she served as the Tennessee State President in the early 1950's.

One of the most beloved physicians in Palmer's history was Dr. Oscar Howell Clements, who came here from Georgia to be the staff doctor at the CCC Camp on Palmer Mountain.

The people of Palmer got to know Dr. Clements in that role and persuaded him to move down into Palmer and become the town doctor. He served from 1933-1948, which included the hard years of the Great Depression and World War II. He was known for his

compassion toward his patients and for making house calls in all kinds of weather and at all hours of the night. As the late Mrs. Horace Moore, Sr. told me, "Dr. Clements was not only a good doctor; he was a good man."

Dr. Clements delivered many babies at this Clements Clinic, which was located behind the old Palmer Theater. He delivered many others in the mothers' homes and even today you'll find names like "Oscar Howell" Mc Daniel and "Oscar Howell" (Harold) James, who were named for this good man as was the late Bobby Howell Rollins. Dr. Clements' oldest son, Howell Gilbert, is a Chattanooga attorney, and his youngest son, Joel, is a physician in Chattanooga.

Others known to have practice medicine briefly in Palmer were Dr. Thomas Ray Mosley and a Dr. Shackleford.

If you have additional information about physicians who practiced in Grundy County, please contact the [webmaster of the Grundy County Historical Society's website](#).

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