



Courier-Journal Photos by Thomas V. Miller, Jr.

Dr. John M. Smith, Jr., crosses a Kentucky River swinging bridge to get to the home of one of his patients near Beattyville. He has practiced there since July, 1951

**50th**

**Anniversary**

**Celebration**

**of**

**John M. Smith, M.D.**

**Medical Practice**

# PROGRAM

INVOCATION Glen Wilson

DINNER Buffet Style

WELCOME C. Beach, Jr., President  
Beattyville/Lee County Chamber of Commerce

## PRESENTATIONS

Lexington Clinic/St. Joseph Hospital M. Cary Blaydes, M.D.  
Pell Ann Waldrop, M.D.  
John W. Collins, M.D.

Comments Area Physicians

## FORMAL PRESENTATIONS

Congressional presentation on behalf of Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers  
Will Smith, Legislative Director  
Bob Mitchell, District Director  
Heath Preston, Field Director  
5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Kentucky Senate presentation The Honorable Robert Stivers  
Senator 25<sup>th</sup> District  
Kentucky House presentation The Honorable Adrian Arnold  
Representative 74<sup>th</sup> District  
Alice Lloyd College presentation Everett Lee Marshall  
University of Louisville presentation Mayor Charles Beach, III  
Kiwanis presentation Donald Begley

## FAMILY COMMENTS

PATIENT/PRESENTATIONS Jacqueline Hollon Slone, Pharm D.  
Richard Lyons, RPH  
Patients/Friends Remarks

REMARKS Honoree J.M. Smith, M.D.

PRESENTATION on behalf of Beattyville/Lee County Chamber of  
Commerce – Charles Beach, Jr.

CLOSING REMARKS



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# Beyond The Call Of Duty

Here's an example of the success of the Medical Scholarship Fund, created to provide more doctors for the rural areas of the state

By JOE CREASON  
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

The accompanying article from The Courier Journal magazine section dated October 26, 1952 is the story of a young navy physician who came back to the area in which he was born to practice medicine.

He came in 1951, a few months after a long time physician in Beattyville had died; and quickly fit into the community and definitely filled a need. Even though there was no pharmacist in Beattyville at the time the article was written, the Wolfinbarger brothers came soon after and opened a pharmacy. A point of interest - the last baby delivered by Dr. Smith is Lou Anne Akers who is presently living in Beattyville. Dr. Smith's hope of installing an X-Ray machine became a reality. He practices medicine in a pleasant clinic which he owns. He continued his medical education - he went to The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D.C.; did a residency in Radiology at Memphis Methodist Hospital and completed it at University of Kentucky. Upon completion, he was staff radiologist at the hospital in Morehead, at the Woodford County Hospital, and at the Lexington Clinic.

He and his family returned to Beattyville in 1974 where he continues to practice medicine.

**JOHN M. SMITH, JR.** had a pretty good idea he'd be in for some unusual times when he hung up his shingle and started the practice of medicine in Beattyville, Ky.

After all, he knew beforehand that Lee County was one of some 40 in Kentucky that was critically short on doctors, having then - in 1951 - only one for a population of more than 8,000 people.

And he knew six other neighboring counties of mountainous East Central Kentucky - Clay, Owsley, Jackson, Wolfe, Powell and Menifee - likewise were on short rations indeed, so far as doctors were concerned.

So he must have suspected he'd face a lot of situations and experiences not generally covered in medical textbooks.

But, even with all that forewarning, it's extremely doubtful if Dr. John M. Smith, Jr., expected the time would come when a tractor would be the only way he'd be able to get into a remote area to see a patient.

Or that he'd have to cross the rain-swollen Kentucky River in a rowboat in the dead of winter with a half-blind woman at the oars.

Or that he'd ever take country hams - at the exchange of a \$1 a pound - in lieu of payment for medical services.

Or that a dozen and one other unusual experiences would come his way in less than a year and a half.

For that's just the length of time Dr. John M. Smith, Jr., one of the first 12 products of the Rural Kentucky Medical Scholarship Fund, has been practicing in Beattyville.

The Rural Medical Fund, sponsored by the Kentucky State Medical Association in co-operation with the University of Louisville School of Medicine, was started in the 1946-47 school year. The purpose of the fund, raised by public subscription, was to provide better medical care for the people of rural Kentucky. Medical students needing financial help may borrow from the fund and make repayment on the basis of a year of practice in a doctor-short section for each year of aid.

To translate the intention of the fund into a real situation, John Smith received help from it for one year 1946-47. That was his first in medical school and the year the first of his two sons was born. Having very little he could use for money, he borrowed in order to get started in school. After that he needed no help.

In return for that year of financial assistance, he was obligated to devote one year's practice to a county approved by the State Board of Health as needing doctors. After looking over the field he chose Lee County.

If John Smith is a fair sample, then the Rural Medical Fund can be pronounced quite a large success. He now has served his year of obligation, owns a home in town and shows no signs of leaving which is exactly what sponsors of the fund were hoping for. They reasoned that if they could get young doctors into rural areas for a year or so, some of them, at least would settle down to permanent practice.

During his year-plus in Lee County, Dr. John Smith has given medical help to hundreds of people from a rather populous and mountainous seven-county area who, conceivably, would have had none otherwise.

Moreover, the people he serves are the kind who don't go rushing off to the doctor with every stomach-ache, or some such.

"Most of these folks are stoic and will suffer a long time before coming in," he says.

"Why, I've had patients with pneumonia walk in to the office from seven or eight miles away.

"I do all I can for them and send them to the hospital - the nearest one is in Richmond, 52 miles away - only in emergencies," he adds. "After all, many of my patients can't afford to go to the hospital with every ache and pain like city folks."

Sponsors of the fund actually got a more than somewhat rare bargain in John Smith. They didn't get just one rural doctor - they got two. For his wife also is a doctor, a 1945 medical graduate of New York University, and she recently opened an office at Booneville 12 miles south in adjoining Owsley County.

Although there were two doctors in Booneville, both were old. One had suffered a stroke, Smith was receiving so many patients from that area it seemed a perfect spot for his wife to open an office to relieve some of the strain.

Now that he's settled in Lee County, John Smith has become a family doctor in every sense of the word. He's known as "Doc" everywhere and can call most of the folks he passes on the road by their first names. He can point to children he brought in to the world. He is taken into confidences, sought out for advice on every conceivable situation.

Since opening his office, he has been too busy even to attend a single movie. The only days he has been away from work was once during a medical meeting and the couple of days he was out last winter with the flu.

Incidentally, that case of the deep sniffles came in the line of duty. He was called to see a woman in the Oakdale section of the county who was sick with pneumonia. He had to follow a narrow path above an ice-laced creek in reaching the home.

As he inched along the bank, it suddenly caved in and he was dunked, bag, baggage, and pill bottles, into waist-deep water; he went on and completed the call before changing clothes, something he'd raise Cain' with a customer for doing, and the result was flu.

Smith keeps a pair of galoshes in the back of his car for hiking over terrain not suited even for the most sturdy horseless carriage. And it's quite often that a car can't make it back into a particularly rough, hilly section. As, for instance, when the husband of a sick woman had to ride him in and out on a tractor, the only transportation that could make the trip.

Then there was the boat ride last winter that he - a veteran of three years of destroyer-escort duty in the Navy - never will forget. He had gone to call on a patient who lived on the other side of the North Fork of the Kentucky River some distance above Beattyville. The only way across the river was by boat. The return was long after sundown and in inky darkness. The pilot was a partially blind woman.

"I crouched in the bottom of the boat," he recalls, "and wondered about my life insurance."

"How she hit the tiny landing on the other side of the river in that darkness and pulling into a swift current, I'll never know."

Numerous times he has been called to see patients in parts of the area he doesn't know. In such cases, the family of the sick person will more or less blaze a trail for him. They'll place a forked stick at the place he's supposed to turn off the main road and leave assorted other signs along the way.

He get night calls, of course, but not as many as might be expected.

"These folks are sturdy, and they'll usually stick it out until morning," he says.

But the night calls do come. This spring he was 'roused at 1 a.m. He went with the caller to see the man's wife gave her some pills and returned home to bed.

Less than 30 minutes later, he was brought out of bed again. It was the same man.

"Better come again, Doc," he urged, "she ain't a bit better."

Lots of patients have been unable to pay cash for doctor-work. So Smith has taken almost everything in payment. He keeps well supplied in ham, chicken and farm produce.

"At first my wife had a little trouble understanding what some patients were talking about," he says.

"Folks would come in and say, 'Take a look at this kid, Doc, he's been daunceyin' 'round,' and she'd have a hard time figuring what they meant.

"But since I was born in Perry County and

grew up in Jackson County, I knew - when they talked about 'daunceying 'round' or 'punying 'round' another very descriptive bit of speech, they meant the child was sort of dragging around and showing little life."

Since he opened his office, another young doctor has come to Beattyville, Sam D. Taylor born there, and also a U. of L. graduate, returned home in August to start practice. The two have worked out a scheme whereby one day a week they take the other's office calls. That allows them to get one day all to themselves.

Smith has his office in what was an old drugstore across the street from the Courthouse. He has divided the gunbarrel-shaped space into a reception room, office, drug room, examination room and delivery room. He delivers babies at homes, but prefers, to have expectant mothers come to his office delivery room. He delivers babies at homes, but prefers, to have expectant mothers come to his office where he has all necessary equipment, including oxygen. He keeps them 10 to 12 hours after the delivery and sends them home in an ambulance.

Beattyville has no pharmacist, so Smith has to dispense his own pills and medicines. Neither is there an X-ray machine in town, although he hopes to install one soon.

Besides his unusual doctoring experiences, Smith has the rather unique distinction of having served as an officer in two different branches of the Navy within a five-year period.

After being graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1942, the 30-year old Smith went into the Navy as a line officer. Upon his discharge, he entered medical school and was graduated in 1949. Then, following his intern work, along came the war in Korea and he volunteered to go back into the Navy, this time as a medical officer. He served for more than a year in Louisville at the recruiting station.

His second discharge came July 6, 1951. He opened his office 10 days later.

In the nearly seven years since the Rural Medical Fund was set up, 64 students have received \$100,450 in financial help. Twelve of those students, including Smith, have served at least one year in rural areas. Nine are still there. Of the three who left the rural field, one is in the Army, one is sick and one moved to another state.

Besides Smith, other fund-helped doctors with at least one year in rural practice are O.C. Cooper, Wickliffe; Carson E. Crabtree, Buffalo; Oscar A. Cull, Corinth; William G. Edds, Calhoun; Clyde J. Nichols, Clarkson; Benjamin C. Stigall, Livermore; William L. Taylor, Guthrie, and Loman C. Trover, Earlington.

Six other doctors who were helped by the fund completed their internship in July and now are practicing in the country.

"Rural practice gets next to a fellow," John Smith says. "You have to make a lot of changes from what they say in the books - you have to be down-to-earth and forget all about dignity and professional manners at times.

"But there's an awful lot of satisfaction in serving people who really need help."

Which pretty nearly describes the country doctor.

