



#14: The McKay Clinic

Humble's Annual Good Oil Days Festival is almost upon us. On Saturday, April 6th, Main Street in downtown Humble will be closed to vehicles, and converted into a giant street fair. The Humble Museum staff will be on hand to sell books, souvenirs and raffle tickets. They will also have information on neat self-guided Walking Tour available at the booth. But, the best thing they will have this year is the McKay Clinic...open all day for tours.

Dr. Haden McKay, Sr. was a well-respected physician during Humble's early years. He practiced in Humble from 1919 until his death in 1949. He also served on the Humble ISD School Board from 1924 through 1926. His son, Dr. Haden McKay, Jr., began his medical practice in 1938 with his father. The two Dr. McKays built the clinic in 1938. The clinic is thought to be the first fireproof building built in Humble. The back of the clinic served as the living quarters for the younger (bachelor) Dr. McKay. In 1942, the younger Dr. McKay joined the U. S. Army Medical Corps as part of the World War II effort. He served until 1946 and was discharged as a Major. He returned to Humble, where his father died in 1949, and continued his medical practice at the clinic. The McKay Bridge that crosses Lake Houston was dedicated in his honor in 1953.

Dr. McKay, Jr. later served on the Humble City Council for 14 years, and then as Mayor of Humble for 24 years. Dr. McKay, Jr. also served in numerous professional medical positions, including as the first Chief of Staff of the Northeast Medical Center Hospital, a Deputy Medical Examiner for Harris County, and as President of the Houston Academy of Medicine. He saw patients at the clinic until his death in 1996. After his death, the building was restored as a medical museum, and donated by his widow to the Humble Museum in March 2001.

A journey through the McKay Clinic is like taking a trip back in time, to a simple country doctor's medical practice. This is when medical service was simpler...local townspeople coming to see their doctor in a simple setting. Much of the equipment and instruments used in the clinic during the early years was brought from Kentucky where Dr. McKay, Sr. was practicing before he moved his family to Humble. Many of those surgical instruments, examination tables, and other specialized equipment are more than 100 years old. The collection includes a microscope purchased in 1908, early electrocardiogram machines, and electro-cautery devices dating back to the 1930s. The rooms include an X-Ray room, a medications room, exam rooms, and on-site laboratory, a room for births, and another room for minor surgical procedures. When the airport was first constructed, Dr. McKay had to coordinate with the airport when he was about to use the x-ray machine, because it affected the planes flying overhead. For two years, meals were delivered to new mothers at the clinic from the Matthews Boarding House across the street.

The McKay Clinic is one of the great hidden jewels in Humble's history...and it's in a great state of preservation! Over the past several years, the McKay Clinic has only been open for prearranged tours, and it has been closed since the Humble Museum was damaged during Hurricane Harvey. Kudos to the museum board for opening it up for this year's Good Oil Days. Take advantage of it! Bring your spouse, your kids and your neighbors to see first-hand and up-close how a great country doctor ran his practice.