Chapter Sixteen

MEDICINE IN MONROE

Most chroniclers of the early Wisconsin story have tended to write with faint praise when discussing pioneer physicians, putting them in a category somewhat below professionalism.

Much has been said about those early doctors as men—and women—who had little exposure to bona fide medical schooling. Even Dr. Helen Bingham (before she became a physician) dismissed early practitioners as possessed of no real knowledge or skills. In her 1877 "History of Green County," Dr. Bingham said, among other things, "...he (the early doctor) is said to have bled, blistered, and salivated his patients successively or simultaneously with an energy that made this a very easy place to die in."

That stark observation probably was based to some extent on a true state of affairs in the very earliest days. But, it probably is not fair to dismiss all those pioneer doctors as ignorant and bumbling. They did the best they could with the skills they had. There were few medical schools anywhere except in the eastern centers of learning. In fact, the same critical attitude might have been applied to early attorneys who "read" law in offices of those already practicing to qualify for admission to the bar.

Formal education for the professions—medicine, law and teaching—was as primitive as the frontierland itself. The real miracle is that so many of those people went on to gain great knowledge throughout their careers. Of the three, the men and women of medicine seemed to strive the hardest for improvement through attendance at post graduate schools and special training
at medical centers, in this country and abroad.

This eagerness to learn more so they could serve their patients better, to save lives in cases where previously they had to stand by helplessly, places those doctors in a special class of pioneers. Those who never gave up in their search for greater knowledge then would have no cause for apologizing to today's generations for their early lack of sophisticated skills.

It is true that men such as Dr. Daniel Harcourt were only "sometimes" physicians as they divided their time between doctoring, farming or preaching. But those who followed them, in the 1840s, 1850s and later, generally were well equipped through medical schooling and experience to serve the Monroe community. Even in those later times, they were seldom brought in by families unless the ailment was an emergency, or involved fractures. Most of the routine illnesses were handled within the family itself by wives and grandmothers, who had early learned the use of herbs and other standard remedies as a part of pioneer life. Most of the births were supervised by midwives, if available, and only the very complicated deliveries were referred to regular physicians. Usually the latter call for aid came too late, accounting for the high mortality of infants and mothers in those times.

Nearly every community in Green County, once the early settlement days were over, soon had its capable and trained physicians. Monroe was particularly blessed in this direction, as it is today with its status as a major Wisconsin medical and hospitalization center.

Complete lists of these early physicians are published in the 1884 "History of Green County" and in Volume I of "Memoirs of Green County" by Charles H. Dietz. There are so many of them that it would serve little purpose to repeat those lists completely. The record also is extensive in those two books for the medical story of other Green County communities.

It would be well in Monroe's case, however, to mention some of the more
outstanding early doctors, those who came after Dr. Harcourt and others in his ilk.

There was Dr. Christopher Tochterman, born in Canton Bern in 1826, who practiced medicine briefly in Switzerland before coming to Monroe in 1852. He possessed versatile talents for doctoring, wagon making and farming. Dr. Tochterman served in the 22nd Wisconsin in the Civil War before being named assistant surgeon for the 38th Wisconsin, organized by Gen. James Bintliff.

Dr. William Monroe Sr., born near Cincinnati in 1818, enlisted in the Black Hawk War at 14 while living in Mineral Point. His father had been a physician in Ohio and his widowed mother married Dr. John Loofbourow shortly before the family moved to Mineral Point. After trying lead mining, he began his medical studies, probably in Dr. John Loofbourow's office.

Following college studies at Washburn Institute, blendon, Ohio, Monroe returned to Mineral Point to read medicine at Dr. O.E. Strong's office. Dr. Monroe started practice in 1840 at Fayette (Lafayette County). He joined the California Gold Rush in 1850 and also practiced medicine among the miners.

Upon return, he continued to practice under the license granted by the Lafayette County Medical Society. Although he was an examining surgeon during the Civil War, he did not receive his degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago until 1869, the year after he came to Monroe. At his death in 1908, Dr. Monroe at 89 was the oldest practicing physician in Wisconsin, although he had "semi-retired" in 1902.

Dr. Nathan A. Loofbourow, born in Iowa County in 1849, was the son of Dr. John Loofbourow, stepfather of Dr. Monroe. He came here in 1870 to read medicine in Dr. Monroe's office and then was graduated from Rush Medical College in 1873. In 1876-77, after practicing here, he attended special courses at Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York. Again, in 1881, he took post graduate work at Rush College and spent eight months in 1884 attending special

Dr. Horace E. Boardmann, born in Vermont in 1835, began as a college level mathematics and literature instructor before turning to medicine in 1859 in New England. After studies at Hahnemann Medical College, Chicago, he became a homeopathic physician in 1867, settling in Monroe later. Dr. Boardman, however, found competition too lively in his particular field and moved to Larned, Kansas, where he died February 26, 1888.

Among the local homeopathic physicians were Dr. Ada Bingham, Dr. Ann Churchill and Dr. Helen Bingham, although the latter practiced mostly in Milwaukee. Homeopathic medicine, no longer followed to any degree in this country, cannot be explained simply, except to say that it treats diseases by seeking to build up the body's natural resistance, in much the same way that vaccination does as a preventative.

Other early physicians—all of them practicing in Monroe at various periods from the 1840s through to and into the 20th Century—included Dr. F.B. Righter, Dr. W.O. Sherman (father of Dr. Ann Churchill) who came here in 1848; Dr. W.D. Carver (father of famed Dr. W.F. Carver, partner of Buffalo Bill Cody and later operator of his own Wild West shows); Dr. H.D. Fuller, also from New York State, settling here in 1882; Dr. Edmund S. Fessenden, born in Ohio in 1835, who practiced in Albany and Monroe; and Dr. J.K. Eilert, better known for his medicines and drugstore enterprises.

Dr. Horatio N. Bradshaw, native of Canada, came to Monroe in 1870, practicing for two years with Dr. Monroe Sr. before shifting to a drugstore business until 1880 when he left for Kansas. Dr. S.W. Abbott never practiced medicine after coming here from Janesville in 1858 and switching to law following the Civil War.

Dr. F.W. Byers, whose military record has been mentioned elsewhere, was born in Pennsylvania February 10, 1837, and settled in Stephenson County,
Ill., in 1857. He taught in Green County schools before entering Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. In 1860, he migrated to Missouri as a salesman but left when Civil War conditions turned that state into a divided battleground.

Moving to Orangeville, Ill., he studied medicine with Dr. W.P. Naramore and then entered Rush College for further work in 1861-62. While serving at Camp Douglas, Chicago, he was graduated from Rush in 1863 and finished out the War in military medical service.

Settling in Lena, Ill., he practiced there successfully before bringing his family here in 1877. He became surgeon-general of the Wisconsin National Guard in the 1880s, retiring with the rank of brigadier general. He gave up his practice in the 1890s and died here in 1915.

Dr. John C. Hall, born at Langdon, N.H., in 1821, first came to Albany after graduating from Harvard Medical School in 1852 and then to Monroe following the Civil War. He moved to the West in the late 1880s.

Dr. L.B. Johnson, born in New York State in 1822, received his medical degree in 1844 and came to Monroe in 1857 where he practiced successfully for many years.

Dr. Samuel R. Moyer, born at Afolkey, Ill., in 1854, began practice here in 1883, gave diagnostic lectures at Marquette Medical School and made a post graduate study European tour in 1909.

Others who came here in the 1880s included Dr. Emil Bindschedler, Dr. Carl Steiger, Dr. Charles A. Rood, a Monroe native, and Dr. Hannah C. Bennett. An M.D., Hannah Bennett was born in Kent, England, in 1842 to John and Hussah Rolfe Russell, who came to America in 1850 to Sussex, Wis., read medicine in the office of her brother, Dr. Richard Russell, in Minnesota. She was graduated from Chicago Medical College in 1875 and came to Monroe to practice in 1881 and married Felix Bennett the following year.
Among prominent medical figures of the turn of the century period were three others whose names are well remembered today in Monroe. They, along with those previously mentioned—plus some probably overlooked in compiling Monroe's medical roster—helped set the pattern for this community's remarkable medical development in the 20th Century.

The three were Dr. R.B. Clark, Dr. Frank L. Hodges and Dr. J.F. Mauermann, each of whom provided splendid examples for those who followed after them.

Dr. Clark practiced here 37 years after prior years in Clarksville, Ia., Brodhead and Juda. Born February 18, 1861, in Orfordville, a son of Alfred S. and Sarah Baker Clark, he attended Brodhead schools and received his M.D. from Rush College in Chicago in 1881. After marriage in Iowa to Anna Husted in 1884, he returned to Rush for post graduate work and then located in Brodhead for one year.

Dr. Clark then practiced in Juda for eight years before coming to Monroe in 1894. He started a drugstore in 1906 which was operated by his son, Herbert H. Clark. Dr. Clark died here May 4, 1931, at the age of 70.

Dr. F.L. Hodges was born at Martintown June 16, 1871, the son of Dr. Will and Ellen Martin Hodges. He was graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1894 and from Rush College in 1898, when he became associated with his father. Dr. Will Hodges died November 17, 1900, and his son practiced alone for many years in the White Block before his death at 59 September 4, 1930, from pneumonia. He had married Nellie Leyden of Chicago February 27, 1898.

Aside from his medical prominence, Dr. Julius F. Mauermann boasted a distinction he had to share with only a few others. While at the University of Wisconsin, he played on the football team with that all-time "great," Pat O'Dea, whose memory still is venerated by UW alumni.

Born in Prussia, January 24, 1872, he was brought to this country in 1876 when his father, Frederick Mauermann, decided to follow his brother,
Herman, to the Juda area. The son grew up in a life of hard farm work and moved into Brodhead to put himself through grade and high school while holding down various jobs. He was graduated from Brodhead High School at 24, the only young man in the 1896 class.

Julius Mauermann then entered the University of Wisconsin, working in the bacteriology laboratory and also acting as an instructor to finance his education. He transferred to Northwestern University, receiving his M.D. in June, 1903.

Dr. Mauermann came to Monroe immediately out of medical school. He enjoyed a successful practice, even after suffering a stroke in 1931 from which he recovered. He died after a two-year illness in an Orangeville convalescent home October 23, 1942, at the age of 70.

There were, of course, many more who located here as physicians but later went on to other communities. The 1895 City Directory lists a Mrs. L. M. Witcomb, 70, as a physician but her name appears to have faded soon afterward from the medical picture.

It should be mentioned at this point that Dr. William Monroe Sr. was joined in 1895 by his son, Dr. W. B. Monroe, born at Fayette in 1861. Dr. W.B. Monroe was graduated from Monroe High School in 1878, from the University of Wisconsin in 1884 and then from Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York, in 1887. His brother, Z.W., was at Bellevue at the same time. Dr. W.B. Monroe practiced at Brooklyn, Wis., before becoming associated with his father and brother in practice here. Dr. Z.W. Monroe died in November, 1903, from tuberculosis and Dr. W.B. in August, 1929 from a heart attack.

Dr. L.A. Moore, native of Kewanee, Ill., was graduated from Rush College in 1900, practiced in Minnesota and came here in 1907 to share medical practice with Dr. W. B. Monroe. The two doctors had married sisters, both of them nurses from Monroe. Dr. Monroe married Maud Walter in April, 1903, and Dr.
Moore, Catherine Walter in April, 1906. After Dr. Monroe's death, Dr. Moore continued to practice alone in the White Block offices until his death in September, 1965. He was the only local physician not associated in later years with either the Monroe Clinic or the Medical Center.

Dr. F.M. Confer, born in Washington Township, December 18, 1854, began teaching school at 17 before entering Monroe High School from which he was graduated in that 1878 class that included Dr. W.B. Monroe and Maj. Gen. Charles G. Treat. He studied medicine with Dr. John C. Hall and then entered Rush College from which he received his degree in February, 1882. After a year at Dayton, Wis., Dr. Confer came here to become associated with Dr. Loofbourow, a partnership which lasted until 1898.

Dr. Confer constantly attended his son, Francis M., when the boy was stricken with typhoid. He nursed the son back to health but contracted the disease himself and died in 1900. He was engaged in converting rooms in his large home for hospital purposes when he died.

Dr. Confer's practice was taken over in 1900 by his brother-in-law, Dr. W. B. Gnagi Sr., who had been practicing at Pullman, Ill. Dr. Confer had married Carrie Isley in February, 1882, while Dr. Gnagi and Louise Isley were married in June, 1891.

Dr. Gnagi was born in Clarno Township February, 1870, the son of Joseph Le Van and Maria Hawthorn Bender. His mother died a short time after his birth and his father left the infant son with Mr. and Mrs. Peter Gnagi when he returned East to John Hopkins Medical School to complete his training.

The Gnagis adopted the child and he used their name throughout his life. An 1881, graduate of Monroe High School, Dr. Gnagi taught school in Clarno and then took a business course at Valparaiso College in Ind. After studying medicine in the Loofbourow-Confer offices for two years, he entered Rush Medical College and received his degree in 1893. His father, Dr. Joseph
Bender, was present at his graduation, their first reunion since he had been left with the Gnagis.

Dr. Gnagi practiced at Gano and Pullman, Ill., becoming an authority on smallpox treatment. His practice here was highly successful and his son, Dr. W.B. Gnagi Jr., joined him in 1926. Eight years later, in association with Dr. John Schindler, native of New Glarus, they set up the Gnagi-Schindler Clinic in the former Insurance building (older section of the Monroe Clinic).

Dr. W.B. Gnagi Jr. was born in West Pullman, Ill., August 9, 1898, and was graduated from Monroe High School in 1917. He received his medical degree at Washington Medical School, St. Louis, in 1924 and joined his father after completing internship and residency training.

Dr. Schindler was born March 23, 1903, in New Glarus, the son of Albert and Anna Wohlwend Schindler. After graduation from New Glarus High School, he received his M.A. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1926 and his M.D. degree from Washington University at St. Louis in 1931. He was married to Dorothea Rockaby of Taylorville, Ill., in 1928.

Dr. Loofbourow had been joined in practice by Dr. Wilson G. Bear in March, 1903, in upstairs offices over the West Side Drugstore, which Dr. Loofbourow owned. Dr. Bear was born June 5, 1873, in Eldorado Township, Stephenson County, Ill., a son of Willoughby and Rebecca Hartman Bear. After schooling in Illinois, he entered Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Ia., for academy (high school) and college work before entering Iowa State University. He was graduated from Rush Medical College in Chicago in 1902 and was married the same year to Maude Ebersole of Toledo, Iowa.

Following Dr. Loofbourow's death July 6, 1916, Dr. Bear practiced alone until he was joined by his son, Dr. Nathan E. Bear, in 1932. The son, born in Monroe October 15, 1903, was graduated from Ripon College and Northwestern University Medical School. He was married October 15, 1932, to Ellen Topel
Trautman of Sheboygan.

As related in Chapter 14, Dr. Loofbourow had initiated efforts to gain community backing for a local hospital in May, 1903. When he received no ardent support for the idea, he bided his time until the Steiger property, originally chosen for a Carnegie grant library site, became available. Dr. Loofbourow bought the lots at the northwest corner of 10th Street and 18th Avenue in 1904 and started construction of his four-story hospital with a ground level floor.

Dr. Loofbourow's hospital was opened March 5, 1905, giving the local medical profession a place to send patients and also providing facilities for surgeons who came here from Janesville and Freeport to perform major operations. Upon his death in 1916, it was discovered Dr. Loofbourow had willed his hospital to his head nurse, Miss Hattie Newman. Feeling that the hospital should be operated by an organization, Miss Newman on October 8, 1916, turned it over to the Evangelical Deaconess Society.

Renamed "Deaconess Hospital," the facility was operated more than 25 years by the Society until it was closed after St. Clare Hospital, built in 1938-39, superseded the older institution.

In 1939, five years after the Drs. Gnagi and Schindler opened their Clinic in the Insurance building, Drs. W. C. and Nathan Bear, along with Dr. L. E. Creasy, who had come to Monroe from South Wayne in 1920, joined with the Gnagi-Schindler Clinic, which also had taken in Dr. Jack Bristow, in what became the Monroe Clinic. Since the General Casualty Insurance Co. had moved to Madison, the new Monroe Clinic bought the building and extensively remodeled it.

Meanwhile, Dr. David D. Ruehlman had come to Monroe in 1930, after graduation from Marquette University Medical School and surgical residency at Madison General Hospital to take over the practice of Dr. F.L. Hodges.

Dr. C. Earl Baumle, graduate of Rush Medical College, Chicago, arrived
here December 1, 1931, to acquire the practice of Dr. R. B. Clark. He also
served as city health officer until January, 1944.

A native of Ashland, Wis., Dr. Baumle had attended Marquette and the
University of Chicago before receiving his degree at Rush Medical College.
He served his internship and residency at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago.
While at St. Luke's, he met Henrietta R. Field, a nurse, and they were married
here April 30, 1932. She assisted in his office for several of the early
years. Dr. Baumle retired in 1971 after 40 years of practice in Monroe.

Drs. Baumle and Ruehlman became associated in practice October 1, 1939,
with offices in the Karlen Block adjoining the First National Bank. Thus,
another medical partnership was being launched the same year as the Monroe
Clinic. Out of that association, "The Medical Center of Monroe" became re-

For several years, Monroe physicians and surgeons had been increasingly
aware of Deaconess Hospital's inadequacies. They had discussed the situation
at length and in 1937 decided to purchase ten lots in the 22nd Avenue and 5th
Street area in hope of inducing some organization to build a modern hospital.

At the suggestion of Rev. Eugene McCollof of St. Victor's, Dr. Baumle
and Dr. Nathan Bear went to Fond du Lac to confer with the Congregation of
St. Agnes, a teaching order which also operated several hospitals. Mother
Aloysia of the order took the proposal for starting a hospital in Monroe to
Archbishop (later Cardinal) Samuel A. Stritch at Milwaukee. After study of
the possibilities, the archbishop gave his consent.

The project, named for St. Clare, was launched in July, 1938, and off-
ically opened August 1, 1939. Capacity was 60 beds and 18 bassinets. Four
Sisters of the St. Agnes order headed the hospital staff of 23 registered
nurses and 33 aids and auxiliary employees.

For the first six years, 1939-45, Sister Mary Agnes Dickoff was St. Clare
administrator. She had arrived here with Sisters Blandine, Bertilla and Laura in May, 1939, later being joined by Sister Geraldine Didier (still on the staff), and Sisters Lucia, Kilian and Anita. All quickly won the affections and respect of the community, a factor in helping to make St. Clare a definite part of Monroe's life.

All too soon, especially after Deaconess Hospital closed, it was obvious St. Clare Hospital would require early expansion. A public drive in 1947 raised a sizable "token" fund to help finance an addition.

This unit, attached to the north end of the original building, was started in September, 1949, and completed at a cost of $1 million in May, 1951, increasing bed capacity to 131 and bassinets to 24. Seventeen Sisters, 34 nurses, 40 nurse aides and 36 departmental employes staffed the enlarged facility, along with 28 physicians.

Through the Emery A. and Amerlia Odell Trust Gift in 1953, various other projects were carried out, improving services and efficiency in handling the growing patient load.

Following another public fund appeal, ground was broken August 5, 1969, for an $8 1/2 million addition which was completed in 1971 and 1972. Additional remodeling projects and relocation of facilities, to increase the bed capacity to an eventual 350, ran the total outlay for St. Clare's expansion to around $12 million, the greater portion of it funded through bonds.

With completion of this major program, Sister Wilfreda Wagner relinquished her duties as administrator to J. Douglas Richie in 1973, devoting her "retirement" to further planning for St. Clare Hospital.

More than 600 full and part time staff members, including Sisters, nurses, aides, technicians and others engaged to operate St. Clare's sophisticated equipment and facilities, see to it that the hospital is one of the finest such institutions in the four-state area from which the bulk of its patients come.
The 100,000th new patient, a Dixon, Ill., man, was admitted February 16, 1976, marking a new milestone. The confidence that Monroe's physicians, the Congregation of St. Agnes and all others who had a part in developing this remarkable hospital has been more than confirmed by St. Clare's established place in the field of Wisconsin hospitalization. And, with Sr. Wilfreda and her associates busy planning ahead, an even greater future for St. Clare Hospital seems assured.

St. Clare Hospital and the Monroe Clinic enjoyed parallel records of success from their initial beginnings in 1939. The later Medical Center also shared in and contributed greatly to this growth of Monroe's unique position in the field of medical and hospital care.

Of the original seven physicians on the Clinic staff, Dr. W.G. Gnagi Sr. died in 1943, Dr. W.G. Bear and Dr. Creasy retired and Dr. Jack Bristow left for military service. Dr. Fred Kundert, native of New Glarus, then came from Madison in 1941 to head Dr. Bristow's department. Dr. Leslie G. Kindschi, Madison native, arrived in 1941 from Mayo Clinic where he had been since 1937. Dr. Kindschi was a graduate of Harvard Medical School in 1935.

Dr. Bristow never returned to the Clinic. Dr. Kindschi and Dr. N. E. Bear left for Navy service but returned later to take active roles as principal partners. A progression of other physicians, surgeons and specialists arrived in the postwar years, or before.

Among the latter were Dr. Ben Brunkow, from Philadelphia; Dr. Dwain E. Mings from an eye clinic in Madison; Dr. James Weir, from the Winona Clinic; Dr. Wayne J. Fencil, from Milwaukee, and Dr. George R. Barry. Of this group, only Dr. Brunkow has retired.

Each year has seen additions or changes in the various medical departments, with several physicians from other parts of the world joining the growing staff.
The Clinic's postwar success and national prestige over the years was enhanced in no small degree by Dr. Schindler's success in emphasizing psychosomatic medicine. A lecture he had given at the UW Farm and Home Week program was expanded into a best-seller book, "How To Live 365 Days A Year," in the 1950s. He was a regular panel member for years on the Chicago University Round Table network radio program.

Dr. Schindler's second book, "Woman's Guide To Better Living," was published only a short time before he was killed November 11, 1957, in a one-car crash on County Trunk K after answering a farm call.

Dr. W.B. Gnagi Jr. also received national attention for his gastroectomy techniques, which later became standard surgical treatment for stomach and ulcer problems. He was elected to the International College of Surgeons and traveled in Europe and South America to deliver papers on his innovations. Dr. Gnagi died January 15, 1955, from a heart attack at the age of 56 while driving near his home.

Today, the Clinic staff includes 45 doctors representing such specialties as neurosurgery, urology, vascular, orthopedic, thoracic, general, colon and rectal surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, internal medicine, gastroenterology, otolaryngology, neurology, ophthalmology, dermatology and psychiatry.

Ancillary departments include radiology, laboratory, physical therapy, electrocardiography, optical, cytology, bacteriology, etc.

Operated by a separate partnership, the Clinic Pharmacy has been a major part of the services.

In 1948, the Clinic expanded its ground floor space and five years later added a three-floor addition to the north. By 1960, the 100,000th patient had been treated while 120,000 patient calls were recorded in 1975, 10,000 of them new patients. This flow of patients came from a 100-mile radius,
with new patients registering from 42 states and 11 foreign countries in 1975. All patients requiring surgery or extensive medical care are sent to St. Clare Hospital.

In 1968, a $2 million addition was built to the west of the original building and this unit is due for additional floors in the near future. The Monroe Clinic today is the third largest in Wisconsin and still looking ahead to future growth.

The Baumle-Ruehlman associated medical practice, starting in 1939, was delayed in its progress toward today's operation as the Medical Center when Dr. David Ruehlman entered the Navy in 1940 and became a lieutenant commander with a Marine Corps amphibious unit. This left Dr. C.E. Baumle alone in the practice. Upon Dr. Ruehlman's return, the joint operation began to gain momentum.

Dr. Alfred E. Leiser of Monroe joined the associated practice in 1949 but two years later was called to active Air Force medical service during the Korean conflict. Dr. John M. Irvin, a classmate, succeeded Dr. Leiser who did not return to the group.

Dr. Irvin, native of Pittsburgh, was graduated from the UW Medical School in 1945 and served on the Army from 1946 to 1948. He was on the Hines VA Hospital staff at Chicago when he came here in 1951 and now is senior doctor at the Medical Center.

Dr. Irvin is a past president of the Wisconsin Society of Internal Medicine and also served as chairman of the Wisconsin Board of Medical Examiners. He was married to Virginia Vande Sand of Clinton, Ia., who has her own career, as a genealogist.

Dr. Donald W. Springer, native of Chicago, joined the group in 1953, coming here from Hines Hospital. He received his medical degree at Loyola University in 1945, serving two years in the Army and Air Force before starting
his residency at Ohio Valley Hospital in Stubenville, Ohio.

When the First National Bank started plans for remodeling its quarters, the group of four doctors decided to build on a site at the northeast corner of 6th Street and 21st Avenue, near St. Clare Hospital. When the doctors moved in, they named their new quarters "The Medical Center."

Dr. Charles O. Miller was added to the practice when the new center was opened in July, 1955. A graduate of Marquette, Dr. Miller interned at the Bethesda, Md., Navy Center and had a year's residency at Great Lakes Naval Hospital. He practiced at Monticello before coming here.

Dr. Ruehlman, co-founder of the Center with Dr. Baumle, left Monroe in January, 1956, after 25 years of practice here, to open an office in Kenosha.

Dr. Dean Miller, who joined the Medical Center in 1958, left two years later for Wood Veterans Hospital in Milwaukee. He was succeeded by Dr. Jack F. Murray who had practiced four years at Hazel Green.

Dr. Murray, native of Milwaukee, was graduated from the University of Virginia Medical School in 1948, interned at Milwaukee County General Hospital and served his four-year residency in surgery there. He is a veteran of World War II and Korea.

The Medical Center managed to outgrow its new building within 11 years and on January, 1966, purchased a site six blocks to the east, erecting its present attractive structure. The former Medical Center building was sold to the Congregation of St. Agnes, and now is used as quarters for the Sisters.

Last to join the Medical Center was Dr. Fernando Santiago who came here in December, 1967, from Chicago. He was graduated from a university in Manila, The Philippines. An obstetrics and gynecology specialist, he was with the Evanston Hospital and Northwestern University.

The Pharmacy at the Medical Center, a separate firm, is owned by David J. Brinkmeier and Thomas Holyoke. Also in separate practices are Dr. Donald
Moen, orthodontist, and Drs. Dennis Frehner and Robert Jeglum, dentists. An addition to the north is planned in the near future to provide other specialized services.

In view of the established Wisconsin leadership positions of St. Clare Hospital, the Monroe Clinic and the Medical Center, Monroe's future growth in the medical and hospitalization fields appeared inevitable in mid-1976.