

Thomas Edwin Rhine

If ever a man was a living landmark of a town, that man was Dr. T. E. Rhine, who practiced medicine in Thornton for more than 66 years and must have delivered upwards of 7,000 babies in his time. In some cases, he had delivered every member of the family through three generations.

But it isn't the vital statistics of his career that made Dr. Rhine a landmark. It was his strength, his compassion and his skill.

Forty years ago, the doctor suffered a stroke that completely paralyzed one side of his body. The doctors told him he would never be able to practice again. Dr. Rhine did take one year off to recover, and then went back to practice for forty.

Dr. Rhine never charged teachers, preachers or widows for his services. He took an interest in educating the young people he knew—an interest that extended to financing a number of years in college for the promising. And he was never scared off by talk of progress—he acquired a reputation for promoting it.

DR. RHINE INSPIRED a lot of anecdotes. People remember him coming to visit and sniffing at the empty medicine bottle to determine what prescription he had given the patient last time—so

he could write out a prescription for a refill.

Others remember the doctor's habit of collecting knots of wood. He would stop his buggy, and later his motorcar, when he spotted an interesting one alongside the road. It is recalled that Doctor Rhine accumulated a whole collection of knots in his backyard. When particularly concerned about a patient or concentrating on the proper course in a case, the doctor would get himself a good solid axe and proceed to the back yard. Other doctors might walk around in circles or meditate at their desks. When he got to fretting, old Doctor Rhine would whack away at some of the hardest knots ever assembled in Calhoun County.

DOCTOR RHINE DIED last Wednesday at the age of 88, leaving behind a rich legacy. People will talk about him for a long time in this part of the country, which is fitting—he spent a long time doing his best for its people. And Dr. T. E. Rhine's best was something to behold.