

## Letter of Veteran Visitor McMahan Gives Picture of Early Clinic Days

A Rochester lady, mother of a Clinic man, has taken us gently to task for a serious flaw in Mayo-vox.

It is right and proper to stress current people and events, she points out—but surely there is also a place for writing of the people and events of preceding Clinic generations.

There is indeed, Ma'am. The problem is for a comparative newcomer like Mayo-vox to get to know the men and women who lived the earlier Rochester story. We'd like nothing better than to receive more letters like a recent one from Dr. Charles G. McMahan of Superior, Nebraska.

A surgeon (F.A.C.S.), Dr. McMahan has been visiting here one or more times a year for upwards of 40 years.

On his first visit, he recalls, "Roy Watson was several years away from his job as desk clerk at the Damon Hotel." (And the Clinic man mentioned above "was in short pants" at the time, Dr. McMahan remembers).

### First Visit

He also recalls from this first trip that "a Minnesota friend asked Dr. Judd between operations who that snappy young assistant was. Dr. Judd replied: 'a young fellow named Sistrunk.'

"I claim to be one of the few men left who have seen Dr. Donald Balfour do a tonsilectomy. (This was several years after my first visit.)

"On my first visit, all the surgery was being done by Will and Charlie Mayo and Starr Judd. On the train to Rochester we talked to an old doctor from Pine Island. He proudly said that young Starr Judd was 'a third Mayo.'

"Will and Charlie had attained national prominence by that time and were often away on the medical missions that fall to men of distinction. Starr stayed in Rochester and did his own surgery as well as that of the absent Mayo.

### Seventeen Operations

"He attained a proficiency in doing surgery well and rapidly that few men have ever equalled. One day at the old St. Marys I saw him keep three operating rooms going. I followed him from 8:30 a. m. until shortly after 1 p. m., and in that time he did 17 major operations.

neighbors are beginning to come in. That means that the ulcer is extending.'

"Another one of his comparisons concerned the parathyroids while he was doing a goiter. He said: 'They are like a little boy driving a four-horse team. They are little—but they do a lot of work.'

### Young Dr. Mayo

"Another story he used to often tell had to do with his early days of practice in Rochester. He told how his father would take him out in the country to see a case one day, and the next day send him out alone. With a chuckle he would say: 'Whether I got in or not depended on whether I got my foot in the door before they saw that father was not following me!'

"Dr. Louis Wilson, one of my instructors at Minnesota University, was just starting to build up the Clinic Laboratories then. Henderson was starting on his Orthopedic Department, which he was to build up to its present high status. Judd was training the first of his assistants, who afterwards did such great work at the Clinic. Few surgeons can point to assistants who developed into men of the class of Sistrunk, Harrington and Rankin.

"Of course, many very able surgeons were developed in later years, but I was thinking of my earliest visits.

### Kindness, Consideration

"Visiting surgeons are always treated with kindness and consideration at the Clinic, and as I look back on the years I can think of no place elsewhere where so much information of value can be acquired in a short time. Thru old friends, I have also been fortunate in establishing contacts that have been of great value to me.

"When I see a number of interesting operations in one morning, just by going from one room to another at St. Marys or the Colonial, I often think of how much ground one would have to cover to see an equal amount of surgery in Chicago or New New York.

"Then I think of New York taxi drivers, and feel that I have added many years to my life by making clinical trips to the Mayo Clinic!"

Chas. G. McMahan

'Hole-in-wall' No Longer