

Health Department History

Everyone knows that a health department exists for the good of the people, and not the people for the health department.

This theory can best be explained when we go back in time to a little over 67 years ago. Here we find Rev. J. P. Love, Rector of the small Episcopal church in Cameron, Texas, setting aside a little room in his church to be used as the headquarters for a new project he was instigating----- this project being Milam County's blessing in disguise—plans for a nurse to stay with the Loves, work from her office in the church, and to introduce health education to the City of Cameron and the out-lying neighborhoods. This idea of health education proved to be so popular the Milam County begin paying the nurse's salary as well as mileage for her car....and as all good stories go, approximately two years later plans were completed to organize a county-wide health department. The responsibility for this decision came from the County Commissioners' Court consisting of Judge Jeff T. Kemp, and Commissioners E. G. Stiles, E. L. McGuyer, B. M. McMillion and Grady Stidham; and from the Cameron City Council whose members at that time were Mayor Charles C. Smith, Sr., and Councilmen E. O. Schiller, Roy Griffith, Bob Terry, August Horstmann, Sam McDermott, and City Secretary Dan Tyson. Thus it came about that in July of 1940 the Milam County Health Department came into existence with Dr. Roy G. Reed as Director.

On October 1, 1940, the Milam Unit was joined by the neighboring Robertson County to form a Bi-County Unit. These two units worked together, without respect to boundary lines, until June 1st, 1945, when Robertson County withdrew leaving the Milam County Health Department as it is known today.

The Milam County Health Department was first housed in the basement at 116 Gillis Street. It remained at this location until 1961 and was moved to its present location which is 209 South Houston St. (It was numbered 113 Houston St. in 1961).

Since its origination, there have been many directors:

Dr. Roy G. Reed – July 1, 1940 – September 30, 1942

Dr. T. E. Crump – October 1, 1942 to May 31, 1946

Dr. Roy G. Reed – for the month of June 1946

Dr. M. L. Fuller – July 1, 1946 to January 31, 1947

Dr. E. S. Freeman – February 1, 1947 to July 1, 1953

Dr. John B. Bryson – September 4, 1953 to December 31, 1957

Dr. T. E. Crump – January 1958 to July, 1965

Dr. Clifford G. Swift – August 1, 1965 to December, 1973

Dr. E. Douglas Perrin – January 24, 1974 to August, 1996

Dr. Phillip Young - September 1, 1996 to July 31, 1997

Rod Holcombe – November 11, 1997 to August 31, 2006

Patsy Gaines – September 1, 2006 to June 19, 2015