

MEDICINE IN FAIRPORT

fifth in a series

The Depression years of the 1930's and the post-World War II years brought several new physicians to the village of Fairport. Among them were John McEachren, Wilbur Buholtz, and Erich Jacobsen.



Dr. Buholtz



Dr. McEachren

John McEachren was born to a Scottish farming family near London, Ontario. Before entering the University of Toronto Medical College, he worked on bridges and as a punch press operator in Detroit. After medical school he served his internship and residency at the Genesee Hospital which had been highly recommended to him by friends who had moved to Rochester. It was there that he met his wife, Margaret, who was a supervising nurse in obstetrics. In September of 1932, after being told by the chief of medicine at Genesee Hospital to "pick a spot and put out your shingle," he opened his first office at 84 South Main Street, subsequently moving to #64 and finally to #70 where he remained until retirement, leaving only for a stint in the Army Medical Corps during World War II. McEachren remembered being on call 24 hours a day especially for home deliveries, noting that "the fee for prenatal care, the delivery, and postpartum care, altogether was \$25." His training had been primarily in the areas of obstetrics and gynecology, but as he recalled, "in those days, you were a mixed bag of a little of everything." In addition he commented that "there were practically no specific medicines for any illnesses except for diabetes, because insulin had been discovered, and liver was used for pernicious anemia." He also remembered seeing many polio victims in those years before the Salk vaccine. His fondest memories were of the people he served who were, as he said, not only his patients, but his friends. McEachren retired in 1985 after over 50 years in Fairport. As his longtime secretary Helen Spafford said, "He has taken care of my family for four generations." The McEachren house is currently occupied by the Fairport Federal Credit Union.

Shortly after the Second World War Wilbur Buholtz and Erich Jacobsen opened practices on West Church Street and East Church Street respectively.

Dr. Wilbur Buholtz opened his practice at 20 West Church Street in the 1950's. He was a 1941 graduate of Cornell Medical School and interned for three years at the Genesee Hospital. He enlisted in the navy and as a member of the "Greatest Generation" he served aboard landing support craft at Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Like many veterans, he never discussed the horrors of war, nor did he display his Victory Ribbons and his Letter Commendation for treatment of "casualties under fire." After the war he did post-graduate work at Bellevue Hospital in New York City before beginning his private practice in Fairport. Buholtz was described by friends as a "very private, shy, marvelous person, who treated any and all who came to him with a gentleness and compassion whether they could pay or not." Like most doctors of that time, he also made house calls. At his quiet funeral in 2000, there was no body because he had donated his remains to the University of Rochester Medical School.

In 1945, Dr. Erich Jacobsen purchased the house at 10 East Church Street and had his home and office there for over thirty years. The doctor was born in Germany and as a child often accompanied his physician father on his rounds. He studied medicine there, assisted in his first appendectomy when he was 18, and practiced as a pediatrician for about 20 years before he was forced to flee the Nazis in 1939. He lived in New York City for several years until a friend persuaded him to move to the Rochester area. Dr. Jacobsen lived and worked in Fairport until his death in 1977 at the age of 82. He and his wife Gabriella are buried in Greenvale Cemetery.

The sixth and final column in this series on medicine in Fairport will conclude next week with a column featuring Dr. John Kraai.

