

MEDICINE IN FAIRPORT

fourth in a series

Between 1930 and 1950, a number of physicians established their practices in Fairport: Dr. George Dean, Dr. John McEachren, and Dr. John Kraai came in the 1930's, Dr. Erich Jacobsen in the 1940's, and Dr. Wilburt Buholtz in 1950. All their offices were on either Church Street or South Main Street.

George Dean practiced medicine in Fairport for 40 years, first at 61 South Main Street (currently Nothnagle Realtors), and then at 11 West Church Street, only missing several years during World War II when he served in the Navy. Dean received his undergraduate education at Cornell and earned his M.D. from the University of Buffalo in 1929. To finance his medical education, he worked nights at the American Brass Company in Buffalo, picked peaches with migrants, and served as a deck hand on a Great Lakes steamer.



1931 photo of Dr. George Dean

In addition to his private practice, Dr. Dean was the senior attending physician at Genesee Hospital, clinical assistant professor of medicine at the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry, and associate physician at Strong Memorial Hospital. He was particularly interested in allergies and took post-graduate courses at Harvard Medical School. He then served as chief of the allergy clinic at Genesee Hospital and as assistant chief at Strong – both were volunteer positions. He received the prestigious Award of Merit from the Rochester Academy of Medicine in 1961 for his work on allergies. Although Dr. Dean was involved in medical research, most notably contributing to the discovery of cortisone, he preferred his private practice. According to his daughter, not only was he brilliant, but he was also thoughtful and caring, interested in knowing about the lives, not just the illnesses, of his patients. Practicing during the era of house calls, he would often be called out three or four times a night. And his wife, Louise, would always wait up for him.

Dean, like many physicians before and after him, was active in the community, serving both as school doctor and several terms as the town health officer. The local health officer's job included keeping track of and reporting contagious diseases, posting any necessary quarantine signs, and inspecting all restaurants. One story notes that he was able to remove a cook, who was infected with typhoid, from the Cottage Hotel before any damage was done. As school physician, he examined each school child every year and also presided over the administration of the first polio vaccines.

George Dean died in June 1970, at the age of 66. He was survived by his wife, Louise, his children Barbara and Andrew, three grandchildren, and scores of grateful patients.

The story of medicine in Fairport during the first half of the 20th century will continue.