

“Growing Up in Cornwall”

Interview by Brenda Underwood for the Cornwall web site

Priscilla Hart Mauro
Janet Hedden Wildman
Dorothy May Winn Cecchinato
Phyllis Root Zucco

Memories of Dr. Walker

W. Bradford Walker, the town physician, lived on Jewell Street with his wife, Katie and their three sons and delivered most of the babies in town, including Cilla, Janet, Phyllis and Dorothy. Dr. Walker was a multi-generational baby deliverer and also delivered two of Dorothy's mother's four children (at home on the farm), Janet's two daughters and her son Steve's to sons.

Sometimes people couldn't pay for Dr. Walker's services in cash so they paid him in chickens and turkeys," said Cilla. "Dad insisted that we were not all paid for."

"Dr. Walker never talked much," said Janet, "he grumped. If you called him up you never started with any small talk you just launched right in to whatever your problem was. 'Yup,' he would say. He was the only person who could grump and make you feel better."

Dorothy remembers a childhood visit to see Dr. Walker. "I was out in the small pen at the end of the barn and my brother was moving the hay around with a fork. He put the fork right into the front of my leg so immediately we were off to Dr. Walker's. Dr. Walker took one look and said, 'We'll have to cauterize.' There was no anesthetic in those days so he goes and gets a long stick with cotton on the end of it and a jug of something, I suspect alcohol, and he just literally stuck that stick in the hole in my leg and said, 'OK, go home now and just watch it.'"

"He had everything he needed in his office. A tremendous wall full of medicines; you didn't have to go anywhere to buy it. He was famous for his cough syrup which he decanted into a smaller bottle and sent it home with you."

"It was probably 98% booze," interjected Phyllis.