

TO: Director of the Cornwall Historical Society

FROM: Janet Hedden Wildman

RE: Society's celebration of Dr. W. Bradford Walker

At Sharon Hospital on November 21, 1928 Hazel Wiley Hedden was delivered of a baby girl by Dr. W. Bradford Walker. I was that baby and named Janet Mabel Hedden. The Mabel was for my grandmother, Mabel Stevenson Hedden. Her son, Donald Stevenson Hedden, was my father.

Twenty-seven and twenty-nine years later as Janet Hedden Wildman at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Dr. Walker delivered me of a son and a daughter respectively.

Growing up on the farm on Cherry Hill Road Dr. Walker was very much a part of our family primarily because mother was not well with super high blood pressure which necessitated numerous visits to the doctor. From my own experiences, I can remember so well when I had a piece of hay or straw stuck in the back of my mouth. Mother could see it and by using tweezers could have removed it very easily. I would have none of it – we had to go to Dr. Walker because, after all, who else knew what to do. Mother certainly didn't and couldn't! I was taken to that wonderful office filled with glass fronted cabinets filled with all sorts of pills and his famous cough syrup, whereupon Dr. Walker using a pair of tweezers quickly dislodged the stuck piece of hay. That visit was probably paid for with mother's homemade mincemeat and a slab of bacon. And, of course, he was there for the ear aches, whooping cough, chicken pox, mumps, and whatever other childhood illnesses came along.

Every year in March I think of Dr. Walker because of the statement he made after a bad winter – similar to the one we have just had in 2011 – and that was, “No matter how much snow we get, it's always gone by April 1st.” It proves true every year.

In 1942 when I was thirteen and a freshman at Housatonic and my sister, Sue, (also delivered by Dr. W.) was 8, mother died at the age of 46. To be sure, Dr. Walker was there.

Our family continued to grow when Dad married Edna Norton and from that came two more Brad Walker babies – brother Steve and sister Gail.

During my teen years, which were the World War II years, at the Cream Hill Lake Club we had square dances frequently during the summer. Brad Walker was often in attendance and was a wonderful dancer. He loved to dance. He was also an accomplished musician as during intermission he would often play his accordion. A very gifted man. It was rather special dancing and singing with your doctor.

In addition to his doctoring he also served for many years as Judge of Probate – I don't have the exact number but it was for several years.

I probably could go on with other remembrances but I do want to make mention that there is one person who should not be omitted and that was Brad's wife, Katie. Katie was a gifted and talented woman in her own right and she understood the daily uncertainties of being a small country doctor's wife.

I am delighted the Cornwall Historical Society is recognizing Dr. Wilmarth Bradford Walker and what he gave to the Town of Cornwall and its people.

Jaret M. Wildman