

Orleans County Historical Association

#2

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Class of 1924, Medina Memorial Hospital, 1st course

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from Miss Estella Douglas.

Numerous pictures of doctors and nurses, and friends

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Continued

G my step-mother called this neighbor where I had called. I was having this trouble with this woman, she was going to go. My step-mother called and she said: "Johnny Walker is here now, Wilda." He was going to Erie, Pennsylvania and she said: "You can ride with Johnny." And she says: "Call Mrs. Linkey cause she wants you to come and take care of her husband who is sick." He had the flu she had said and I got into small-pox. Was I glad to get out of there.

Mc He didn't have the flu, he had small-pox ?

G I wasn't afraid of anything but my dad was terrified. He said: "If you get small-pox we will have to put you in the Pest House."

Mc Do you remember the Pest House in Medina ? That was before your time, wasn't it ?

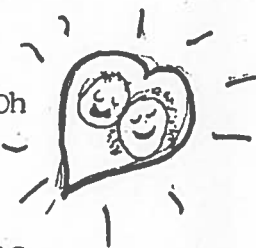
G That was before my time. But Elmer had gone in with me; Easter was the next day, we didn't know it was small-pox and we went to church together and he brought me candy. So Elmer says: "Well I'm not afraid. If you can go out in the evening with me we will go riding." So we didn't dare go near anybody. We would park over on State Street Park, had a coupe, and friends lived over there, friends of Elmer's that he knew before he knew me and the kid would see me and he would laugh his head off: "Wilda and Elmer were over in the park spooning !" We didn't dare go near anybody 'cause I was quarantined with small-pox.

Mc So you were spooning in the car.

G Yeah, and he said we were over in the park spooning. Oh we had a wonderful night!

Mc That was in the days before vaccinations, wasn't it ?

G They were vaccinating then. I was vaccinated when I was little, when I was a baby. Just a few days before I went on Linkey's case I had been vaccinated, before I had gone down to Rochester. I was crazy over all my babies and I'd go visit them afterwards. I went to see Blanche Tracey in Middleport and her baby was going to be vaccinated and Dr. Thomas was going to do it and I went with her. Dr. Thomas was going to vaccinate the baby. I said: "Dr. Thomas, how about vaccinating me too ?" And this



was just before I got on the small-pox case. And he said: "Oh, I'd be delighted to fix you." So he vaccinated me along with him. I wasn't afraid anyway because I'd been vaccinated before.

MC Wilda, one of the experiences you had was being present when someone had twins. Would you tell us about that ?

G That was Mable Woodard. I never was so thrilled in my life !

MC How did you happen to witness it ?

G I was working at the hospital here in maternity and Mable had her babies. Mable and Barton were both there.

MC Did they know that they were going to have twins ?

G They didn't know ahead of time. They were quite surprised when the second baby came. You know the placenta came with the first one, and then there was another baby. I don't remember whether there was two placentas or if there was just the one. Sometimes there's two.

MC You kept track of those babies for awhile?

G Oh yes. Mable died finally. I had a picture there holding the two; she was holding one and I was holding the other. (see photo)

MC The twins were a boy and a girl ?

G No, two girls. I don't know who they married. They might be around Medina somewhere. Mable and Barton are both dead. The trouble with me you know is that I'd follow up, I kept in touch with "my babies."

MC That's good.

G Blanche Tracey in Middleport; she had a baby - - and oh for years - - she came to my wedding. In fact she sang at my wedding. She was one of my patients. And her husband was out walking up and down Marlboro Road with the baby while I was being married. I had a lot of wonderful patients.

MC Well I believe we will draw our interview of today to a close because this tape is running out and we will continue it, if you would like to, because I think it is very interesting.

G I'm getting a kick out of it too !

MC I think future historians would like to hear what you have to say about the hospital; things you will remember later.

This is Tape 2 with WILDA GOMSRUD, Helen McAllister interviewing. The date is February 2, 1982.

Mc I'm glad we can get together one more time. In listening to the first tape I realized that you had talked about ~~at~~ one time when Little Freddy was with you in the hospital that you had to wash the diapers; and I don't think today's nurses would be washing diapers. Would you tell us about the laundry as you remember it?

G We had to wash Freddy's diapers because he was the only baby there; we had to wash all the diapers out, the babies' diapers.

Mc They didn't use paper diapers?

G Oh no. They never heard of such a thing then. We washed the diapers in a great big hopper that was in the nursery. We always washed the diapers.

Mc How did you wash them, did you soak them first?

G We had to soak them first. With a newborn baby it is terrible to get that all out. And we had to wash them in this great big hopper. Some of them we had to boil.

Mc Where would you dry them?

G We had a line out on the porch -- we didn't use that too much -- I just don't remember how we dried them. We **had** to at least wash the stain out.

Mc How about the laundry for the maternity?

G Those things were all sent out. Of course we washed the stains out, the blood out of things, then sent them out. I think there was a laundry down the alley, I can't think of the name of the people that ran it.

Mc This laundry was not in the hospital?

G It was out. Our uniforms were all done there too.

Mc Did you have your uniforms starched?

G Oh yes they were starched.

Mc So that you rustled when you walked?

G Not quite like they used to be, but ours were starched.

All our laundry was done right there in this little laundry, it was down in the alley back of Eagle Street. I just can't remember who ran it.

Mc I'm sure somebody will know and we will put it in when we find out. (Leo Moriarty, 322 Bowman Place, Medina....??) You talked about working in the basement with patients who had to be kept away from other patients and you talked about someone who had polio. What could you do for the patient ?

G Of course at that time polio was a new disease, no one knew what to do, they were all scared to death of it. This young man, they said, had polio and they put me in the basement to take care of him and of course there is nothing but the little basement window and if I left him a minute he'd be up trying to look out the window and dancing on his legs to see if he was alright. He wasn't too serious a case and apparently he recovered alright but he used to scare the life out of me cause he'd be trying to see out of the cellar window to see if his legs were alright, he'd be dancing up and down on his cot.

Mc Did you put hot packs on him ?

G No, I don't remember that I did. Of course it turned out that he was alright and he was able to go home before long. I don't remember who he was either.

Mc When this Medina Hospital was first opened and you first came here someone told me that you were one of the first night nurses in the hospital.

G I was. Scared of my shadow, oh I was scared! I'd have one or two patients on what we called the third floor and I was just terrified everytime I had to go up. I'd go up and down on the elevator. I expected somebody was going to jump at me when I got off. I was scared of my shadow after being in "that little house." The house was so small compared to the hospital.

Mc You mean the first hospital down on the corner of Eagle ?

G Yes, at the corner of Eagle and Prospect.

Mc Wasn't there always a nurse with the patients on the third floor ?

G No, not necessarily. We had a top light and a lower light

and whichever floor lit the light would be on the top.

MC But there wouldn't necessarily be a nurse on that floor ?

G There would be just one nurse on at the beginning because there was only a few patients. I'd go up and down on the elevator. I was scared to walk up the stairs for fear I'd meet somebody and I knew there wasn't anybody in the hospital but still that was a big place for me when I wasn't used to it.

MC Were the hospital doors locked at night ?

G I can't remember that we locked them, they may have been. That's something I never thought of. ~~IT~~ doesn't seem to me as they were locked because we didn't have a bell or anything.

MC How about the maternity cases, didn't they usually come at night - - in the full moon ?

G They usually called before they came and you would be ready for them, or the doctor would call to say he was bringing a patient. Of course I don't remember that we had any babies at the time when we first opened.

MC When you said they called ~~leads~~ to another question that I have: What about the telephone system in the hospital as you remember it in 1924 ?

G They had two phones and I had a terrible time. I'd have somebody on one line and the phone would ring and I didn't know what to do, ~~and~~ I'd pull the button down and I'd shut them off and be trying to connect up another one. ~~and~~ Miss Douglas had to get up in the night a couple of times to straighten me out and finally the operator said: "Well I'll call on just one phone." She said: "Evidently you don't know how to work those." I didn't; it was all new to me and it was something different. I'd never been alone in a big place, it seemed like an awful big place.

MC Do I understand that you and Miss Somerville and Miss Douglas were the only nurses working at that time ?

G There were other nurses that came on daytimes. I don't just remember who all was there. But of course I came up from the other hospital. We had "specials" then, we had nurses that came in with special patients.

MC What do you mean when you say "Specials" ?

- G When they just took care of the one patient. Slept in the room on a cot, man or woman it didn't matter, you slept on a cot in the bedroom with them. I had lots of special patients.
- Mc Did they ~~have~~ more than having five or six nurses on the floor ?
- G They'd have their special. I don't remember just how many - - - of course there was four people in a ward downstairs, the men's ward and the women's ward, and there had to be nurses for maternity down there and there probably would be two nurses in maternity.
- Mc Was there a doctor in the hospital at all times ?
- G No, you had to call the doctor when you wanted him.
- Mc What about week ends ?
- G Well of course we had to work week ends same as our eight hours, same as they do now.
- Mc What about doctors on the week ends ? Did they come in always ?
- G I don't think they came in unless it was something important. Usually the patients were in pretty good shape.
- Mc Was the medicine kept under lock and key ?
- G Oh yes, the medicines were all kept under lock and key. The trained nurses passed the medicines out; we didn't. It's all together different now, it's so hard to think back to just what it was like.
- Mc What about the laboratory, I know it's grown now even in the last 20 years that I can remember. Who was the first Lab Technician that you can remember ?
- G MacLaughlin, she was from Buffalo. I don't remember her first name. We always called her "Mac". She gave it up and went into the Sisterhood. She was down to St. Mary's Church one time after that and different girls saw her.
- Mc Do you know why she gave up her lab work ?
- G Well, she had a boy friend and she was going to marry him and the first thing she knew he had married someone else, ~~and~~ Her heart was broken and she carried on and she just couldn't face it so she went into the Sisterhood. She had thought he was going to marry her, they were

serious with each other, he met somebody else and married her. I can see her now, she was heart-broken.

Mc When she went into the Sisterhood did she continue her work as a Lab Technician ?

G I don't know. She came down to St. Mary's once for something. I didn't happen to go - - not being a Catholic - - but the girls saw her and they were all so thrilled.

Mc You said when children needed to be operated on that usually the doctors came from Batavia when the hospital was first opened in 1924 ?

G It depended on what it was. The doctors who came from Batavia were usually operating on some paralytic or something, trying to help them. There was - - I thought I'd never forget his name - - he died here recently - - and we had him in there for months and months with a crippled leg - - Stanley

Mc It wouldn't be Dr. Johnson or Leseur would it ?

G No they weren't the ones - - they operated - -

Mc Why did the doctor have to come from Batavia ?

G We didn't have any doctors to operate. We didn't have any specialists.

Mc Do you remember the first surgeon that came to Medina ? The first that you can remember; it must have been a pretty exciting time ?

G I can't remember doctors operating.

Mc You said there was one doctor who was always taking out tonsils, who was that ?

G That was Dr. Thomas. I don't think there were any tonsils left in Medina when he got through.

Mc At one time doctors took ^{everyones} tonsils out.

G The sun porch even would have the cots lined up with the kids on them and I don't think there is a kid left from that age ~~left~~ in Medina that didn't have their tonsils out!

Mc How long would they have stayed in the hospital when they came in for that ? (Note: see Thomas, C. Transcript!)

G They weren't here long, usually overnight or so. Then they'd go home with a nice sore throat. He operated on one right after another; my land, we had regular clinics and bled all

over everything, and the poor kids would be so sick! They'd be scared to death and I vowed I'd never lose my tonsils to him, and I never did.

Mc Another human interest story that ties in since our visit last week. You have read the interview that I did with Dr. Ross Arnett and I think you have something that is quite interesting that ties in with his stories?

G I knew ^{the} Arnetts. Mrs. Arnett was a Oderkirk. I don't remember whether we had an Oderkirk in the hospital or not but I knew Mrs. Arnett and Dr. Arnett. They had a baby and Elmer and I lived down on West Avenue and when they wanted to go out for a evening they had me come and stay with the baby. \$2.00 a evening I think it was. I specialed Mrs. Arnett, the doctor's mother, when she was - - - just before the Gold Star Mothers went to France, and I specialed her. And Dr. Arnett came in when they were ready to go - - she had had a gall bladder operation. Of course at that time that was a serious operation. He said his mother was going with the Gold Star Mothers and I said: "How can she go, she's just had an operation?" "Well she'd be fine, they'd take good care of her on the boat." Of course at that time they went by boat, and she went and I guess she had a wonderful time. He was so used to dealing with horses that he wouldn't consider his mother.

Mc Dr. Arnett was a strong person. His wife said that when she was ready to have her first baby he was out fussing with a cow. (*Dr. Arnett was a veterinarian*).

G I'm not surprised at that. He didn't think anything of *his mother* ~~her~~ going. I thought it was terrible. I said: "My goodness, she hasn't recuperated from her operation." And he said she would be fine when she got there. I almost think they went by boat at that time.

Mc I think that they did. When I interviewed Dr. Arnett, it was the first time I had ever heard of Gold Star Mothers and their trip to France. That I believe was to visit the grave of the son who had died and was buried over there; rather than having the body shipped back.

G There was a whole lot of them went, a whole group of Cold Star Mothers. I think they went from all over.

Note:
see Arnett, A
transcript

Medina Memorial Hospital

Medina, New York

32 1/2

September
26th
1929

To Whom It May Concern:

Miss Wilda Edick in 1924

completed the training class for nurses at
the Medina Memorial Hospital. She completed
her course as prescribed by our hospital and
received her certificate.

Since her graduation, Miss Edick
has been employed continuously on the staff of
the Medina Memorial Hospital. She is
now leaving this position in order that
she may be nearer her family and friends in
Michigan.

Miss Edick is a girl of excellent
character and habits, cheerful and considerate
and above all, a very capable nurse.

We regret that Miss Edick is leaving
our staff and I have no hesitancy in recommending
her to anyone requiring the services of a nurse.

G. A. Howell
President

Board of Directors

MEDINA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

It was just wonderful and she got along just grand but I thought she'd die for sure just getting up and going after a serious operation.

Mc Wilda, I understand you were with women when they gave birth to their babies and you were with Mable Woodard when she had her twins.

G She had her twins, I'll never forget it.

Mc What were the twins names ?

G I can't remember. Oh it was Betty and Florence.

Mc What was the husband's name ?

G Barton. There was another, the O'Donnell's had twins but I wasn't in on that.

Mc You know Helen Waldo ?

G Oh yes!

Mc I told her that you had told me that she had played ^{the piano} for your wedding and she said "Yes" and she liked you so much ^{and} that you were with her when she had her babies and that she named her daughter, Wilda, after you.

G Wilda's a honey. She's been wonderful to me, she's a dear.

Mc Have you had quite a few women name their babies after you ?

G One other girl friend named hers after me, too.

Mc That's quite an honor.

G I lost all track of the girl friend. Before I came here I was a "Big Sister." They had a "Big Sister Council" in Rochester.

Mc Yes, you told us about that.

G They would get some girl that wasn't "privileged" to the extent that you were, you know, from a different home. She was living with her grandmother and I was her "Big Sister" and she named her daughter after me. Of course she didn't know what I was doing, I was just being a friend to her. She was living with her aunt and uncle and I didn't think they were really very nice people. ~~and~~ I went down there one evening to talk to her and we were talking - - there was a drape on the door and Louise was standing near the light and all of a sudden that aunt flew in at us and started to yell, and boy, I was terrified! We were making plans to move her, we moved her down into our neighborhood with some French Canadians that were people that she knew and she

(Note: see Waldo, H. Transcript)

ROBERT P. MUNSON, M. D.
CORNER PARK & WEST AVENUES
MEDINA, N. Y.

W. Gomsrud

33 1/2

September 27, 1929.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am glad to state that I have known Miss Wilda Edick for five years. I have watched her work at the Medina Memorial Hospital, and consider that she has had excellent training and experience.

I consider her reliable, attentive, capable, and tactful.

Robert P. Munson

Robert P. Munson



Dr. Robert Munson

lived there for quite a long time. She named one of her children after me. But they're all dead now. Not the daughter - - I never heard anything from her at all.

MC You probably realize that doctors handle birthing quite differently now than they used to ?

G I should imagine so. I haven't seen any births lately but - -

MC I suppose if a baby came too early years ago there wasn't much they could do for it.

G We had preemies once in awhile.

MC How about Dawn Marie Wright, you were telling about how she weighed 2 pounds and 7 ounces ?

G Yes, and we raised that child! You ought to look at that autograph book, I gave it to you didn't I ? Her foot print is in there.

MC Oh my goodness. What can you tell me about this?

G I was away, on my vacation and I came back and Catherine Male met me the minute I got in the hospital and she said: "Oh wilda we got a baby this time. She's a little wee thing." 2 pounds and I can't remember how many ounces - - it's marked in my autograph book.

MC 2 pounds and 7 ounces.

G And she said: "Come and see it." And I said: "Oh my word !" when I saw that baby - - "I don't want to take care of it." Well she says: "You'll probably have to." Well we loved that baby, Dawn Marie Wright it was. In later years I got in contact with her, and I found she had been married to an older man and we wrote back and forth and she wrote beautiful letters. Finally her husband died; he was an older man, and he had a truck. She sold the truck and she had one or two children, besides that one, and she went to Florida, her mother was down there. She's down in Florida now. I told her I've got the foot print.

MC What did they feed a little baby like that ?

G I think we fed her with a medicine dropper for awhile till we got her going. Of course she was born while I was away so other girls had to handle the first part of it.

MC That's not even as big as a five pound bag of sugar!

G She was so tiny. I said I'd never be able to take care

W. Gomsrud

34 1/2

Office of
L. F. Waters, M. D.
311 Pearl St., Opp. Armory
Bell Telephone No. 186

OFFICE HOURS
2 TO 3 AND 7 TO 8 P. M.
EXCEPT SUNDAYS

Medina, N. Y., Sept 30, 1929

Tell him it may concern.

It is with
pleasure that I recommend
Miss Lida Edick to anyone
needing her service as
a nurse.

Her work with us
at the Indian Hospital
throughout during the past
year has been entirely
satisfactory in every way,
and I wish to recommend
her as an excellent nurse
and a woman of noble char-
acter.

L. F. Waters



Dr. Waters

of her when Catherine first showed her to me. But I got used to her. Can get used to anything.

Mc I'd like very much to ask you about some of the other early nurses, maybe not from the other hospital, but some of the earlier ones. Marion Heady ?

G Marion Heady took the course here long after I did.

Mc Tell me about the course and who was the teacher ?

G Miss Douglas gave a six month course of training and you had to take tests and have practical nursing besides. Marion worked with us for years. Catherine Male went in with me. Then Dorothy Forder came and then the Heady girls, I think they came after Dorothy, and there was Miss MacAvoy there with Miss Douglas and Miss Somerville. Mac, I think, was at the old hospital too.

Mc How about Beatrice Pope (Carroll Mullen)?

G Oh yes, Beatrice Pope took the course under Miss Douglas. Eventually she got doing X-Ray work, I believe, long after I left.

Mc She was with me when we had our last two daughters: Pam & Lois.

G Oh was she ?

Mc I asked for her the second time because I liked her so much. She was very good.

G She was a good nurse. Then we had Edith Johnson too. Edith and Pope were awfully good friends, Edith was older than Pope. Edith gave a shower for her when she was either getting married or leaving the hospital. The first time she got married she married Carroll and she had a daughter, I believe, by him. Edith Johnson lived just before you get to the Ridge, down on Gravel Road, and she gave a shower and we were all there for that. Bea left Carroll and brought her daughter back to Medina.

Mc Then there were just two of you in the first class ?

G Catherine Male and I, yes. I think Dorothy Forder was alone when she went through. I don't remember that there was anyone with her. I don't remember whether if there was anybody with Bea or not. The last time I saw Bea I came into the hospital to see someone and she was at the desk and I didn't recognize her and her hair was

Medina Memorial Hospital
Medina, New York

Jan. 20, 1919.

My dear Mr. Conover:-

Miss Editha Eick completed our course of six months training in practical nursing, and remained at the nursing staff for five years. During that time her work was entirely satisfactory, and we found her dependable in all her duties.

In my opinion Miss Eick is adaptable and pleasing personally, and will do good work, with any patient, in any case.

Esther Douglas,
Supt.

kind of henna. I made the mistake of mentioning: "I didn't know you, your hair's a different color."

Mc Her name is different too now. She quite active in politics now too. Her husband is the president of the Medina Historical Society. *(Gerald Mullen)*

G Oh that's what she's interested in. She's into something else.

Mc She's into politics pretty strong.

G She'd been married before she married him you know; she married Carroll . She had that one daughter by him.

Mc Tell me about Mr. Bowen. Who was he ?

G I think he was one of the head ones at S. A. Cook Company, furniture.

Mc What did he have to do with the hospital ?

G He was the head trustee, the one that everybody turned to if they needed anything. Miss Douglas went to him for everything. He was our side-kick.

Mc Who was Helen VanNorstrand ?

G Helen was the telephone operator and handled the bills and those things. The book-keeper I suppose.

Mc That's before everybody had to have a thousand pieces of paper for everytime they moved!

G Nothing much to it then.

Mc How did they handle cases where people were very ill but they didn't have any money to pay for it ?

G Of course we never knew what they were taking in. They never turned anybody away; everybody was kept there.

I suppose there was some way of getting money from the county or something.

Mc Do you know what happened to older people ? They didn't have a North Wing like where you are living now.

G Lots of older people, years ago, were kept at home, they weren't brought to the hospital. I think a lot of them would be better off at home right now, they wouldn't live as long. Here they'll keep you alive forever! If you got a pain, you'll get a pill; it keeps you going. You can see a lot of those people are over 90 years old and that's my one objection to this place; I don't want to live long, I got nothing to live for and I don't want to live on and on.

36 1/2

DONALD F. MACDONELL, M. D.
123 WEST CENTER STREET
MEDINA, N. Y.

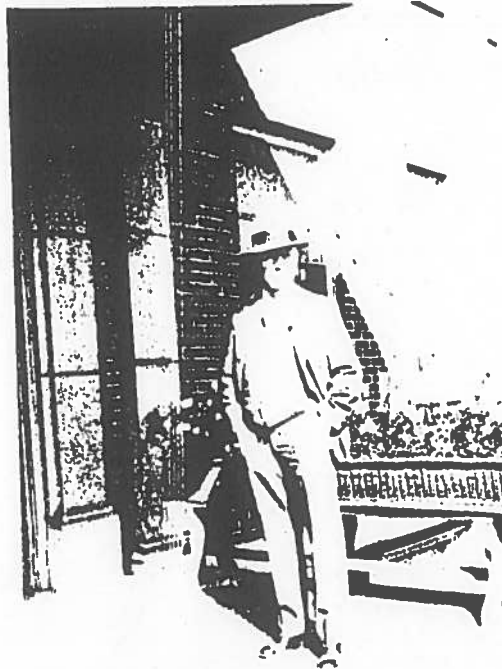
I have known Miss Wilda Edick for almost six years.
During this time I have had ample opportunity for
observing her work.

I have no hesitation in recommending her as a nurse
of ability, integrity and industry.

Medina, N.Y.

November 9, 1929

Donald F. MacDonell
MD



Dr. MacDonell

Mc If you had felt that way three weeks ago I couldn't be getting this interview, so you're wrong! If you don't have a mind and if you are suffering that's different, but you are so alert and you have so much to share.

G I do enjoy life when it comes right down to it and I have a lot of wonderful friends. I got two lovely letters today. I've got a little Rochester grand-daughter who wrote from out in Seattle, outside of Seattle.

Mc You have her picture on the wall.

G Yes. She and her husband are both interested in the same things and they're both having such a good time. She said: "Believe it or not the skiing was nothing there this year and we're just so anxious to close up here and get down to our place." They have this land and they want to get it cleaned and get things ready so they can start building their home. They've cut down the woods. It's outside of Seattle in the State of Washington.

Mc We have enough snow and ice in New York State this last month for all winter.

G It'll do us forever.

(end of Tape #2, side #1)

Copied from Wilda's Autograph Book

May you rattle along like a good old fliver
With just enough bumps to tickle your liver;
And then may you find at the end of the way
A crown that will fit, and a harp that will play.

to Wilda 1928

from Florence K. Fox

(husband: Elmer Fox, barber)

(sons: Don... also a barber)

Merle

Mc Wilda, we are on Tape 2 on the second side and I would like you to take over and just tell us, if you would like to and as much as you would like to, about your interests other than nursing. I know you said you met and married a very wonderful man and that you traveled a lot.

G We've been to Norway twice. He was Norwegian.

Mc How did you go ?

G We went by boat the first time and the second time we flew over. Oh, it was beautiful, I can see that water yet. It was an awful feeling the first night or so to think we were on water and I'd think "suppose the boat goes down".. It was just like a living palace that we were traveling on.

Mc About what year was that ?

G I'd have to look it up. I might have the date in my autograph book.

Mc Who did you stay with or did you stay in a hotel ?

G My husband was Norwegian and we went to his nieces' and stayed with them. We saw his sister and were entertained by everyone over there. They treated us like royalty.

Mc What's the food like ? Is it quite different than ours ?

G It's beautiful over there, of course mountainous. He was born over there. He was four years old when his father died, and he and his mother lived in the end of the school house. There was a little living quarters and he lived there with his mother, widowed. He was the last of seven children. He said his father was older than his mother by quite a bit. I remember after we were married the first time he got a letter from Norway and he started to cry when he opened it and I didn't know why, ~~and~~ his mother had died. He felt so bad to know he wasn't going to get home to see her alive again.

Mc So you never met his mother ?

G No, I never met her. She was gone when we went over but he had nieces. One niece came over here and visited us for over a month and we just enjoyed her. She could speak English. Of course I got over there and I didn't know Norwegian but the ones that could speak English - - most of them learn English in school - - - and they could *talk*

to me and we just had a wonderful time.

Mc What was the food like in Norway ?

G Wonderful, just grand! Norwegians fix everything so fancy that wouldn't believe it. They could make beautiful sandwiches and coffee, you had that every afternoon, you know, you had to have your coffee hour. They go strong on coffee and little cakes and cookies. We stayed out in the country with his sister and her husband. We just had a wonderful time. It's almost impossible to think of all the good times and things we did. We had picnics and all the friends that Elmer went to school with would be there. I have a friend in Rochester and while we were over there the first time we sent home a little girl's address to a little friend in Rochester and they started writing and had letters back before we got home. This last summer she went to Norway and met her little friend and her daughter wrote to a girl over there and her daughter had letters back and forth before they got home. We went to Norway twice. The first time we went by boat and the second time we flew. We had money left to us and we figured why put it in the bank, we might better enjoy ourselves, so we went to Norway the second time. We flew the second time and of course I was terrified of that airport looking out at all the planes. I said to Elmer: "All these planes ahead of us, we'll hit one of them when we get up there." When the moon came up I just kept putting the window curtain up and looking at that moon. I said: "Oh, if the man in the moon came down I'd run away with him." I've always loved sunsets and the moon. When I was 12 years old we went out to Saskatchewan and we spent three weeks, I think, with Mother's niece and her family on a paire.

Mc Did Elmer have relatives in Canada ?

G Not in Canada, no, he did in Norway. That last trip was with my folks. My mother was Canadian. She had nieces and nephew over there and her brothers and sisters. We were over when her mother was alive. At Aunt Libby's, I was a little kid then and so was Ethel. Ethel was two years older and some months than I was.

Mc You had said that your father was a railroad man and so you had passes to go.

G Yes we had passes. We had a pass on the Cobourg boat. We could get up in the morning and go to Cobourg any day we wanted to. Mother wouldn't go.

Mc Why wouldn't she go ?

G Oh, she didn't like it, she didn't care about it. All we had to do was go to downtown Rochester and catch the train and ride out to Charlotte and get on the boat and go over to Canada, then have a couple of hours roaming around Cobourg and turn around and come home again. We usually got a soda when we got off the boat. But Mother never liked to go. We went a few times - - Elmer and I went too and we got pictures of that - - us on the boat.

Mc Where else did you and Elmer travel besides Norway ?

G Elmer had a brother out in Oregon. Portland, Oregon.

Mc That's a beautiful state.

G And we went out there to his brother's. *He* came to see us first and then we went out there. I remember we were fixing the house up before they came and we had new linoleum, a bathroom put in - - - Elmer said: "Oh they couldn't stand it if they didn't have a bathroom in the house." So we had a bathroom put in. Course it was a old house but we had a large clothes-press off our room - - it was just an ordinary room and we put a bathroom in there and we were getting all fixed up with running water and we had it all fixed when they came from Portland. But we had been out to see them and got acquainted with them. Elmer lived out there with them when he first came from Norway. His brother was already over here. He had two brothers out there. The first time we went to Montana to the one brother's. His wife had lost her mind and had been sick for a long time and she had died, and then we went on to Oregon to see the other brother. His brother said to me: "Wilda, wait until you see Neena; Alex can hardly move without she tells him what to do, she's the bossiest thing you ever met." He had me scared to death of her, but she

was lovely to me. We had an awful good time out there. Then after they died, years later, Elmer had to go out and settle up everything. When he was sick Elmer went out and then he died so Elmer stayed for the funeral and then later after she died we went out and the house, ~~and~~ Everything was left to us and we had to go out and clean up everything.

Mc That's hard.

G It was hard. An awful thing, the last of Elmer's people, it made him feel bad.

Mc Your husband was a big man wasn't he ?

G He was taller than I am but he wasn't heavy. He wasn't a heavy set man. I can't remember just what he weighed. He was a polisher and plater, he did that kind of work when he came over here. He could draw. His picture is there on the dresser. That was taken near New York City. We were visiting someone and they took us over to this place. A Norwegian lady lived there and she had Norwegian food for us.

Mc Would you tell us when Elmer passed away ?

G He died just two years ago June 5th; i, it will be three years this year.

Mc That would be 1978.

G Last June would have been our 50th wedding anniversary. It would have been June 27th. He hadn't been well for quite awhile. I took care of him as long as I could. Somebody sent the "50 years ago" of our wedding, out of the Medina paper, and sent it to me, ~~and~~ I broke down and cried. It was a thoughtless thing to do.

Mc They probably thought they were doing something nice.

G She probably thought I didn't even see it. ~~Gomez~~ Russell Waldo always did that you know, put the different years in. He started that. He worked at the paper. (*Medina Journal Re*

Mc Yes I know; I interviewed Hellen Waldo.

While we are talking about really all sorts of things, would you want to tell us how you happened to come to the long term part of the hospital to stay here ? (*North Wing*)

G It was two years ago after Christmas. Christmas time they brought my dinner in.

Mc You were at home ?

G I was alone at home, you see Elmer died in June. I sold Roger my home with the privilege of having life use of it. I looked after everything.

Mc Who is Roger ?

G Roger Millis, I sold him the home. Jean and Roger did everything for me. Roger grew up as a neighbor there and the Millis' were always awfully good to us.

Mc This was down near Waterport wasn't it ?

G Yes, Waterport. They lived up on the hill from us.

(Gomsrud home located on Route #279, south of Route #18. Elder Millis' home was located on Fuller Road. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Millis home is located on Route #18, just west of Kuckville.) I knew his (Roger) mother, in fact I took care of his aunt in Lyndonville. I knew Mrs. Millis before that, but I can't just remember how I met her. When we moved down there I knew the Millis'. We used to get our milk from them so I saw their family grow up and then as time went on - - - Of course when we bought our house it was an awful looking thing, it had three coats of tar-paper on it and the paper was all rough and ragged around it. We went in the house to look, it was empty then, the Land Bank had it, and the wall-paper was hanging in the dining room. I remember reaching up and pulling a piece of wall-paper down and Elmer said: "Don't do that !" And I said: "Why not ? Nobody could live here the way it is now !" And I tore off a piece of wall-paper. Well we moved in there and then after Daddy died why we had money left to us that we could put into something so we put it into our home. We put a bathroom in off of this clothes-press off of our bedroom, a beautiful bathroom. We fixed up the kitchen and put in plumbing. Elmer put in our own furnace, put it in himself; he was a plater and polisher. He could turn his hand to anything he wanted to do. He shingled the roof once. There was tar-paper around the roof and then afterwards we had a contractor. No, we bought the things, he was going to do it, then Elmer was sick and this friend came over and brought this - - kind of an asbestos with stones on it - - and

Elmer was going to do it and he wouldn't let Elmer up on the roof, he finished that for us. Corlian's father put a chimney up front for us after Elmer put the furnace in.

Mc You were living there alone after your husband died ?

G I was there alone from June until February. I had for some time, every once in awhile, I'd fall down but I didn't know what happened and I'd go down so fast. I would go out to the garage for something and all of a sudden I'd be on the ground. My knees buckled and I didn't know what was doing it. ~~and~~ So this was Christmas, and Jean and her father had brought me my dinner, her folks were down to their place, and I had known Roger since he was a little tike, and then of course he married Jean and they lived in the neighborhood and they were always awfully good to us. So I went out to the garage for something one day and I just went down so fast I didn't know what happened! I had been telling Jean about it. I had my dinner and went out and washed the dishes and put them on the sink and I came back in and had a cup of coffee on my table next to my chair and just as I got near my chair, down I went! ~~and~~ I knocked the coffee and my legs hurt so that I couldn't get up and I had to sit there for a long time. Finally I got up and I called Jean and then I told her. I think this was after Christmas, I don't think it was Christmas Day, 'cause her folks were down there then. I said: "Oh Jean, I couldn't get up off the floor, my knees hurt me awful." Well from then on I was sick and I didn't know what was the matter with me. Dr. Bell would come to the house to come to see me.

Mc Dr. Bell is in Lyndonville isn't he ?

G Yes, he lives on the Roosevelt Highway not too far from us. He's a Lyndonville doctor. He makes house-calls and that's why I wanted him. They also have a church up across from Millis' house is (On the Fuller Road), I don't know what kind it is. Some religion but I don't know what kind. Before this Jean had taken me for a ride and showed me they were using this Ingraham's house for a church and

THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE
EDUCATION
STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT



BE IT KNOWN THAT

Julia E. Sidle Comarod

HAS MET THE REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED BY CHAPTER 472 OF THE
LAWS OF 1938 AND WITHOUT WRITTEN EXAMINATION HAS
BEEN GRANTED THIS

LICENSE TO PRACTISE AS A
PRACTICAL NURSE
IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, THE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GRANTS
THIS LICENSE NO. *3591*
UNDER ITS SEAL AT ALBANY,
NEW YORK, THIS *30th* DAY
OF *March* *1940*

William E. Brown
ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Stella H. Hufschmidt
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
OF NURSES

4/3/40

there were flowers out there and she called Mrs. Bell and told her and she said she would come down and get them. Since then they've had their babies. Dr. Bell came to the house and talked with Jean, ~~and~~ so they brought me in here and I was down in the other part of the hospital. ~~A week or so~~ A young couple came in for church service (he had preached a service or something) and I didn't go out right away, I didn't know they were out there 'till I heard them playing the piano, and I went out and I said: "There were four people in that room." And Jean said: "No, Wilda there were only two of you." I had insurance for a two-bed room. I was sure there were four people. Jean said there were four people in there while I was in there but I was in there with one person at a time. I just couldn't visualize that. So I didn't know what was what. So this Sunday this young couple were there, the little girl played the piano, the mother played the piano, the father had already spoken before I got over there. This girl came over and said: "Aren't you Wilda?" And I said: "Yes, I'm Wilda." And she said: "I knew you were."

MC Who was the girl?

G Here she was the one that - - - she said: "I'm DeeDee." And I said: "DeeDee?" I didn't know who DeeDee was. She said: "I was with you down in that room." And I said: "Well I vowed there was four of us in there." And she said: "No, there was only the two." Now that's the first time I've seen her and I don't remember what she said her last name was but I was so surprised, 'cause I had argued with Jean that there was four people in that room. So when I told Jean, she knew who she was. So Jean said: "I told you there was only two of you." But I could still see the four people in that room, yet I knew when I came to that - - - So then when she said that' to me I knew - - -

MC But you had passed out.

G I must have. Oh my mind wasn't clear for a long time. Then Jean and Roger took me home and even then my mind wasn't clear. They took me home and when they picked me up to take me back she brought lunch over and let me eat and when they came to get me why she said did I pick up

anything you wanted. Well I had no notion of leaving home, I expected I was coming back. I had just gotten this beautiful Zenith television and here they had insured it on Elmer, and if I'd known that I'd a had a fit! I chewed my head off when I found out about it. They bought everything.

Mc Who bought it ?

G Jean and Roger Millis. I knew where things were in the house. I had an ashtray from the North Cape, way up where the sun never sets, very few people get there. We went way up there in the middle of the night, here was this gorgeous great big sun going down, and us climbing the mountain to see the sun. They said: "Why climb up there ? You go down the road a little ways and you can see it in the crack in the mountain." We went on this bus tour.

Mc People just don't understand that unless they are into it.

G They thought it wasn't going to come back up again but it does. So when we got down on the bus, I kept going ahead of Elmer, and he'd say: "Wilda, wait for me, Wilda !" And I kept going faster and faster and finally he caught up with me. "You make me sick," he said, "you know you've got to turn around and walk down these stairs and it isn't going to be easy." I wanted to get to the top. They say if you go down the road to where the bus stands you can see that sun just as good as you can up here and it's the same sun. So I started going down and every step my knees hurt, thought I'd die. Elmer said: "If you'd listened to me you wouldn't have been way up here." I groaned and groaned all the way to the bottom. That was a wonderful trip. I've got so many memories. My dad being a railroad man, we had passes to Cobourg, we could go every day and Mother wouldn't go. I think now, boy, I'd have been on the road all the time!

Mc Yes I think if I had a free pass I would go all the time too.

G He could get passes for anywhere. Mother wouldn't go.

Mc Is there anything at all that you can remember about being a nurse ? Somewhere you wrote down when one of your patients died, and patients do die sometimes, you held the hand of someone ?



Sketch of Estelle Douglas taken from photograph by Rochester cartoonist Messner.

ROCHESTER PAPER PAYS HONOR TO MEDINAN UPON RETIREMENT

Miss Estelle Douglas, retiring from the post of administrator of Medina Memorial Hospital at the end of this month, received a high tribute from the Rochester Times-Union when she was featured in a recent Saturday edition under the heading: "The Times-Union Salutes."

A regular week end feature of the Rochester afternoon paper, this salute goes out to "a man or woman who has contributed in an outstanding way to community progress."

The selection of each week's personage is made by the Times-Union editors and a drawing of the individual is made by Elmer R.

Messner, editorial cartoonist.

It is rare in the history of this feature that it has gone this far out of the Rochester city district or immediate suburbs. The salute to Miss Douglas appeared in all editions of the T-U.

The text accompanying the picture pointed out that in the 35 years under her administration, the Medina Memorial Hospital has grown from a \$14,000 annual operation to one of nearly \$300,000.

It traced briefly the start of her nursing career in Canada more than half a century ago, and also spoke of her hobbies of research into perfumes, collections of figurines, chinaware, etc.

It concluded by mention of her other affiliations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Ladies of the Moose, Business & Professional Women's Club, and as a communicant of St. John's Church.

G Mrs. Maynard; Dr. Maynard's wife, she.. was the sweetest thing. She was holding my hand when she died.

Mc She was in the hospital here ?

G No she was at home. She was a dear soul. I want you to look at my autograph book while ^{you are} here 'cause I ^{want} to see what you think of some of them. She wrote in that. Most of my patients wrote in that for me. She was a dear. I knew Dr. Maynard, I knew him well. I remember one time he balled me out when I was supposed to be giving chloroform to somebody and I was watching him, I guess, deliver a baby. He said: "You can't put her under, Miss Edick, if you don't give her something." I often think of that. He was a dear. He was so nice to us. Miss Douglas and he were delivering the baby and I was watching them instead of dropping the chloroform.

Mc What about the nurses around here today, are they quite different or are they pretty much like you were ?

G Well most of these girls aren't trained, I don't think; if they are they aren't trained long. They don't make a bed like we did. We'd never get away with a bed like they make them. I complimented them today, I told them I wasn't putting my throw over the top of it because I said they really did a good job today and I'll let it show. Most of the time they just throw things together. Often I go in and make my bed over after them; they don't like that.

Mc Do they have Candy Stripers, young girls, to help in the hospital here now ?

G I can't remember whether they had different uniforms than we did or not.

Mc Did they have young girls come in without training when you were here ?

G Oh yes they brought them in without training. Miss Douglas trained them. Catherine Male and I and Dorothy Forder, we were all - - - well of course I had had a little training, but the rest of them hadn't. We started in that old hospital; that was something!

Mc What about the physical therapy, did you have any physical therapy rooms when you were first starting in 1924 ?

G No, I can't remember any. We had an X-Ray in the basement where we could X-Ray people.

Mc Have ministers always come into the hospitals ?

G Oh yes. Did I tell you about Mr. Findley ?

Mc Yes. Now you and I are sitting in the Chapel Room.

This is the room set aside for people who want to use (meditate) the Chapel. What did they do before they had this room ?

G The minister just came in and visited them and that was it. I don't remember any priests coming in. Father Kelly used to come all the time to the old hospital but I don't remember him giving communion or anything. Now he may have and I didn't know it.

Mc Does a minister call on you regularly ?

G Our minister has just changed. Rev. Cushman has left. He was here two or three times. I get the Bulletin from the church. See the new minister now is there and he has three churches. So far he hasn't been up to see me.

Mc Do they have programs in the other room ? How often do they have a minister come in ?

G Every week end usually. He isn't exactly a minister. He was Pentacostal because they left me a paper for Sunday. I didn't go out. He just drives me crazy, he goes on one foot and then the other and he can't carry a tune. He didn't have anybody play the piano and it was terrible. When he did, he doesn't carry a tune.

Mc Do you like to have someone play the piano in there or not ?

G Oh yes, I like to have entertainment, any kind of entertainment.

Mc Do they do it just on Sundays or do they have other people come in ?

G We've had an awful lot of entertaining. Not right lately. Christmas time they were caroling up and down the halls after we went to bed. People were marvelous to us.

Mc How about the rest of the year ?

G The rest of the year sometimes somebody comes in who wants to entertain or there's something doing. They're



AMONG THE 91—When 91 hospital staff members and other professional associates gathered around Medina Memorial Hospital Administrator Estella Douglas last week, the head table accommodated this group. They are a portion of the 50 or more nurses who received training under Miss Douglas in a period from 1923 to 1937 at the local hospital. Seated, from left, Mrs. Er-

vanna Menke, Miss Douglas, Mrs. Robert Gilly Elwyn Fuller, Miss Marian Heady. Standing, M. Short, Mrs. Edward Simpson, Mrs. Elmer Gons Alton Benthin, Mrs. Beatrice Carroll, Mrs. Mun strong, Mrs. Franklin Kaderli and Mrs. Ivain Wo

—(J)

Hospital Staff Assembles To Fete Administrator

Ninety-one past and present to you as a wonderful person. members of the Medina Memorial Hospital staff attended a recent dinner given as a tribute to Miss Estella Douglas at the Apple Grove Inn. The honored guest commented by telling them: "This was the love-

liest party I ever attended. It did my heart good to know that you remembered me and came back for this meeting. It was just like a family party and will long be remembered.

"I have been most fortunate in having such a wonderful group.

"You have a wonderful hospital and have the equipment. It is now up to you to keep the wheels turning."

Miss Douglas hospital superintendent, will retire later this summer.

Those who started earliest in the hospital with Miss Douglas were seated at the table with her. In a toast to the departing superintendent, it was said, "Wherever you go from here we wish you the best of everything."

In presenting the pearl pin and necklace, Mrs. William Stockfield said to Miss Douglas, "We hope you will have time to enjoy your well earned retirement." This gift is from the personnel of the hospital. A gift of a bracelet was presented from a group who were trained under Miss Douglas.

Following the presentation of gifts Mrs. Dorothy Simpson paid a tribute to the retiring superintendent.

"Miss Douglas," she declared, "I feel a sense of great honor and privilege to have been asked by the members of the nursing school of

Among the guests who were identified with the hospital in the early days and have continued in some cases were: Mrs. Joseph Menke, who was associated with the old hospital in 1923, Mrs. Elmer Gons-

rud who went to the new hospital in 1925 as night nurse with only five patients. Both gave interesting sidelights, comparing the two hospitals.

Five others who took training with Miss Douglas and who are still associated with the hospital include Miss Marion Heady, who has been with the hospital for 33 years; also Mrs. Marian Woodworth, Mrs. Beatrice Carroll, Mrs. Eunice Armstrong and Mrs. Donna Fuller.

Following the dinner a collection of pictures were projected which had been taken through the years by those who have been associated with the hospital.

Reminiscing past days and renewing former acquaintances featured under the chairmanship of Mrs. Dorothy Stockfield assisted by Mildred Matz, Betty Martin, Hazel Mack, Laura Ott and James Peck. Mr. Peck served as toastmaster and said, "This is a party which won't be forgotten by any who have

- always welcome. Corky's always welcome.
- Mc Who is Corky ?
- G Corlian Thiel, she was a Waterson. She's in charge of our Day-Room. I've known her since she was a little girl. Her father had his 90th birthday the other day and I took care of him years ago and he'd say to me: "You took care of me once, Wilda." And I'd say: "Yes, and you were the worst patient I ever had." He never pays any attention to me.
- Mc Is the last name Waterson ?
- G Waterson, her name is Thiel now. Corlian Thiel.
- Mc Would his name be John ?
- G John Waterson.
- Mc Oh sure!
- G You ask him if he knows me and he'll tell you. He would come down almost every Sunday and visit with Elmer.
- Mc I think I saw Mr. Waterson on the street one day and he said he'd gone to Hawaii.
- G He was going to Hawaii ?
- Mc He had been there and he loved it.
- G He's been around a lot.
- Mc He's still driving. Would you believe it ? *(at age 90)*
- G He's still driving? He had an awful accident here awhile ago and I didn't know whether he could. They didn't find him guilty but it was Jean's nephew, ~~and~~ John's car was a wreck, but he got another one.
- Mc He has a truck, a pick-up truck.
- G Now ? He had a truck before I guess but it was wrecked. Why he had a birthday, Coralian was taking him out and the girls were taking him out; she has a sister too. They were taking him out to dinner on his birthday. So I sent him a card. 94 years old he was. I came down to the gift shop and I got a card and I sent it to him and he was so pleased he turned around and sent me a card! He said he'd never thought he'd hear from me. I used to talk terrible to him when he came down.
- Mc I understand he used to work on the canal when they were widening it the last time.
- G I never heard that. He was a carpenter and a mason and a

darn good one. He put our chimney up in front of our house. Every Sunday he'd be right there sitting on our porch. He'd bring Alice down once in awhile but not too often.

Mc Who is Alice ?

G That was his first wife, Coralian's mother. Then he married Olive. Don't know what her last name was. ...

Now they won't have anything to do with each other. She's down in Florida.

Mc That's too bad.

G Well, he'd take the bus here and she'd known him for years; she worked in that store in Albion for awhile.

Mc I like to ask you Wilda, looking at you sitting in this chair with a very pretty dress on: What do you do when your clothes need to be laundered , does the hosital take care of it ?

G Jean takes them home.

Mc You have someone that does this for you ?

G Yes, Jean does it for me.

Mc Supposing you came in without anybody to look after you, who would do it ?

G I don't know. Probably they'd find clothes for you. They have a laundry here, they do all the underwear, but any dress or anything I need washing why Jean takes home. I've never sent mine down. I sent my brassieres down. The day or so before I got sick I bought myself a lovely garment, paid a big price for it down in Bronson's, what was Bronson's - -

Mc It's Crowley's now.

G Yes - - - and I got myself two brassieres, Cross-Your-Heart Brassieres, and I've had the worst time keeping track of them. When you've gone for three weeks !

Mc Do you put your name on things ?

G You write your name with a marker and I put "W.G." on them, in the little flap so it wouldn't show. I lost three pairs of pants and I was desperate. I says: "What's the use of getting things if you can't keep them." Well the other day my brassiere came back. Now I've got both

my brassieres. You put your clothes in the laundry and they do a good job. Now that green dress I had on, I was going to put it on today but I thought you would think I wore it all the time and I had sent it to the laundry and it comes back just beautiful.

Mc Do they charge you for doing the laundry ?

G I don't know whether they charge us or not. Everything that they got from the house will come back into the hospital. Roger pays the mortgage and Elmer's Social Security, that all helps pay my way. As Mr. MacCarroll/said: "When your money's all gone, you're still kept here." That's wonderful.

Mc Yes. I think Medina has a wonderful hospital.

G I just about blow up and burst when I think about the hospital because I saw it come from so little to so much! Miss Douglas would be so proud of it!

Mc I thank you so much for this interview, Wilda, because you were one of the first to come in here, and here you are as the "Queen Mother" really, you really are.

G I don't know as I'd consider myself that but I've been awful, awful lucky.

Mc A lot of people speak very well of you. I've been telling people, I'm going to go do another interview with Wilda Gomsrud.

G I don't know, maybe if you talk to some people they'd say I was terrible.

Mc Oh no, not at all.

G I've had a lot of patients around town. A lot of them of course are older people and they are gone by now.

Mc Thank you, Wilda.

- - - - -

Transcribed by Lysbeth Hoffman of Waterport, N.Y.
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 Helen McAllister of Medina, N.Y.