

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE AREA? (Cont.)

On a cold February 11, 1931, local residents witnessed the dedication of the new Mellus Hospital in Brighton (north of the First Presbyterian Church). Prior to that date, area mothers always had their babies at home, and those in need of surgery were treated on the kitchen table or in the doctor's home office. The Argus of February 4, 1931, described in detail the arrangement of the various treatment rooms, including the decorating schemes and furniture. "Brighton is very happy to have such a finely equipped building, as the new hospital will be, located here. ...set well back from Grand River Ave., on the crest of the city's predominating hill, where terraced lawns from the street will lead up to the main entrance, ... imposing two story structure of Georgian design. The exterior is of red face brick with stone cornice and entrance motif. A wrought iron railing over the entrance contributes beauty to the imposing facade."

Dr. Horace P. Mellus and his wife, Charlotte, arrived from Detroit in 1914. They lived in a house located on the present site of the building. He soon earned the love and respect of the citizens of the area. Many long time residents remember him as a person who displayed special kindness to children. Nostalgically Mary Mathias says, "During those years Brighton was like a family. Everyone knew everyone else." At that time his office was located in the first house off Grand River on the north side of E. North Street. This house had a beautiful fireplace and the doctor added rooms to the back. Following the death of his wife, March 3, 1925, Dr. Mellus married again in 1929, to Mildred E. Clark of Hamilton, Ontario. He and his bride lived in their newly built home on Spencer Road (2nd house north of Main on the west side).

Following a severe illness, Dr. Mellus would diagnose and prescribe from his recuperative bed upon the report of a patient's symptoms by another doctor. After sufficiently regaining his strength the doctor had Dewey Douglas, a young man who had studied medicine for several years but lacked adequate funds to complete his medical education, drive the doctor on his rounds. Dewey examined the patient and described the symptoms. From his car the doctor diagnosed the illness and prescribed treatment. By this time other doctors practiced with Dr. Mellus at the hospital; Dr. Duncan Cameron and Dr. Archibald McGregor, among them. Dr. Mellus and Charlotte are buried in Fairview Cemetery on Flint Road. The doctor died April 19, 1939, at the age of 52, from a heart attack. As has been noted about other doctors in the area, Dr Mellus cared about the community. In 1936, he became the founder and first president of the Brighton Rotary Club. (By Marieanna Bair. To be continued. Anyone with information regarding the subject matter of these articles is urged to contact her, 229-6402. She needs help.)

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