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

The construction of Melius Hospital in 1931, encouraged more medical practitioners to come to Brighton. Among them were Dr. Archibald McGregor (who acquired the hospital upon the death of Dr. Melius, 1939), and Dr. Duncan Cameron, both of whom came to Brighton in the mid to late 1930s, and practiced at the hospital. Cameron’s office was in the Lee house (just south of the First Presbyterian Church on E. Grand River.) By the early 1940s the McPherson Memorial Hospital in Howell was accepting patients. This helped reduce the pressure on medical facilities in other areas of the county. In the late ’50s Dr. McGregor retired and sold the hospital to a Dr. Vann. He developed a rather unsavory reputation (involving abortions, drugs, etc.) and during the mid ‘60s the hospital was sold to the Presbyterian Church for use as office space and educational facilities. From 1979-1989, the Michigan National Bank had its Brighton offices located there. Its newest owners are Leah Gold Confectioners whose corporate offices, candy making factory and retail sales will be in the building. Dr. McGregor is buried at the Findlay Cemetery; having died at the age of 57 in 1962.

In 1940, Dr. Olin C. Wilkinson moved to Brighton. The Campbell house at 420 E. Grand River had two front rooms; one served as a waiting room and the other was the treatment room. There he hung out his shingle. The doctor practiced osteopathy, the first such doctor in Brighton. (Dr. Shurtleff in Howell was the only other D.C. in the county. He had not been allowed the use of McPherson Memorial Hospital and had to take surgical, etc. patients to Detroit Osteopathic Hospital.) To help break the ice because people were wary of that unfamiliar method of treatment, and to develop his practice, he usually attended the high school football games and offered his services in the event of an injury. For about 10 years he was the school team physician.

When Dr. Cameron went off to WWII he transferred his practice and office to Dr. Wilkinson with “You can have any of my patients you can keep.” (After the war Dr. Wilkinson developed a practice in Detroit as a surgical specialist.) Dr. Wilkinson practiced at the Lee house until 1950, when he built a clinic on the S.W. corner of E. Grand River and North Street. Dr. William Rice, a boyhood friend of his in Bad Ax, came to Brighton at his urging in 1942 and they developed a joint practice.

In the late 1950s to early 1960s, Dr. Wilkinson served as the mayor of Brighton, resigning because of ill health. Under Mayor Wilkinson the first city manager, Bob Beekman, was hired. For three years, the Doctor, and others, instigated and supported efforts to have the I-96 and US 23 interchange cloverleaf situated near Brighton at the time of the construction of those highways. When the McPherson Community Health Center was first opened he was its Chief of Staff. December 21, 1969, Dr. Wilkinson died. He is buried at Fairview Cemetery. Dr. Rice retired in the early 1970s and divides his time between Florida and Bad Ax, Mi. (By Marianna 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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GENERAL MEETING
The Fall General Meeting of the Brighton Area Historical Society has not yet been finalized at the time of printing of Trail Tales. Snags in obtaining antique dealers to come to do appraising of our member’s antiques have occurred. Work is progressing and this meeting will be held at the end of October. You will receive a flyer in the mail advertising this interesting and informative meeting. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

SOCIETY NEWS
The Brighton Area Historical Society would like to welcome Doris Peterson to the Society Board of Directors. We look forward to working with her.

Ricci Bandkau is this year’s chairman of the nominating committee. She will be looking for members who wish to run for office or be part of the Board of Directors. Please call her if you would like to be part of the board or if you know of someone who wishes to be nominated. The Society needs active, interested members who are willing to put in that extra time and effort to make the Society a success. We want you to be that person.

The HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY of BRIGHTON (one of the Society’s projects) is being resumed. Dave Barton has offered to chair this project. Local planning commissions need this kind of information, i.e. age, style, history of various buildings in an area, when considering changes and additions. The four townships in this southeast corner of Livingston County could also make use of a survey like this. If you need more information on how this is done contact Marianna Bair, 229-6402.