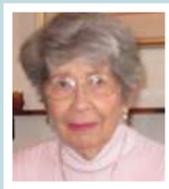


Country Doctors and Rural Healthcare

“One reason Rene wanted to be a country doctor, he said, “I’d be bored stiff with doing the same thing day after day after day after day. The things that happen to me are so interesting.” And they were; they really were. He liked doing what he did. So that was what made it so wonderful.”

MARGARET SCHNOEBELEN



Margaret (Buzz), Shade, Renee, and Dr. Rene Schnoebelen c. 1954

“A woman came to the door and her little boy was sick. Of course I was one of those to open the door and say, “Come on in.” So, the little boy had polio, and of course I didn’t know it, and he threw up. The kids weren’t in here, but they were dashing around. I can just remember Rene’s voice, “That little boy has polio.” And of course I just sweat blood for about two weeks. I was just so afraid my children would get it.”

MARGARET SCHNOEBELEN c. 1950

“I was probably 15 or 16. I thought that I had the flu or something. I was out on a tractor when I got sick....I did go back home, but after I got back home, I didn’t remember getting there. I was looked at pretty close

They knew there was something wrong because I couldn’t whistle or anything like that. It was dropping here (on face). Mom said, “You got polio.” So Dad told me to get in the car and to Hutchinson we went. Well, it was a just a couple weeks later when they brought my brother John down there. He was having trouble and, well in fact, it was his legs. He couldn’t control them. There were seven of us in 4-H in the Lewis area that had polio. They treated my oldest sis at home because Mom, seeing there were so many of us down there, the parents took different times to help putting the hot packs on us kids down there. They took different days doing that. I was there five weeks.”

LEROY SPARKE 1945



Elmer Sparke Family: LeRoy in back; Front L to R: Shirley, Elmer, Carol, Ada May, John c. 1942



“I can remember when I had Sena, I was going to breast feed. It wasn’t the “in” thing yet, and I was asked, “Are you sure you want to?” They’d been doing it for hundreds and thousands of years, so I was going to breast feed. I can remember all the nurses would come in because they hadn’t seen anybody breast feed before. I was all on my own, I didn’t have any of these classes or anything, but I thought, “Everybody else can, so I can do it.” My mother had said she wished she could have been in a time when they did, but they just didn’t do it. She always kind of wished she had. She said she wished she’d had the guts like I did. Because I said, “I’m going to figure it out if you guys can’t figure it out because I am going to breast feed.” So I did, but I can remember all the nurses and everybody came in and they thought that it was wonderful.”

SALLY FRAME 1958



Marilyn and Jack Kersting with baby Kalen March, 1960



“Having a baby (in my mother’s time) they would be bedfast for two weeks or so. But after two weeks of being flat on your back, you could hardly get up and carry your baby. But they had nursemaids, or a helper. The doctor would come out to the place and deliver the baby, and he’d bring a nurse. The nurse would probably stay for a short time, too. “(In my time) we were in the hospital five days. Then, no restrictions. I think they were more for getting over the bed rest and that type of thing. It was five days for all four of my children.”

MARILYN KERSTING

“I stayed in the hospital for five days when I had Leann. That was the third one. They asked if I was going to have any help, and I said, “Bob’s mother is going to come out once in a while.” And Dr. Schnoebelen says, “That’s not good enough. You’ll stay until I let you go. You’ll just go home and work yourself to death running after those kids.” I don’t know if he thought I was milking cows or I was going to go drive tractor or what, but I didn’t drive tractor and I didn’t drive cows. That was one thing my mother told me before I got married. She said, “If you don’t learn to milk cows, you’ll never have to. If you learn to milk a cow, you’re going to be stuck out there evening after evening. Just don’t learn to milk. And I had to stay for seven days.”

MARY KALLAUS 1969

