

# DOCTORS



1994

- DP: Do you remember cars coming to town?  
RC: Well, my father always had a car to make his calls, only in the wintertime he had a horse and sleigh.  
DP: Oh.  
RC: And that was the [unclear] we were allowed to go with him.  
DP: What year was that? What year was that?  
RC: This must have been the—'18—'18, '19. Maybe the early '20s when we had a lot snow. And my father's chauffeur, he would drive the sleigh and Dad—we'd be allowed to get—once in awhile, not very often—allowed to go with him. And we'd stay with Charlie in the sleigh when he went to make his house calls.

....

- DP: What kind of a car did your father drive?  
RC: The first one I remember was a white Buick. And it seems, as a matter of fact, his last one was a Buick too, but there were many in between, Studebakers, Packard, a Franklin—Kelly green Franklin. He was very fussy about his car—work car because he had to carry his bags in it. And his one test for buying a new car that he was going to use was how quickly he could get in and out of it, and was there space on the floor for his bags?



1966

*Dr. William Vroom was within a month of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday when he was interviewed.*

- ?: ... When did you come here to practice?  
V: Doctor, I came in 1888 when I graduated from college.  
?: Well, you must have had some very interesting experiences in those days. Did you have any interesting confinements [births]?  
V: Between two and three thousand. I don't know how much.  
...  
V: At the height of my work I had four horses and a pony and a pony cart for my wife and daughter. Then automobiles came in soon.  
?: What kind did you have, Doctor? What sort of car were you driving?

V: I had a Steamer. Steam [unclear]— Called a Locomobile.  
??: Is that the car you used to have a license to cross the Hudson River? On the ferry you had to have a license to cross the Hudson River?  
V: A yellow license. I went to New York and they said they had no licenses. They didn't have any automobiles in New York. So I said, "Well"—but they—the old man said, "Here, I'll give you an examination and then I'll send you to Nyack and get it; they have some license up there." So they brought out a slate and drew a picture and they asked me all about the mechanism of my engine. And then I sent up to—they sent up to Nyack and they gave me a license from there, which I have hung upstairs, and New York accepted it.

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??: [chuckles] What about the telephone, Doctor? Did you have a telephone in those days? ...  
V: The—as the business grew, I had no way of communicating from town to town. And there was no telephone here except one in a store in Ridgewood connecting Paterson. So I said I'd build my own. And my preceptor had one up in New York State he built and connected with a main line up to the Hudson Valley. And they allowed him to connect in with the main lines. So he sent me the bells. The parts were not [unclear] free yet. I whittled out the part to listen and a part, the transmitter, was a box about the—a board about the size of a cigar box. Behind that were points of carbon connected with the wires. And you spoke against this and the transmitter were two long bar magnets, much as a transmitter is today, [unclear]. I had the wires—I bought in New York, [unclear] Telegraph people. They gave me a lot of insulators. And I got a man—and I bought a whole load of poles. I got a man to put them up, connected them to trees and the poles that were there for telegraph—telegraph poles. And I connected my office with a grocery store in Wortendyke. Wortendyke contained then the repair shops for the Susquehanna Railroad. [unclear] my clientele was quite large up there. I kept that there for two years. And one day a call came through on it that they wanted to see me, meet me in the office. And it was the superintendent of telephones from Paterson. He said, "Doctor, we're going to put the service in Ridgewood. We're going to take yours out." And so they took it all out and turned the wire out—turned from coil to wire. They burned up my instruments and that ended it.

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?? ... What'd you have [for a hospital] back in 1905 and so?  
V: Well, I was talking about a hospital. I had practiced a few years, got the telephone service in. And I took in Dr. Craig as an assistant. ... Because he aided me until then, we became very busy. We had no hospitals. The Paterson Hospital, I remember when they built it. And the hospital in

Hackensack, I was there when they initiated it. So Dr. Craig and myself said, "Let's build our own hospital." So we got a carpenter and we built it right next to my home down on Ridgewood—on Ridgewood Avenue. We finished it up, the sterilizers, rooms, cook, waitress and five bedrooms. They weren't done there. We had a beautiful operating room. Now, in operations we didn't attempt ourselves—attempt to do heavy work. The doctors from New York would come and operate in our operation room for any heavy work. But when it came to appendicitis and those things, we took care of those ourselves.

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HULL: Dr. Vroom, this is Dr. Hull speaking. I was one of your first patients in that hospital, had my tonsils out by you.

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??: What was the date of that, Don? Do you remember?

DH: I think it was about 1905.