

Views from Sault Ste. Marie - Health

Phyllis Colegrove –St. Ignace

We never went to a doctor. My mom took care of us, if anything should happen, and I know there was a little, a little weed that grows down by the boulevard, by the bridge, and we always went down and gathered that up, and she dried it out, and that was our medicine for the whole year.

Elvira DeGrand –Escanaba

I know that one that, well one thing I do remember, and my husband's family even used it, was that they used to call it 'Turkey Tea,' but I don't know what the real name of it is, but it will bring down a temperature. I know it contains some of the same ingredients as aspirin, and we used to pick that plant, in fact I have some growing out here in front, it was, it just came up there, but you steep the leaves like tea, and it would bring the temperature down really fast.

Vernon Martin –DeTour

My grandmother, I was probably six or seven years old when she died, but she had a great many different medicines, and she used to go out into the woods and pick certain plants, and so on, and make her own medicine. I remember she had a concoction when I was young that she used for us when we had colds, we used to drink it. She called it tea, but actually it was some kind of a willow bark that she had peeled, and boiled into a tea-like substance. And she gave that to us when we had colds, or she had medicines for almost any sickness that we had at that time. But she died when I was about six or seven years old, and of course people have forgotten those old methods now, they don't do that any more.

Pearl Bowerman –Sault Ste. Marie

One time I was cutting wood with some guy there when we lived in St. Ignace or outer St. Ignace, the saw, he threw it and it hit me in the leg. Well the teeth, you know rusty saw made blood poison in my leg. First of all dad and mother took me to the doctor in St.

Ignace, and he said the gangrene and blood poisoning was in my leg too far up, that they might have to send me away to take my leg off, but grandma took me home and she took care of me for six weeks. She put burdock leaves around it, and every so many hours she'd get fresh burdock leaves, she'd wrap it, and when she took it off they were getting greener and greener and then when she took the burdock leaves off and they were all completely green, my leg was all healed up.

Isaac McKechnie –Sault Ste. Marie

If you cut yourself like that, you get these little blisters that's on the balsam tree and take them, go up there and take a teaspoon, and get all that you could get in to this teaspoon and bring it back and whoever had the cut on their hand or wherever they were cut, put that on there. Within a couple of days, I mean it was healed. And there was an infection in it, they went and got the gum off the spruce tree and they used that. In fact to get it where it would be pliable, they'd take and chew it.

Basil and Betty Willis –Barbeau

Basil: We picked a lot of little tread? and sweet flag and there was other different plants that you knew, that you passed down. But that's another thing that everybody got away from. I got a few, we got a few, I used to go out and do it myself every once in a while but I don't no more. Like gold thread now, you use that for your stomach ailments, you know, like for ulcers and stuff, you take that and steep it, and then you got flag, sweet flag, I got sweet flag there in our cupboard, you use that, you shave it, you steep it. But some of them roots are so bitter, you got to use a little bit of honey to mix it, so you can mix it down. Plannam leaves out there in the garage, you get them for a poultice, they'll cure you anything. And then there's other stuff that'll kill you too. Like buttercups now, you steal, like a buttercup, that'll kill you quicker than anything you'll buy in a drug store.

Maitland Paquin –St. Ignace

I had golden thread they called it, my grandfather give it to me. He says now you come with me in the woods, I had a sore throat all the time. And we went in the woods in an

old cedar swamp and we dug some old trees apart and here we found that golden thread in there, and he says, you chew that and swallow the saliva. And he says, your sore throat will go away. So I says, okay, I tried anything, you know, I tried it, it went away and I never had it since. Now that's golden thread, if you know what it looks like. It looks like hair, only it's a root that grows in rotten trees, and it's gold.

Zelia Frazier –Barbeau

There was gold thread on the island, which they steeped for sore throats. It grows like in a, something like a swampy area where it's really moist, and it's like a root or, and then you pull it out and it comes into little strands of thread. And blue flag which they used for I think it was abdominal distress, and then if somebody got injured or something like with a rusty nail, it was either using a plannam leaf poultice or a salt fork, bread and milk poultices, and it really was beneficial, I remember my grandmother when I'd get a headache or a temperature, she'd slice up a onions and put it in white cloth over my forehead, or potatoes or something that would draw out the fever.

Elvira DeGrand –Escanaba

[showing plants] This is what they called turkey tea (Labrador tea). They dry them, both the leaves and the flowers. They hang them upside down, and when they're dry they use both. They brew them like tea. We always called it turkey tea, but I guess the real name is yarrow. But this'll bring down a temperature quicker than aspirin. This does have some aspirin in it, it says, the information I read, but that's what we used to use to bring temperatures down, but it works better than aspirin, than just plain aspirin.

Phyllis Colegrove –St. Ignace

So if there was anything the matter the you, you had to drink this tea, ok. That was a cure-all for everything, I guess. But she did use a poultice that was made out of salt-pork. I remember stepping on a nail. That drew the poison out, whatever it was, because I never, the scar is there, but nothing had happened. I remember being cut, and that was the only thing she ever used. Everything was very simple. I don't ever remember going to the

doctor or dentist. Although I don't have anything against them; I'm really glad they're around.

Isaac McKechnie –SSM

This root that's called mishkiigwish, and that was really an all-purpose one. You'd take and they'd grind it up and boil it, and you'd drink the tea. And they had some of this stuff they'd call Indian Tobacco, which was supposed to drive the spirits away, but it was really effective for an earache. You know, they'd make a fire with it, in that little pan, coals on the stove, and that heat would go up in your ear.

Julie Cameron –Autrain (1978)

Every fall she'd go and dig this medicine, we'd go up the river in the boat, quite a ways up the river here, and this Queen of the Meadows she call, that was really her main medicine, it was like for rheumatism or something like that. She'd make a big kettle of it, and you could drink all you want, wouldn't hurt you, and Uncle Eddie and Uncle Dave, they'd used to always come and get that medicine. And she'd put different things in it, like wild pepin and wild ginger, and this tamarack stuff, that's real good, tamarack, you know, the inside bark, for like a sore throat, or a sore something. One time when we had my sister's children then, and this one boy, well he was only twelve, or maybe he wasn't that old, but he went in the woods with my dad, and they were cutting wood, and he had a little axe you know, and he was chopping, and he cut his knee you know, way in it like that, so the first thing my dad did, he looked for those, you know those blisters on a balsam tree, and he took that there stuff and put it over that his knee there, and then he had a handkerchief and he tied it up, and he carried that kid home and kept him in bed for a week, and never took that rag off, and it healed up. // And wild peas, you can go on the beach there, there's wild peas. And that's real good medicine for if you have kidney trouble or bladder trouble. I had my, one of my nephews, Dan, he was in Marquette, well when he was three years old she doctored him, and he was, he had this bladder trouble or kidney trouble, and they took him to Munising, and he was in the hospital ten days, and he wasn't getting no better. So my mother said to my brother, 'You ask the doctor if I can bring him home and doctor him.' And the doctor said, 'Well, if you can help him, go

ahead.' So she went and got those wild peas and she steeped it, and in three days that kid was better.

Man: We had a wonderful childhood, I mean we had just all the freedom we wanted.

Woman: I mean, when we were children, every, family day was on a Sunday. My dad and mother always took us for a ride, bought us ice cream at the store, that was our treat for the week.

Beatrice Leonard –DeTour

You know in them days things were tough. I know we used to pick, go at night and get pulpwood on the shore and cut it for to keep warm that night. My mother...// my dad too. // Oh, we went on an old gasoline boat, we'd go on picnics and we'd stay partly all day with an old gasoline motor, and us kids, and they'd make whistles for us and we enjoyed ourselves.

Charlie Shedawin –Sault Ste. Marie (1978)

I can remember way back when my father took me hunting, my uncle taught me how to trap. And I can remember being the only member of my family that is alive today, I missed many opportunities of Indian culture. We had an old Medicine lady down at St. Ignace, I was go with her everywhere when she was picking roots and Indian medicine. I know where the places are, but I wouldn't know what to look for. This is what she was trying to teach me.

Sadi Huntley & Luella Mitchell

L: I wished and prayed to the Creator many days of my life to find mom, my mom, and I did. And we were very closely related, and I had my real mom to love again, and that I prayed for all my life, cause I knew she was there somewhere, and I knew she helped give me my life, I knew my dad did, so I wanted both of them, and I missed them, very much. // And that's why I like the pow-wow today, and homecoming: togetherness.

S: that's the beauty of the pow-wows, now just last evening we met some of our kinship again, our cousins. L: that's what I was going to... S: every year, it seems like we picked

up another one that was fallen, that we were related to. So I can feel it within me, that the spirits were, this family of mine is coming together, and I just look at it, I'm happy with it. L: answered prayer, came right from me. S: it's being answered, there's more to come I believe.

George Shampine –Manistique

My grandmother was an Indian Medicine woman. // Now she used to walk from Manistique to Munising if someone was sick or having a baby or something like that, she'd walk and she carried a blanket with her, that's what they told me, and she'd sleep on the way, just lay in the woods and sleep, to go there, and they always, she had to carry that black bag, and if someone was having a baby, she'd always have that baby in that little black bag, that's what we were told. // Grandma used to go, to walk from here to St. Ignace and when it got cold, she'd dig a hole in the sand and she'd put her blanket out and she'd cover herself with sand over and above to keep her warm. That's what was told to me and my father told him.

Frances Kokko –Sault Ste. Marie

My mother taught me a lot of spirituality as far as deaths and births are concerned, okay. In births you don't cry, because you frighten your unborn child. Okay, in deaths you should restrain yourself from crying because the person that's passing his trip will, his or her trip will be interrupted.

Leo Mendoskin –Sault Ste. Marie

One thing that is quite interesting would be real interesting too is when they used to bury people // we'd take a body back there on the stone boat with a horse in front on the stone boat carry up the mounds up on the hill, and then they'd pull the body up with a rope, the rope would come along up the big hill, and bury them, and there'd be an all-day thing, they'd have a big bonfire up there, cook their meal and have a real feast up on top of the hill. And then after they'd buried them, each person had to, that was eating would have to throw a little bit of food into the fire to feed the dead I guess it was about, and they ate, they'd take a little of their food and throw it in there.