

Folk ^{WFO DSGW} - ~~dicent~~ originating or traditional
with the common people of a region, and
typically reflecting their life style.

Folk - medicines - traditional medicines or practices
not professionally by people isolated from
modern medical and involving the use of
plants.

Patent medicine

Patent medicine - Privately owned or marketed



HISTORICAL - Morehead
J WITTSBACH COLLECTOR

FOLK
- MEDICINE

This busy brave types the medicine man who used to visit county-seat towns of the South and Midwest on court days. The chief would put on a hard-driving pitch for his panacea, especially snake oil, which he guaranteed would cure everything from toothache to toeache. Here he is shown crying his wares on the public square in Morehead, Kentucky, county seat of Rowan County.

**From The Collection Of:
Dr. Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun St.
Morehead, KY 40351
606-784-7473**



BUDS FROM THIS
BARK OF GILEAD TREE
WAS USED IN EARLY
FOLK MEDICINE FOR
A VARIETY OF
MEDICAL PROBLEMS

From The Collection Of:
Dr. Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun St.
Morehead, KY 40351
606-784-7473



From The Collection Of:
Dr. Jack D. Ellis

552 W. Sun St

Morehead, KY 40351

606-784-7478

THE LEAF FROM THIS

USE-EAR PLANT, SOMETIMES
CALLED "PRENCHERS FEVERWEEED"

IS USED BY HERB DOCTORS

TO REDUCE FEVER, STOP

NOSE BLEEDS, FOR KIDNEY

AND URINARY PROBLEMS



From The Collection Of:

Dr. Jack D. [unclear]

552 W. Sun St.

Morehead, KY 40351

606-784-7473

SEAL

BY CUTTING AN
APPLE IN HALF
REVEALING A FIVE
POINTED STAR

MADE BY THE SEEDS.

SHARE IT WITH
YOUR LOVE AND

YOUR LOVE
WOULD BE
RECIPRICATED

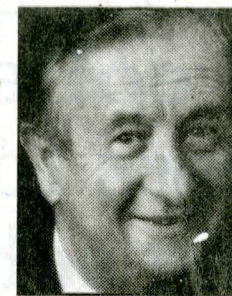
Local Trivia

■ Liniments, including one also applied to horses, were often used by early arthritis sufferers.

SECTION D

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2005



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Early folk medicine practitioners made use of limited resources in treating maladies

Early folk (traditional) medicine, II

"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)

Folk or traditional medicine is defined as "medicine practiced by non-professional people isolated from modern medical care, involving the use of plants." This article continues to give some of this region's early folk medical treatments.

Under no circumstances does this writer recommend that anyone use these remedies. They are listed to show how far we have come in the practice of modern medicine.

Tobacco was once used for many medical purposes in early Rowan County, e.g., to relieve a sore throat required soaking one cured tobacco leaf in vinegar. Then place the tobacco leaf in a long cotton stocking and wrap it around the patient's neck. Of course, a "chaw" of tobacco held with the tongue over an aching tooth was a popular toothache remedy. Also, tobacco juice was a remedy

when spit on insect stings, cuts and bruises or snakebites.

Early folk dental medicine

Personal appearance enhancers were used by early pioneer men and women, e.g., one early folk remedy that was supposed to whiten and brighten teeth called for getting a small twig from a black gum tree and chewing the end of it until it made a brush. Then get black stove soot and place on the black gum twig brush and brush your teeth vigorously. The claim was that it would whiten the teeth. It was also claimed by early pioneers that chewing tobacco helped whiten the teeth.

This writer recalls a line from one of pioneer poet Bret Hart's poems that said, "And I learned him to chaw tobacco just to keep his milk teeth white." Also, in this writer's baseball playing days in the old Bluegrass League, I was a



See FOLK, Page D-3

Tobacco leaves were used in various folk remedies.

Folk

Continued from Page D-1

chewer of tobacco. But I don't recommend it for good dental hygiene.

Sore throats were a constant pain (pardon the pun) to early pioneers. Remedies included gargling three times a day with a mixture of baking soda and salt in a glass of warm water. (Still used today). Another sore throat remedy included boiling pine boughs in a pan of water. When the steam appears, place a towel over the head of the patient and allow him to inhale and gulp the steam. That treatment was good for both a sore throat and laryngitis.

Folk medicine laced with lots of whiskey

One remedy used by Kentucky hill folk for congestion and a really bad cold was good moonshine whiskey mixed in equal parts with hot ginger tea. Sugar was then added and the patient would drink a couple of ounces of the mixture and go to bed covered with several layers of quilts. The patient would then sweat profusely and those who used that remedy declared that it worked. (Even if it didn't, they enjoyed the treatment).

Arthritis treatments tried in the 1950s

Arthritis has plagued mankind throughout the ages. Archaeologists have unearthed ancient bones that have shown evidence of arthritis. Early remedies for the painful plague involved mixing equal parts of apple cider and strained honey unto a quart jar. The remedy called for the patient to pour two tablespoons into an eight-ounce glass of water and take three times a day. Liniments were often used by early arthritis sufferers. One of those early liniments used on people, and horses, included a mixture of equal parts of wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, camphorated oil and pure spirits of turpentine. Mix well and always shake vigorously before applying to



Seal your love by cutting an apple in half, revealing a five-pointed star made by the seeds. Share it with your love and your love would be reciprocated.

the skin. The claim was, "It's very fine used for arthritis and old horses."

Other early treatments for arthritis sufferers included wearing a rotten potato tied in a bag around the neck, wearing a copper bracelet around the wrists, and/or drinking sulphur water. In the 1950s, this writer's mother-in-law, Myrtle Caudill, with the blessings of Dr. Louise Caudill, tried many of those early remedies. She was trying everything for some relief from the terrible pain she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments also included gold shots, which were the medical treatment of choice fifty years ago. But none of the home remedies or modern medical remedies seemed to help much.

Asthma, colds, congestion, headaches

Asthma: A malady that

has long plagued people throughout the Ohio Valley. Folk Remedy: Burn dry sumac leaves and inhale the fumes (supposed to help hay fever).

Another option was to burn rabbit tobacco and inhale the fumes (as a child this writer sometimes smoked rabbit tobacco and didn't know it was suppose to help my breathing.) Other home remedies for asthma included placing powdered ginseng in a pan with a hot coal on top and inhale.

If none of these worked, it was actually suggested that you keep a Chihuahua dog around the house.

Colds or congestion: Remedies included one or more of the following. (1) A few drops of turpentine in a teaspoon of sugar. Take at bedtime. (2) Rub mutton suet on the bottom of your feet and hold feet to the fire. (3) Make a plaster of boiled onions, put on a cloth and place on chest. (4) Spread Vicks salve, turpentine, and tar on a flannel cloth. Heat and place on chest. Do not wear during daylight; this is only a nighttime remedy. (This writer can recall as a child this was used on me a few times.) (5) Camphorated oil rubbed on chest at night. (6) Mix dry mustard with water and flour and spread on a cloth. Cover chest with oil to keep from blistering and place cloth on chest. Keep watch that it does not blister.

Headaches: Folk Remedies included: 1) Wet a piece of brown paper bag with vinegar, sprinkle heavily with baking soda and wrap around the head with something tight. (2) Bend wilted beet leaves around the forehead. (3) Mix a little turpentine and beef tallow in a bandage and tie tightly around the head. (4) For a mild headache, wet a towel with cold water and hold on forehead. (Also good for a hangover.)

Sore throat: (1) Place

pine boughs in a container with water and heat. As steam appears, hold a towel over head, to catch the steam and inhale or gulp steam. (2) Soak a cured tobacco leaf in vinegar and wrap around you neck. Secure with a long cotton stocking. (3) Tie a dirty sock around your throat at night. (4) Blow sulphur through a reed onto throat. (5) Onions and sugar cooked together - mash and take two tablespoons before bedtime.

Teething babies, toothaches, infections

Teething babies: Kill a mole, cut off one of its feet, tie a string around the foot, then tie the string around the baby's neck as a necklace. Teeth will pop through the gums without pain. Toothache: (1) Peel off some bark from the south side of a red oak tree. Boil in water and add a pinch of salt. Hold the bark on aching tooth. (2) Put several drops of paregoric on a cloth, place on tooth and press down. (3) Treatment for tartar: 1 spoon apple cider to 1 glass of water at mealtime will prevent tartar. (4) Whitening teeth: 1 tsp baking soda on a clean cloth and rub teeth vigorously.

Coughing: (1) 3 or 4 pieces of peppermint candy, 1 tsp. Paregoric, finish filling small bottle with whiskey. Shake vigorously and take as needed for cough. (If it doesn't cure your cough, you don't care.) (2) Melt 2 tsp of butter, add 1 tsp of vinegar, 1 tsp sugar, pinch of sugar and a dash of pepper. Take one tsp at bedtime. (3) Saturate brown sugar with whiskey. Take as needed.

Rusty nail infection: Boil peach tree leaves 30-40 minutes. Drain water, put 1 tsp. salt and thicken with corn meal. Make a poultice and place on infected area overnight. It will remove swelling and fever. Real good!

Poison ivy or poison oak: (1) Mix 1/4 cup of black molasses with enough baking soda to make a thick paste. Spread on infected area twice a day. (2) Dip rag into strong salt solution. Cover area with rag dipped in solution. Will prevent scratching.

Removing brown spots from face and hands: (1) Castor oil rubbed on nightly. (2) Buttermilk applied to spots twice daily. (3) Equal parts cucumber juice and lemon juice. Mixture applied daily.

Painkiller: Roast some poke roots by the fire. Scrape clean with a knife and grind up. Make a poultice out of the powder and apply to the bottom of the feet. It will draw the pain out of any part of the body.

The early pioneers to Kentucky had to use what they had in the practice of home remedies known as folk medicine or traditional medicine.

Say MERRY CHRISTMAS with a Book About Local History & Heroes by Jack D. Ellis

Kentucky Memories: Reflections of Rowan County. 450 pp; 200 photos; c. 2005.

Patriots and Heroes: Eastern Ky. Soldiers of WWII. 412 pp; 85 photographs; c. 2003.

Morehead Memories: True Stories From Eastern Kentucky. 592 pp; 100 photographs; c. 2001. (Almost out of print)

Each: \$35.00 + \$4.00 S&H

For signed copies with a personal Gift Card from You, Contact:

Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun Street, Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 784-7473

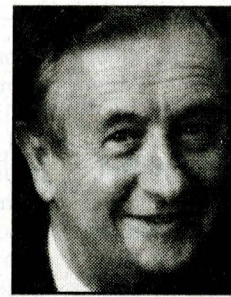
Available locally at the Coffee Tree Bookstore; MSU Bookstore; St. Claire Gift Shop; Mustard Seed; and Baldwin & Assoc.

Website: JSFBOOKS.COM
Add \$5.50 S&H

■ Before aspirin, early Rowan County herb doctors used the mouse ear plant to fight fever.

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2005



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

A look at early folk (traditional) medicine in Rowan County

"The fruit thereof shall be for meat and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Ezekiel 47:12)

Rowan County is rapidly becoming the Folk Center of Kentucky. With the Folk Art Center located here and such terms as folk music, folk dancing, folk

songs, folk dramas, folk art, folk fest and folk medicine, many wonder what this "folk" is all about. The Oxford English Dictionary, under "Folk Lore" says, "The traditional beliefs, legends and customs current among the common people." Webster's Dictionary defines "Folk" as "Originating, or traditional with common people of a region and typically reflecting their life style."

Webster defines Folk

■ **Author Jack Ellis will be signing his books at the Appalachian Arts and Crafts Fair in the Laughlin Field House on the campus of Morehead State University Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Medicine as "Traditional medicine practiced by non-professional people isolated from modern medical care, and involving the use of plants and herbs." There are certain groups who would revive some of the early Folk Medicinal remedies. This writer is not one of them and is thank-

ful for modern medicine; therefore, I am not recommending any of these remedies.

Folk medicine practiced by early settlers

One hundred years ago there were few doctors and even fewer roads in Rowan County. Therefore, much of eastern Kentucky was certainly isolated from the outside world. For treatment of maladies and diseases, many people relied on home



The leaf from this mouse-ear plant, sometimes called "preachers feverweed" was used by herb doctors to reduce fever, stop nosebleeds, and for kidney and urinary problems.

remedies, native plants and "Herb Doctors" for their medical care. Later this treatment became known as "Folk Medicine." (Today it is called "Traditional Medicine.")

Folk medicine began when the first settlers landed in Jamestown, Va. Certainly there was no professional medical care so they relied on native plants and sometimes used the ancient doctrine of signature. That doctrine believed that "God put sign on plants for specific diseases"; e.g. the eye-bright plant was thought to be good for the eyes. Old

timers claimed that hawks would tear into the plants and rub their eyes with the juices to improve their vision. The leaf of the bugless plant was shaped like a snake's head and was used to treat snakebites. Indeed, as late as 1733, a slave in Virginia was given his freedom and a lifetime pension for concocting a remedy for scurvy, dropsy and other ailments made from Spanish oak, pine park and sumac boiled in water. The knowledge of herbs and plants was handed down from one generation to the next with a little mixture of

early native-American remedies.

As the early pioneers moved westward into Rowan County they brought their home reme-

dies and herb doctors with them. By that time, there was a whole compendium o

See FOLK, Page D-2

Town & Country Storage

1028 E. Main Street, Morehead, KY
(606) 784-4108

Will **BEAT** Competitor Pricing — **GUARANTEED!**
1-FREE month rental for new applicants*
Senior Citizen — Discounted Rate*
Chamber Member — Discounted Rate*
MSU Students w/valid ID — Discounted Rate*

Conveniently located behind St. Claire Outpatient Center — within 1/4 mile of MSU Campus.

*CALL OFFICE FOR DETAILS. CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS APPLY

FOLK

Continued from Page D-1

folk medicine practiced by the pioneers. It was a skill that was respected by the early pioneers.

Folk medicine practiced on this writer

This writer's mother Dot Ellis, used to tell about her grandmother making her wear an asafetida bag around her neck in the wintertime. It was a stinking gum residue made from the carrot family and tied tightly in a bag and worn to school as a necklace. She was not too popular wearing that foul smelling remedy. It was thought to prevent colds and flu, and was so rancid that no self-respecting germ would come near it.

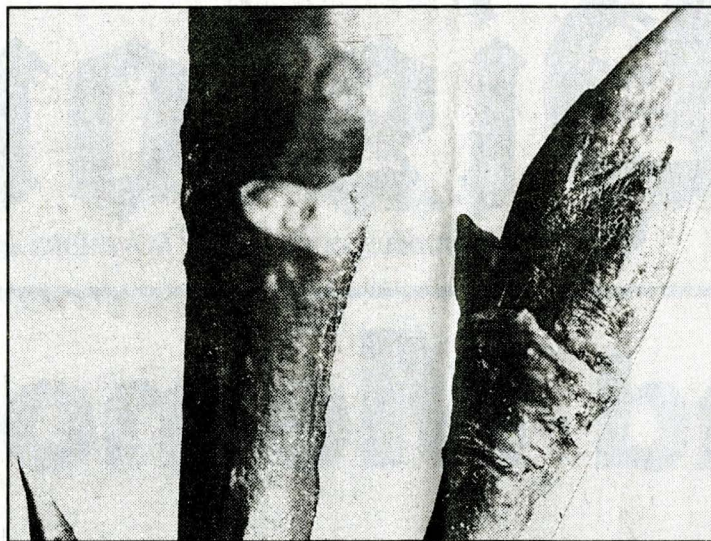
When this writer was a small child, you would think my mother would not subject me to that kind of home remedy folk medicine after the trauma she suffered. But she did. It hap-

pened one summer when I developed several painful boils on my legs.

It seems my grandfather insisted that the best home remedy for a boil was by placing a cow manure poultice on the boil. It was supposed to bring the boil to a head and it would clear up. Therefore, I wore a cow manure bandage around my leg for several days.

Thank goodness I was not in school at the time as my humiliation would have been even worse. However, the boils did clear up. But, several years later I was in the Army during WW II and was in the hospital in Keesler Field, Mississippi with another outbreak of boils.

That was at the time that penicillin had just been discovered. I was given dozens of shots for the infection but the new "wonder" drug did not help. (Though maladies remained the same only the treatment changes.) I didn't have the nerve even to ask them to change the treatment from penicillin to a cow manure poultice.



Buds from this balm of Gilead tree were used in early folk medicine for a variety of medical problems.

Rowan rich in folk medicine plants

Many of the herbs and plants used by the herb doctors were used either singly or in combination. For example, yellow root, a common plant in Rowan County, was used as a sore throat gargle or as an anti-septic. (Long ago the Indians used it to make a bright yellow war paint for their bodies.)

The old herb doctors prepared yellow root liquid as follows: Take two large roots, crush them with a hammer, add one pint of water and bring to a boil for one minute and set it aside to cool. It is then ready to be used as a gargle for a sore throat.

In early Rowan County, before aspirin, the herb doctors used what they called preachers fever weed (also called mouse ear) to fight a fever. Fever weed also was used to stop nosebleeds and to treat boils.

Other plants used in folk medicine for treatment of fever included bervine root and plantain root used in combination.

Early herb doctors used witch hazel to treat skin diseases. The mixture was prepared by soaking the plant bark, twigs and

Many people think witch hazel has something to do with black magic, but it actually comes from an old English word meaning to bend. Its branches make excellent divining rods (used to locate underground water). This writer's father used a witch hazel branch to determine where to dig a well.

Other folk remedies include bone set or wild cherry bark in the treatment of cold and flu. It is reputed to break a fever and loosen the bowels. It is drunk as a tea made from the leaves and flowers.

Wild cherry bark tea with added sugar makes a good tasting cough syrup. But the leaves and the fruit pits of the wild cherry should never be consumed because they contain a potent poisonous acid that causes shortness of breath, loss of balance, convulsions and even death.

Tea from the lady slipper is reputed to cure headaches, tension and is an antispasmodic. But, people with dermatitis should not use this plant because it could aggravate their condition.

The lowly onion was used among other things as

claimed to draw out the poison and relieve the pain. The onion was merely cut in half and placed over the sting or bite. Of course, eating onions was considered to serve as a blood thinner. Those early folk medical practitioners were sometimes on to something and didn't know why or how.

Many of those early folk remedies had some merit, and today those remedies are called "traditional" medicine.

A constant theme of early folk remedies was to drink a small amount of vinegar and apple cider each day to promote good health.

FREE INTERNET

No Monthly Internet Fee Anymore

Call 1-866-2PRONET

Pools and Spas

<p>ABOVE GROUND POOLS</p> <p>15'\$929</p> <p>18'\$1079</p> <p>24'\$1259</p> <p>15X30 Oval\$1779</p>	<p>MANY SIZES IN STOCK!</p> <p>Inground Pool Kits In-stock!</p> <p><i>Lay-A-Way</i></p> <p>Now for Spring!</p>
--	---

HOLIDAY POOLS, INC.

2973 Piedmont Rd. • Huntington • 429-4788
9:30 - 5:00 M-F • 9:30 - 2:00 Sat.

www.holidaypools.info

Say MERRY CHRISTMAS
with a Book About Local History & Heroes
by Jack D. Ellis

Kentucky Memories: Reflections of Rowan County. 450 pp; 200 photos; c. 2005.

Patriots and Heroes: Eastern Ky. Soldiers of WWII. 412 pp; 85 photographs; c. 2003.

Morehead Memories: True Stories From Eastern Kentucky. 592 pp; 100 photographs; c. 2001.
(Almost out of print)

Each: \$35.00 + \$4.00 S&H

For signed copies with a personal
Gift Card from You, Contact:

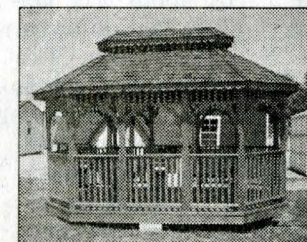
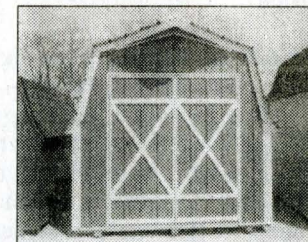
Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun Street, Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 784-7473

Available at **LOOKING FOR**

It's Time To Get ORGANIZED

Getting organized is easy when you have the storage space.
Come in and let us help you find the building you need.
We have many styles & sizes.

Check Out Our Selection Of Light Houses & Dog Houses

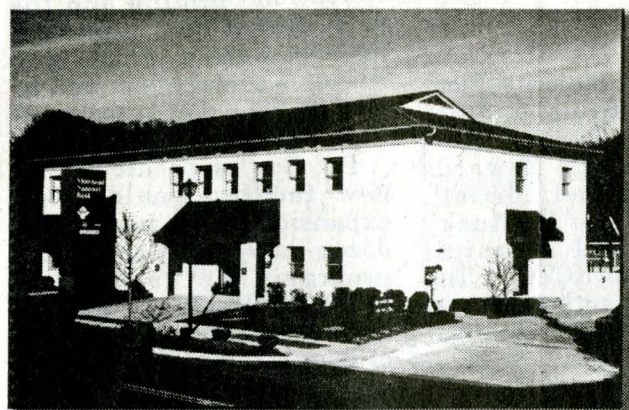


Summer Furniture ♦ Quaker Style Storage Barns

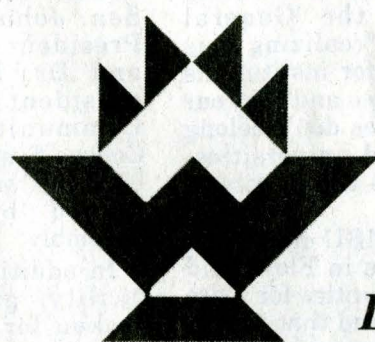
♦ Many Barn Styles ♦ Barn Style With Loft ♦ Cottage Style Garage
-Also Check Out Our Selection Of Metal Buildings & Wood Buildings-

METAL MINI BUILDINGS
NOW AVAILABLE!
*FREE Delivery & Set Up

"TRU-BUILT"
STORAGE BARNs



Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



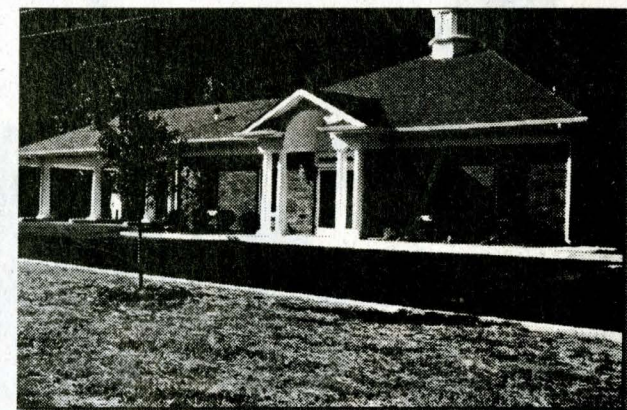
Morehead Memories

Brought To You By

Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories:

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies II



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Correction: *The American Legion article on Nov. 9, 2001 stated: military service personnel were considered war veterans if they honorably served during Vietnam War: Aug. 5, 1964 - Aug. 15, 1973. It should have stated: August 1958 - August 1973.*

"I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thy wounds" (Jeremiah 30:17).

No matter how much things change, it is amazing how much they stay the same. In the year 2001, everyone is saturated with commercial messages on television and in the newspapers. Most of these commercial messages seem to

County. They attracted large crowds with magic shows, music and even dancing girls. Then the slick talking medicine man would tell the people about the patent medicine he was selling, that it would cure just about any ailment. It was usually a mixture of old home remedies laced with lots of alcohol and sold in attractive bottles.

The men loved it but the ladies were always a little

bladder physic. Don't get up nights... physic the bladder out with juniper oil". Also, the article went on to say "Drive out the impurities, stop the burning and frequent desire with Bucer leaves contained in this bladder physic. It works on the bladder similar to castor oil on the bowels. Get a 25 cent test box at the drug store, and if you're not relieved after four nights, go back and get your money".

with this interesting message: "When Dr. Caldwell started practicing medicine in 1875, he said there was not nearly the need for a laxative as there is in 1896". People lived normal lives in 1875, ate plain, wholesome food and got plenty of fresh air.

Therefore, they did not need laxatives as they do today. (There must have been a drastic change in lifestyles during those 20 years). But

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES OR YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?

Give a copy of
MOREHEAD MEMORIES:
True Stories From Eastern Kentucky

by
Jack D. Ellis
(606 784-7473)
(606) 326-1667

"Syrup of Pepsin" and is a mild safe bowel stimulant. Dr. Caldwell also claimed that his prescription would provide relief from headaches, biliousness, flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dyspepsia, colds and fever. (It didn't miss much).

If Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin could live up to its claims and is available in local Morehead drug stores today, it would many of today's medical problems. Even in 1896, that remedy was available — in Morehead's City Drug Store.

Finding the cure for flat chests

Another physical problem still around today and must have been around since the dawn of man (or woman) was flat chests. That problem also had a supposed medical cure 100 years ago.

The sales pitch read, "Girls with flat chest have few boy friends". The sales pitch continued, "Try this easy way to fill out your chest (notice the word breast was never used). Visal will give your body the pretty curves that men admire. Just take Visal a few weeks and you'll be surprised". It didn't actually claim anything except you'll be surprised. (I'll bet their boyfriends and husbands would also have been surprised). Unfortunately there were no models or artwork used in that early print media.

It seems many of the maladies suffered by mankind have been around since the

folklore, but some of it was effective.

Coughs and sore throats were as prevalent 100 years ago as they are today. Many of the early remedies were helpful, or if they didn't stop your cough, you didn't care. One early home-made cough syrup was prepared by saturating brown sugar with white whiskey, and take as needed. It is no wonder so many people developed a chronic cough.

Another early cough syrup was made by mixing a cup of melted butter with a half cup of vinegar and adding a pinch of salt and pepper. One teaspoonful of this concoction was supposed to relieve the cough.

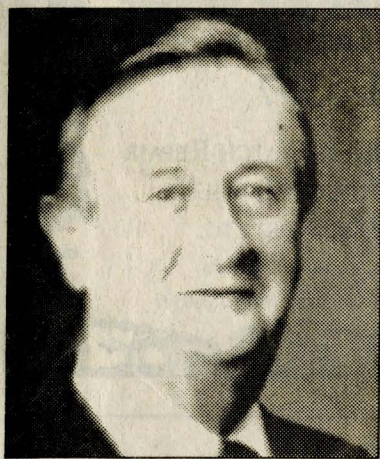
Another cough syrup popular in pioneer Rowan County was prepared by boiling cherry bark, whiskey and honey together until it thickens. Take one teaspoonful as needed. But one of the easiest early remedies for a cough was to wear a used sock around your throat at night. Therefore, as long as one had a pair of socks, you had your own cough remedy.

But if the used sock remedy didn't work, another cough remedy was a mixture of pine tar and plaster. They would spread the mixture on a cloth and tie the cloth around the throat with the tar side next to the skin. The wrapping should be changed twice a week.

Early remedies for colds and congestion included

MOREHEAD MEMORIES.

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies II



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Correction: *The American Legion article on Nov. 9, 2001 stated: military service personnel were considered war veterans if they honorably served during Vietnam War: Aug. 5, 1964 - Aug. 15, 1973. It should have stated: August 1958 - August 1973.*

"I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thy wounds" (Jeremiah 30:17).

No matter how much things change, it is amazing how much they stay the same. In the year 2001, everyone is saturated with commercial messages on television and in the newspapers. Most of these commercial messages seem to be diagnosing physical ailments and prescribing the best medical treatment for these ailments, eg. "Does pain from arthritis keep you from enjoying life? If so, try our remedy for complete relief". "Does constipation, sluggishness or headaches keep you from being your best? If so, try our pills and you'll feel like a new person".

Then there is Viagra, and Bob Dole tells us how it's helped him. Then the caveat comes — ask your doctor if this pill is right for you. All of this comes with beautiful models amid slick Madison Avenue fanfare. But medical care has not always been so available. But there have usually been people proclaiming cures for whatever ails you.

Early medicine shows promised healing

One hundred years ago, traveling medicine shows often came through Rowan

County. They attracted large crowds with magic shows, music and even dancing girls. Then the slick talking medicine man would tell the people about the patent medicine he was selling, that it would cure just about any ailment. It was usually a mixture of old home remedies laced with lots of alcohol and sold in attractive bottles.

The men loved it but the ladies were always a little skeptical. There would sometimes be people "planted" by the medicine man in the audience who would "testify" to the amazing cures of the product. Personal testimony has always been a persuasive way of selling a product, whether it is with a traveling medicine show, in newspapers, magazines or television.

Early residents told how to live healthier lives

Seventy-five years ago the people of Morehead and Rowan County were bombarded with the same kind of messages of how they could be healthier and live better lives. Those messages appeared in the only media available to Moreheadians of that time — newspapers. But the messages were the same then as now, only they were printed messages.

In 1930, the Rowan County News printed the following: "Get relief with 'Bucer' the

bladder physic. Don't get up nights... physic the bladder out with juniper oil". Also, the article went on to say "Drive out the impurities, stop the burning and frequent desire with Bucer leaves contained in this bladder physic. It works on the bladder similar to castor oil on the bowels. Get a 25 cent test box at the drug store, and if you're not relieved after four nights, go back and get your money".

The claim continued, "If you are bothered with backache or leg pains caused from bladder disorder, you are bound to feel better after this thorough cleansing and you can get your regular sleep". Sold at C.E. Bishop Drug Store.

Here is another one from the same era that used a common technique still used today — a persuasive testimonial from a health care professional. "Nurse tells how to sleep sound and stop gas". Nurse V. Fletcher says, "Stomach gas bloated me so badly I could hardly sleep. But one spoonful of Adlerika brought out all of that gas and now I sleep fine". (I hope she was sleeping alone). Available at C.E. Bishop Drug Store.

Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin

Appearing in the Morehead Advance in 1896, Rowan Countians were urged to buy Dr. Caldwell's syrup of Pepsin

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES OR YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?

Give a copy of
MOREHEAD MEMORIES:
True Stories From Eastern Kentucky

by

Jack D. Ellis

(606 784-7473

(606) 326-1667

"Syrup of Pepsin" and is a mild safe bowel stimulant. Dr. Caldwell also claimed that his prescription would provide relief from headaches, biliousness, flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dyspepsia, colds and fever. (It didn't miss much).

If Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin could live up to it's claims and is available in local Morehead drug stores today, it would many of today's medical problems. Even in 1896, that remedy was available — in Morehead's City Drug Store.

Finding the cure for flat chests

Another physical problem still around today and must have been around since the dawn of man (or woman) was flat chests. That problem also had a supposed medical cure 100 years ago.

The sales pitch read, "Girls with flat chest have few boy friends". The sales pitch continued, "Try this easy way to fill out your chest (notice the word breast was never used). Visal will give your body the pretty curves that men admire. Just take Visal a few weeks and you'll be surprised". It didn't actually claim anything except you'll be surprised. (I'll bet their boyfriends and husbands would also have been surprised). Unfortunately there were no models or artwork used in that early print media.

It seems many of the maladies suffered by mankind have been around since the beginning of time. Although those maladies remain unchanged, their treatment has changed over the years, from early home remedies that were hilarious, peculiar and bizarre, into the science we call modern medicine.

In Rowan County, we are fortunate to have skilled physicians, nurses and a modern hospital, but the early settlers had to rely upon folk medicine and home remedies for their medical treatment. Much of that treatment was based upon superstition and

folklore, but some of it was effective.

Coughs and sore throats were as prevalent 100 years ago as they are today. Many of the early remedies were helpful, or if they didn't stop your cough, you didn't care. One early home-made cough syrup was prepared by saturating brown sugar with white whiskey, and take as needed. It is no wonder so many people developed a chronic cough.

Another early cough syrup was made by mixing a cup of melted butter with a half cup of vinegar and adding a pinch of salt and pepper. One teaspoonful of this concoction was supposed to relieve the cough.

Another cough syrup popular in pioneer Rowan County was prepared by boiling cherry bark, whiskey and honey together until it thickens. Take one teaspoonful as needed. But one of the easiest early remedies for a cough was to wear a used sock around your throat at night. Therefore, as long as one had a pair of socks, you had your own cough remedy.

But if the used sock remedy didn't work, another cough remedy was a mixture of pine tar and plaster. They would spread the mixture on a cloth and tie the cloth around the throat with the tar side next to the skin. The wrapping should be changed twice a week.

Early remedies for colds and congestion included taking two drops of turpentine on a teaspoon of sugar at bedtime. If that didn't work, another old remedy was to rub mutton suet (fat) on the bottom of the patient's feet and hold their feet close to the fire. (Is that where the old time saying comes from, "Hold their feet to the fire"?). Another early home cold and congestion remedy was to make a plaster of boiled onions and place in a cloth and tie it around the chest.

Local Trivia**Home remedies**

■ In early Rowan County, before aspirin, the herb doctors used what they called preachers fever weed (also called mouse ear) to fight a fever.

History

About the Author

Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Healing from the home and the hills

By Jack D. Ellis
Special to The Morehead News

"The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezekiel 47:12).

One hundred years ago there were few doctors and even fewer roads in Rowan County. Therefore, much of Eastern Kentucky was isolated from the outside world.

For treatment of maladies and disease, many people relied on home remedies, native plants and "Herb Doctors" for their medical care. Although they didn't know it at the time, today it is called folk medicine. Webster defines folk medicine as "traditional medicine practiced nonprofessionally by people isolated from medical care, and involving the use of plants".

Folk medicine began when the first settlers landed in Jamestown, Va. Certainly there was no professional medical care, so they relied on local native plants sometimes using the ancient doctrine of signatures.

That doctrine believed that "God put a sign on plants for specific disease"; eg. the eyebright plant was thought to be good for the eyes. Old timers claimed that hawks would tear into the plants and rub their eyes with the juices to improve their vision. The leaf of the buglass plant was shaped like a snake's head and was used to treat snakebites. Indeed, as late as 1733, a slave in Virginia was given his

remedy folk medicine after the trauma she suffered. But she did. It happened one summer when I developed several painful boils on my legs. It seems my grandfather insisted that the best home remedy for a boil was by placing a cow manure poultice on the boil. It was supposed to bring the boil to a head and it would clear up. Therefore, I wore a cow manure bandage around my leg for several days. Thank goodness I was not in school at the time as my humiliation would have been even worse.

The boils soon cleared up, but I still have scars on my legs where the "core" came out and probably have trauma in my psyche.

Herbs used singly and together

Many of the herbs and plants used by the herb doctors were used either singly or in combination. For example, yellow root, a common plant in Rowan County, was used as a sore

throat gargle or as an antiseptic. (Long ago the Indians used it to make a bright yellow war paint for their bodies).

The old herb doctors prepared yellow root liquid as follows: take two large roots, crush them with a hammer, add one pint of water and bring to a boil for one minute and set it aside to cool. It is then ready to be used as a gargle for a sore throat.

In early Rowan County, before aspirin, the herb doctors used what they called preachers fever weed (also called mouse ear) to fight a fever. Fever weed also was used to stop nosebleeds and treat boils. Other plants used in folk medicine for treatment of fever include bervine root and plantain root used in combination.

Folk medicine offered myriad of treatments

Early herb doctors used witch hazel to treat skin diseases. The mixture was prepared by soaking the plant bark, twigs and leaves in

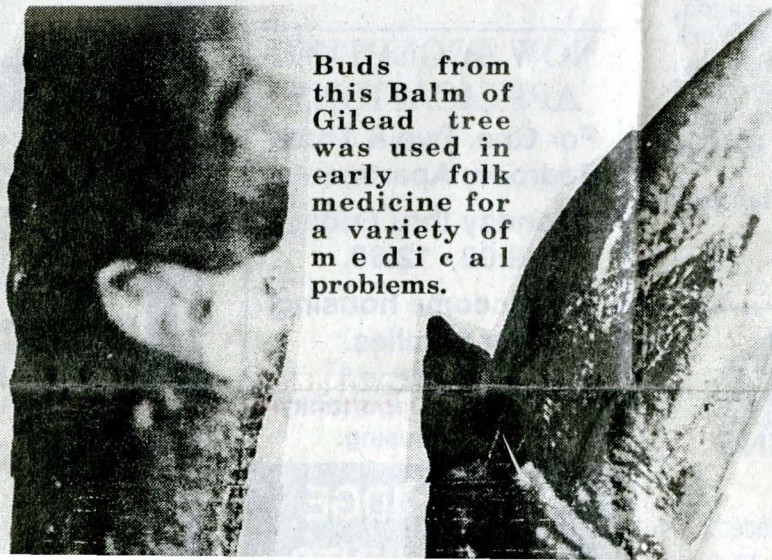
cough syrup. But the leaves and the fruit pits of the wild cherry should never be consumed because they contain a poisonous acid that causes shortness of breath, loss of balance, convulsions and even death.

Tea from the lady slipper is reputed to cure headaches, tension and is an antispasmodic. But people with dermatitis should not use these plants because it could aggravate their condition. The lowly onion was used, among other things, as a treatment for bee stings. It was claimed to draw out the poison and relieves the pain. Many pioneers used it for snake bites to draw out the poison. The onion was simply cut in half and placed over the wound. Of course, eating onions was supposed to be good for the blood.

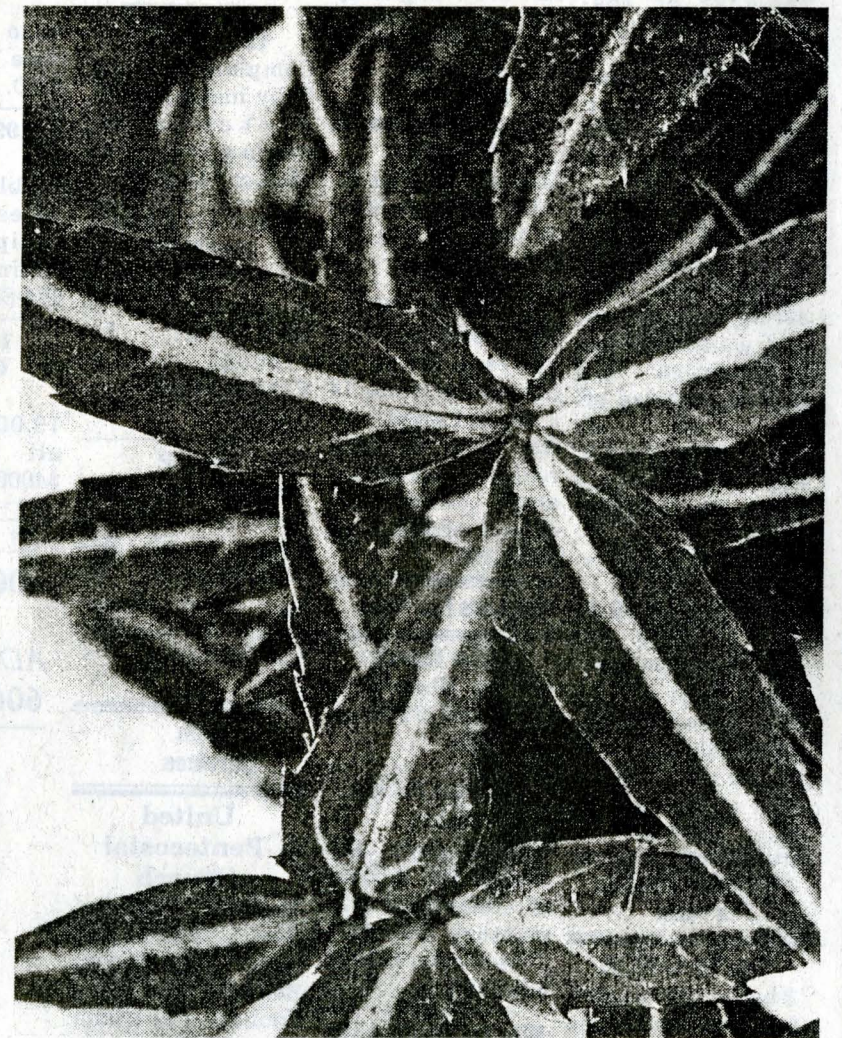
Lowly dandelion a star among folk remedy

The hearty dandelion which so many people kill relentlessly in their lawns, was once a star in the folk medicine realm of remedies. In the springtime, the early pioneers cut the tender shoots for a raw salad or cook it as a green vegetable.

The roots also could be dried and ground up, roasted and brewed as a coffee substitute. The bright blossoms were brewed into a summer wine. Boiling the blossoms over a hot fire gave you a soft yellow dye, and boiling



Buds from this Balm of Gilead tree was used in early folk medicine for a variety of medical problems.



The leaf from this mouse-ear plant, sometimes called "preachers feverweed" was used by herb doctors to reduce fever, stop nosebleeds, and for kidney and urinary problems.

County

Sassafras tea is a distinctive tasting aromatic tea familiar to most Rowan Countians. It offered a welcome taste change from coffee, cola or regular tea. The tea is made from the dried roots of the sassafras tree. It is a delightful aromatic drink prepared by boiling the root in

Chewing the leaves is said to relieve a toothache. The tea supposedly serves as a sleep inducer and prevents nightmares. Catnip is prepared by pouring boiling water over two teaspoons of dried leaves and allowed to steep for five minutes. Lemon and honey may be added.

Bostonians patriotic —

...put a sign on plants for specific disease"; eg. the eyebright plant was thought to be good for the eyes. Old timers claimed that hawks would tear into the plants and rub their eyes with the juices to improve their vision. The leaf of the buglass plant was shaped like a snake's head and was used to treat snakebites. Indeed, as late as 1733, a slave in Virginia was given his freedom and a life time pension for concocting a remedy for scurvy, dropsy and other ailments made from Spanish oak, pine bark and sumac boiled in water. The knowledge of herbs and plants was handed down from one generation to the next.

Early pioneers brought folk medicine west

As the early pioneers moved westward into Rowan County they brought their home remedies and herb doctors with them. By that time, there was a whole compendium of folk medicine practiced by the pioneers. It was a skill that was respected by the early pioneers.

This writer's mother, Dot Ellis, used to tell about her grandmother making her wear an asafetida bag around her neck in the winter time. It was a stinking gum residue made from the carrot family and tied tightly in a bag and worn to school as a necklace. She was not to popular wearing that foul smelling remedy. It was thought to prevent colds and flu, and was rancid that no self respecting germ would come near it.

When this writer was a small child, you would think my mother would not subject me to that kind of home

early folk medicine for a variety of medical problems.



The roots also could be dried and ground up, roasted and brewed as a coffee substitute. The bright blossoms were brewed into a summer wine. Boiling the blossoms over a hot fire gave you a soft yellow dye, and boiling the roots gave you a bright yellow magenta dye. Dandelion tea supposedly was considered good treatment for heartburn, liver problems and made a good laxative. To this day, this writer refuses to have his lawn sprayed with an herbicide that kills the dandelions.

The soft inner bark of the slippery elm tree has long been used in folk medicine. It was used as a tea to calm an upset stomach. When soaked in water it makes a gummy substance used on cuts and bruises. During the Revolutionary War, the military surgeons used slippery elm as a dressing for gun shot wounds. Early midwives also used it as a lubricant to ease the childbirth process. Other early remedies for gynecological problems included a tea made from witch hazel bark that was supposed to clear up bleeding between menstrual periods. Also, wild ginger tea was used to ease monthly cramps and regulate a woman's cycle.

Wild ginger is nothing like the fragrant spice used in spice cake and gingerbread. Wild ginger gives off a foul odor that resembles rotting meat. Early residents used wild ginger tea to break a fever, relieve gas and stimulate the appetite.

Sassafras once a commercial crop in Rowan

County

Sassafras tea is a distinctive tasting aromatic tea familiar to most Rowan Countians. It offered a welcome taste change from coffee, cola or regular tea. The tea is made from the dried roots of the sassafras tree. It is a delightful aromatic drink prepared by boiling the root in a pan of water and adding sugar. According to the early pioneers, it was used in the springtime to eliminate "poison" from your system. Evidently one can drink too much, as did this writer's wife, Janis, during her college days. The result was that she broke out in a rash on her face that Cr. Louise Caudill attributed to drinking too much sassafras tea. More recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has declared the compound safral found in the root to be potentially carcinogenic if taken in large amounts. In the latter 1800s, there was once a sassafras mill in Rowan County. It was located past Cranston on the banks of the North Fork of Triplett Creek. The company bought the sassafras roots dried them, chipped them and sold them throughout the U.S. The sassafras roots were used in root beer (how do you think it got its name?), chewing gum, toothpaste, sasspirilla (how many times in an old western movie have you heard the hero ask the bartender for a sasspirilla?) and many other products. Catnip, that bushy, fresh smelling herb with the gray leaves and lavender flowers, makes an excellent tea. But unlike cats, humans get no "high" from the special oil the plant secretes as an insect repellent. However, catnip does offer some benefit in folk medicine remedies.

water for 24 hours. it was then applied with a hot towel on cuts and bruises, or with a cold towel on fevered brows.

Many people think witch hazel has something to do with black magic, but it actually comes from an old English word meaning to bend. Its branches make excellent divining rods (used to locate underground water).

Other folk remedies include bone set or wild cherry bark in the treatment of cold and flu. It is reputed to break a fever and loosen the bowels. It is drunk as a tea made from the leaves and flowers. Wild cherry bark tea with added sugar makes a good tasting

Chewing the leaves is said to relieve a toothache. The tea supposedly serves as a sleep inducer and prevents nightmares. Catnip is prepared by pouring boiling water over two teaspoons of dried leaves and allowed to steep for five minutes. Lemon and honey may be added.

Bostonians patriotic — drank liberty tea

Goldenrod tea is another common tea in the lexicon of folk medicine, and was once exported to China which was the birthplace of tea.

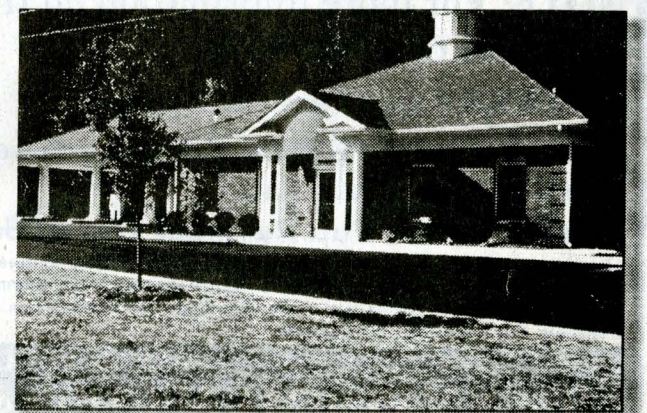
After the Boston tea party, when protesters threw all of the imported tea into the harbor, they suddenly realized they had nothing left to drink. Forced to turn to native plants, one ingenious colonist came up with "Liberty Tea", made from the leaves of the goldenrod. Also, the flowered tops of the goldenrod was used as a treatment for colic and the each was used to treat urinary disorders.

Much of the ingredients used in herbal folk medicine are now synthesized and used in modern medicines. Of course, many of those folk remedies did not live up to their claims. But then, neither does our modern medicine.

However, history shows that many of those old remedies did have some merit to some extent. The folk medicine now called "traditional" medicine is returning to our lexicon of treating diseases. But those who use traditional medicine urge common sense in us. Never concoct or ingest any folk medicine you are unsure about. Avoid wild foods and herbs and use great care and common sense in using traditional medicine as well as modern medicine.



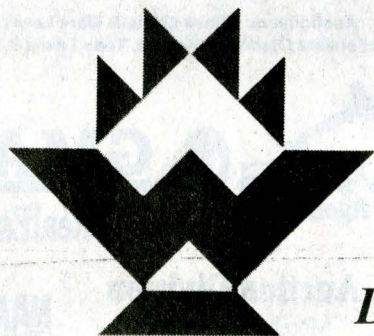
Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories

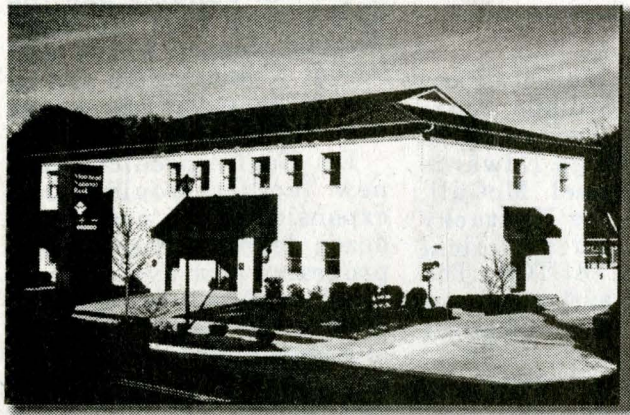
Brought To You By



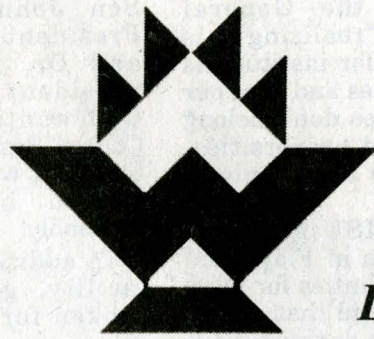
Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



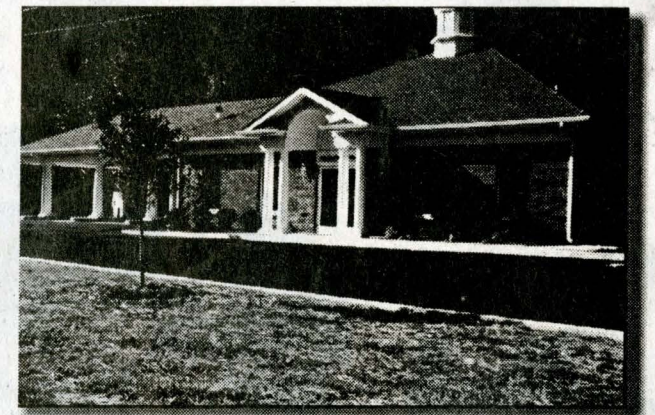
Morehead Memories

Brought To You By

Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories:

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Correction: The American Legion article on Nov. 9, 2001 stated: military service personnel were considered war veterans if they honorably served during Vietnam War: Aug. 5, 1964 - Aug. 15, 1973. It should have stated: August 1958 - August 1973.

"I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thy wounds" (Jeremiah 30:17).

No matter how much things change, it is amazing how much they stay the same. In the year 2001, everyone is saturated with commercial messages on television and in the newspapers. Most of these commercial messages seem to

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES OR YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?

Give a copy of **MOREHEAD MEMORIES: True Stories From Eastern Kentucky**

by

Jack D. Ellis

(606) 784-7473

(606) 326-1667

The County... many of the same... use today
They attracted large crowds with magic shows, music and even dancing girls. Then the slick talking medicine man would tell the people about the patent medicine he was selling, that it would cure just about any ailment. It was usually a mixture of old home remedies laced with lots of alcohol and sold in attractive bottles. The men loved it but the

bladder physic. Don't get up nights... physic the bladder out with juniper oil". Also, the article went on to say "Drive out the impurities, stop the burning and frequent desire with Bucer leaves contained in this bladder physic. It works on the bladder similar to castor oil on the bowels. Get a 25 cent test box at the drug store, and if you're not relieved after four nights, go back and get your money".

with this interesting message: "When Dr. Caldwell started practicing medicine in 1875, he said there was not nearly the need for a laxative as there is in 1896". People lived normal lives in 1875, ate plain, wholesome food and got plenty of fresh air.

Therefore, they did not need laxatives as they do today. (There must have been a drastic change in lifestyles during those 20 years). But

"Syrup of Pepsin" and is a mild safe bowel stimulant. Dr. Caldwell also claimed that his prescription would provide relief from headaches, biliousness, flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dyspepsia, colds and fever. (It didn't miss much).

If Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin could live up to its claims and is available in local Morehead drug stores today, it would many of today's medical problems. Even in 1896, that remedy was available — in Morehead's City Drug Store.

Finding the cure for flat chests

Another physical problem still around today and must have been around since the dawn of man (or woman) was flat chests. That problem also had a supposed medical cure 100 years ago.

The sales pitch read, "Girls with flat chest have few boy friends". The sales pitch continued, "Try this easy way to fill out your chest (notice the word breast was never used). Visal will give your body the pretty curves that men admire. Just take Visal a few weeks and you'll be surprised". It didn't actually claim anything except you'll be surprised. (I'll bet their boyfriends and husbands would also have been surprised). Unfortunately there were no models or artwork used in that early print media.

It seems many of the maladies suffered by mankind have been around since the

folklore, but some of it was effective.

Coughs and sore throats were as prevalent 100 years ago as they are today. Many of the early remedies were helpful, or if they didn't stop your cough, you didn't care. One early home-made cough syrup was prepared by saturating brown sugar with white whiskey, and take as needed. It is no wonder so many people developed a chronic cough.

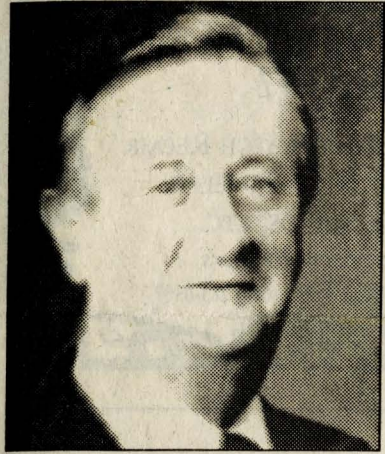
Another early cough syrup was made by mixing a cup of melted butter with a half cup of vinegar and adding a pinch of salt and pepper. One teaspoonful of this concoction was supposed to relieve the cough.

Another cough syrup popular in ~~the early 20th century~~ was prepared by boiling cherry bark, whiskey and honey together until it thickens. Take one teaspoonful as needed. But one of the easiest early remedies for a cough was to wear a used sock around your throat at night. Therefore, as long as one had a pair of socks, you had your own cough remedy.

But if the used sock remedy didn't work, another cough remedy was a mixture of pine tar and plaster. They would spread the mixture on a cloth and tie the cloth around the throat with the tar side next to the skin. The wrapping should be changed twice a week.

Early remedies for colds and congestion included

PATENT MEDICINE + HOME REMEDIES



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Correction: The American Legion article on Nov. 9, 2001 stated: military service personnel were considered war veterans if they honorably served during Vietnam War: Aug. 5, 1964 - Aug. 15, 1973. It should have stated: August 1958 - August 1973.

"I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thy wounds" (Jeremiah 30:17).

No matter how much things change, it is amazing how much they stay the same. In the year 2006, everyone is saturated with commercial messages on television and in the newspapers. Most of these commercial messages seem to be diagnosing physical ailments and prescribing the best medical treatment for these ailments, eg. "Does pain from arthritis keep you from enjoying life? If so, try our remedy for complete relief". "Does constipation, sluggishness or headaches keep you from being your best? If so, try our pills and you'll feel like a new person".

Then there is Viagra, and Bob Dole tells us how it's helped him. Then the caveat comes — ask your doctor if this pill is right for you. All of this comes with beautiful models amid slick Madison Avenue fanfare. But medical care has not always been so available. But there have always been people proclaiming cures for whatever ails you.

Early medicine shows promised healing

One hundred years ago, traveling medicine shows often came through Rowan County

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES OR YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?

Give a copy of **MOREHEAD MEMORIES: True Stories From Eastern Kentucky**

by **Jack D. Ellis**

(606 784-7473)
(606) 326-1667

The County... many of the... use today

They attracted large crowds with magic shows, music and even dancing girls. Then the slick talking medicine man would tell the people about the patent medicine he was selling, that it would cure just about any ailment. It was usually a mixture of old home remedies laced with lots of alcohol and sold in attractive bottles.

The men loved it but the ladies were always a little skeptical. There would sometimes be people "planted" by the medicine man in the audience who would "testify" to the amazing cures of the product. Personal testimony has always been a persuasive way of selling a product, whether it is with a traveling medicine show, in newspapers, magazines or television.

Early residents told how to live healthier lives

Seventy-five years ago the people of ~~Morehead~~ ~~Rowan~~ ~~County~~ were bombarded with the same kind of messages of how they could be healthier and live better lives. Those messages appeared in the only media available at that time — newspapers. But the messages were the same then as now, only they were printed messages.

In 1930, ~~the~~ ~~Rowan~~ ~~County~~ ~~News~~ printed the following: "Get relief with 'Bucer' the

bladder physic. Don't get up nights... physic the bladder out with juniper oil". Also, the article went on to say "Drive out the impurities, stop the burning and frequent desire with Bucer leaves contained in this bladder physic. It works on the bladder similar to castor oil on the bowels. Get a 25 cent test box at the drug store, and if you're not relieved after four nights, go back and get your money".

The claim continued, "If you are bothered with backache or leg pains caused form bladder disorder, you are bound to feel better after this thorough cleansing and you can get your regular sleep". Sold at ~~your~~ ~~local~~ ~~drug~~ ~~store~~ ~~near~~

Here is another one from the same era that used a common technique still used today — a persuasive testimonial from a health care professional. "Nurse tells how to sleep sound and stop gas". Nurse V. Fletcher says, "Stomach gas bloated me so badly I could hardly sleep. But one spoonful of Adlerika brought out all of that gas and now I sleep fine". (I hope she was sleeping alone). Available at ~~your~~ ~~local~~ ~~drug~~ ~~store~~ ~~near~~

Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin

Appearing in the Morehead, Ky Advance in 1896, Rowan Countians were urged to buy Dr. Caldwell's syrup of Pepsin

with this interesting message: "When Dr. Caldwell started practicing medicine in 1875, he said there was not nearly the need for a laxative as there is in 1896". People lived normal lives in 1875, ate plain, wholesome food and got plenty of fresh air.

Therefore, they did not need laxatives as they do today. (There must have been a drastic change in lifestyles during those 20 years). But even in 1875, Dr. Caldwell pointed out there were harsh laxatives that were not good for human beings.

The patent medicine for constipation that Dr. Caldwell developed in 1896 not only claimed to cure constipation, but most of the ailments that plagued mankind at that time (and still does). Dr. Caldwell reported his medical cure contained Syrup of Pepsin and a liquid vegetable mixture that is suitable for women and children.

It is called Dr. Caldwell's

"Syrup of Pepsin" and is a mild safe bowel stimulant. Dr. Caldwell also claimed that his prescription would provide relief from headaches, biliousness, flatulence, indigestion, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, dyspepsia, colds and fever. (It didn't miss much).

If Dr. Caldwell's Syrup of Pepsin could live up to it's claims and is available in local Morehead drug stores today, it would many of today's medical problems. Even in 1896, that remedy was available — in Morehead's City Drug Store.

Finding the cure for flat chests

Another physical problem still around today and must have been around since the dawn of man (or woman) was flat chests. That problem also had a supposed medical cure 100 years ago.

The sales pitch read, "Girls with flat chest have few boy friends". The sales pitch continued, "Try this easy way to fill out your chest (notice the word breast was never used). Visal will give your body the pretty curves that men admire. Just take Visal a few weeks and you'll be surprised". It didn't actually claim anything except you'll be surprised. (I'll bet their boyfriends and husbands would also have been surprised). Unfortunately there were no models or artwork used in that early print media.

It seems many of the maladies suffered by mankind have been around since the beginning of time. Although those maladies remain unchanged, their treatment has changed over the yeas, from early home remedies that were hilarious, peculiar and bizarre, into the science we call modern medicine.

In Rowan County, we are fortunate to have skilled physicians, nurses and a modern hospital, but the early settlers had to rely upon folk medicine and home remedies for their medical treatment. Much of that treatment was based upon superstition and

folklore, but some of it was effective.

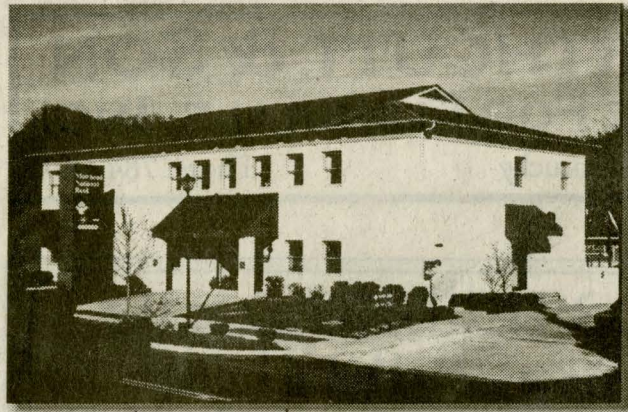
Coughs and sore throats were as prevalent 100 years ago as they are today. Many of the early remedies were helpful, or if they didn't stop your cough, you didn't care. One early home-made cough syrup was prepared by saturating brown sugar with white whiskey, and take as needed. It is no wonder so many people developed a chronic cough.

Another early cough syrup was made by mixing a cup of melted butter with a half cup of vinegar and adding a pinch of salt and pepper. One teaspoonful of this concoction was supposed to relieve the cough.

Another cough syrup popular in ~~the~~ ~~early~~ ~~of~~ ~~Rowan~~ ~~County~~ was prepared by boiling cherry bark, whiskey and honey together until it thickens. Take one teaspoonful as needed. But one of the easiest early remedies for a cough was to wear a used sock around your throat at night. Therefore, as long as one had a pair of socks, you had your own cough remedy.

But if the used sock remedy didn't work, another cough remedy was a mixture of pine tar and plaster. They would spread the mixture on a cloth and tie the cloth around the throat with the tar side next to the skin. The wrapping should be changed twice a week.

Early remedies for colds and congestion included taking two drops of turpentine on a teaspoon of sugar at bedtime. If that didn't work, another old remedy was to rub mutton suet (fat) on the bottom of the patient's feet and hold their feet close to the fire. (Is that where the old time saying comes from, "Hold their feet to the fire"?) Another early home cold and congestion remedy was to make a plaster of boiled onions and place in a cloth and tie it around the chest. ~~At~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~early~~ ~~settlers~~ ~~in~~ ~~Rowan~~ ~~County~~ ~~Ky~~



Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



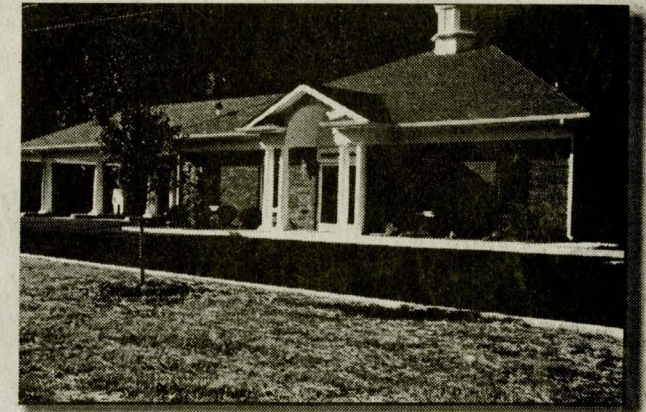
Morehead Memories

Brought To You By

Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

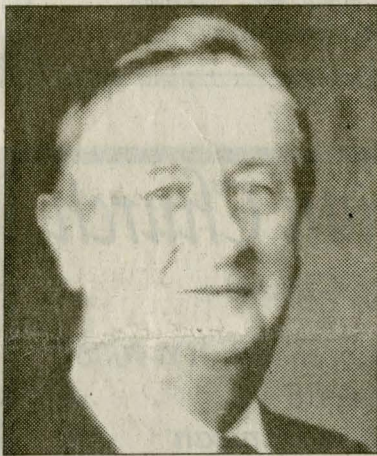
Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories:

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies III



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Tobacco was used for many medical purposes in early Rowan County, eg., to relieve a sore throat required soaking one tobacco leaf in vinegar and then placing the tobacco leaf in a long cotton stoking and wrapping it around the patient's neck. Of course, a "chaw" of tobacco held with the tongue over an aching tooth was a popular tooth ache remedy.

One remedy used by Kentucky hill folk for congestion and a really bad cold was good moonshine whiskey mixed in equal parts with hot ginger tea. Sugar was then added and the patient would drink a couple of ounces of the mixture and go to bed covered with several layers of quilts. The patient would then sweat profusely

evidence of arthritis. Early remedies for the painful plague involved mixing equal parts of apple cider and strained honey into a quart jar. The remedy called for the patient to pour two tablespoonfuls into an eight ounce glass of water and take three times a day.

Liniments were often used by early arthritis sufferers. One of those early liniments used on people, and horses, included a mixture of equal parts of wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, camphorated oil and pure spirits of turpentine. Mix well and always shake vigorously before applying to the skin. The claim was, "it's very fine used for arthritis and old horses".

Other early treatments for arthritis sufferers included wearing a rotten potato tied in a bag around the neck, wearing a copper bracelet around the wrist, and/or drinking sulphur water. This writer's mother-in-law, Myrtle Caudill, with the blessings of Dr. Louise Caudill, tried many of these early remedies. She was trying everything for some relief from the terrible pain she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments also included gold shots, which was the medical treatment of choice 50 years ago. But none of the home remedies or modern medical remedies seemed to help much.

Personal appearance

brush. Then get black stove soot and place in the black gum twig brush and brush your teeth vigorously. The claim was that it would whiten the teeth.

It was also claimed by early pioneers that chewing tobacco helped whiten the teeth. This writer recalls a line from one of pioneer poet Bret Hart's poems which said, "And I learned him to chaw tobacco just to keep his milk teeth white". Also, in this writer's baseball playing days in the old Bluegrass League, I was a chewer of tobacco. But I don't recommend it for good dental hygiene.

Warts have always proven a detriment to personal appearance, and, although those early pioneers did not know it at they time, they could turn deadly. There were many old time methods of removing unsightly warts.

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES OR YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?

Give a copy of
MOREHEAD MEMORIES:
True Stories From Eastern Kentucky

by

Jack D. Ellis
(606 784-7473
(606) 326-1667

Another treatment included rubbing stump water on the wart once a day for a week; another remedy was make the wart bleed and then put a drop of the wart blood on a grain of corn and offer it to a rooster. Of course, there were people in the community who supposedly had the power to "charm" warts off. They would rub their hands over the wart and speak some kind of "mumbo-jumbo" and the wart was supposed to go away. This writer's wife, Janis, had an aunt who had that power and charmed a wart off her when she was a child.

Ladies, don't get rid of all of your expensive creams and lotions for skin care yet, but there were many early remedies for removing brown spots on the face and hands. The early settlers had their own cures such as buttermilk applied to the spots several times a day.

Also, apply a mixture of equal parts of cucumber juice and lemon juice daily was supposed to remove the brown spots as was stump water sprinkled daily on the spots. Also, early settlers developed a bleaching cream mixture for the skin. It involved two tablespoons each of zinc oxide, powdered chalk, hydrogen peroxide and lemon juice. Mix the concoction well and apply nightly.

Care of newborn babies by the early settlers in Eastern Kentucky was especially challenging, and sometimes even bordering on bizarre. One treatment to newborn babies in Eastern Kentucky was called "scarifying". It was believed that it would ensure that the baby would grow strong and healthy.

The procedure involved mixing three drops of the mother's milk with three drops of the baby's blood taken from a tiny incision on its back. The blood and milk mixture was then fed to the baby. That was one of the

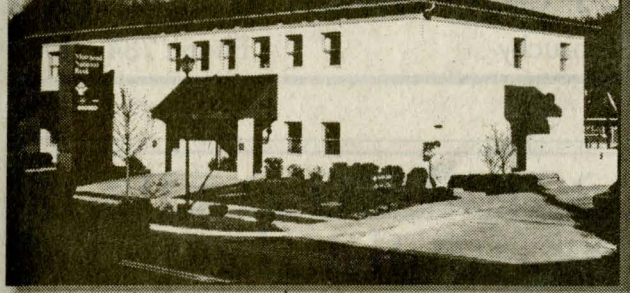
most bizarre treatments this writer has come across, but was evidently a wide spread practice in early Eastern Kentucky.

There were also treatments for thrush, a common ailment among newborn babies where tiny blisters break out inside the mouth, and the baby has trouble nursing. Old timers said that the seventh son of the seventh son had the power to cure the thrush by blowing his breath into the infant's mouth.

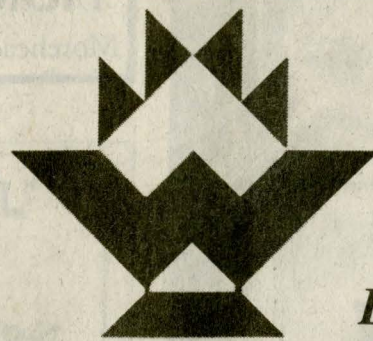
One of this writer's newborn babies came home from a Lexington hospital with the thrush and we found out there was a man on Christy Creek that supposedly had the gift of healing. We were about to try that method, but Dr. Louise Caudill succeeding in getting the problem under control. But many people believe in that seventh son of a seventh son treatment.

Although this writer does not recommend using any of these remedies, we do remember many of these old time remedies. But we are so thankful today for our modern hospital and many fine physicians in the community. Also, the best is yet to come!

(This was written before the anthrax scare. Perhaps somewhere in the literature is a home remedy for anthrax).



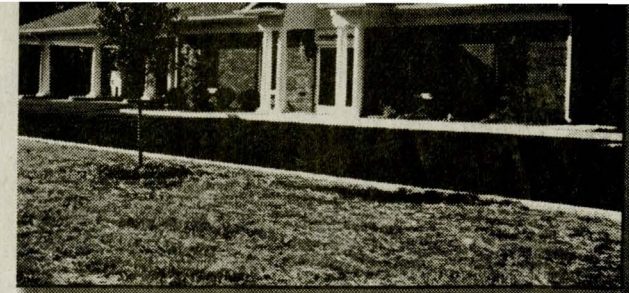
Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

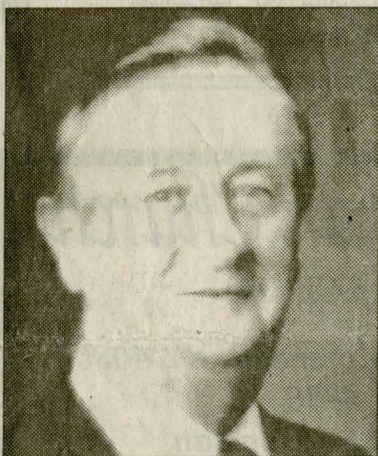
Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories:

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies III



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Tobacco was used for many medical purposes in early Rowan County, eg., to relieve a sore throat required soaking one tobacco leaf in vinegar and then placing the tobacco leaf in a long cotton stoking and wrapping it around the patients neck. Of course, a "chaw" of tobacco held with the tongue over an aching tooth was a popular tooth ache remedy.

One remedy used by Kentucky hill folk for congestion and a really bad cold was good moonshine whiskey mixed in equal parts with hot ginger tea. Sugar was then added and the patient would drink a couple of ounces of the mixture and go to bed covered with several layers of quilts. The patient would then sweat profusely and those who used that remedy declare that it worked. (Even if it didn't they still enjoy the treatment).

Arthritis has plagued mankind throughout the ages. Archeologists have unearthed ancient bones that have shown

evidence of arthritis. Early remedies for the painful plague involved mixing equal parts of apple cider and strained honey into a quart jar. The remedy called for the patient to pour two tablespoonfuls into an eight ounce glass of water and take three times a day.

Liniments were often used by early arthritis sufferers. One of those early liniments used on people, and horses, included a mixture of equal parts of wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, camphorated oil and pure spirits of turpentine. Mix well and always shake vigorously before applying to the skin. The claim was, "it's very fine used for arthritis and old horses".

Other early treatments for arthritis sufferers included wearing a rotten potato tied in a bag around the neck, wearing a copper bracelet around the wrist, and/or drinking sulphur water. This writer's mother-in-law, Myrtle Caudill, with the blessings of Dr. Louise Caudill, tried many of these early remedies. She was trying everything for some relief from the terrible pain she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments also included gold shots, which was the medical treatment of choice 50 years ago. But none of the home remedies or modern medical remedies seemed to help much.

Personal appearance enhancers were used by early pioneer men and women. One early folk remedy that was supposed to whiten and brighten teeth called for getting a small twig from a black gum tree and chewing the end of it until it made a

**LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT
FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES
OR
YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?**

Give a copy of
**MOREHEAD MEMORIES:
True Stories From Eastern Kentucky**
by
Jack D. Ellis
(606 784-7473
(606) 326-1667

brush. Then get black stove soot and place in the black gum twig brush and brush your teeth vigorously. The claim was that it would whiten the teeth.

It was also claimed by early pioneers that chewing tobacco helped whiten the teeth. This writer recalls a line from one of pioneer poet Bret Hart's poems which said, "And I learned him to chaw tobacco just to keep his milk teeth white". Also, in this writer's baseball playing days in the old Bluegrass League, I was a chewer of tobacco. But I don't recommend it for good dental hygiene.

Warts have always proven a detriment to personal appearance, and, although those early pioneers did not know it at they time, they could turn deadly. There were many old time methods of removing unsightly warts. Those included rubbing the wart with a piece of garlic every day, or steal someone's dishrag, rub it on the wart and hide the dish rag. (That was supposedly a guaranteed cure. Has anyone missed any dishrags lately?)

Another treatment included rubbing stump water on the wart once a day for a week; another remedy was make the wart bleed and then put a drop of the wart blood on a grain of corn and offer it to a rooster. Of course, there were people in the community who supposedly had the power to "charm" warts off. They would rub their hands over the wart and speak some kind of "mumbo-jumbo" and the wart was supposed to go away. This writer's wife, Janis, had an aunt who had that power and charmed a wart off her when she was a child.

Ladies, don't get rid of all of your expensive creams and lotions for skin care yet, but there were many early remedies for removing brown spots on the face and hands. The early settlers had their own cures such as buttermilk applied to the spots several times a day.

Also, apply a mixture of equal parts of cucumber juice and lemon juice daily was supposed to remove the brown spots as was stump water sprinkled daily on the spots. Also, early settlers developed a bleaching cream mixture for the skin. It involved two tablespoons each of zinc oxide, powdered chalk, hydrogen peroxide and lemon juice. Mix the concoction well and apply nightly.

Care of newborn babies by the early settlers in Eastern Kentucky was especially challenging, and sometimes even bordering on bizarre. One treatment to newborn babies in Eastern Kentucky was called "scarifying". It was believed that it would ensure that the baby would grow strong and healthy.

The procedure involved mixing three drops of the mother's milk with three drops of the baby's blood taken from a tiny incision on its back. The blood and milk mixture was then fed to the baby. That was one of the

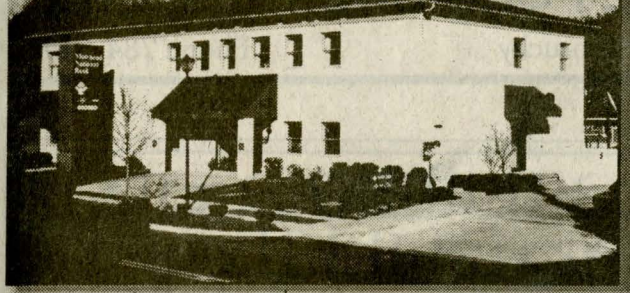
most bizarre treatments this writer has come across, but was evidently a wide spread practice in early Eastern Kentucky.

There were also treatments for thrush, a common ailment among newborn babies where tiny blisters break out inside the mouth, and the baby has trouble nursing. Old timers said that the seventh son of the seventh son had the power to cure the thrush by blowing his breath into the infant's mouth.

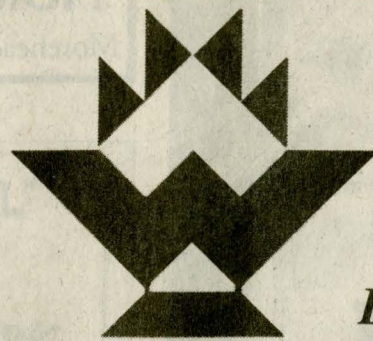
One of this writer's newborn babies came home from a Lexington hospital with the thrush and we found out there was a man on Christy Creek that supposedly had the gift of healing. We were about to try that method, but Dr. Louise Caudill succeeding in getting the problem under control. But many people believe in that seventh son of a seventh son treatment.

Although this writer does not recommend using any of these remedies, we do remember many of these old time remedies. But we are so thankful today for our modern hospital and many fine physicians in the community. Also, the best is yet to come!

(This was written before the anthrax scare. Perhaps somewhere in the literature is a home remedy for anthrax).



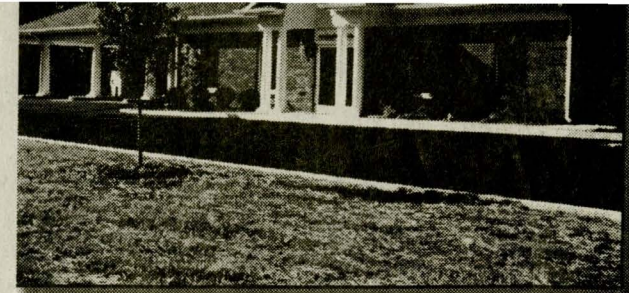
Main Street at Carey Avenue
(606) 784-8966



Morehead National Bank

Discover the Whitaker Difference

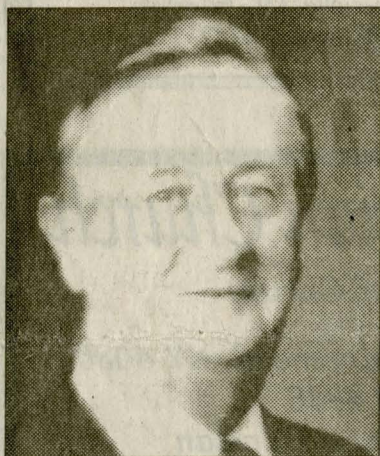
Morehead National Bank is a subsidiary of Whitaker Bank Corporation



Flemingsburg Road at Whitaker Street
(606) 784-8960

Morehead Memories:

Folk medicine, patent medicine and home remedies III



Dr. Jack D. Ellis

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

Tobacco was used for many medical purposes in early Rowan County, eg., to relieve a sore throat required soaking one tobacco leaf in vinegar and then placing the tobacco leaf in a long cotton stoking and wrapping it around the patients neck. Of course, a "chaw" of tobacco held with the tongue over an aching tooth was a popular tooth ache remedy.

One remedy used by Kentucky hill folk for congestion and a really bad cold was good moonshine whiskey mixed in equal parts with hot ginger tea. Sugar was then added and the patient would drink a couple of ounces of the mixture and go to bed covered with several layers of quilts. The patient would then sweat profusely and those who used that remedy declare that it worked. (Even if it didn't they still enjoy the treatment).

Arthritis has plagued mankind throughout the ages. Archeologists have unearthed ancient bones that have shown

evidence of arthritis. Early remedies for the painful plague involved mixing equal parts of apple cider and strained honey into a quart jar. The remedy called for the patient to pour two tablespoonfuls into an eight ounce glass of water and take three times a day.

Liniments were often used by early arthritis sufferers. One of those early liniments used on people, and horses, included a mixture of equal parts of wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, camphorated oil and pure spirits of turpentine. Mix well and always shake vigorously before applying to the skin. The claim was, "it's very fine used for arthritis and old horses".

Other early treatments for arthritis sufferers included wearing a rotten potato tied in a bag around the neck, wearing a copper bracelet around the wrist, and/or drinking sulphur water. This writer's mother-in-law, Myrtle Caudill, with the blessings of Dr. Louise Caudill, tried many of these early remedies. She was trying everything for some relief from the terrible pain she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments also included gold shots, which was the medical treatment of choice 50 years ago. But none of the home remedies or modern medical remedies seemed to help much.

Personal appearance enhancers were used by early pioneer men and women. One early folk remedy that was supposed to whiten and brighten teeth called for getting a small twig from a black gum tree and chewing the end of it until it made a

**LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT
FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES
OR
YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS?**

Give a copy of
**MOREHEAD MEMORIES:
True Stories From Eastern Kentucky**
by
Jack D. Ellis
(606 784-7473
(606) 326-1667

brush. Then get black stove soot and place in the black gum twig brush and brush your teeth vigorously. The claim was that it would whiten the teeth.

It was also claimed by early pioneers that chewing tobacco helped whiten the teeth. This writer recalls a line from one of pioneer poet Bret Hart's poems which said, "And I learned him to chaw tobacco just to keep his milk teeth white". Also, in this writer's baseball playing days in the old Bluegrass League, I was a chewer of tobacco. But I don't recommend it for good dental hygiene.

Warts have always proven a detriment to personal appearance, and, although those early pioneers did not know it at they time, they could turn deadly. There were many old time methods of removing unsightly warts. Those included rubbing the wart with a piece of garlic every day, or steal someone's dishrag, rub it on the wart and hide the dish rag. (That was supposedly a guaranteed cure. Has anyone missed any dishrags lately?)

Another treatment included rubbing stump water on the wart once a day for a week; another remedy was make the wart bleed and then put a drop of the wart blood on a grain of corn and offer it to a rooster. Of course, there were people in the community who supposedly had the power to "charm" warts off. They would rub their hands over the wart and speak some kind of "mumbo-jumbo" and the wart was supposed to go away. This writer's wife, Janis, had an aunt who had that power and charmed a wart off her when she was a child.

Ladies, don't get rid of all of your expensive creams and lotions for skin care yet, but there were many early remedies for removing brown spots on the face and hands. The early settlers had their own cures such as buttermilk applied to the spots several times a day.

Also, apply a mixture of equal parts of cucumber juice and lemon juice daily was supposed to remove the brown spots as was stump water sprinkled daily on the spots. Also, early settlers developed a bleaching cream mixture for the skin. It involved two tablespoons each of zinc oxide, powdered chalk, hydrogen peroxide and lemon juice. Mix the concoction well and apply nightly.

Care of newborn babies by the early settlers in Eastern Kentucky was especially challenging, and sometimes even bordering on bizarre. One treatment to newborn babies in Eastern Kentucky was called "scarifying". It was believed that it would ensure that the baby would grow strong and healthy.

The procedure involved mixing three drops of the mother's milk with three drops of the baby's blood taken from a tiny incision on its back. The blood and milk mixture was then fed to the baby. That was one of the

most bizarre treatments this writer has come across, but was evidently a wide spread practice in early Eastern Kentucky.

There were also treatments for thrush, a common ailment among newborn babies where tiny blisters break out inside the mouth, and the baby has trouble nursing. Old timers said that the seventh son of the seventh son had the power to cure the thrush by blowing his breath into the infant's mouth.

One of this writer's newborn babies came home from a Lexington hospital with the thrush and we found out there was a man on Christy Creek that supposedly had the gift of healing. We were about to try that method, but Dr. Louise Caudill succeeding in getting the problem under control. But many people believe in that seventh son of a seventh son treatment.

Although this writer does not recommend using any of these remedies, we do remember many of these old time remedies. But we are so thankful today for our modern hospital and many fine physicians in the community. Also, the best is yet to come!

(This was written before the anthrax scare. Perhaps somewhere in the literature is a home remedy for anthrax).

Local Trivia

■ Liniments, including one also applied to horses, were often used by early arthritis sufferers.

SECTION D

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2005



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Early folk medicine practitioners made use of limited resources in treating maladies

Early folk (traditional) medicine, II

"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)

Folk or traditional medicine is defined as "medicine practiced by non-professional people isolated from modern medical care, involving the use of plants." This article continues to give some of this region's early folk medical treatments.

Under no circumstances does this writer recommend that anyone use these remedies. They are listed to show how far we have come in the practice of modern medicine.

Tobacco was once used for many medical purposes in early Rowan County, e.g., to relieve a sore throat required soaking one cured tobacco leaf in vinegar. Then place the tobacco leaf in a long cotton stocking and wrap it around the patient's neck. Of course, a "chaw" of tobacco held with the tongue over an aching tooth was a popular toothache remedy. Also, tobacco juice was a remedy

when spit on insect stings, cuts and bruises or snakebites.

Early folk dental medicine

Personal appearance enhancers were used by early pioneer men and women, e.g., one early folk remedy that was supposed to whiten and brighten teeth called for getting a small twig from a black gum tree and chewing the end of it until it made a brush. Then get black stove soot and place on the black gum twig brush and brush your teeth vigorously. The claim was that it would whiten the teeth. It was also claimed by early pioneers that chewing tobacco helped whiten the teeth.

This writer recalls a line from one of pioneer poet Bret Hart's poems that said, "And I learned him to chaw tobacco just to keep his milk teeth white." Also, in this writer's baseball playing days in the old Bluegrass League, I was a



See FOLK, Page D-3

Tobacco leaves were used in various folk remedies.

Folk

Continued from Page D-1

chewer of tobacco. But I don't recommend it for good dental hygiene.

Sore throats were a constant pain (pardon the pun) to early pioneers. Remedies included gargling three times a day with a mixture of baking soda and salt in a glass of warm water. (Still used today). Another sore throat remedy included boiling pine boughs in a pan of water. When the steam appears, place a towel over the head of the patient and allow him to inhale and gulp the steam. That treatment was good for both a sore throat and laryngitis.

Folk medicine laced with lots of whiskey

One remedy used by Kentucky hill folk for congestion and a really bad cold was good moonshine whiskey mixed in equal parts with hot ginger tea. Sugar was then added and the patient would drink a couple of ounces of the mixture and go to bed covered with several layers of quilts. The patient would then sweat profusely and those who used that remedy declared that it worked. (Even if it didn't, they enjoyed the treatment).

Arthritis treatments tried in the 1950s

Arthritis has plagued mankind throughout the ages. Archaeologists have unearthed ancient bones that have shown evidence of arthritis. Early remedies for the painful plague involved mixing equal parts of apple cider and strained honey unto a quart jar. The remedy called for the patient to pour two tablespoons into an eight-ounce glass of water and take three times a day. Liniments were often used by early arthritis sufferers. One of those early liniments used on people, and horses, included a mixture of equal parts of wintergreen oil, eucalyptus oil, camphorated oil and pure spirits of turpentine. Mix well and always shake vigorously before applying to



Seal your love by cutting an apple in half, revealing a five-pointed star made by the seeds. Share it with your love and your love would be reciprocated.

the skin. The claim was, "It's very fine used for arthritis and old horses."

Other early treatments for arthritis sufferers included wearing a rotten potato tied in a bag around the neck, wearing a copper bracelet around the wrists, and/or drinking sulphur water. In the 1950s, this writer's mother-in-law, Myrtle Caudill, with the blessings of Dr. Louise Caudill, tried many of those early remedies. She was trying everything for some relief from the terrible pain she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Treatments also included gold shots, which were the medical treatment of choice fifty years ago. But none of the home remedies or modern medical remedies seemed to help much.

Asthma, colds, congestion, headaches

Asthma: A malady that

has long plagued people throughout the Ohio Valley. Folk Remedy: Burn dry sumac leaves and inhale the fumes (supposed to help hay fever).

Another option was to burn rabbit tobacco and inhale the fumes (as a child this writer sometimes smoked rabbit tobacco and didn't know it was suppose to help my breathing.) Other home remedies for asthma included placing powdered ginseng in a pan with a hot coal on top and inhale.

If none of these worked, it was actually suggested that you keep a Chihuahua dog around the house.

Colds or congestion:

Remedies included one or more of the following. (1) A few drops of turpentine in a teaspoon of sugar. Take at bedtime. (2) Rub mutton suet on the bottom of your feet and hold feet to the fire. (3) Make a plaster of boiled onions, put on a cloth and place on chest. (4) Spread Vicks salve, turpentine, and tar on a flannel cloth. Heat and place on chest. Do not wear during daylight; this is only a nighttime remedy. (This writer can recall as a child this was used on me a few times.) (5) Camphorated oil rubbed on chest at night. (6) Mix dry mustard with water and flour and spread on a cloth. Cover chest with oil to keep from blistering and place cloth on chest. Keep watch that it does not blister.

Headaches: Folk Remedies included: 1) Wet a piece of brown paper bag with vinegar, sprinkle heavily with baking soda and wrap around the head with something tight. (2) Bend wilted beet leaves around the forehead. (3) Mix a little turpentine and beef tallow in a bandage and tie tightly around the head. (4) For a mild headache, wet a towel with cold water and hold on forehead. (Also good for a hangover.)
Sore throat: (1) Place

pine boughs in a container with water and heat. As steam appears, hold a towel over head, to catch the steam and inhale or gulp steam. (2) Soak a cured tobacco leaf in vinegar and wrap around you neck. Secure with a long cotton stocking. (3) Tie a dirty sock around your throat at night. (4) Blow sulphur through a reed onto throat. (5) Onions and sugar cooked together - mash and take two tablespoons before bedtime.

Teething babies, toothaches, infections

Teething babies: Kill a mole, cut off one of its feet, tie a string around the foot, then tie the string around the baby's neck as a necklace. Teeth will pop through the gums without pain. Toothache: (1) Peel off some bark from the south side of a red oak tree. Boil in water and add a pinch of salt. Hold the bark on aching tooth. (2) Put several drops of paregoric on a cloth, place on tooth and press down. (3) Treatment for tartar: 1 spoon apple cider to 1 glass of water at mealtime will prevent tartar. (4) Whitening teeth: 1 tsp baking soda on a clean cloth and rub teeth vigorously.

Coughing: (1) 3 or 4 pieces of peppermint candy, 1 tsp. Paregoric, finish filling small bottle with whiskey. Shake vigorously and take as needed for cough. (If it doesn't cure your cough, you don't care.) (2) Melt 2 tsp of butter, add 1 tsp of vinegar, 1 tsp sugar, pinch of sugar and a dash of pepper. Take one tsp at bedtime. (3) Saturate brown sugar with whiskey. Take as needed.

Rusty nail infection: Boil peach tree leaves 30-40 minutes. Drain water, put 1 tsp. salt and thicken with corn meal. Make a poultice and place on infected area overnight. It will remove swelling and fever. Real good!

Poison ivy or poison oak: (1) Mix 1/4 cup of black molasses with enough baking soda to make a thick paste. Spread on infected area twice a day. (2) Dip rag into strong salt solution. Cover area with rag dipped in solution. Will prevent scratching.

Removing brown spots from face and hands: (1) Castor oil rubbed on nightly. (2) Buttermilk applied to spots twice daily. (3) Equal parts cucumber juice and lemon juice. Mixture applied daily.

Painkiller: Roast some poke roots by the fire. Scrape clean with a knife and grind up. Make a poultice out of the powder and apply to the bottom of the feet. It will draw the pain out of any part of the body.

The early pioneers to Kentucky had to use what they had in the practice of home remedies known as folk medicine or traditional medicine.

Say MERRY CHRISTMAS with a Book About Local History & Heroes by Jack D. Ellis

Kentucky Memories: Reflections of Rowan County. 450 pp; 200 photos; c. 2005.

Patriots and Heroes: Eastern Ky. Soldiers of WWII. 412 pp; 85 photographs; c. 2003.

Morehead Memories: True Stories From Eastern Kentucky. 592 pp; 100 photographs; c. 2001. (Almost out of print)

Each: \$35.00 + \$4.00 S&H

For signed copies with a personal Gift Card from You, Contact:

Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun Street, Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 784-7473

Available locally at the Coffee Tree Bookstore; MSU Bookstore; St. Claire Gift Shop; Mustard Seed; and Baldwin & Assoc.

Website: JSFBOOKS.COM
Add \$5.50 S&H

Healing from the home and the hills

By JACK D. ELLIS

Special to The Morehead News

"The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezekiel 47:12).

One hundred years ago there were few doctors and even fewer roads in Rowan County. Therefore, much of Eastern Kentucky was isolated from the outside world.

For treatment of maladies and disease, many people relied on home remedies, native plants and "Herb Doctors" for their medical care. Although they didn't know it at the time, today it is called folk medicine. Webster defines folk medicine as "traditional medicine practiced nonprofessionally by people isolated from medical care, and involving the use of plants".

Folk medicine began when the first settlers landed in Jamestown, Va. Certainly

there was no professional medical care, so they relied on local native plants sometimes using the ancient doctrine of signatures.

That doctrine believed that "God put a sign on plants for specific disease"; eg. the eyebright plant was thought to be good for the eyes. Old timers claimed that hawks would tear into the plants and rub their eyes with the juices to improve their vision. The leaf of the buglass plant was shaped like a snake's head and was used to treat snakebites. Indeed, as late as 1733, a slave in Virginia was given his freedom and a life time pension for concocting a remedy for scurvy, dropsy and other ailments made from Spanish oak, pine bark and sumac boiled in water. The knowledge of herbs and plants was handed down from one generation to the next.

Early pioneers brought folk medicine west

As the early pioneers moved westward into Rowan County they brought their home remedies and herb doctors with them. By that time, there was a whole compendium of folk medicine practiced by the pioneers. It was a skill that was respected by the early pioneers.

This writer's mother, Dot Ellis, used to tell about her grandmother making her wear an asafetida bag around her neck in the winter time. It was a stinking gum residue made from the carrot family and tied tightly in a bag and worn to school as a necklace. She was not to popular wearing that foul smelling remedy. It was thought to prevent colds and flu, and was rancid that no self respecting germ would come near it.

See *HEALING* on 5

When this writer was a small child, you would think my mother would not subject me to that kind of home remedy folk medicine after the trauma she suffered. But she did. It happened one summer when I developed several painful boils on my legs. It seems my grandfather insisted that the best home remedy for a boil was by placing a cow manure poultice on the boil. It was supposed to bring the boil to a head and it would clear up. Therefore, I wore a cow manure bandage around my leg for several days. Thank goodness I was not in school at the time as my humiliation would have been even worse.

The boils soon cleared up, but I still have scars on my legs where the "core" came out and probably have trauma in my psyche.

Herbs used singly and together

Many of the herbs and plants used by the herb doctors were used either singly or in combination. For example, yellow root, a common plant in Rowan County, was used as a sore throat gargle or as an antiseptic. (Long ago the Indians used it to make a bright yellow war paint for their bodies).

The old herb doctors prepared yellow root liquid as follows: take two large roots, crush them with a hammer, add one pint of water and bring to a boil for one minute and set it aside to cool. It is then ready to be used as a gargle for a sore throat.

In early Rowan County, before aspirin, the herb doctors used what they called preachers fever weed (also called mouse ear) to fight a fever. Fever weed also was

used to stop nosebleeds and treat boils. Other plants used in folk medicine for treatment of fever include bervine root and plantain root used in combination.

Folk medicine offered myriad of treatments

Early herb doctors used witch hazel to treat skin diseases. The mixture was prepared by soaking the plant bark, twigs and leaves in water for 24 hours. it was then applied with a hot towel on cuts and bruises, or with a cold towel on fevered brows.

Many people think witch hazel has something to do with black magic, but it actually comes from an old English word meaning to bend. Its branches make excellent divining rods (used to locate underground water).

Other folk remedies include bone set or wild cherry bark in the treatment of cold and flu. It is reputed to break a fever and loosen the bowels. It is drunk as a tea made from the leaves and flowers. Wild cherry bark tea with added sugar makes a good tasting cough syrup. But the leaves and the fruit pits of the wild cherry should never be consumed because they contain a poisonous acid that causes shortness of breath, loss of balance, convulsions and even death.

Tea from the lady slipper is reputed to cure headaches, tension and is an antispasmodic. But people with dermatitis should not use these plants because it could aggravate their condition. The lowly onion was used, among other things, as a treatment for bee stings. It was claimed to draw out the poison and relieves the pain. Many pioneers used it for snake bites to draw out the

poison. The onion was simply cut in half and placed over the wound. Of course, eating onions was supposed to be good for the blood.

Lowly dandelion a star among folk remedy

The hearty dandelion which so many people kill relentlessly in their lawns, was once a star in the folk medicine realm of remedies. In the springtime, the early pioneers cut the tender shoots for a raw salad or cook it as a green vegetable.

The roots also could be dried and ground up, roasted and brewed as a coffee substitute. The bright blossoms were brewed into a summer wine. Boiling the blossoms over a hot fire gave you a soft yellow dye, and boiling the roots gave you a bright yellow magenta dye. Dandelion tea supposedly was considered good treatment for heartburn, liver problems and made a good laxative. To this day, this writer refuses to have his lawn sprayed with an herbicide that kills the dandelions.

The soft inner bark of the slippery elm tree has long been used in folk medicine. It was used as a tea to calm an upset stomach. When soaked in water it makes a gummy substance used on cuts and bruises.

During the Revolutionary War, the military surgeons used slippery elm as a dressing for gun shot wounds. Early midwives also used it as a lubricant to ease the childbirth process. Other early remedies for gynecological problems included a tea made from witch hazel bark that was supposed to clear up bleeding between menstrual periods. Also, wild ginger tea was used

to ease monthly cramps and regulate a woman's cycle.

Wild ginger is nothing like the fragrant spice used in spice cake and gingerbread. Wild ginger gives off a foul odor that resembles rotting meat. Early residents used wild ginger tea to break a fever, relieve gas and stimulate the appetite.

Sassafras once a commercial crop in Rowan County

Sassafras tea is a distinctive tasting aromatic tea familiar to most Rowan Countians. It offered a welcome taste change from coffee, cola or regular tea. The tea is made from the dried roots of the sassafras tree. It is a delightful aromatic drink prepared by boiling the root in a pan of water and adding sugar. According to the early pioneers, it was used in the springtime to eliminate "poison" from your system.

Evidently one can drink too much, as did this writer's wife, Janis, during her college days. The result was that she broke out in a rash on her face that Dr. Louise Caudill attributed to drinking too much sassafras tea. More recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has declared the compound safrale found in the root to be potentially carcinogenic if taken in large amounts.

In the latter 1800s, there was once a sassafras mill in Rowan County. It was located past Cranston on the banks of the North Fork of Triplett Creek. The company bought the sassafras roots dried them, chipped them and sold them throughout the U.S.

The sassafras roots were used in root beer (how do you think it got its name?), chewing gum, toothpaste,

sasspirilla (how many times in an old western movie have you heard the hero ask the bartender for a sasspirilla?) and many other products.

Catnip, that bushy, fresh smelling herb with the gray leaves and lavender flowers, makes an excellent tea. But unlike cats, humans get no "high" from the special oil the plant secretes as an insect repellent.

However, catnip does offer some benefit in folk medicine remedies. Chewing the leaves is said to relieve a toothache. The tea supposedly serves as a sleep inducer and prevents nightmares. Catnip is prepared by pouring boiling water over two teaspoons of dried leaves and allowed to steep for five minutes. Lemon and honey may be added.

Bostonians patriotic — drank liberty tea

Goldenrod tea is another common tea in the lexicon of folk medicine, and was once exported to China which was the birthplace of tea.

After the Boston tea party, when protesters threw all of the imported tea into the harbor, they suddenly realized they had nothing left to drink.

Forced to turn to native plants, one ingenious colonist came up with "Liberty Tea", made from the leaves of the goldenrod. Also, the flowered tops of the goldenrod was used as a treatment for colic and the each was used to treat urinary disorders.

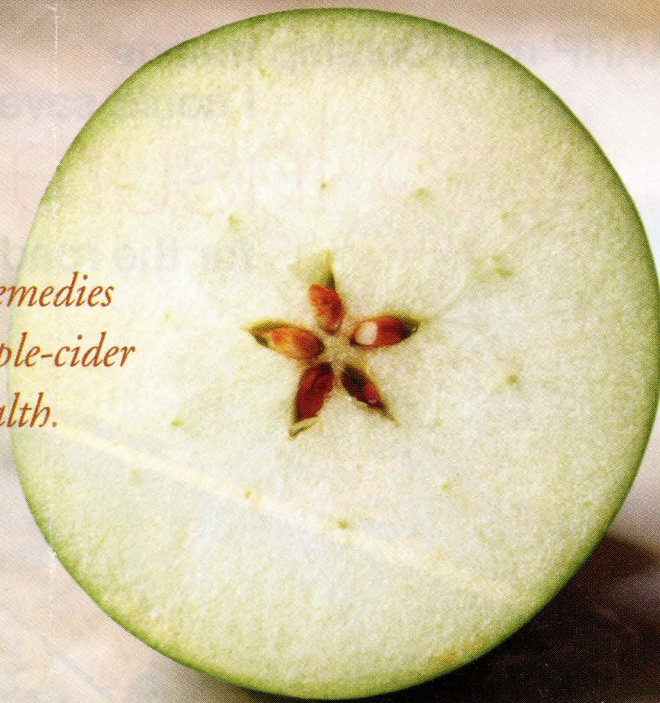
Much of the ingredients used in herbal folk medicine are now synthesized and used in modern medicines. Of course, many of those folk remedies did not live up to their claims. But then, neither does our modern medicine.

However, history shows that many of those old remedies did have some merit to some extent. The folk medicine now called "traditional" medicine is returning to our lexicon of treating diseases. But those who use traditional medicine urge common sense in us. Never concoct or ingest any folk medicine you are unsure about. Avoid wild foods and herbs and use great care and common sense in using traditional medicine as well as modern medicine.

6

A constant theme in old-time folk remedies was to drink small quantities of apple-cider vinegar each day to ensure good health.

Right: Seal your love by cutting an apple in half crosswise to reveal a five-pointed star made by the seeds and share it with your love—or love to be. **Below:** The ancient Celts, to whom few sweets were available, believed that the blessed spent the afterlife in a land covered with apple trees.



star made by the seeds (according to Celtic and Native American traditions, the number five is reputed to be magical and anything with five points has enchanting powers) and share it with your true love or love to be. Applewood was turned into magic wands to be used for love magic while dried apple peels were carried in a sachet, as their scent was said to attract love. “Holding an apple in your hand until it is warm and giving it to a desired partner was said to enable one to predict the outcome of a romance,” says Hopman. “If the apple was eaten, your love would be happily reciprocated.”

Today there is plenty of evidence that eating apples helps keep the doctor away: They are rich in vitamins B and C, as well as magnesium, potassium, and phosphates. According to Hopman, eating raw apples benefits the gums and liver and aids digestion. Likewise, she asserts that unpasteurized apple cider is an excellent tonic for the liver and kidneys, and

that drinking one cup of it (be sure your supplier employs effective sanitation methods to prevent *E. coli* contamination) three to four times a day rids the body of excess uric acid. Hopman also maintains that, after completing a course of antibiotics, eating applesauce left unrefrigerated overnight will help patients to replenish intestinal flora quickly.

Emily Thacker, author of *The Vinegar Book* (Tresco Publishers; 1996) and a researcher of old-time folk remedies, asserts that a prescription passed on from generation to generation for optimum health was to take small amounts of apple-cider vinegar each day. Containing more than 30 nutrients, a dozen minerals, and essential acids and enzymes, apple-cider vinegar was commonly used as a general preventive medicine, sore throat and cold stopper, digestive, memory booster, arthritic tonic, skin toner, and hair rinse. Here are some apple-

cider vinegar recipes adapted from *The Vinegar Book*:

FOR HEALTHY SKIN AND HAIR: *Make your own skin toner by diluting apple-cider vinegar with water. Fruit acids in the vinegar gently exfoliate the skin, restoring it to its natural pH level, which helps protect against dryness and bacterial infection. Or, apply it as a hair rinse—said to restore a healthy shine to hair, especially hair that’s been chemically treated.*

FOR LONGEVITY: *Combine one teaspoon apple-cider vinegar with one teaspoon honey in a full glass of water and drink a half hour before meals. Also said to be excellent for aiding digestion, easing arthritis, and boosting memory.*

TO SPEED THE HEALING OF A SORE THROAT: *Sip a syrup made of ½ cup apple-cider vinegar, ½ cup water, one teaspoon cayenne pepper, and three tablespoons honey.*

FOR TIRED FEET: *Wriggle your toes in warm ankle-deep bathwater to which ½ cup apple-cider vinegar has been added.* ✨

VOL 1 NO 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF KIN FOLKLORE

BY

I SUPERSTITIONS II CHILDREN'S GAMES

III FOLK DANCING FOLK MEDICINE

2nd OED - FOLK 1. 8 VARIATIONS - GER. RUSSIAN

NO FOLK ART LISTED

LITHUANIAN

1. A NATION PEOPLE RACE OR TRIBE
2. A AGGREGATION OF PEOPLE IN RELATION TO TOP-^{OR KIN-} PAPER
3. MILLIONS OF WORDS -

FOLKLORE: THE TRADITIONAL BELIEFS, LEGENDS, AND CUSTOMS,
CURRENT AMONG COMMON PEOPLE

FOLK SONGS: A SONG ORIGINATING AMONG THE COMMON PEOPLE

FOLK ART

FOLK-ART - ARTIST - BELIEF - COMEDY - CULTURE - CUSTOM

DRAMA - EPIC - HERO - LEGEND - LIFE - LITERATURE

MEDICINE - MIND - MUSEUM - NAME - POEM -

POETRY - RHYME - SPEECH - TALE - TRADITION ETC.

Talk medicine Patent Medicine
Herb Doctor
Family Remedy
Natural Remedy
Holistic Medicine

Calomel - for everything
patent

Castor oil
Black Drought

Castor
Syrup

NR - Natrus Candy

Vicks Salve

555 Salve

Colverine

Country - big trouble

Swing

Hortland
Whiskey
Alum
Surgentine

Rabbits Lament