

89101

Interviewer's tape no. A collection NAFOH Accession no. 891

Merryn Ferris

Interviewer Michael O'Hara Address

Interviewee See Accession & Address See collection
Collection

Place of interview - Date Spring, 1975

Other people present -

Equipment used -

Tape: Brand - Size reel 1 mil/1.5 mil Speed -

Cassette: Brand - C-30/C-60/C-120

Amount of tape used (Side 1) - (Side 2) -

Brief description of contents: A collection of folk remedies.

Superstitions (Death of children) (Evil Eye)

Cures for: Hemorrhoids

Hangovers

Cuts

Virus

Sex drive

Hiccups

Colds

Headaches

Coughs

Stomach aches

Fevers

Sore throats

Bee stings

Warts

Arthritis

Cramps

EVERYBODY IS A DOCTOR

Merryn Ferris/Michael O'Hara
Ricker College/Folklore 1975

This is a joint project being done by Merryn Ferris and Michael O'Hara for a Folklore Class taught by Gifford Stevens at Ricker College in Houlton, Maine.

We originally wanted to do a project concerning the cures for hiccups but then went on to gather all kinds of folk remedies.

We first went to interview a woman who owns a health food store as we thought she would be a rich source of material and she was. She did not recommend us to anyone else.

We stayed in pretty much close range with our family and friends.

We got a lot of material from students who were on the Ricker College campus.

Usually in doing our interview one of us wrote down what was said and the other asked the questions.

Since this project was done in a span of three months it did not really give us the amount of time and material for a thorough research.

We feel that there is a lot more for people to learn about this subect.

Ricker College is a small liberal arts school in Houlton, Maine. Most of the students come from the New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania area.

The only other informants we used ^{were} was family and family friends who live in the Connecticut and New York area.

Conn.
Penn.
Houlton
New York
New Jersey

Theresa Del Giorno

Age: around 55

Area: The Bronx, New York

Class: B

Tess really believed in everything she gave us. She was quite willing to talk, normally she talks slowly and acts sluggish but when we went to interview her she pepped right up. She has lived with Michael's family for about a year.

All remedies she has tried herself or close relatives have and they work.

"Evil Eye"

1. If you feel drowsy and tired the Italians believed this was caused by the evil eye (Mal-ouchio). At Christmas time mothers or grandparents would teach their children a certain prayer to be said three times and after said, the person who has the evil eye would wash their face and make the sign of the cross nine times and it would disappear. You can teach the prayer only on Christmas Eve. I forgot, as you say the prayers to the person who has the evil eye, you can tell if he has it if you start to yawn. Sometimes if the person has the evil eye very strong you have to repeat the process.

2. Another way to detect if you have the evil eye: put water in a dish, say prayers to the one with the evil

Bronx, N.Y.

eye, then dip your finger in oil and shoot it fast in the water, if the oil stays with you while putting in the drops you don't have it, if it gets big and oily you have it.

"Unquiet Grave" Dreams

3. If anyone died and they came in a dream they would be telling you something either good or bad. Italians are great believers of these dreams.

A man died, they made the coffin too small for him so they couldn't put his shoes on his feet and buried him with no shoes. So he came to his wife in a dream saying that he can't walk, his feet are blistering and he needed his shoes on his feet. They opened the coffin and put his shoes next to him. No trouble after that.

4. The lady here was a friend of my mothers: She lost a daughter six years old, the mother cried constantly no letting up, the mother's aunt dreamt that she was in church and the old churches had big fountains of holy water and the aunt says what are you doing sitting under there, and the baby says my mother's tears are making my dress so heavy that I can't play. So the aunt went to visit the neice (the baby's mother) and said you better not cry anymore because your baby is not resting in peace.

Merryn Ferris/Michael O'Hara -4-

5. This same thing happened to the informant. Her daughter also died and her aunt told her not to cry so much as the child made a bad face in a dream like she was being disturbed by the crying.

'Cures'

6. If you have a splinter or a sore thumb, you make a paste of sugar and yellow soap and you put it in a thin rag and it's suppose to draw out any infection that you have. Works for a kid.

● 7. If you have a cough and you want to loosen the mucus you put two teaspoons of sugar and two teaspoons of water and you give it by the teaspoon.

8. Use any kind of tea strongly and dip a rag in it and put on poison ivy. This relieves the itching.

○ 9. Hold your breath in a brown paper bag to get rid of hiccups.

Φ 10. Take a lot of blackberry brandy to get rid of cramps. That's what my mother used to give me until I had

my appendicitis^x out.

● 11. For an adult: if you have a cough, heat up a grapefruit, make it hot and pour honey on it and eat it and it will loosen up the cough.

● 12. My father used to drink hot red wine to get rid of a dry cough.

Φ 13. My husband, for back cramps, had someone walk on his back and it did wonders.

14. For hemorrhoids, get a basin of water with ice cubes, a basin big enough to sit in but if you can't get one large enough, just use a washcloth, and put witch hazel in the water and they really shrink.

89108

Mrs. Lydia Lauder

Class: C

Age: early 50's

Area: Hartford, Connecticut

When we went to interview her she was extremely reluctant to give us any information because she owns her own health food store and believes the now generation does everything in excess, and she was afraid the government would make her close down her store for selling certain herbs that could get people high if used the wrong way. But we stayed around anyway and a lot of customers came in and Mrs. Lauder would prescribe certain things for their ailments and would say to us "You can quote me on this" and tell us the remedy. We got things at first like this but eventually as the day wore on she opened up and gave us a lot of information.

She is very talkative and interested in helping people with their problems, she is also extremely knowledgeable about herbs.

Mrs. Lauder feels that her remedies may work for some people but since everyone is different they have to find their own way. She also believes it is best to read books to find your answers.

Since we were in the store Mrs. Lauder owned there were quite a few interruptions by other customers coming in.

Hartford, Conn.

"cures"

89109

1. When your feet ache, go to the woods near your house and walk on the herbs there. You should use the herbs near you, not the ones from India and other countries.

2. Peppermint tea is good for indigestion.

3. If you get a scratch from metal, put cobwebs on it and it will heal.

4. If you believe you will become well you will. It's the faith that is important.

5. If you get a cut while in the woods you are better off taking your chances with nature. Find a leaf-a nice green one, not the kind with spikes on it and believe you will get better after putting the leaf on your cut. The leaf acts as a catalyst.

6. You have to use whats around you in order to survive.

7. Because of stress, eating the wrong things, nerves,

India

891
89110

post operative conditions, and bad elimination man builds up digestion problems and causes of cancer. Now take plain yogurt because this has good bacteria and mix it with whey and kefir grains (also a bacteria), which is beneficial to digestion because the good bacteria tends to over ride the bad bacteria in the stomach.

8. The purpose of herbs is to;

- a. Clean out the urinary tract first
- b. Secondly, to clean out the blood tract.

★ 9. To cure a sore throat, take a pill of asadophiles (concentrated bacteria), break it open and put on the throat, the pain goes away. Again an example of good bacteria over riding bad bacteria.

▲ 10. Get rid of fevers by making the person hot. (Law of sympathy or homeopathic).

11. To help in indigestion, chew your food a lot.

12. Hang raw onions in a room because they act as a magnet to catch viruses so the family doesn't get the flu.

89111

13. People who eat raw garlic don't get the flu.
(Probably because people won't go near them.)

14. Too much peanut butter and too little sex will not
give you ^{an}ance.

Φ 15. B-- complex helps to get rid of menstrual cramps.

Φ 16. Take squaw root and blue crohash for cramps.

17. Aleo - vera gets rid of gas.

18. To clean out the urinary tract (this is a german
remedy) take juniper berries by taking one the first day,
two the second day, three the third up to fourteen and then go
back down to one again on the twenty eighth day.

19. Boil spring water to get rid of bad bacteria.

20. Perriwinkle weed is a cure all. You can grow a
whole garden full for a dollar. Cures hodgekins disease,
aging, cancer. Small doses help the stomach but too large

doses induce vomiting.

89112

21. What might cure one person, may not cure another.

22. A lot of carrot juice and B - complex helps you to not burn in the sun.

* 23. Alfalfa acts as a neutralizer. It helps arthritis and canker sores by getting rid of the acidity that they cause.

24. Grind up flax and make a poultice to aid bronchial problems.

25. Rub pennyrol^{yal} oil on a dog to get rid of fleas.

26. Use vitamin B₁ to get rid of bugs on dogs. Ground it up.

27. Chapparel gets rid of cancer. (Indian folklore).

28. Hawthorne berries are good for the heart.

- 29. For sinus or nazal conditions, go to the ocean and get the salt water and sniff it, or take sea salt, add to water and sniff.

89113

Merryn Ferris

Age: 20

Area: West Hartford, Connecticut

Class: B

1. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
2. Apple cidar vingar is good for dandruff.
3. Vinegar is a good creme rinse for brunettes and lemon juice a good one for blondes. It gets rid of dirt and shampoo particles.
4. Egg white is good for a face masque.
5. Witch Hazel is a good astringent.
6. Rub a fresh lemon on your face and it acts as a freshner.
7. Put peices of cucumber on your eyes to make them

West Hartford, Conn.

89114

feel less tired.

8. Peppermint tea dispels gas.
- Δ 9. Camomile tea gets rid of headaches.
- Δ 10. Coffee helps get rid of headaches.
- 11. When you have a cold, drink plenty of fluids.
- ★ 12. Gargle with salt and water to get rid of sore throats .
- † 13. Soak bee stings in epsom salt and warm water.
14. Coconut oil makes your hair smooth and shiny.
15. Rosemary is good for the scalp.
16. Calcium builds strong bones and teeth.
17. Spinach makes you strong.
- ★ 18. Take honey and lemon for a sore throat.
- 19. Take vitamin C to get rid of colds.
- Φ 20. If you have menstrual^{cramps}, keep your feet warm.
21. Eat pumpkin seeds for a better sex drive.

89115

22. Camomile tea calms your nerves.

23. Drink a glass of warm milk before going to bed to make you feel sleepy.

24. If a pet of yours gets sprayed by a skunk, wash him in a tub of tomato juice.

25. If you get poison ivy, wash immediately with yellow soap.

Lynnette Bemis

Age: 20

Area: Worchester, Mass.

Class: C

● 1. Corn syrup is good for coughs, it coats your throat, anything smooth like that coats the throat.

2. Mullein tea is good for the respiratory system.

φ 3. Sex is good for cramps, something to take your mind off it.

φ 4. Heat helps to relieve cramps.

□ 5. Green peppers are good for colds.

Worchester, Mass.

89116

6. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
7. Belladonna plants used in small amounts cured the black plague.
8. The herb saffron is good for your heart.
9. The seeds of lanolic apricots, crushed and made into an oil is good for the skin.
10. Sesame seeds are well known as an emulsifier.
11. Witches can't eat caroway seeds.
- 12. Stand on your head to get rid of hiccups.
13. Eat pickles or olives for a hangover.
14. Pickles are good for pregnant women.

Mrs. Eleanor O'Hara

Age: 42

Area: Scarsdale, New York

Class: C

- 1. Putting raw garlic or onion over a baby's crib or basonet when they have a cold helps to cure the sinuses.

Scarsdale, N.Y.

2. Wrap a new born baby tightly with muslin so his bones will grow straight..

89117

3. Wrap salt pork with a tourniquet around the throat to relieve swollen glands.

4. Senna pods made into a tea can be used as a laxative.

5. Crushed Italian parsley stems can be used as a suppository.

6. To ward away evil spirits the Italians used a devil's horn.

□ 7. Eat raw onions to cure a cold.

8. Eat olives to increase sex drive.

* 9. Cedar vinegar is good for arthritis.

* 10. Wearing a copper bracelet is good for relieving arthritis.

11. Bleeding a person was a cure all for lots of things.

Craig Coulter

89118

Age: 21

Area: Hartsdale, New York

Class: B

▲ 1. Anytime you feel a fever coming on, go out and drink beer. Always works with me.

□ 2. For a cold take vitamin "C" tablets and a shot of alcohol, preferably gin.

Scot Berry

Age: 21

Area: Presque Isle, Maine

Class: B

♥ 1. To cure warts, cut a potato in half, rub it on the wart, and plant the potato. It works.

John Fallow

Age: 21

Area: Mass.

Class: B

1. Put mud on a cut to draw out whatever might have got in it.

*Hartsdale, N.Y.
Bequele
Mass*

89119

- ★ 2. For a sore throat gargle with salt water.

Perter Letournaeau

Age: 20

Area: Conn.

Class: B

○ 1. This is my brothers' cure (for hiccups) and he says it works. Take a glass of water and plug your ears like this (sticks his thumbs in his ears) and drink a glass of water, like this (Motions to pick up a glass with his thumbs still in his ears)

Ann Benson

Age: 20

Area: White Lake, New York

Class: B

* 1. If you wear a copper bracelet, it's to ward off arthritis. My grandmother told me that.

■ 2. This is for stomachaches and it works I've used it myself. Put a shot of whiskey in a half pint container and fill it as full as you can with blueberries, cover it tight and let it sit for a week. Store it in your refrigerator.

Use as much as is needed. I've never seen my refrigerator without it. My parents don't believe in it, but my grandmother

*Conn.
White Lake, N.Y.*

89120

won't be with out it.

2. A basic one is a mazuza in your doorway. We're Jewish and we have a mazuza in our doorway. Its just to protect the house and everyone in it. A "God bless you" kind of deal.

Amy Spencer

Age: 20

Area: Born in Conn. but considers Maine her home.

Class: B

1. Make a compress of comphrey leaves and put it on swelling or vericose ^{se} ^c vains. It will help it get better.

2. This is something I use myself, in all honesty. If you have phlegm in your throat or if you have a cold, mix one tablespoon of honey with one tablespoon of apple cider vinger and fill the cup up with hot tap water, stir it and drink.

Eloise Martin

Age: 17.

Area: Born in Antigua, West Indies and moved to Queens, New York when she was ten.

Class: B

1. (The following four cures are for hiccups) Put a paper bag over your head.

Queens, N.Y.
Conn.
Antigua, West Indies

89121

o 2. Blow out a match.

o 3. For a baby put a match (not lit) in his hair.

o 4. Scare them.

† 5. For a bee sting, cut a lemon in half and rub it.

6. To get rid of an earache put a marble in his ear.

Yolanda Brantford

Age: 19

Area: Texas

Class: B

o 1. Scare them right when you think the hiccups coming.

o 2. Hold your ears and swallow water, that makes them (hiccups) go away too.

□ 3. Honey and lemon for a cold.

□ 4. When you have a cold, you sweat it out, you put piles and piles of blankets on you. I swear it, it's true.

□ 5. If you have a cold you drink brandy or cognac.

Jess

89122

6. (I believe this is for popped ears) You pour warm water into your hands and you tilt your head back and you pour it in, (Motioning with her hand over her ear) you hold it there and you let it sink in, it bubbles a little. Then you let it drip out, and you yawn a little sort of stretch your mouth. It should clear up , but you can only use it three times a day. When you use this water thing you hear much too loud, everything is too clear.

8. When you get something in your eye you hold the lid up and look in the light and let someone else blow in it. (the eye) My uncle in Austin uses it.

Renee Rousso

Age: 19

Area: Alabama

Class: B

1. Take a penny and tape it on your wart for maybe a day, then throw it into the street where someone will find it. Whoever picks it up will get your wart.

2. For acne rub garlic and lemon juice on your pimples..

3. Another one for warts is put a few drops of blood from the wart on a rag and bury the rag.

Alabama

89123

† 4. Mud on a bee sting.

○ 5. (The following three cures are for hiccups) Teaspoon of sugar.

○ 6. Breathe into a plastic bag.

○ 7. Take a glass of water and take ten sips real fast without breathing in between.

△ 8. Put some whiskey on your forehead, it'll make your headache go away.

● 9. For a cough put aspirin, honey and whiskey together and heat it and drink it.

□ 10. Eat chopped up roasted onions for a cold. It's good for old people.

11. This is for constipation take ginkgo tree seeds, I don't think you can get them up here, and you simmer them in butter and you eat them. You have to eat a lot of them.

○ 12. Peanut butter is good for hiccups.

13. This is for freckles, put some buttermilk and lemon juice together, put it on your face and sit in a warm place. It will take your freckles away.

14. This is a superstition, if someone is lying on the floor your not supposed to step over them if you do you have to step back over them and walk around or it's bad luck.

15. Your^{le} not supposed to sit on the floor to eat a meal because it means a friend of yours has died.

16. If you drop a knife on the floor it means someone is coming to visit from the direction that it's pointing.

17. For chigger bites take a bath in hot salt water.

18. Another way to kill chiggers is to cover them with fingernail polish.

Renee was pretty sure that most of these worked though she has not tried them all except she did say that a friend of hers tried the freckle cure and it didn't help.

89125

Nick Pocaro

Age: 21

Area: Penn.

Class: B

1. For hiccups drink soda, drinking water blowing in a paper bag won't work.

2. For a cold drink blackberry brandy.

Stacy Schroeder

Age: 20

Area: Born in Cal. but considers Iran her home.

Class: B

1. In Germany when babies cry they give them a table-
spoon of brandy. Thats an old cure and it works too.

2. Teaspoon of suger for the hiccups.

3. When my mother would get the hiccups my gnanfather
would hold her upside down and shake her.

Donna Dube

Age: 19

Area: Mass.

Class: B

Mass
Germany
Penn.
Cal
Iran

89126

● 1. For hiccups take a spoon full of suger[^] and mix it with water and drink it. It really does work.

● 2. For a cough take a half of teaspoon of honey or molasses.

▲ 3. For a fever put a cold wet cloth over your head.

4. For a nice complexion you use one egg, a teaspoon of honey and oatmeal. You blend them togeather and put it on your face for about five minutes , when you wash it off your face is as smooth as anything.

Wayne Fletcher

Age: 22

Area: Penn.

Class: B

● 1. Hiccups, take your finger and lick it, full lick not a little lick and stick it in a bowl of suger, then stick it in the back of your mouth and touch that thing that hangs down.

★ 2. To clear a sore throat you take a glass of water and a free flowing salt shaker hold it over the glass upside down and count to three. Place water glass firmly in hand take a quick slug and gargle. Thats how you do it.

Penn.

89127

3. Whenever my mother sees a bird dead, a crow it has to be a crow that she killed by a car or something or if it dies in her back yard, she has a dream that night and she can predict that someone will die and she knows who from the dream.

4. Apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Jeff Sonn

Age: 19

Area: New Rochell, New York

Class: B

▲ 1. When you have a fever, mud packing all over the body.
My ma did it to me.

Dave Milgrim

Age: 19

Area: Symrna, New York

Class: B

1. If your hands are cold chop up onions and mix them with powderd pot and rub it all over your hands. I tried this once and it works.

2. Burdock tea is good for boils.

*New Rochell N.Y.
Symrna N.Y.*

89128

o 3. For hiccups, take cold water and tilt your head back and let it drip down a drop at a time. This always works

4. Cure for mono, this I know works from first hand experience, go outside every day and smoke a joint. I had mono and I got rid of it in three weeks.

† 5. For bee stings mud or butter.

6. If you got a hangover before you go to sleep take a shot of tequila, two aspirin, tablespoon of honey and a half quart of water the colder the better.

Paula Papuzynski

Age: 15

Area: Haddonfield, New Jersey

Class: B

o 1. For hiccups hold your breath.

o 2. (Hiccups) Take a spoon full of suger and drink water.

□ 3. Colds, drink lots of water to make you go to the bathroom a lot and go to sleep.

† 4. For bee stings put silver on it.

Haddonfield, N.J.

† 5. Muds good (for bee stings) too.

89129

▲ 6. Fever, alcohol rub and cold compresses.

■ 7. Orange juice is good for upset stomachs.

† 8. Onions are also good for bee stings.

Ashley Cary

Age: 18

Area: Louisiana

Class: B

† 1. For bee stings rub tobacco on the bite.

† 2. Baking soda works too (for bee stings) one time I got bit on the tongue and it worked.

○ 3. If you scare someone the hiccups go away. That one works the best.

▲ 4. Fevers, alcohol rubs and real cold water on rags on the head and your neck. You have to keep them real cold.

□ 5. For a cold get under a lot of blankets and sweat it out.

Louisiana

89130

6.. For an earache put alcohol in your ear. It may sting at first but it works..

* 7% Sore throat, gargle with warm salt water.

Δ 8. Tiger balm (a chinese ointment) for headaches, rub it on your temples.

9% Wear a stick of garlic around your neck it cures anything.

10% For a black eye put steak on it, raw.

Bill Papuzynski

Age: 22

Area: Haddonfield, New Jersey

Class: B

1% Root beer is good for oral malfunctions, if you cut your mouth or if your tooth gets knocked out. Thats what my mother did when I fell down and put my tooth through my lip, made me drink root beer.

2. Kiss it and make it better.

Haddonfield, N.J.

89131

▲ 3. When you have a fever or the chills take a shot of whiskey.

4. " If you want to be happy the rest of your life,
Never make a pretty woman your wife
So, from my per-son-al point of view,
Get an ugly girl to marry you."

† 5. You put ice on a bee sting and it draws the stinger out.

■ 6. Cola syrup is good for upset stomachs.

7. Cold hands or cold feet, you cut an onion in half and rub it on them. It works.

Michael O'Hara

Age: 19

Area: Scarsdale, New York

Class: B

* 1. Black pepper prevents arthritis.

2. Pickled ginger root prevents heart ailments.

Scarsdale, N.Y.

89132

3. Eat prun^es if your^e constipated.
4. Put mud on burns.
- ,▲ 5. Starve a cold, feed a fever.
- 6. Drink orange juice for colds.
7. Eat local honey to get rid of allergies.
- Δ 8. Drink camomille tea to get rid of headaches.
- 9.▲ Apples are good for your teeth.
10. Beets are good for your blood.
11. Spinich makes you strong.
- 12. ~~Drink~~ scotch to get rid of a cold.
- 13. Honey and lemon for a cold.
- ▲ 14. When a fever gets very high dip the person in a cold bath, to bring it down.

89133

In order to create a sense of organization we have made up a list of major categories with symbols after them to show which cures belong together that are similar in diagnosis.

1. Hiccups-○
2. Colds-□
3. Headaches-△
4. Coughs-●
5. Stomach aches-■
6. Fevers-▲
7. Sore throats-★
8. Bee stings-†
9. Warts-⊗
10. Arthritis-✱
11. cramps φ