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With Josie and Jim MacNeil, Big Pond During a recent visit with Josie and Jim MacNeil, they told us that people would take children down the mines for whooping cough, for "a change of air--many's the one saved." They'd take them down there and take them around for an hour or so. "Whether it was the compressed air or the change of air, whatever it was, that cured them. It was common, lots of kids...," Josie MacNeil: They took bread, loaf bread--bread and butter, like--didn't make sandwiches--the bread that was in the can, in the mine all day--and kids had blister, sore, or a bite of something--used to make poultices of the bread • In those days all we had was Surprise soap--brown soap. It's something like Sunlight soap today--you can get it in bars, and it's kind of yel? low. Boil butter in a tablespoon on the stove. When butter boils, there's always a foam on the top from the salt. So you'll have to take all that salt off of it, and have nothing left but the oil of the but? ter. And you put it on the bread, right off of the stove, because then it's steril? ized. White bread, as a rule. (Bread that had been in the mine?) Well, we used it if we had it, you know, if it was available. And if we were going to plan that, the men would save it, to have it left in their lunch pail for that purpose, (So they felt bread that had been in the mines...) Had something in it that was different from other bread. Because it always tastes dif? ferent. Jim MacNeil: Oh yeah, but even bread that's not in the mine.... Josie: Not in the mine at all, will do the trick. Yeah, but that was a thing they had, a fa? ble like they had, that if they had the mine bread it'd be better. Now there's the piece of bread, eh? You put it on a saucer, and you put water on it. Then you get a piece of clean cotton, and you squeeze the water out of it. Not all, but keep it moist. And then you'd spread it out on this sterilized cotton. And then you'd wait till the butter would boil in the tablespoon, a big tablespoon. And as soon as you got that foam on the top of that butter, take it all off, every bit of it. And then, what oil was left, you'd pour it on that piece of bread. And then you just turn it all over and put it right on the boil. (Where does the Surprise soap come in?) Well, you could rub a little Surprise soap--when you'd squeeze the water out of the bread, you'd rub a little bit of this Surprise soap on it. Whether it was sup? posed to keep that soft or keep it clean or what, they did that. And after that went on, the butter went on, and the boil got treated like that. Jim: I think most any soap. Josie: But it was the bar soap we used those days. We'd never use soft soap, like they used to make. It was the bought soap. Jim, you remember (the fellow,) he went to the doctor's about three months, to get cured. The back of his neck was nothing but a mass of sores. And I treated him for a week, and he never had any after. I told him to stop eating pork while he had boils. (You felt that pork caused boils?) Well, it's too rich for your blood. If your blood is that rich that it gets bad, and it breaks out, you shouldn't eat pork. That was an old, old saying, to keep away from the pork. Jim: (My father used to say,) "That is the healthiest thing could happen to you, to have a boil--to have poison coming out like that. I wish I could get one of those--it's in your system and that's where it came out." Josie: But they're too scientific today. (Sties on the eye, I think they were more common at one time.) Yes, they were.



And they used to put black tea on them. Like you'd make a teabag, and you'd boil the tea. And when it would be just warm enough, they'd put it on the eye. And they'd have one of those shields. (Like a patch?) Yeah, right. Celluloid. The elastic would be on it, and it would hold on the eye, and the teabag would be underneath that, and it would take all the poison out. Got to be black--old-fashioned black tea. (Did they use eyestones here?) I don't know. I heard of them, but I know years and years ago the real old, old doctors-- was it flax seed?--just one seed--and it would turn like jelly in the eye that was sore, but it would take all the poison out. (And would it pick up a speck caught in your eye?) Right, But it'd be sore while it was doing it. It'll form a kind of a jelly in the eye--whatever was in the flax that would do it--and it would cure whatever it was. They say the men in the mine used to get coal dust in their eyes. They used to go out and do that, (Put a flax seed in it,) Yeah, I remember that,

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