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Mary and Dan MacNeil sat one night in Sydney and told us these cures: For a cold, rub goose grease on your chest and then put black wool on top of it. Sore throat: black wool with a little kerosene on it, wrapped around the throat before going to sleep. For measles, sheep manure tea. This seems to have been a general cure-all all over Cape Breton. Drink a mare's milk, by the spoonful, for whooping cough. Goat's milk is said to be good for tuberculosis. A cure for headache is vinegar on a cloth on the forehead. Also, a speck of salt petre with a little milk settled the blood and thus relieved headache. Sulphur and molasses was taken in the spring to clear the system, after so much salted food through the winter. (Tommy Peggy MacDonald once told us that when the scholars were walking to school, they would come in all sweaty and stand around the stove • and the heavy odor of sulphur and molasses would come out in the sweat.) To keep warm, pepper in the shoes. On a cold night before going to bed they would make a drink of a speck of ginger, molasses, hot water and milk. For toothache, fill a bag with coarse salt and put in oven till hot as you can stand • then put against cheek. There were lots of cures for earache but Mary said the best is boiled butter, fresh not salted. Dip cotton, cool a bit and put in the ear. They would also use castor oil, even a drop of rum. She said she once stepped on a rusty nail and it started to fester. Her grandmother boiled salted butter and poured it on the foot and put a cloth on. The next day there was no pain and it started to heal. If you had a sprained ankle, they'd wrap it in an eel skin, Mary Harrington: "If ever you hurt yourself, like if you hurt your arm, and it wasn't broken but it was paining terrible • you couldn't do anything with it and the doctors they all put it in hot water • you take goose grease if you can get it and just grease it like that. And the first thing that'll be blue. Bruised blood comes right to the top of the skin." Use goose grease for a cold: one teaspoon with molasses, warm, to cut flem and carry the cold through the bowels. Goose grease with dry mustard to make a poultice for chest cold. The grease prevents the mustard from burning. Cow manure mixed with linseed meal and made warm will draw poison from any? thing. Dogwood berries are good to take for bad vomiting, For bad stomach, make tea by steeping the flower and stem. It is bitter. Worms: \*You'd put one drop of turpentine in a spoonful of sugar. Two drops the second day, till you come to nine drops (the ninth day). Then you quit. The worms go for the sugar and get the turpentine. That was a sure cure." Emily Seymour: "For colds, if they had a chest cold they'd make a mustard plaster. Dried mustard and flour, cold water. Make a paste. And put it between two cloths, thin cheesecloth. And they'd boil onions and sugar and make a syrup of it and take that for colds. Oh, you'd have to put a little bit of water but not too much • slice the onions up. If you had been vomiting for any length of time or your stomach'd be upset, they'd give you lime water. They'd put the lime in a quart bottle • common lime that you buy; loose lime • fill it up with water and let it soak for a while and then drink the water off the lime. (Aline and Alex Romard had told us that to get rid of a boil anywhere on the body, take nutmeg, bore a hole through and wear it on a string around your neck. Mrs.



Seymour had heard of that but said:) Here they'd make plasters out of soap and molasses. They'd put it on the palm of their hand. The green soap. They'd take a knife and smooth it all out • then they'd put molasses in it and make a real ointment. And they'd put it on a piece of cloth with a little hole cut in the cloth, and they'd put that on the boil and draw it out like that. Well now if you had a serious cut • and you could have a serious cut • you go to the woods and you pick the fir balsams. On the fir trees, at all times but especially in the spring time of the year and in the summertime • there's a big bubble. Well they sliced them off • they'd take perhaps 3 or 4 • as many as they want 'cause certainly you could go every day in the spring and cut new ones • and they'd fill this cut right full of this balsam. Squeeze it out. Then you'd just put the wound together, as close as you could, you know? Even if you couldn't get it together it would heal, and tie it up and leave it for 9 days and not open it. And by the time the 9 days were up that would be pretty well healed. Never, never get infection. You used cloth bandage. People used to have things washed and sterilized and put away • put it in the oven and make it good and hot. And they'd tear off strips. They'd use old cotton sheets and pillowcases. They'd save everything like that. Never throw away nothing. Everybody had their bundle in their homes, CAPE BK&TW SHOPPING PLAZA SYDNEY RIVER • OPEN DAILY 'TIL 10 P, M, DEPARTMENT STORES A Division of the F.W.Woolworth Co IF YOU TAKE AWAY OUR LOW PRICES YOU'VE GOT A REGULAR DEPARTMENT STORE Limited Cape Breton's Magazine/23