

[Inside Front cover - Amelia Cook: Great-Grandmother's Cures](#)ISSUE : [Issue 24](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1979/12/1

Amelia Cook: Great-Grandmother's Cures My great-grandmother was an herb doctor. And my grandmother. My mother knew all those old cures, you know. And they were passed down from one to another. There isn't a tree that grows in Nova Scotia, I'm sure, that I don't know what it is. And my mother was the same way. Today, the kids may know a maple leaf and they may not. But then, they'd know what they could be used for. I was born in Port Hood, Har- bourside • at that time it was Seaside. But Grandmother was born over here in what they call Tracadie. And they'd come all hours of the night for her when people got sick. Well, she was a clear doctor, that's the whole amount, without a license I'd say. And she'd cure everything, from bel? lyache up. They'd come if they had pneumonia. She used to use bran poultices. And Mama used to tell me about Granny telling her just according to one poultice got cool, they'd put on another one. They'd put the bran in water to make it damp and to msike it just as hot as they could bear, and put it in between two cloths and lay it over your lung. And according as one was cold, you'd put another one on. I've done it here my? self, when the kids have been sick and you didn't know what to do. Here (in Guysbor? ough) the doctor was two miles away, you had to pay cash for everything, and you had to do all the home doctoring you could yourself. I never had a kid in the hospi? tal in my life. I used to take herring • it was Granny's remedy • and split the herring open and bind it on the little thing's feet. Salt herring on the soles of the feet. And look boy, I'm telling you, the fever would cook that herring on those feet, and when you'd take it off, it would criMb right up. It Amelia at 16, with her mother and friend would draw all the fever out of them. It was really good. My children would have a cold here and I'd be frightened they might develop pneumonia, you know. I used to take and make kind of a pancake and fry it in goose grease and take a red woolen cloth • they liked that the best because they said that there was a cure in red woolen. I'd fry this pancake in goose grease, then I would have a sau? cer of goose grease and I'd make it right hot, and I'd grease my children in front on their throat and on their back. And I'd put a pancake on each side of it • one on the chest and one on the back, when they'd go to bed. And in the daytime I'd never let them go out without a red woolen cloth and some grease on their throat • no sir, although they say now that that opens the pores. (Will any kind of wool work?) Yes, but red was the best. I wore red shirts next to my kids' bodies for years and years • and they hardly ever took the cold. Bu-t my little girl used to take croup. And I used to be so scared. That's the way I lost my first baby. My god, was I scared. I'd even, look, when she'd be real sick, I'd picture her grave out there. And if it was raining I could see the water running through it. That's how scared I was. I used to take a cloth and wring it out in warm water and put it around her neck. And I'd grease her with the camphorated oil. I'd buy a bottle of olive oil and a cake of camphor gum and dissolve that. And the warm cloths would kind of drive it in. And every time she had a bit of a cold, she

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34