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## SURVIVING FOLKTALES AND HERBAL LORE AMONG THE SHINNECOCK INDIANS OF LONG ISLAND

By Ensign LLOYD G. CARR and CARLOS WESTEY<sup>1</sup>

Folktales of wandering ghosts or spirits which play a conspicuous role in the mental life of Algonkian tribes are frequently encountered among the descendants of the Long Island group of Shinnecock Indians. These simple tales represent almost the last survival of an earlier age in the life of this once important maritime New England Algonkian group. Indeed ghosts or spirits are so important in the thoughts of all individuals in the community that at night, we were told, each woman or girl is assured of an escort when approaching the many dubious areas of the reservation where ghosts are known to abide.

The exact style in which the tales included in this collection were related by the informants has been preserved, their statements having, in the main, been taken down verbatim. The beginning of the writers' studies of Shinnecock folklore and ethnobotany are here presented.

Ethnological attention, it should be noted, has never been focussed as it should have been on the Indian tribal communities existing on Long Island. That they still survive as descendants of at least six specific tribal groups has been established by the authors. Investigations in the field of traditional ethnology and especially in acculturative processes are being undertaken and offer promising results. Very little material has been published on these Indian folk communities; practically nothing exists concerning economic and social behavior except what appears in several short reports by Harrington.<sup>2</sup>

Harrington's comments in 1903 on the folklore situation are appropriate here.

Very little was obtained in the way of folk-lore or traditions, but it is evident that such exists. More time devoted to the subject would doubtless rescue more words from oblivion, would accumulate a stack of folk-tales and would, in all probability unearth many ethnological treasures from among the musty contents of the old garrets and lofts of the Shinnecock Indian Reservation.<sup>3</sup>

The Shinnecock today number approximately four hundred persons of whom two hundred reside on the reservation of eight hundred acres situated on Shinnecock Bay, located two and one-half miles west of the town of Southampton and one hundred miles east of New York City. They also pos-

<sup>1</sup> Carlos Westey (Red Thunder Cloud) has resided among the Long Island Shinnecock for two years, making notes on folklore, customs, and economy, and collecting specimens under provision made by the Museum of the American Indian (Heye Foundation) New York. Lloyd G. Carr carried out ethnological field work with Dr. Frank G. Speck and gave primary attention to survival foods and herbs; Mr. Carr is responsible for botanical identities and data concerning the uses of the plants. Acknowledgment is due Dr. Speck and Mr. William C. Morrow for their help in connection with this study.

<sup>2</sup> M. R. Harrington, Past and Present of the Shinnecock Indians (*Southern Workman* 32: 282-9, 1903); Shinnecock Notes (*JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE* 16: 37-9, 1903); An Ancient Village Site of the Shinnecock Indians (*Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 22: 5, 1924).

<sup>3</sup> Harrington, An Ancient Village Site.

sess four hundred acres of woodland at Hampton Bays, referred to by them as "West Woods." The tribe is tax free and is governed by three trustees who are elected the first Tuesday in April and serve one-year terms.

The men are hunters and fishermen, tapping the resources of abundant salt-marsh and sea life for home consumption only. The soil of the reservation is quite rich. However, all reservation farming activities are carried on by Whites who lease the land for certain periods.

Formerly before the biotic balance was broken by the advances of the white man the Shinnecock enjoyed an abundance of game in their respective areas of dominance. An account in 1670 by Daniel Denton<sup>4</sup> gives some idea of the biotic picture.

The greatest part of the Island is very full of timber, as Oaks—white and red. Walnut-trees, Chestnut-trees, which yield stores of Mast for swine, etc.

For wild beasts, there is Deer, Bear, Wolves, Foxes, Racoons, Otters, Musquashes and Skunks. Wild fowl, there is great store of, as Turkeys, Heath-hens, Quails, Part-ridges, Pigeons, Cranes, Geese of several sorts, Brants, Widgeons, Teal, and divers others. Upon the south side of Long Island in the winter, lie store of Whales and Grampusses, which the inhabitants begin with small boats to make a trade, catching to their no small benefit. Also, an innumerable multitude of seals, which make an excellent oyle; they lie all the winter upon some broken Marshes and Beaches, or bars of sand before mentioned, might be easily got were there some skilful men would undertake it.

At the present time beadwork is practised by a few Shinnecock, while others make and sell a type of brush made of oak splints, called a "scrub," which is employed in cleaning pots and pans. It is interesting to note that the "scrub" still survives. In 1903 Harrington<sup>5</sup> made mention of it,

Serviceable brushes for cleaning posts are made by splitting the ends of a white oak stick into small splints, the process of whittling and splitting taking about half an hour for each 'scrub.'

Their ethnic status is that of a mixed group with the tendency to live as Indians becoming less and less. Inter-marriages take place with the Wampanoag of Massachusetts, Montauk, Poosepatuck, and Matinecock Indians of adjacent residence on Long Island, and the Apache. The language has not survived.

The tales, herbals and other Shinnecock material could not have been secured without the farsightedness of the older Shinnecock people whose patience and cooperation enabled us to procure much interesting data.<sup>7</sup>

It is of no small interest to know that three or four of the biotic areas of Long Island, differing floristically, are still inhabited by descendants of the Algonkian-speaking peoples of these respective minor life zones.

For instance, the far eastern extremity of the Island possesses biomes dis-

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Denton, *A Brief Description of New York, formerly New Amsterdam* (London, 1670).

<sup>5</sup> Harrington, *Shinnecock Notes* 38.

<sup>6</sup> The writers add the use of Black Oak (*Quercus velutina* Lam.).

<sup>7</sup> Informants were: Stella Virginia Arch, Lillian Harvey, Fredrich Arch, Anthony Beaman, Eliza Beaman.

tinctive from the pine barrens of the south central portion and from the glacial hilly coast of the northern shore. And in the extremity of the island are two settlements of the Montauk people. The Shinnecock inhabit a territory characterized by moors and hills in oak associations, with close proximity to water.

Some thirty miles west are the Poosepatuck or Unquachog (Thomas Jefferson)<sup>8</sup> whose environment is primarily pine barrens, equally adjacent to maritime conditions, on the south shore. Recent investigations by Red Thunder Cloud have revealed that a group of Matinecock are living on the north shore near Cold Spring. Here the environment is that of the hilly rocky shore of the Sound country. In each of these groups opportunity for field investigation is offered, to test the working principles of ecology and acculturation. Our study of the Shinnecock represents a mere beginning at coverage of the material which is obtainable in this region. Montauk data is at present being assembled by us for future treatment.

As the field worker analyzes peoples situated in different biotic areas he becomes conscious of the correlation existing between cultural patterns and a given environment. In perspective he notes that the cultural pattern reflects the nature of the environment to which the group is exposed and molds itself in accord and in harmony with the natural area involved. Since the Shinnecock inhabit a coastal area near the sea, their cultural pattern reflects a maritime focus in one of its local environments, undergoing drastic change through White acculturation.

Since animals play such a significant role in the life activities of native groups it is not surprising that they are characterized so frequently in their folklore. In five of the folktales recorded here animals play an important part, three pertain to physical happenings of a singular and odd nature without the intervention of a vital medium, and signify the presence of a ghost.

#### ANECDOTES

##### 1. *The Ghost of Quioque Bridge*<sup>9</sup>

When we used to go over to the Old Quioque Swamp Bridge at night, the horse would always see something to frighten him because he would stand up on his hind feet and froth at the mouth and his nose would get just as big.

When he came down on his feet you couldn't hold him. How he would go.

##### 2. *The Old Woman*<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Lillian Harvey states that at one time while living in a house on Shinnecock that was considered queer, she and her husband Ernest Harvey witnessed a startling occurrence.

It was their custom to lock one of the bedroom doors by inserting a clothes-pin in the latch. After having done so one evening, they retired to bed. Something woke

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Jefferson, for instance, pointed out that the Poosepatuck, although living in marked proximity to the Shinnecock, could understand each other only with difficulty.

<sup>9</sup> The refreshing foresight of Stella Virginia Arch in realizing the importance of recording the last remnants of surviving Shinnecock lore has resulted in No. 1. Also she has been instrumental in affording rich information on herbal cures.

<sup>10</sup> The next six stories were contributed by Lillian Harvey and Fredrich Arch.

Ernest Harvey and upon awaking he saw that the door was open and a white-clad form of a woman stood in the doorway.

He aroused his wife and she awoke startled to see the weird figure in the doorway. Her husband quickly threw a bottle of medicine at the apparition and it vanished.

Upon relating her experience to Ella Cuffee the next day, the older woman told her that it was the spirit of her sister Date. Both women took the sign for a death omen and not long afterwards Andrew Cuffee, the blind ex-whaler, died.

### 3. *The Old Sewing Woman*

Fredrich Arch and Lillian Harvey reside in the house of old Aunt Charity Kellis on the western end of the Shinnecock Reservation. It was always the custom of Aunt Charity Kellis to sew and mend, an art at which she was quite skilled.

The sound of clinking scissors has been heard by Lillian Harvey coming from that corner of the house where the Indian woman spent her time sewing. The sound is often heard.

### 4. *The Lamp Chimney*

At one time Lillian Harvey and her husband were sitting at the table when all of a sudden the lamp chimney broke in fine pieces, as though hit by someone with a stick. They both considered this to signify the presence of a spirit.

### 5. *The White Horse*

A large white horse is said to roam the reservation at night. Various people have seen it.

### 6. *The Dog*

Lillian Harvey was walking near the water one night when she saw a large dog about the size of a calf walking along. She watched it for some time until suddenly it vanished. Upon arriving home she related what she had seen and her husband said that she must have seen the big dog that legend says roams Shinnecock. Stella Arch says that she has been told that he is a great big fellow and drags a heavy chain.

### 7. *The Sound of Boots*

Fredrich Arch was engaged in conversation one day many years ago with his mother just before dusk when the sound of someone walking in boots was heard. He looked around but saw no one but he followed the sound for about fifty feet and it neared his house and stopped. He knew without a doubt that it was a ghost.

### 8. *The Cat<sup>11</sup>*

I had been gunning and it was just about daylight when I passed the house of old Dave Scudders and saw a cat in the window sill, but when I walked up there there was nothing to be seen. The cat was a big black one.

### 9. *The Woman with the Apron*

Once when walking by Al Davis's house I saw a woman waving an apron in the direction of Em Thompson's house and two days later she passed away. Em Thompson died.

### 10. *Horse and Buggy*

The horse and buggy starts down the back road, goes down by Harvey Thompson's house and disappears.

<sup>11</sup> The remaining five tales were given by Anthony and Eliza Beaman who took a hearty interest in the undertaking. It is to be noted that Mrs. Beaman is a Montauk from Easthampton, while Mr. Beaman is of Shinnecock descent. Both have contributed herbal material.

11. *The Indian Death Whoop*

We have heard a low moaning sound that goes from one end of Shinnecock to the other and it sounds like an old Indian moaning. It is not long after we have heard this sound that someone passes away.

Anthony Beaman relates the following episode in regard to the death whoop.

I was in the boat down in the East Creek fire lighting when I heard this mournful Indian whoop. It started from the head of the East Creek and went down the water front till it got to the west end of the bay near the old Indian cemetery and it stopped. That winter eight of our Indians passed off.

12. *Allen's Death*

We were asleep many years ago and woke up in the night when we heard something heavy sliding off the roof. At the same time Allen Bunn who lived a mile away died. We know that this was an omen of Allen's death.

BOTANICAL CURATIVES AND THEIR EFFICACY AS MEDICINAL AGENTS

Considering that seventeen of the thirty-six listed herbal cures are of European origin and play a conspicuous role in English herbology, it is evident that the latter has had a decided influence upon the Shinnecock picture of botanical curatives. It will be noticed also that some of these plant introductions are known to the Mohegan<sup>12</sup> and Narragansett tribes, who have equally experienced English influence. Since the Shinnecock fall into the same linguistic classification<sup>13</sup> it is probably not too strange that certain of the cures are common to both. It is interesting to note that seven native botanical cures are known to both the Shinnecock and the Mohegan for identical uses, while uses of eight of the European introductions are familiar to both.

When a final synthetic pattern is worked out for herbals used by the Eastern tribal groups something of continuity and harmony will ensue, and European influences on the indigenous pattern may be evaluated and recorded.

It not infrequently happens that the field investigator finds that one informant will know only one use for a certain herb, while another may be acquainted with two or three, unknown to the first. This would indicate the necessity of wide acquaintance with members of the tribe to insure thoroughness and completeness of record.

Various Shinnecock recall many instances where herbals triumphed over the efforts of physicians to cure or help an ailing person. Such herbal victories are strongly remembered and stressed whenever some of the less credulous members of the band express a desire for outside treatment.

<sup>12</sup> Reference is made to G. Tantaquidgeon, *Mohegan Medicinal Practices, Weather Lore and Superstitions* (Forty-third Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1928) 264-79.

<sup>13</sup> T. Michelson, *Preliminary Report on the Linguistic Classification of Algonquian Tribes* (Twenty-eighth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1912). See also F. G. Speck, *Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut* (Forty-third Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1928) 210.

Unquestionably, the herbs listed contain active constituents or principles useful for the purpose which they are applied. For instance the onion is known to contain an oil that carries a bactericidal principle; the seaweeds contain iodine, while pine oils furnish healing terpenes, and so forth. It should be remembered that the use of herbs is a customary part of Shinnecock life and that they make no more ado in employing them, than one does in eating a meal to supply a need.

The herbs were formerly ground in mortars described by Harrington<sup>14</sup> in 1903.

These mortars were made of sections of the trunk of the pepperidge tree, sometime called tupelo or sour-gum (*Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh.), the wood of which is noted for its toughness and freedom from splitting. The hollows in the mortar were made by laying on live coals and scraping out the charred portion, renewing the coals until the required depth was reached.

A stone pestle was used for grinding the herbs.

1. Wild cherry (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.). a. Steep the buds, leaves or bark in boiling water. Add sugar to the mixture and take some every half hour if the cold is a bad one, and every hour if the cold is not so heavy (Stella V. Arch). b. Eliza Beaman, an inter-married Montauk, uses honey in place of sugar. c. Ada Bunn chooses molasses in preference to honey or sugar. [Wild cherry is also used as above by the Mohegan, Narragansett and Rappahannock.] d. The cherries themselves are put in a bottle and allowed to stand; then you take them for stomach trouble. Some add sugar (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.] e. Wild cherry leaves and boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.) are steeped together and I remember my grandmother added molasses to the mixture. It is very good for colds (S. V. Arch). [Combination known to Mohegan.]

2. Mullen (*Verbascum Thapsus* L.). European. Steep the leaves and add sugar as this is very good for a cold (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

3. Low century (specimen not seen). The leaves and roots are steeped and taken as a laxative (S. V. Arch).

4. Indian posey (*Barbarea vulgaris* R. Br.). European. Steep the leaves of Indian posey and take the solution every half hour to cure coughs (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

5. Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees.). a. Use the root of sassafras for tea. Steep it and sweeten it when you drink it (S. V. Arch). b. Sassafras and wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens* L.) are brewed together as a beverage (S. V. Arch).

6. Sweet flag (*Acorus calamus* L.). a. Dry the root and cook it in sugar and eat it as it is good for your breath (S. V. Arch). b. Nibble a piece to dry your blood (A. Beaman).

7. Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.). a. Take boneset tea for a cold. It is very bitter. Boneset we drink as a tea for colds and it reduces the fever (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.] b. Steep some boneset, let it get cold, then

<sup>14</sup> Harrington, Shinnecock Notes 38.

drink it and always take a hot cup before going to bed and you will perspire (E. Beaman).

8. Sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina* (L.) Coulter). Steep sweet fern leaves and rub the solution on the skin to cure an itch (huckleberry itch, Eliza Beaman).

9. Plantain (*Plantago major* L.). Eurasia. a. A cure for sore eyes. Steep the leaves and bath the eyes with the medicine (S. V. Arch). b. Plantain leaves are pounded until moist and put on a rag which is applied to sore spots to draw out the inflammation (A. Beaman).

10. Catnip (*Nepeta cataria* L.). European. Dried catnip leaves are smoked in a pipe for rheumatism (A. Beaman).

11. Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare* L.). European. a. Steep the leaves of tansy and drink the medicine for inside pains. It has little fringy-looking leaves (S. V. Arch). b. Flannel cakes with tansy mixed in as a flavoring were made by my great aunt, a Montauk (Eliza Beaman). [In old English receipt books one notes the preparation of various cakes with the addition of herbs such as tansy flower, roses, elderberry.<sup>15</sup> It would appear that this usage by the Shinnecock represents an English influence.]

12. Root Beer: Wintergreen (*Gualtheria procumbens* L.), sassafras root (*Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees.), sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis* L.), hops (*Humulus lupulus* L.), horseradish (*Rorippa armoracia* (L.) Rob.) and cherry bark (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.) are all boiled together to make root beer in the old Shinnecock style (A. Beaman).

It is interesting to note that the Shinnecock utilize the hops and horseradish which are of European origin. Apparently very early the Shinnecock adopted from the English or Dutch (both were settlers of Long Island in the seventeenth century) the addition of hops to the preparation of their beer.

13. Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris* L.). European. Boil the leaves of barberry and drink the medicine as a cure for jaundice. Take the mixture three times a day (A. Beaman).

14. Red top clover (*Trifolium pratense* L.). European. Red top clover is good for cancer. It is like powder. Pour a teaspoonful in boiling water and drink it (A. Beaman).

15. Lung wort (Specimen not seen). Gather lung wort from the north side of a white oak tree and steep it as it is very good for the lungs (A. Beaman).

16. Blackberry root (*Rubus hispida* L.). a. Steep blackberry root and drink the medicine as it is good for diarrhea (A. Beaman and E. Beaman). [Also Rappahannock.] b. The blackberries themselves are used to check dysentery here (S. V. Arch).

<sup>15</sup> "Somewhere in our land, in farmhouses and old-fashioned households, the elder is still in some honour for the production of 'that cup of mulled elder wine served with nutmeg and sippets of toast' which on a cold winter night was as Cobbett said, 'a thing to be run for.' But the flowers are the subject now and these, having a peculiar and agreeable flavour of their own, were beaten up in the dough of cakes, were boiled in a gruel as a fever drink, were distilled to flavour vinegar, and the unopened buds were pickled to serve as capers, or, served in a salad, were recommended as a spring-time diet food for those of scorbutic ailments." Charles Cooper, *The English Table in History and Literature* (London, n.d.) 135.



17. Tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* L.). a. Put some tobacco in the tooth to cure a toothache (E. Beaman and A. Beaman). [Also Rappahannock and Montauk.] b. Tobacco smoke blown into the ear will stop an earache (S. V. Arch). [Also Rappahannock and Mohegan.]

18. Wild mustard (*Brassica nigra* (L.) Koch.). European. a. Wilt wild mustard leaves in your hand and bind on the skin for toothache and headache (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.] b. Mix flour and mustard (commercial preparation) with water and your insides will come up if you have anything bad in your stomach (E. Beaman). c. Make a poultice of mustard and apply it to body pains (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

19. Hops (*Humulus lupulus* L.). European. a. Dried hops heated in a cloth bag are put on as an application for pneumonia. b. Hops are used in the making of nerve medicine (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

20. Hollyhocks (*Althaea rosea* Cav.). European. Steep hollyhocks and apply the solution with leaves for inflamed areas (A. Beaman). A discussion on the properties of the Order to which Nos. 20 and 21 (below) belong presented by J. Lindley of London<sup>16</sup> in 1842 is pertinent here.

The Uniform character of the Order is to abound in mucilage, and to be totally destitute of all unwholesome qualities. The use to which Mallows and Marshmallows are applied in Europe is well known. The whole plant of the latter, especially the root, yields in decoction a plentiful, tasteless, colourless mucilage, salutary in cases of irritation. It is used as demulcent for children, and is a favourite medicine with the French, who employ it constantly in poultices, lozenges, etc., under the name of Guimaive. The flowers of the gaudy Hollyhock (*Althaea rosea*, malache, Diosc.) are official in Greece for the same purpose. *Althaea* itself comes from the Greek meaning to cure.

The fact that this introduced plant is used by the Shinnecock Indians today for inflamed areas graphically demonstrates the impress left on the Indian pattern of cures by English herbology, which was brought in with English settlers in the seventeenth century.

21. Wild marshmallow (*Hibiscus palustris* L.). Break up some dry marshmallow stalks and steep them. The solution is applied for inflammation of the bladder (A. Beaman).

22. Seaweed (kelps representing various species). Steep seaweed for bathing sore parts. Anthony Beaman believes that it will cure rheumatism. Seaweeds contain iodine; therefore, extracts from them will be efficacious and soothing in bathing sore parts.

23. Garden onion (*Allium cepa* L.). European. a. Place an onion in a sick room to draw fever out. It will turn black. Onions draw the flu out. b. Take some onions, chop them up and make a syrup which is taken for colds (Stella V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.] c. Put the heart of an onion in your ear for an earache (S. V. Arch).

Onions are known to contain a volatile oil carrying bactericidal properties;<sup>17</sup> therefore, they are of value in destroying germs. The chief portion of

<sup>16</sup> John Lindley, *The Vegetable Kingdom* (London, 1847) 369.

<sup>17</sup> T. H. Lovell, *Bactericidal Effects of Onion Vapors* (*Food Research* 2: 435-8, 1937).

the oil consisted of a compound  $C_6H_{12}S_2$ , an oil of specific gravity 1.0234 at  $12^\circ$ , boiling at  $75^\circ$  to  $83^\circ$  at 10 mm. From the higher boiling fractions a substance was obtained apparently identical with one of the constituents of asafœtida.<sup>18</sup>

24. Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegioides* (L.) Pers.). European. Steep the leaves of pennyroyal and drink for pains (S. V. Arch).

25. Sour grass (*Rumex acetosella* L.). European. Use sour grass to wash dirty hands (A. Beaman).

26. White pine (*Pinus Strobus* L.). a. Bark is good for a stubborn cough. It is steeped and then taken. We used to get pitch from an old tree across the road and chew it to keep from coughing in school (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

The pines produce oils containing terpenes which are closely related to the coal and wood tar products in their chemical structure.<sup>19</sup> Since these constitute some of the most important medicinal agents, the value of pine extracts is at once evident.

27. Wild grape leaves (*Vitis* sp.). We have plenty of wild grapes and I put them on the head for a headache (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

28. Motherwort (*Leonurus Cardiaca* L.). European. Motherwort is steeped and drunk for female ills (S. V. Arch.). [Also Mohegan.]

29. White oak (*Quercus alba* L.). We use the bark of white oak steeped as liniment for muscular pains (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

30. Puffballs (*Lycoperdon* sp.) and spider webs. These are used to stop bleeding (S. V. Arch).

31. Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* Weber.) and white daisies (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* L.). European. Wines made from dandelions and white daisies are beneficial as tonics (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

32. Spruce gum (A local misnomer derived from England; probably implies pitch from *Pinus rigida* Mill.). Applications for boils and abscesses are made of spruce gum (S. V. Arch).

The term spruce gum has certain connotations. For instance in tidewater Virginia, another area of marked English influence where neither *Tsuga* or *Abies* occur, the term spruce or spruce pine is applied for *Pinus virginiana* Mill., while in the Appalachian region the term is reserved for *Tsuga*. These further illustrate the influence of English nomenclature by colonial settlers in new life zones.

33. Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens* L.). It is good to take wintergreen tea when you have kidney trouble (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

34. Pigweed (*Chenopodium album* L.). European. We use pigweeds for greens and they are good (S. V. Arch).

35. Horse chestnut (*Aesculus Hippocastanum* L.) Introduced from Asia by way of Europe. Carry a horse chestnut in the pocket for rheumatism. I have seen people carry them until the chestnut is dried up and turned black. A potato may be carried for rheumatism also (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

<sup>18</sup> E. J. Parry, *The Chemistry of Essential Oils*, 4th ed. (London, 1921) 92.

<sup>19</sup> W. C. Minchin, *Tuberculosis and Lupus* (London 1915) 12-13.

36. Balsam buds (*Impatiens biflora* Walt.). Use balsam buds and vaseline as a salve.

#### NON-BOTANICAL CURATIVES

1. First snow in March is used as an eye wash (S. V. Arch). [Also Rappahannock.]

2. Mutton tallow is very good for cuts and chapped hands and my father rubbed it on his leather boots to keep them waterproof. [Also Mohegan.]

3. Frighten a person to cure hiccoughs.

4. Use fresh cow dung as a poultice on the face for toothache (E. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

5. a. Wax will cure fever sores. b. If you have an insect sting take wax from your ear and apply to it.

6. For a wort spit on your finger every morning before you speak and rub it on the wort and it will disappear. Stella Arch did this and her wort disappeared.

7. If a child is born with a veil over its eyes it means that it will be able to see spirits. (Widespread northeastern belief.)<sup>20</sup>

8. Take ants and earthworms, let them rot together in a bottle and later rub them on the body for rheumatism. Jim Smith tried this. [Also Mohegan.]

9. Bind pieces of salt pork on the throat for soreness (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

10. Children often have colic: the best thing for colic is to pour boiling water on a small quantity of soot (S. V. Arch). [Also Mohegan.]

11. Milk thickened with flour and black pepper is good for dysentery. [Also Mohegan.]

12. Urine will cure chapped hands. [Also Mohegan.]

#### PLANTING LORE

Among the Shinnecock as well as many other American tribes there are rules observed by the people in regard to the planting of crops. No doubt as a result of the natives' close contact with natural and physical phenomena they have come to recognize and appreciate certain weather signs, which tell them it is the opportune time to do certain things. When a frog chirps for the first time in the spring, it no doubt represents a physiological response evoked by the surrounding environmental conditions. The Indian has come to associate this with very specific and exacting weather events. Such is not superstition, but sound observation that has enabled the native to survive. This represents only one of many examples of such a type. In fact so well known are these rules and so well followed that to plant crops in contradiction to them would, as all believe, be a disastrous undertaking.

Never plant your beans when the east wind blows. They all go to vines instead of beans (S. V. Arch). Plant your crops on the new of the moon if you want them to do well (S. V. Arch). Vegetables grow best in moonlight. Especially cucumbers. Kill hogs and plant corn and beans on the full of the moon.

<sup>20</sup> See the article, *What William Saw*, by Victoria Gittings, in this issue, for a Maryland Negro expression of this belief.—Ed.

OMENS

If your right eye itches, you will laugh; the left eye; you will weep.

When a dog howls it is a sign of death (S. V. Arch).

Wish when you see a shooting star and your wish will be granted. When you see a shooting star it means that the winds will blow hard.

Do not sing at the table or you will have bad luck.

If you burn the bones of animals your bones will ache.

If you cut hair on the new of the moon it will do well, but if cut on the old moon it will do poorly.

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