

FA 1065

(2)

HERB MEDICINE

Jerry LaSalvia
Dr. Montell
Folklore
9:10 T.-Th.
April 29, 1971

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages 1 - 3 ----- Introduction

Pages 4 - 81 ----- Remedies, cures and practices
of herb medicine.

Page 82 ----- Conclusion

This paper deals with some aspects of herb medicine. Throughout my collection, I will be discussing some of the practices, tonics, and remedies involved in herb medicine. Many of these remedies and cures are still being used today.

Charles T. Crume, who is my informant, helped me choose this interesting topic. This subject happened to be in his line of work, since he is a Naturalist. All this information that was gathered was from Chuck Crume alone. It was a job finding Chuck every day, because he was so involved in other activities. Most of this information was either gotten in the University Snack Bar or in his office. Chuck's interest in herb medicine is endless, therefore there is a lot to be uncovered.

I explained my problem to Chuck and he very enthused about the idea said that he would be very glad to help. The method that we used was just sitting in his office and relating everything we knew about herb medicine. I did everything in his office from looking at nature slides to watching him paint his new painting which is a Sparrow Hawk. But he likes to talk about nature. This is my field of study, so by learning from Chuck about nature I will benefit greatly. Chuck offered to take me out to the woods to show me some of these plants but he was short on time.

Herb medicine is still practiced by many. Now and then we still find many that take it for granted that herb medicine is a vague term for a collection of old wives tales. This is not true because herb medicine is practiced by many and old wives tales were just more or less a superstition. Nature opened the first drugstore and it has its branches everywhere, so therefore when you were ill you would find in the fields the herbs to make you well again.

No, the topic on herb medicine is not exhausted, because of the endless amounts of topics people are uncovering every day on herb medicine. There is too much to be found and related about to say that this subject is exhausted. There are so many people still living today that actually believe and practice

herb medicine. Just by telling what I have found from one informant —
mant could not justify all that is left for others to uncover.

To make sure that future workers found the true meaning of the practices of herb medicine, they should search for people that have lived long enough to relate to them the true side of story, not just heresay on herb medicine. They can do this by inquiring through families, through teachers, through endless means if they are interested enough. There are many people who would give their time and devotion to help these people learn about their kind of medicine. Most people are glad to let other people hear about how they came to believe in herb medicine.

The area from where I did my collecting is the college campus, Western Kentucky University. From the Grill in the the Dero Downing University Center to the classroom in the Diddle Arena. Most of the material was collected from Chuck's classroom.

The information below is about the informant of my collection paper.

Informants Name: Charles T. Crume, Jr.

Address: Box 546 Shepherdsville, Kentucky

Age: 37 Sex: Male

Birthplace: Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky

Race, Nationality or Ethnic Background: German, Indian

Other Communities lived: Louisville, Bardstown and Shepherdsville

Significant travel: World wide- U.S.A.F. (State Department)

Occupation: Naturalist - Nature Artist

Education: B.S. Western Kentucky University

Character of Community: 2500 Population, Rural, 20 miles south of Louisville in Knob County along the Salt River.

Chuck probably received most of his information as a child by living in Eastern Kentucky. He was raised in the hills and it was a common practice among the people usually in the hills to practice herb medicine. By also traveling world wide he probably received first hand information abroad. Since it was also practiced overseas Chuck probably found people that were still practicing herb medicine. Being a Naturalist he also found many people while trying to find a painting that were also common users of the herb medicine.

The information preceeding will bring out some of the cures, practices and remedies that are being used in herb medicine. I hope to give you some uncovered information relating to herbal remedies. Nature has provided a complete storehouse of herbal remedies to cure all ill's of mankind, and today's medicine's are only the translations of the healing properties of herbs.

Charles T. Crume Jr.

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

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(7)

A potent medical remedy for all diseases of man and beast, a powerful charm against the evil eye, demons, witches, and vampires, the bulb of the garlic plant was mashed and spread on the body.

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Charles T. Crume, Jr.

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8

This is one of the oldest medical prescriptions used as a cure for all ills of the stomach, spleen, bowels, uterus, and a cure for intestinal worms. This is the castor oil plant. A concoction of its roots was used to relieve kidney and bladder troubles, and its leaves as a remedy for scabby, rash, itch and inflammation of the eyes.

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Charles T. Crume, Jr.

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9

The Ginseng is an herb with a forked root. This aromatic root is considered a cure for all the ills of man. Curing is done by boiling the root and drinking it as if it were tea.

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CHARLES L. CRANE, Sr.
Age: 37
Shepherdsville, Ky.
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Class "C" Text

10

The bitter juice of the Genitan Root has been used as a stomach ache tonic, an antidote against poisonous bites of mad dogs and venomous reptiles, a remedy for diseases of the stomach and liver, a powerful cure for the plague. The juice of the Genitan Root is still an important ingredient in stomach bitters to aid indigestion and to remedy stomach aches.

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(11)

Hemlock juice taken one drop a day with a sweet pastry was used as a preventive against cholera, and a remedy for hernia, epilepsy, pleurisy, fainting spells, and double vision. This juice was extracted from the roots of the poison hemlock tree.

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(12)

Henbrane juice has a paralyzing effect on the body. This plant has a hairy, sticky, and stinky stem. It is mainly used for various conditions of asthma. The juice of the henbrane plant is also used as a mouthwash for toothache and as drops for ears.

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13

Mustard seeds were chewed for toothache, taken internally for epilepsy; lethargy, stomach ache and clarifying the blood. They were ground and sniffed by sneezing; externally they were used for pains and to draw splinters.

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Charles T. Crume, Jr.

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(14)

The juice from the Nettle Plant was used to rub their limbs to warm the blood. The juice, pressed from the whole plant was used as medicine for tuberculosis. Nettle sprouts were used and eaten as a health salad.

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(5)

The parsley was used for stomach ache, cough, and snake bite. An infusion of the young leaves was used as an eyewash. and a concoction of crushed seeds for freckles, as well as for head and body lice.

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(16)

The peony was considered among the most potent herbal cure-alls.

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17

The juice of the poppy seeds was well known to the ancient Egyptians as a sleep and dream inducing narcotic.

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18

The Sage taken internally was considered good for the liver, for breeding new blood in the body, the best food for the brain an excellent strengthener of the muscles, and a tonic for stomach, heart and nerves. An infusion of sage taken as a gargle was used to whiten the teeth and strengthen the gums. Sage tea is still used today as an old fashioned gargle and stomach tonic.

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The sesame soaked in sparrow eggs and cooked in milk, it was used for centuries as an aphrodisiac; sesame oil was applied externally as a cosmetic. It was mixed with vinegar as an ointment for the forehead to strengthen the brain.

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20

The fruit of the almond tree was used as an antidote for the influence of witchcraft and evil eye; it served to stimulate the milk supply of nursing mothers, and to relieve head aches and hang overs. Five almonds taken before drinking alcoholic beverages were considered the best bracer against intoxication and a prevention for hangovers.

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(21)

The anise, an herb of the carrot family, was used as an agent for milt, kidneys, liver and gall; they were considered a remedy for worms lice, stomach ache, giddiness and nausea.

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(22)

Cherry stones are seeds of the cherry tree. The kernals contained a poison. This was used in small doses as a sedative for irritation of the throát and windpipe, to relieve chest pains, stomach spasms. Six cherry kernals a day prevented the formation of kidney stones.

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23

The caraway, seed-like fruits, were used as a tonic to warm the stomach, to relieve coughs, headaches, colic, and as a potent antidote against the bite and sting of poisonous animals and insects. It was also believed that caraway seeds were a sure protection against the loss of hair. Oil of caraway and sugar in alcohol was used to help relieve labor pains.

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24

The ground bark of the cinnamon tree was used as a breath sweetner, a tonic for the whole system: heart, stomach, liver, kidneys, galls and nerves. It was also considered a remedy for heartburn, nausea, and diarrhoea, and as a sedative for expectant mothers during childbirth.

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(25)

The dried flowerbuds of the clove tree were used as a breath sweetner; a comforter for heart, liver, stomach, and bowels; a remedy for nausea, colic and a preventive for paralysis of the tongue, inflammation of the gums, and loosening of the teeth. Rosewater flavored with cloves was a favorite eyewash.

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(26)

The dried berries of the cubeb shrub resemble the grains of black pepper but are less spicy and pungent. They were used as a tonic for nerves and stomach, an abortive for kidney and bladder stones, a relief for epilepsy, asthma and other bronchial troubles, and as a potent laxative. Cubeb brandy was used to prevent venereal disease.

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(27)

The dried seeds of the fennel plants were used against mistiness of the eye and to drive worms out of the ears; to reduce excess flesh and fat; to relieve pains in the chest; to increase the milk supply in nursing mothers and as a general cleaning agent for the liver, galls, kidneys and bladder. A solution of oil of fennel was used as an enema for hemorrhoids.

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(28)

Raw and crystalized ginger was used as a breath sweetener, an aid to digestion, a cure for toothache and bleeding gums and as a strenghtening agent for loose teeth and weak eyes.

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29

The pepper has been the most popular of the cure-all remedies in medicine. It has been used for everything from toothache to a preventative drug for scarlet fever, smallpox typhus, cholera and the bubonic plague or the Black Death.

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The fruit kernals of the nutmeg tree were used as remedy for all ailments of the brain, a cure for failing eyesight, and a general tonic and stimulant.

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CHARLES F. STAMM, JR.
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(31)

The carrot is a member of the celery family. It was believed that the carrot would improve the eyesight.

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(32)

For ulcers and boils, take the root of an iron weed,
and tie it around the neck; its supposed to cure running
ulcers. It also serves against obstructions in the bladder.

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Charles L. Crane, Sr.
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33

To stop pains in a wound cut three small twigs from a tree, rub one end of each twig in the wound, and wrap them separately in a piece of white paper, and put them in a warm and dry place.

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34

To destroy warts, roast chicken-feet and rub the warts with them. Then bury them under the eaves.

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Charles I. Crume, Jr.
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(35)

A remedy for a toothache: Stir the sore teeth with a needle until it draws blood; then take a thread and soak it with this blood. Then take vinegar and flour, mix them well so as to form a paste and spread on a cloth; then wrap this cloth around the root of an apple tree, and tie it very close with the above thread, after which the root must be well covered with the ground.

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(36)

To heal burns, pound or press the juice of a male fern,
and put it on the burnt spots, and they will heal very fast.

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Class "C" Text

(37)

A tea made of the acorns of the white oak is very good
for weakness of the limbs.

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(38)

To catch a fish, take a rose seed and mustard seed, and the foot of a weasel and hang these in a net, and the fish will collect there.

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39

To cure a rupture, cut three tufts of hair from the center of his head; tie the same in a clean cloth, carry it into another district, and bury it under a young willow tree, so that it may grow together.

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10-1-76

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(40)

To cause a cow to become pregnant, take nine knots of an early tree in the spring of the year, pulverize them and give them to the cow on newly baked bread.

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(41)

To cure a cough, take an onion and roast it, then rub the soles of the feet with it, and the ailment will cease.

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(76)

Tie onions on the wrist to take down a high fever.

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43

To remove warts, cut an apple, a turnip, or an onion into halves and rub the wart with the pieces and bury them under the eaves of the house.

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Charles A. Crume, Jr.

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44

A remedy for hayfever is the chewing of honeycomb wax.

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(45)

Gather short, bud-bearing twigs from the pine tree, along with a few pine needles. Put them in a dish, cover them with water and let them simmer slowly on the stove for three days. During this time the water turns brown. The resulting brown mixture is run through a sieve and then thickened with honey. One teaspoon full of this mixture, taken several times a day, will end the sickness in the breathing tract.

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46

Egg-shaped blisters are to be found on the bark of the fir tree. These blisters are punctured with a knife, and the liquid is then collected. A teaspoon of this liquid taken three times a day will also clear up difficulty in the breathing tract.

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(47)

Mullin weed will cure asthma.

Plum root will cure asthma.

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(18)

Buckeye carried in the right hand pocket will cure
backache.

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49

Fever weed will stop bleeding.

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971-76

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50

Wild cherry tree bark is a cure for bad blood.

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Charles T. Crume, Jr.

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Class "C" Text

(51)

Fire weed will cure blood poison.

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52

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Drink sasfrasilla root tea for bad blood.

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53

Mistletoe herb is a remedy for high blood pressure.

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54

A flaxseed solution will bring boils to a head.

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Warren County

971-710

Charles I, Crane, Sr.
Age: 37
Shepherdsville, Ky.
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Class "C" Text

55

Eat nutmeg to cure boils.

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(56)

Drink sassafras tea to cure a boil.

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(57)

Bark from the root of the red alder is a good bowel
movement.

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(58)

Tea made from wild strawberry roots will cure bowel trouble.

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(59)

Comfrey root is a cure for stone bruises.

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(60)

Red dogwood bark made into a tea with whiskey is used as a tonic for chills.

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971-211

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(61)

White briar rod keeps off chills.

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62

Drink a tea made of cherry tree bark for chills and fever.

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63

Root of mullen, stewed together with wild cherry bark
and brown sugar for colds.

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Charles I. Grune, Sr.
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(64)

For colds take green needles from the pines, boil them,
sweeten the water, then drink it.

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(65)

Chew a piece of calamus toor for the colic.

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(66)

Maple sap is used as a laxative.

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(67)

Chew calamus root for stomach pains.

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(68)

Callibus root is good for indigestion.

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(69)

Buck root is good for indigestion.

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(70)

Water melon seed tea is good for kidney trouble, pour
water over the seeds.

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Class "C" Text

Red dogwood bark tea is good for pneumonia.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Charles T. Crume, Jr.

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

72

Dew off of the love vine is good for poison ivy.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

1971-76

Age: 37
Shepherdsville, Ky.
April 29, 1971
Class "C" Text

(73)

Green tomatoes will cure poison oak.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Charles T. Crume, Jr.

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(74)

For rheumatism carry an acorn in your pocket.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Age: 37

Shpeherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(75)

Tea made of poke berry root is good for rheumatism.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(16)

Carry an onion in your pocket to keep off small pox.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

FOLKLORE AND FOLKLIFE COLLECTION
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1971-76

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(17)

For snake bite, drink tea of cockleburs Dollar weed for
snake bite.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Charles I. Crane, Sr.
Age: 37
Shepherdsville, Ky.
April 29, 1971
Class "C" Text

(78)

For snow blindness put tea leaves on your eyes.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Miller Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

01. 21

Charles T. Crume, Jr.

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(79)

Use Jimson leaves for a sore throat.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

1971-76

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(80)

Drink teas of yellow root for a sore throat.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

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1971-76

Charles T. Crume, Jr.

Age; 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(81)

Drink the juice of a box wood for a toothache.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

82

Lobelia weed will make a person throw up.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Rk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

(83)

The juice of the milk from thistle cures warts.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

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1971-71

Charles T. Crume, Jr

Age: 37

Shepherdsville, Ky.

April 29, 1971

Class "C" Text

84

Chestnut leaves were used for whooping cough.

Mr. Jerry LaSalvia
Lot 47 Millers Tr. Pk.
Bowling Green, Ky.
Warren County

1971-76

Looking back we find that there is not a single plant that has not been used at one time or another by men as a food-stuff, a healing, life-giving medicine, or a deadly poison. Since the beginning of time man has fed on berries, fruits, grasses, herbs, leaves and roots. In addition to their necessary food plants, the old nations cultivated herbs for their own medicinal needs. Knowledge of the herbs was considered pagan because of the many things that went along with their use. The religious, legendary and symbolic meaning attached to plants has been handed down to us through the ages and today we still use many special plants in accordance with medicine and in religious ceremonies such as Easter, Christmas, etc. Throughout human history herbs, flowers, plants etc. have become so interwoven into mans life that they have developed in to symbols for his expressions, passions, affections fears and superstitions.