

H 96-35 Pt. 1

9-12-96

Howard Luke with BUm. Schneider,
Charles Hamby, and Robert Drozda.
Re: Plant lore, medicinal plants and
how Howard learned these skills.

Howard Luke: Mother and uncle taught
him about plants. Howard hung out
with the old folks because he lost his
dad when he was young. He would tag
along with them to get a piece of
meat or fish. In those days, there
were no bandages, only iodine which
burned like heck. The old folks said
that they [meaning white folks,
Europeans] weren't trying to ~~kill~~
cure them, they were trying to
kill them.

Spruce Pitch used for putting on auto.
Put a rag on top and the rag would
stick to the pitch. Yellow pitch used
for healing, brown pitch used for caulking
canoes.

~~Mother~~ Family didn't have candles
so ~~Howard~~ ~~after~~ Bupper he and his mom
would lie on the bed and his mother
would tell stories. Sometimes Howard's
blind uncle would come to visit and
he would tell stories also. Howard
learned by watching them and by
repetition [mother and uncle repeating
into over and over].

Side I, Part I cont.

If Howard didn't pay attention, his mom would put a rag in his ear to keep the info from leaking out. His blind uncle would whack ~~him~~ ^{Howard} with his cane. ②

People ~~at~~ would say prayer before harvesting the plants.

Howard names plants and their uses.

(Tink cow benny) ^{stink weed.} - boil them up.

Keep in sack or paper bag, not plastic bag. Good for arthritis. Soak rag in plant broth, put rag over joint. Also good for muscle cramps or pulled muscles. Wrap up the affected area tightly in plant broth soaked rag. Best rags are wool - absorb a lot of the liquid. Have to believe that plant will fix you or else it won't work. Can be used for tea. Can be preserved by drying.

Seeds of birch tree, [←] collected in the spring. Make it into tea, good for flu. Tastes bad. How much you add to the water depends on how strong you want the tea. Want it stronger, add more. Don't put it in a plastic bottle.

To ~~pick~~ ^{pick} herbs, you need to pick up them where no one else has been like beside a still lake where no water is running. Herbs from undisturbed places have more nourishment.

Use of rocks for healing and medicine:

People used to use certain kind of rocks.

They would heat the rocks, then put it into water and drink the broth. That kind of rocks is hard to get now. It is a red rock. Howard used to find them up at Nolby (?) Dalby (?) Gallow (?) Howard Nolvi (?)

can Howard says the rocks are hard (can't be chipped), multi-colored, and are washed down from the hills in the streams in the spring time. Howard can't remember what the rocks are called.

Howard says that in the old days there were no germs because people believed in each other.

~~Spruce pitch~~ ^{Thaw in inner} spruce bark in the winter, chop it up into pieces, make a tea out of it. When spruce bark tea is drunk 2 times a day, nothing will bother you.

Heard of plants for treating TB. Have to go high up into mountains to get them. Don't know what kind of plant it was. Back in the 1940s, Howard used to race with a guy named Walter John who had TB. Walter went high up into the mtns, pitched a tent, used that herb, stayed up there for about two months, and got his health back.

Spruce pitch and stink weed used for cataracts. Boil up the plants, dip rag in ~~a~~ ^{the} broth, put rag in your eye.

Spruce pitch also good for healing bad cuts in their paws. †

All the stories about the introduction of ~~the~~ white man's disease started at Fort Gibbon (Tanana) when the soldiers started putting in the telegraph.

~~Howard~~ When Howard thought he was going to have to have hip surgery,

④

he asked his doctor to use spruce pitch instead of sutures to close the wound.

Howard talks about his mother doing small operations around the village. She would feel for the infected spot, then heat up the knife red hot, and cut out the lump. She would poke in a shallow way and the infected material ("rotten blood") would come out.

Howard's maternal grandmother (his mother's mother) was a medicine woman. Taught his mom how to do these things.

Howard says that the trend nowadays is toward Western medicine, but that he feels that the traditional knowledge should be preserved.

Mentions that the owl used to bring messages about someone that had died or was going to die or that something bad was going to happen. Howard says that he still listens to the owl and can understand him.

Howard's uncle didn't want to have his sight brought back, didn't want to be changed. To bring back sight, the people would have used stinkweed. The Spruce needle tea is also good for many ailments including restoration of sight.

Howard's talks about a plant that comes from the lake and floats on top of the lake. It's called "stink a berry" or stinkweed that is strongest herb there is.

Howard remembers his ^{maternal} grandmother as being very protective. Always had to change his sleeping blanket every day (air it out) so he would have good luck.

side I cont.

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People in Nenana would send for mom to come and doctor them.

Howard believes that by helping out the old folks, ^{Divine Providence} God watches out for him and has helped him thru some tough spots in his life (his heart attack, shooting accident (lost a finger), falling into the river I. Doing good for old folks gets you blessing from God.

Howard's mom always encouraged him to help out the old folks.

Makes Howard mad to see youngsters ~~like~~ ^{not} listening to him (like talking to a stump). ~~Does~~ Feels that when you give a speech, you shouldn't have anything written down. Instead you should speak from the heart.

learned a lot from Austin Hammond in Haines, AK.

Howard likes to be on the same level as his audience. Doesn't like to lift himself above his audience — that's ^{making} putting yourself out to be superior to your audience.

Howard was something of a loner as a kid. Preferred to hang out with old folks as opposed to kids his own age.

~~She~~ His mom told him before she died that he was going to get to travel. He didn't believe her then, but she was right.

Women usually treated the wounds, but there were some men who did those things. Both men and women would pick the herbs.

When choosing a birch tree for building a sled, you have to pick the right one. Too young, the tree hasn't got its strength. Too old, the tree has lost its strength. If you want to eat snow in winter, don't take snow on top. It has no nourishment. Take the snow from the bottom - it has more nourishment.

If you get your feet wet, don't rinse your socks out. Put snow over your boots - it will suck the moisture out.

Always chew on the willow, it will cut your thirst down.

Howard said that when his family was at Nenana one time his step dad got sick with pneumonia. The other villagers brought them grub and other things to help out.

His grandmother (maternal) was called the "Bear-Killer" because she killed a grizzly with an axe. Grandma was walking way behind the hunting party with a bunch of pups. The pups started sniffing something so Grandma started digging with her snowshoes and she found a grizzly bear in its den. ^(still sleeping) She then clubbed bear to death with her axe.

Always keep a big woodpile in front of your house. Always take care of your friends and share with them.

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Howard has a .30-30 he inherited from Chief Thomas's family.

Howard tells about his hunting accident. He was carrying his new .30-30 and was just walking along looking for moose when he heard a shot. Thought it was another hunter. Didn't realize he had shot himself until he looked at his hand and saw his finger dangling by a little bit of skin. Howard ~~hadn't felt~~ ^{didn't feel} anything or panic. Got a piece of rope and made a tourniquet ~~(?)~~, flagged down an airboat, which took him to town. It was only after he got to town that his hand started hurting.

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9-12-96 Place Names

Chena Village.

[WAF] West Ridge (Wild Potato Hill). Used to drive ~~to~~ ^{moose} below the hill on little Goldstream Creek. Just above Irony Jack's. Used to be posts ^{there} marking the spot.

Sam Charlie and the ^{old} lady were only people on Chena Village site when he came there in 1937.

Deadman Slough (Noyes Slough).

In Athapascan, it's called Chin ^{Nach} ~~nakh~~. Called Deadman Slough because people found a man's head there many yrs back.

Bushy Lake - used to have an island in the middle, heavily covered with bushes, where moose would congregate. Island disappeared

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about 10 yrs ago. People used to fish for pike and dry them at Lost Creek which flows into Tanana River.

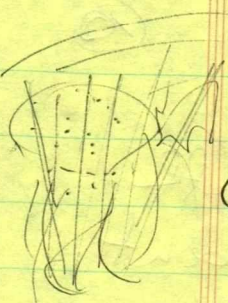
Used to hunt muskrat out at unidentified lake. Muskrat gone now - Howard believe that's due to overabundance of pike.

Moosehead Point (above Bushy Lake) - about 2 miles to the east. Floating ~~lake~~ ground, comes together in a point. Man cached a moosehead, but wolverine scavenged it before he could come back the next day. Crooked Creek flows into Bushy Lake.

Wood River - Howard traveled up river in 1938 to hunt sheep by dog team. Used to have a revolving light ~~onto~~ ^{at} top of old federal courthouse (what is now Court House Square). When they were at Gold King, ^(where Wood River) they could look down at Pkbs and see the light. Gold King is located where Wood River comes out on Bonnitfield Trail. Used to haul stuff up to the miners from there.

Dead Dog Slough - Howard heard story from Grandma. Man's ~~dog~~ ^{dog} dropped dead while hauling sled across the slough. Told another story about man who got mad at his lazy dog so he took it out of the harness and shot it on the slough. When he came back across the slough, the dog was sitting up looking at him so he shot it again repeatedly and then burned the carcass. Used to be a moonshiner who had a hidden whiskey still out there someplace.


Nah't say nah't (point of land sticking into the water) - Howard doesn't know any stories about that place.



Clear Creek & Butteⁿ - Fellow named George ~~is~~ used to have a big mink ranch there, built a house at the base of the bluff. Howard talks about him in one of his books.

Golden Eagle Nest is near

Golden Eagle Nest



Lost Creek - bootlegger ~~had~~ had a still, ran away from the marshalls, never did find him. Howard ~~says~~ ^{still} says there are a lot of stills in this area.

Pfiter's Camp (right at mouth of slough). Norman Hadley used to own it. Bought by man named Pfiter.

Bluff ^{where} by Rosie Creek comes out there are some rocks, with writing on them [petroglyphs?] Also at mouth of Luke's Slough [petroglyphs?]

Place where sheep turned to stone, - When a girl becomes a woman [starts menstruating] she is secluded. Only mother takes care of her, male relatives musn't look at her. One day mother went outside, girl didn't see her in house, so she went looking for her. When girl went outside, she saw some sheep. When she directed her mother's attention to them, the sheep turned to stone. Wherever you see a white rock on a bluff, that's where the sheep p turned to stone.

Rosie Creek

Arthur Andrew used to have a place where Binkley has a house now. Used to be married to a dark-skinned native girl from here - called her Black Mary.

Slough is called Black Man's Slough. (10)
Arthur Andrews' cousin used to run
steamboats. When steamboats went out
business, Arthur salvaged a lot of stuff
from the boats. Howard also talks about
him in book. Arthur makes his own photos
at home. Used to go down to Sixteen
Mile to trap, used to fish as well.

Sam Charlie's Slough - (Sam Charlie had fish
camp there)

Jack Barrington's cabin (Boi ut tuli -
"place that they cry about"). Used to be
a village, the cemetery was ^{there} there. Every
time people go past "Crybaby Hill" they
think on tough times and feel sad.
Jack Barrington had a little farm
there with an ice house.

Chena Village used to be one of
the biggest villages on the river [Tanana?
Chena.]

Morgan's Slough [Tzooigi⁴² or "Marten"]
Just lately marten have started coming in.
When Howard saw a marten for the first time,
he thought it was a little fox. They used to
get just mink, fox, and otter.

~~Crooked Creek~~ Howard's grand.

"Grandma Helen" (?), an old lady who
lived in Chena Village, told him about these
places.

(moor) "ah bah ~~gan~~ nah" & place where they used
to put the freighting boats for the winter, next
to Salchaket Slough. (Name means "place where
the swans gather up for the winter").

Old George Nelson used to trap around
Clear Creek. ^{Had mink farm} Trapped for mink. Made his own
fish traps. Used fish for ba. Fed his mink on
fish all winter, ~~used fish for bait?~~ Sold his

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property to the U.S. Army. Had a greenhouse as well.

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Cranberry Hill < Nah dah yeh - place where slough used to run and now it's all dried up. Lots of cranberries grow there.

MacDonald Creek (above Clear Creek).
Comes in from ~~Bear~~ Blair Lake.
Bear (?) Blair (?)

Mike the Fisherman - had a trading post on? near? Sixteen Mile Island.

Hadley Island - Hadley was a Canadian who didn't want to become a U.S. citizen. Had a trading post there, it all washed to way. Didn't believe in putting money in banks, as people used to go up to Hadley Island and hunt for ~~it~~ his cache but it was never found.

Mud Slough - located by Chena Slough. Henry Gale used to have a place there. Used hunt muskrat in Mud Slough. Mud Slough used to run around by South Cushman toward the garbage dump.

Parker

Birch Hill, Painted Hill - Howard doesn't know anything about these places. Chena Ridge and Murphy Dome ~~are~~ ^{were} out of his territory.

Rhubarb Hill (Wild Potato Hill) - West Ridge of WAF. Wild rhubarb used to grow by Smith Lake.

Eat 'Em Up Frank's - man named Frank used to have a roadhouse there. Frank Lindberg was his real ~~exp~~ ^{name}. Got his nickname because he used to tell travelers to "eat up" their stew.

Moose Johnson's place - right across from Whiskey Island. Close to Wood River Village. Moose Johnson's place is gone now.

~~Wood River~~

Yellow Water Slough - ~~was~~

Used to be bootleggers all down the river hence the many "whiskey" place names.

Foxes Crying Hill (Nah geh dah) - above Nenana. About 6 miles. ^{site of old} Fox farm is near by.

Someone ~~to~~ ^{Runs} Running Hill - bluff below used to run around (jog?). About 6 miles above Nenana.

Too tattah (ee gah) - place of an old roadhouse. River changed course.

Poh Koh soh - place above Nenana.
Howard doesn't know anything about it.
Henry Thomas from Wood River village told him
^{some} stories about that place.
Dry Creek Lake

Tau tit tee (ridge across from
Nenana where the cemetery is now).
Means "big hill". Could hear the wind
on ~~to~~ top of the hill and that would
tell them that the weather was
going to change.

Howard talks some more about the
Golden Eagle Nest close to Clear Creek
Butte. Says that in the old days people
would make the youngsters wear a sheep
hoof around their necks. Believed that
would make the kids good runners.
People would go up into Sheep Hills to
get those hooves.

Golden eagles used to stay up hills, now
they've moved down into the low lands.
The world is changing says Howard.
~~But~~ Water levels low in river. Seems to
be less and less water every year.