

Ancestral Medicine

A close-up profile of a person's face, likely of Indigenous descent, looking towards the right. The person has dark hair and is wearing a dark, textured headdress with a grid-like pattern. A single, large, dark feather is positioned to the right of the face, pointing upwards. The background is a warm, textured brown.

Knowledge
Efficiency
Compassion

A glass of amber liquid, possibly a beverage or a medicinal concoction, is shown in the upper right corner of the image. The glass is partially filled and sits on a white surface. The lighting is soft, creating a gentle shadow to the left of the glass. The overall tone is warm and natural.

Essiac

An Indigenous Remedy
For Cancer

In science, where there is a confrontation between evidence and opinion, evidence always wins. Not so with Essiac. Given the evidence of the 1939 Canadian Cancer Commission Hearings in Toronto, the 1959-1960 Bruschi Medical Center trials in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the 1974-1976 trials conducted at the prestigious Sloan Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York, and the consequent failure of the Canadian Walde/Barker trials in 1977, medical opinion states that Essiac has no merit. While the wealth of so-called anecdotal evidence continues to accumulate; tumors disappeared, bloodwork returned to normal, tumors encapsulated and easily removed with minimal risk of metastases during surgery, terminally sick patients living normal, fulfilling lives years beyond the prognosis date.

Essiac is not a cure-all for cancer. But there were and are many people taking it who improve more than can be explained. The original formula, now known as *Black Root Medicine* was created by an elderly Native American Medicine Man for an Englishwoman with breast cancer in the summer of 1893. She was menopausal, the tumor was large and aggressive, and she and her husband were living in a mining camp on the Canadian frontier in northern Ontario. The doctors in Toronto recommended an immediate mastectomy with little hope of survival; the Medicine Man told her he could cure her without surgery.

The Medicine Man's Formula

Black Root Medicine

Rumex acetosella

Arctium lappa

Ulmus rubra

Rheum palmatum

Trifolium pratense

Vinca major

Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum

Coptis trifolia, var. groenlandica



The Medicine Man's formula consisted of eight herbs, two of them native to North America, the rest arriving with the European settlers. Together with the shredded inner bark of the Slippery elm tree, *Ulmus rubra* he included the roots of:

Rumex acetosella, common name, Sheep sorrel

Arctium lappa, Greater burdock

Rheum palmatum, Turkey rhubarb

Trifolium pratense, Red clover

Vinca major, Periwinkle

Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum, Watercress

Coptis trifolia, variety groenlandica

Native American Medicine Men and Women were specialist rather than general practitioners, their personal pharmacopeia assembled over lifetimes of practice, the details of which they were not obliged to reveal to their patients. This Medicine Man made the unprecedented move of not only offering to treat a white woman but also naming the eight herbs, showing her where to find them and how to prepare them.

BLACK ROOT MEDICINE / CLASSIC ESSIAC TEA



Mrs Johnson kept the formula secret for another thirty years until 1922 when she shared it with Rene Caisse of Bracebridge, Ontario, who would use the formula as the basis to develop the cancer treatment commonly known under the blanket term 'Essiac', her family name spelt backwards.

Rene was a dedicated, highly ambitious career nurse who was also strongly resentful of the male-dominated, hierarchical medical profession of that time. Right from the start she wanted to be involved, to work closely with the doctors, above all to be recognized for her work with the formula, and the only way she could compel their cooperation was to keep the ingredients secret. Doctors could examine the results; they were not to share in the preparation of the material. Her initial results, using the Medicine Man's formula, were promising. Her aunt, terminally sick with liver cancer, made a full recovery and in view of this and other successful treatments, a group of doctors in Toronto encouraged her to develop an injectable formula experimenting on mice prepared with human carcinoma.

To be clear, we are talking about two related, but distinct, categories of treatment here:

- 1) The Medicine Man's original eight-herb formula.
- 2) Rene Caisse's Essiac, consisting of the *Rumex acetosella* decoction given by injection, plus a decoction of *Arctium lappa*, *Ulmus rubra* and *Rheum palmatum* diluted with warm water as a drink, that might include *Coptis trifolia* and /or *Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum* at varying dosage levels for selected patients.

The key to the success of this treatment was the *Rumex* injection, administered intramuscularly as close as possible to the site of the primary tumour. The few that were unable to tolerate the injection drank a version of the oral decoction consisting of not less than 35% *Rumex acetosella*, what would become the basic four-herb, *Classic Essiac Tea* formula. It was only when Rene Caisse was no longer permitted to administer the injection that this formula formed the basis of the Essiac remedy best known to us today.

October 8, 1973

'... our earlier correspondence was a real expression of our interest back in 1958...

... should we be successful you would receive due recognition of your contribution.'

Dr C. Chester Stock

*Vice-President
Director Walker Laboratory*

SLOAN-KETTERING INSTITUTE *for* CANCER RESEARCH

DONALD S. WALKER LABORATORY, 145 BOSTON POST RD., RYE, N.Y. 10580



OWENS 8-1100

October 8, 1973

Mrs. Rene M. Caisse McGaughey
P.O. Box 538
Bracebridge, Ontario
Canada

Dear Mrs. McGaughey:

I was interested in having your letter and the brochure about your work. I have not located our earlier correspondence but it was a real expression of our interest back in 1958. We have always believed we should try materials in which there was reason to believe they might be active or in which there was a demonstrated activity. We have even tested materials with much less basis than that.

Recently we have been investigating materials from the point of view of their stimulation of the host defences, particularly the immunological. Such materials could let you live with your cancer if it did not actually cause it to regress. Thus your letter comes at a good time for we could include your preparation in our experimental animal tumor studies which can show the effectiveness of such agents.

We still would be interested in trying your material and, as before, in learning what herb is involved. I can assure you we will try it and not "leave it on the shelf." If you can provide us with material we will try it experimentally. I am confident good results in such studies would assure clinical trial.

Should we be successful you would receive due recognition of your contribution.

Sincerely yours,

C. Chester Stock, Ph. D.
Vice President
Director Walker Laboratory

CCS:mk

Dr Stock's offer to test Essiac at the Sloane Kettering Institute was the dream ticket for Rene Caisse, the opportunity she had been praying for since the breakdown of the Bruschi trials in 1960. What's more, this time she had a written guarantee that she would be recognised for her work if the testing succeeded. And she failed to honour it for the same reasons that terminated the Bruschi trials and would cause the Walde/Barker trials to end in failure: her continuing refusal to supply recognizable, itemized material for testing. Anyone involved in research knows that it is not only unreasonable to be expected to responsibly analyse unknown substances from a questionable source, but also impossible to guarantee reliable results.

The staff at the Bruschi Medical Center had been obliged to operate blind, as was Dr Merker at Sloane Kettering, who supplied the mice on condition that they were returned to him for analysis. Despite later claims to the contrary, Rene Caisse never revealed the identity of the herbs to Dr Bruschi, neither during the ten months they were working together, 1959-1960, nor in the late seventies when the Essiac story was published in the Toronto *Homemakers* magazine and became more widely known. A year after her death Dr Bruschi was recorded on tape telling Sheila Snow that he was waiting for instructions from Mary McPherson because he didn't know the combination for mixing the herbs or how to use them.

Rene Caisse was more forthcoming with Dr Stock in a series of detailed letters assuring him that he was the only person she had ever trusted concerning the identity and preparation of *Rumex acetosella* in decoction. When she mentioned in a letter of May 1974 that it took years to isolate *Rumex acetosella* as the herb that worked directly on the cancer cells while the others were equally necessary, administered as an oral decoction to facilitate the resulting detoxification process, Dr Stock requested fresh material along with the identity of the herbs related to the treatment. She refused and the testing was discontinued. When interviewed for the magazine article a year later, he repeated that he was willing to continue the work if he could replicate her method where the injectable substance would be followed up with the ingredients to make the oral decoction. Again, she refused to cooperate.

Rumex acetosella root:
'essential in Essiac'...

*Rene Caisse, letter to
Dr. C. Chester Stock,
June 14, 1976*



Cancer and *Rumex acetosella* have a lot in common. Like cancer the plant can be difficult to eradicate, surviving fire, volcanic eruptions, prolonged periods of drought and freezing conditions. Like the disease it shows activity against, it survives repeated treatment with chemicals and, given the right conditions, the seed can remain viable but dormant for many years. Like cancer, established colonies can occasionally vanish for no apparent reason.

Of the eight herbs, only *Rumex acetosella* proved injectable with no adverse side effects, exhibiting activity not only directly against live cancer cells but also where metastasized cells appeared to revert to the primary tumor before the mass broke down. Fifty years later, Dr Stock remarked to Sheila Snow that Dr Merker had observed similar activity in the Brusch samples in 1959.

In practice I have only once observed what appeared to be the same activity, including the yellow, 'cottage cheese' type discharge as the tumor broke down, when employing a full range of five formulae in which the *Rumex acetosella* content consisted of 100% root i.e. as Black Root Medicine; the four-herb, Classic Essiac Tea and its two derivatives, Essiac Clover, including *Trifolium pratense*; Essiac Gold, including *Coptis trifolia*; Essiac Topical Solution as one part *Ulmus rubra* bark to five parts *Rumex acetosella* root. I haven't harvested the leaves and stems of the plant since 2009.

Sheila Snow first proposed introducing *Trifolium pratense* into Essiac when we were writing our first book together in 1998 and I have continued experimenting with the herb, using the roots in preference to the flowers which are generally more easily commercially available.

The Lineage

The Medicine Man

*The Englishwoman
Mrs. Johnson*

Rene Caisse

Mary McPherson

Sheila Snow Fraser



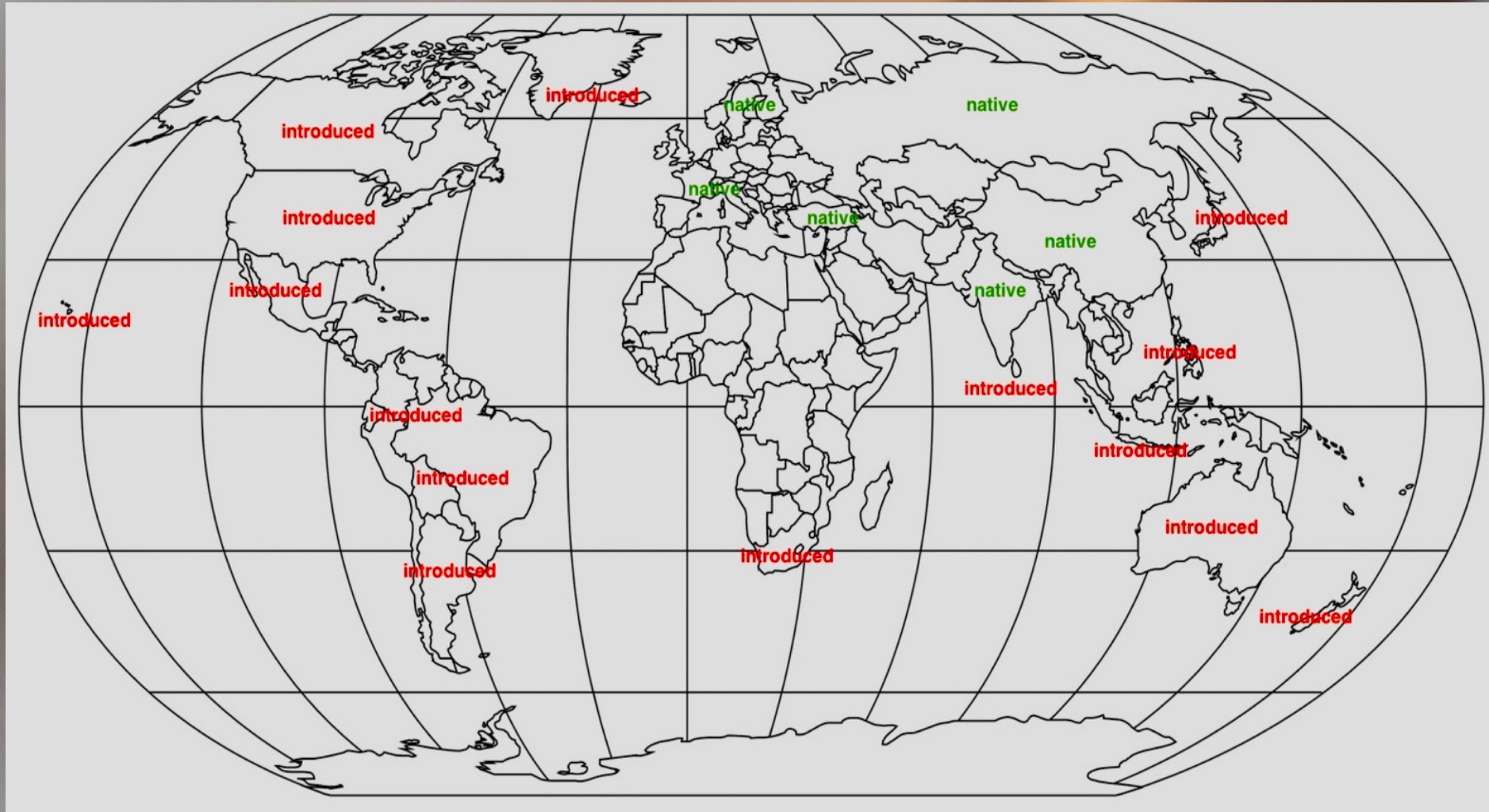
A nineteenth-century Medicine Man, who may not have been able to read or write yet accomplished something his white contemporaries couldn't hope to achieve.

The Englishwoman he cured of an aggressive breast cancer. It's a great story but it's not romantic hearsay. It's fact. She survived and lived thirty years longer into a ripe old age.

Nurse Rene Caisse, courageous but flawed, who threatened to take the secret of Essiac and *Black Root Medicine* with her to the grave. She would have succeeded if not for the tireless efforts of Mary McPherson and Sheila Snow who worked with her during her final years, making copies of all the paperwork and letters she allowed them to read, memorizing the information she permitted them to share, Sheila taping hours of telephone conversations after the magazine article was published in 1977.

One handwritten paper entrusted to Mary McPherson, a collection of letters entrusted to Dr Stock, plus one chance meeting between Sheila Snow and a man who had harvested the mysterious eighth herb for Nurse Caisse during the Bracebridge Clinic days, and we had it, the Medicine Man's original formula plus confirmation of the activity of *Rumex acetosella* root in cancer cells.

Rumex acetosella: World Distribution



Rumex acetosella has been recorded as being present in seventy-one of the world's one hundred and ninety-five countries, covering a vast amount of habitable territory either as a native or introduced species, where it was followed by many of the plants the Medicine Man selected to include in his formula. Ancestral Medicine cannot be patented. The knowledge is out there, the birthright of what it is to be human and survive. Essiac cannot be patented. The formulae are well known. No one can stop anyone picking a few herbs and turning them into a tea.

Dr John Barker, left with no alternative but to join Dr Walde in publishing a negative report at the conclusion of the 1977 trials, told Sheila Snow on tape: *'I think that old Essiac did work. We haven't established the uselessness of Essiac, just the uselessness in terminal patients of the material she (Rene Caisse) is producing now that she calls Essiac. It means it won't be easy to get research funds to direct towards Essiac for re-examination, but this doesn't prevent people from testing herbal remedies. There will be a resurgence of interest. I'm not pessimistic about the long view for Essiac.'*

Current research into the properties of the Medicine Man's herbs indicate activity in all eight of them, and after twenty-six years growing the plants, making and taking the various formulae, studying the evidence in the archive material, I agree with Dr. Barker. I think old Essiac did work.

Preventing metastasis remains one of the biggest problems in cancer treatment today.

Science may not be always entirely objective, but it is generally considered to be democratic and intolerant of dishonesty.

What if the action of *Rumex acetosella* against cancer could be proven in the laboratory, using spring and autumn samples collected from selected places around the world?

What if the apparent action whereby metastasized cells return to the source could be proven?

What if a substance could be isolated from the material that would incorporate those properties?

What if that substance could be injected prior to surgery, during surgery and post-surgery as a follow-up treatment to minimize the spread of metastases?

There may yet be a place for *Rumex acetosella* in twenty-first century cancer treatment.

ESSIAC, THE NEXT GENERATION
KNOWLEDGE, EFFICIENCY, COMPASSION

