

POTAWATOMI MEDICINES

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PART V - VEGETABLE FIBERS

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POTAWATOMI VEGETABLE FIBERS

While the Forest Potawatomi are not the most primitive of our Wisconsin Indians, still they have always felt the need of producing their own fiber materials, especially since none of them have ever become very wealthy.

We can scarcely imagine a white family so poor that they could not afford thread or string and yet that is just the case in many of the Potawatomi families. While their cordage fibers and textile fibers are by no means so refined as those of the white man, there is no question but that they are stronger and more durable as a general rule. It is a question whether or not the time spent in the preparation of their vegetable fibers would not be sufficient to earn the funds to purchase their wants in this direction. But the Potawatomi have ever thought that time is worth little and the materials are free of cost, so why should they purchase this material from the white man?

The Forest Potawatomi have not woven textiles for a long time, although they used to do so. In the earliest days, they used tanned buckskin for clothing, sewing it with native fibers and sinew. They wove a kind of cloth from cedar bark and from bast fibers. Woven bags of bast fibers were used for storage vessels but this is all long ago and now they wear the garments of the white man. The Forest Potawatomi still live in their wigwams, which they make from poles and cat-tail mats, covered by birch bark rolls. This is

the usual residence of the summer time and may be used by poorer members of the tribe in the winter as well. It is possible to make them quite warm and cozy for winter use. But, as formerly stated, the Indian Service has built frame houses for most of them and they use these at the present time. A few of them also have ancient automobiles and it is hard to maintain old customs with such up-to-date materials and equipment.

For the furnishing of the house, the Forest Potawatomi still weave rush mats and cat-tail mats so that one has an opportunity to see their ancient handicraft still practiced today. They make ash splint baskets for the tourist trade and also fashion miniature birch bark canoes as well as other knickknacks for the tourist trade.

All of the younger members of the tribe are compelled to go to school although they have no reservation school for the Potawatomi Indians in Forest County. They are farmed out around among neighboring Indian schools at the Lac du Flambeau Reservation, and even farther away.

These are boarding schools where the children stay for nine months of the year and the objective of the Government is to make regular citizens out of the children so that they will not revert to the old habits of reservation Indians. Until very recently, these schools overlooked an opportunity and there was no perpetuation of Indian arts and crafts.

Recently the teachers have encouraged the children to work at weaving and bead work so that the Indian arts and crafts will not die out. They also encourage them to get assistance from their parents at home in maintaining Indian designs.

Under the head of vegetal fibres, we will also consider their uses of forest trees, since these are so closely related. As before, the families will be listed alphabetically and descriptions of uses made will be along the same lines as in the preceding divisions of this paper.

POTAWATOMI FIBER PLANTS

ACERACEAE (MAPLE FAMILY)

Mountain Maple (*Acer spicatum* Lam.) "caca'gobimîc" [soft wood]. The Forest Potawatomi use these leaves as a pattern for their bead and applique work. Before the coming of the white man their beads were fashioned from native shells and were rather coarse. They also used porcupine quills for ornamenting their articles of buckskin clothing. With the coming of the white man and the trade beads, which were much smaller, they were better satisfied and turned to them. When the Indian woman is allowed to make her own designs, she will do a very fine piece of work but

if she is asked to copy some design fancied by the white man, oftentimes she does a very inferior piece of work. The leaves of this maple make a favorite design for their bead work and they were in the habit of using the leaves and flowers of valued medicinal plants to reproduce on their articles of wearing apparel.

In making up a design for art work or bead work, the Potawatomi woman would burn deer antlers until they turned to charcoal and use this to rub on the backs of the leaves. This surface was placed down upon a piece of white birch bark and rubbed until the shape and venation of the leaves were transferred to the birch bark. Then arranging with other leaves, a design would be formed which would be the pattern for the bead work. Oftentimes this would be placed directly under the loom so that the form and outline of the finished beadwork would be a true representation of the natural object.

APOCYNACEAE (DOGBANE FAMILY)

Spreading Dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium* L.)³⁷¹ "magosä'-sîngä'sîkîk" [awl-shaped]. The Prairie Potawatomi name for this is similar, "makosä'käsêkûk", and means the same thing. It refers to the shape of the green pod. Just about the time the pods are green, and before they open, the rind or bast fibre of the bark is very strong and tough. By twisting the stalk in opposite directions and pulling upon it they can determine just when the bast fibre has matured to suit their purposes. Then they cut down the entire stalk and remove the bark, which is bound into braids for future use. It is usually then thrown into a kettle of hot water and this also renders it more readily separable and tougher. The fine divisions of this fibre are very strong and also quite slender. A strand no thicker than No. 200 D. M. C. cotton will be many times stronger. They use it as a thread for sewing on the fine beadwork that is put upon buckskin, such as moccasins and coat work.

ASCLEPIADACEAE (MILKWEED FAMILY)

Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca* L.)³⁷² "ane'niwîc" [man weed]. Not only this but other species of the Milkweed have been used for thread materials in the same manner as the Spreading Dogbane.

BETULACEAE (BIRCH FAMILY)

Paper Birch (*Betula alba* L. var. *papyrifera* [Marsh.] Spach) "wigwassamic" [wigwam tree]. The Paper Birch is about as valuable to the Forest Potawatomi as the cocoanut tree is to the South Sea Islanders. They use the bark for many different purposes. It takes its Indian name from one of its uses, the making of the wigwam, furnishing a waterproof cover for the top of the wigwam. It is taken off in long rolls and these rolls are sewed together to make larger pieces. The seams are waterproofed by the application of a mixture of pitch and fat of some sort. Many of the household utensils were made from birch bark, storage vessels and all sorts of containers. They used to cook in birch bark vessels by the means of hot stones. Also, in maple sugar making, these vessels were actually

suspended over coals made from larch bark. One of the great uses to which birch bark is put, is in furnishing the outside cover of the birch-bark canoe.

Yellow Birch (*Betula lutea* Michx. f.) "wînesa'tîk" [odorous wood]. The Forest Potawatomi recognize the strength of Yellow Birch and it is a preferred material in its sapling stage for wigwam poles. These poles are set up in a circle and then bent down at the tip to meet and overlap in the center where they are tied together in the form of a hemisphere which makes the framework for the wigwam or medicine lodge. It also endures for a fair length of time and when the family moves it is left in position for it is but a matter of half a day to throw together another wigwam.

Beaked Hazelnut (*Corylus rostrata* Ait.) "cîkane'samîc". One would expect to find this used as a basket fiber to correspond with its use in the West, but if the Forest Potawatomi did use it for this purpose we were never fortunate enough to discover this. However, they do bind a bunch of the twigs together and make a serviceable broom out of it for sweeping out the wigwam.

CYPERACEAE (SEDGE FAMILY)

Great Bulrush (*Scirpus validus* Vahl.) "ana'gûnûsk" [mat weed]. The Forest Potawatomi gather the Great Bulrush from streams and in shallow parts of the lake to make mats and baskets. The entire stem of the plant is gathered and sunk with weights in the lake until the surface is bleached white. After that they can color it as desired and weave mats or baskets in patterns. The greatest use made of this plant is for the wigwam mats which average thirty by sixty inches.

The smaller stems are favored for use because the pith cavity is not so great in them and they outwear mats made from the larger stems.

Lawson³⁷³ records from Simon Kaquados, a Potawatomi Indian from Blackwell, Forest County, the memory of these rushes growing at Lake Koshkonong in the Rock River. He said that "the squaws gathered it and made blankets and mats from it."

FAGACEAE (BEECH FAMILY)

Beech (*Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh.)³⁷⁴ "ajawe'mîc" [beech tree]. The Forest Potawatomi use the beech and one or two other woods to make food or chopping bowls. The kind of beech wood most favored is that with a curly or wavy grain, for the wood is apt to be much harder and resist cutting edges of tools used to chop up foods or meats.

JUGLANDACEAE (WALNUT FAMILY)

Shellbark Hickory (*Carya ovata* [Mill.] K. Koch.)³⁷⁵ "mîtigwa'-bak" [hard wood]. The Forest Potawatomi use this strong and elastic wood to make

their bows and arrows. Such bows and arrows are still used by their children.

OLEACEAE (OLIVE FAMILY)

Red Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica* Marsh.) "êmkwansûk" [spoon wood]. This species and the Black Ash were both used by the Forest Potawatomi for making woven wooden baskets. They separate the wood by its annual rings and then pull apart the rings to get the material which they use in basket making. It is also from this wood that they make wooden spoons.

PINACEAE (PINE FAMILY)

Jack Pine (*Pinus Banksiana* Lamb.) "bêgi'wîtc cîngwak" [pitchy pine]. The Forest Potawatomi use the root of the Jack Pine as a heavy sewing material. These roots extend near the surface of the ground through the sandy soil for thirty to thirty-five feet and are easy to pull out of the ground in their entire length. When they are gathered they are made into coils and sunk beneath the surface of the lake until the outer bark has loosened from the root. Then they are peeled and split in half, each half being a serviceable cord for sewing together canoes and bark strips intended for the roofs of wigwams and for other purposes. The cones of this tree also yield a pitch which is used to waterproof the seams which they sew.

THYMELAEACEAE (MEZEREUM FAMILY)

Moosewood (*Dirca palustris* L.) "cîbă'gob" [dead man's bark]. This is one of the ready cordages that are to be found in the woods by the Indians. The bark is very tough and stringy and makes a good substitute for twine.

TILIACEAE (LINDEN FAMILY)

Basswood (*Tilia americana* L.)³⁷⁶ "wîgobbi'mîc" [string tree]. As with other Indian tribes in Wisconsin the Basswood is perhaps the most important fiber plant that the Forest Potawatomi use. All sorts of string for making cordage and fashioning bags, sewing the edges of cat-tail mats and the many household uses that develop, are cared for by the use of this string. The women gather long strips of the bark from saplings and peel the outer bark from the inner bark by using their teeth to start and strip the outer bark. The bast fiber is then boiled in an iron kettle to soften the fiber to render it more slender and to increase its strength. It is stored in the same coils after they have been boiled until such time as they wish to use it when it will again be softened in water and made into cords or rope or bags or whatever they wish to make of it.

TYPHACEAE (CAT-TAIL FAMILY)

Cat-tail (*Typha latifolia* L.)³⁷⁷ "aba'kweûck" [shelter weed]. "biwie'skwinuk" [fruit for baby's bed]. In common with the other Wisconsin tribes, the Forest Potawatomi use the leaves of Cat-tail which they sew together to make a wind-proof and waterproof side mat to be applied to the

wigwam or medicine lodge. They stitch the flags together with a bone needle and native string, perhaps basswood or nettle fiber, so carefully that the stitches are almost invisible. The edges of the mat, which is usually four or five feet wide and of any desired length, are whipped tightly with fiber to keep them from unravelling. The ripened fruit head is also used as a fiber. It consists of a very fluffy head of pappus-like material which when it is once opened, will scarcely mat, therefore it is used to make a quilt upon which to place the infant.

URTICACEAE (NETTLE FAMILY)

Slippery Elm (*Ulmus fulva Michx.*)³⁷⁸ "anib" [elm]. The Potawatomi made boxes and baskets from elm bark, according to Pokagon.³⁷⁹ The use of elm bark for baskets is also mentioned by Simon Kaquados.³⁸⁰ He also says that the bark of the elm was sometimes used to make the sides of the wigwam. The writer has been in such a wigwam where big strips of elm bark were sewed to the framework with bass-wood string. Lyall's Nettle (*Urtica Lyallii* Wats.) "masan" [itching]. The Forest Potawatomi gather the outer rind of the nettle for its textile strength. It is twisted into a two-strand cord that is used for sewing cat-tail mats and baskets. This nettle belongs to the same family as the Indian hemp, the hemp that is cultivated by the white man, and the bast fibre is approximately as strong as that of hemp. It is held in storage in the form of a braid about three feet long.

MISCELLANEOUS USES OF PLANTS

Under this head will be considered plants used for dyes and in the arts and crafts. There also will be considered a class of plants used for love charms or hunting lures and for sacred or ceremonial uses. In this class, much of the information gathered must be regarded as pure superstition.

With the extreme cheapness of anilin dyes, the Forest Potawatomi have almost abandoned the use of their native dyes. It is only when something is to be made for a sacred or a ceremonial use that they employ some of their native dye stuffs today saying that this type of dye lasts much longer than the material which they can purchase.

Under this head lies the greatest opportunity for expansion of knowledge of the ancient Potawatomi since most of the practices mentioned hereunder have been abandoned by the present day Potawatomi. Clay "wabigan". Clay is not a plant material, but was called to the attention of the writer as one of the materials used in making fireplaces and making the pots that they used long ago. They also spoke about their practice of wrapping wild pigeons in clay and cooking them in the fire.

ACERACEAE (MAPLE FAMILY)

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* L.) "cicigîme'-wîc" [maple]. The Potawatomi trapper boiled his traps in water with soft maple bark to deodorize them so that the animal would not detect the scent of the previous one which had been caught in the trap.

ANACARDIACEAE (SUMAC FAMILY)

Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina* L.). Jonathan Carver³⁸¹ found the Potawatomi using the leaves of the Staghorn Sumac to mix with their tobacco, "which causes it to smoke pleasantly".

BALSAMINACEAE (TOUCH-ME-NOT FAMILY)

Spotted Touch-me-not (*Impatiens biflora* Walt.)³⁸² "twatubîgo'- nîak" [touch me not]. The Prairie Potawatomi called this plant "wasawashîa'k" [yellow slippery]. Both the Prairie Potawatomi and the Forest Potawatomi use this plant as a dyestuff. The juice of the whole plant is boiled and the material placed in the pot while it is boiling to give it an orange or deep yellow color. Sometimes rusty nails are thrown into the solution when it is boiling and this deepens the color, making it somewhat reddish.

BETULACEAE (BIRCH FAMILY)

Speckled Alder (*Alnus incana* [L.] Moench) "atob" [bitter]. Alder bark is used by the Forest Potawatomi to obtain a red or brown dye. The powdered bark is also used as an astringent remedy to cure horse galls.

CHENOPODIACEAE (GOOSEFOOT FAMILY)

Strawberry Blite (*Chenopodium capitatum* [L.] Asch.) "mena'- kwoskûk" [stinking or scent weed]. The fruit heads of this plant have a beautiful pink to red color and stain the skin. Therefore the young Forest Potawatomi women use it for rouge to paint on clan marks or to heighten the color of their cheeks and lips.

COMPOSITAE (COMPOSITE FAMILY)

Yarrow (*Achillea Millefolium* L.)³⁸³ "nokwe'sîkûn" [perfume reviver]. The Yarrow is one of the plants that is used as a medicine and also as a witch charm. When the seed heads are placed upon a pan of live coals, a smoke is produced which is supposed to keep the witches away.

Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea* [L.] B. & H.) "wewa'bîckûnakûk" [white top] or "bakwä'näsîkûn" [fumigator]. Pearly Everlasting is also used as a witch charm to drive or keep evil spirits out of the house. The top is dried and placed upon a pan of live coals because it is supposed to hurt the eyes of the evil spirits and cause them to stay away from the house.

Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum* L.)³⁸⁴ "maskwano'kûk" [red top]. The Forest Potawatomi use the flowering tops of the Joe Pye Weed as a

good luck talisman. When one is going to gamble he places the tops in his pocket and then is sure to win a lot of money.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta* L.) "memakate'nî'ngweûk" [black eyeballs]. The Forest Potawatomi use the disk florets of the Black-eyed Susan as a yellow dye material. The disk flowers are boiled with rushes to give them a yellow color and to afford some variation in the color of the woven mats.

Field Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis* L.) "a'wesawano'kûk" [yellow plant]. This plant has an entirely superstitious use among the Forest Potawatomi hunters. The hunter will suck the milk of the branches of the Field Sow Thistle to imitate the fawn obtaining its milk and therefore will be able to make a sound like the fawn, calling its mother. He will thus be able to call the doe close enough to dispatch it with an arrow.

CORNACEAE (DOGWOOD FAMILY)

Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera* Michx.) "mêmskwa'kwûk" [red stem bush]. The Forest Potawatomi peel the bark from the twigs of the Red Osier Dogwood to make a sort of "kinnikinik" or smoking material. Sometimes it is used as prepared and at other times as an addition to smoking tobacco to render the tobacco more mild. This bark after flaking, is usually toasted over a fire to better prepare it for shredding and use.

CYPERACEAE (SEDGE FAMILY)

Wool Grass (*Scirpus cyperinus* [L.] Kunth) "bakwantibe'wûck" [clump of weeds]. The Forest Potawatomi use the fruiting tops of Wool Grass as a resilient material for stuffing and making pillows.

Great Bulrush (*Scirpus validus* Vahl.) "ana'gûnûsk" [mat weed]. The Forest Potawatomi say that this plant besides being used for making mats and baskets is a love medicine. They say that the flowers were used by Ottawa women as a love medicine and that they taught the use of it to some of the Forest Potawatomi women.

ERICACEAE (HEATH FAMILY)

Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi* [L.] Spreng.) The Potawatomi use the Bearberry leaves to mix with their tobacco. Carver says,³⁸⁵—"A weed that grows near the Great Lakes, in rocky places, they use in the summer season. It is called by the Indians "segockimac", and creeps like a vine on the ground, sometimes extending to eight or ten feet, bearing a leaf about the size of a silver penny, fairly round; it is of the substance and color of the laurel, and is, like the tree it resembles, an evergreen. These leaves, dried and powdered, they likewise mix with their tobacco; and as said before, smoke it only during the summer."

Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens* L.) "wa'bîgon" [white flower]. This is the tribal flower of the Forest Potawatomi who consider that these flowers came direct from the hands of "kîtcî' manîtowîwîn", their divinity. Chief Pokagon³⁸⁶ relates a very beautiful story connected with the flower.

"Many moons ago there lived an old man, alone in his lodge, beside a frozen stream in the forest. His locks were long and white with age. He was heavily clad in furs, for all the world was winter, snow and ice everywhere. The wind swept through the woods, searching every bush and tree for birds to chill and chasing evil spirits over high hills and through valleys deep and broad. And the old man went about vainly searching in the deep snow for pieces of wood to keep up the fire in the lodge. "In despair he returned to the lodge, and sitting down by the last few dying coals, he cried to the God of heaven that he might not perish. The wind answered with a howl, and blew aside the door of his lodge, and there came in a most beautiful maiden; her cheeks were like wild red roses; her eyes were large and glowed like the eyes of a fawn in the moonlight; her hair was long and black as the raven feathers and it touched the ground as she walked along; her hands were covered with willow buds, and on her head was a wreath of wild flowers; her clothing was sweet grass and ferns; her moccasins were white lilies, and when she breathed, the air in the lodge became warm and fragrant."

"The old man said, 'My daughter, I am glad to see you. My lodge is cold and cheerless, yet it will shield you from the tempest of the night. But do tell me who you are, coming into my lodge in such strange clothing? Come, sit here, and tell me of thy country and thy victories, and I will tell thee of my exploits for I am a Manitou.'

"He then filled two pipes with tobacco that they might smoke as they talked; and when the smoke had warmed the old man's tongue, he said: 'I am Manitou. I blow my breath and the lakes become like flint, and the rivers stand still and bridge over.' The maiden answered: 'I breathe and the flowers spring up on all the plains.' The old man said:

'I breathe and the snow covers all the ground.' 'I shake my tresses,' returned the maiden, 'and warm rains fall from the clouds.' 'When I walk about,' answered the old man, 'leaves fade and fall from the trees. At my command the animals hide themselves in the ground, and the birds forsake the water and fly away, for I am Manito.'

"The maiden made answer, "When I walk about, the plants lift up their heads, and the naked trees cover themselves with green leaves without number. The birds come back, and all who see me sing for joy; music is everywhere.' And thus they talked and the air became warmer and more fragrant in the lodge. The old man's head drooped upon his breast and he slept.

"Then the sun came back and the bluebirds came to the top of the old

man's lodge, and sang, 'I am thirsty! I am thirsty.' And the river replied, 'I am free; come and drink.' As the old man slept, the maiden passed her hand above his head; he began to grow small, streams of water ran out of his mouth, very soon he was a small mass upon the ground. His clothing turned to withered leaves. Then the maiden, kneeling upon the ground, took some of the most precious white flowers, and hid them about, under the faded leaves, breathing upon them said:

'I give you all my virtues and my sweetest breath, and all who would pick these, shall do so upon bended knees.'

"Then the maiden moved away through the woods and over the plains, and all the birds sang to her, and wherever she stepped, and nowhere else, grows our tribal flower, the Trailing Arbutus."

Labrador Tea (*Ledum groenlandicum* Oeder)³⁸⁷ "wesawa'bagûk" [yellow leaf] or "mamizhi'baguk" [woolly leaf]. The Forest Potawatomi use this leaf to make a beverage, also as a brown dye material.

FAGACEAE (BEECH FAMILY)

Red Oak (*Quercus rubra* L.)³⁸⁸ "mêtîgo'mîc" [wood tree]. The Forest Potawatomi use the leaves of the Red Oak to furnish a design for their beadwork. Their rushes, which are gathered for mat weaving, are boiled with Red Oak bark to impart a brownish red dye.

GRAMINEAE (GRASS FAMILY)

Sweet Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum* L.) "wîckobad mackossu" [sweet grass]. The Forest Potawatomi use the Sweet Grass to make baskets and also to sew with upon buckskin, when fashioning moccasins and articles of clothing, according to Pokagon.³⁸⁹

IRIDACEAE (IRIS FAMILY)

Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor* L.)³⁹⁰ "keki'weon" [flags]. The Forest Potawatomi used the leaves of the Blue Flag to weave mats and baskets according to Pokagon.³⁹¹

LILIACEAE (LILY FAMILY)

Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense* Desf.)³⁹² "sûksi'-mînaga'wîc" [deer weed]. The root of this plant is used by the Forest Potawatomi as a good luck charm to enable him to win a game.

MYRICACEAE (SWEET GALE FAMILY)

Sweet Fern (*Myrica asplenifolia* L.) "cîngwako'sîngä'cîkûk" [pine—shape of]. The Forest Potawatomi gather the leaves of the Sweet Fern to throw on the fire to make a smudge to keep away mosquitoes. They also used to line their berry pails with them when gathering any kind of berries, to keep the berries fresh.

Sweet Gale (*Myrica Gale* L.) The Forest Potawatomi have no name for this to our knowledge but they used to line the blueberry pail with it to keep the berries from spoiling. It was also thrown on the fire to make a smudge to keep away mosquitoes.

ORCHIDACEAE (ORCHID FAMILY)

Intermediate Bog Orchid (*Habenaria dilatata* [Pursh.] Gray var. *media* [Rydb.] Ames) "mêsko'mîni'kâcîkik" [red feather-like]. Due to the rarity of this plant, the Forest Potawatomi women use it as a love charm to enable them to secure a good husband. It is rubbed upon the cheek or painted upon the cheek and is said to be efficacious for either sex.

PAPAVERACEAE (POPPY FAMILY)

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis* L.)³⁹³ "mackwadji'bikûkûk" [red rootplant]. The Bloodroot is well known among most Indians as a facial paint root and was used in that manner by the Forest Potawatomi, to put on clan and identification marks.

PINACEAE (PINE FAMILY)

Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea* [L.] Mill.)³⁹⁴ "kêki'ntebä" [peaked top]. The Forest Potawatomi use the Balsam fir needles to make pillows, believing, as does the white man, that the aroma keeps one from having a cold.

Tamarack (*Larix laricina* [DuRoi] Koch)³⁹⁵ "monîba'namîc" [tamarack tree]. The Forest Potawatomi mixed the shredded inner bark of the Tamarack with oats that they feed to their horses so that it will make the hide of the animal loose and it will slip around when you pinch it.

Jack Pine (*Pinus Banksiana* Lamb.) "bîgi'-wîtc cîngwak" [pitchy pine]. For night hunting, the Forest Potawatomi made pine pitch and cedar torches. These torches were placed upon the bow of a canoe when they were hunting down a stream or on a lake.³⁹⁶

White Pine (*Pinus Strobus* L.)³⁹⁷ "cîngwak" [pine]. The Forest Potawatomi use the pitch rendered from the bark or cone to caulk boats and canoes.

Arbor Vitae (*Thuja occidentalis* L.)³⁹⁸ "giciga'ntûk" [sky leaf] The Arbor Vitae or White Cedar leaves are preserved by the Forest Potawatomi, or may also be used fresh, to create a smudge to exorcise evil spirits and to purify sacred objects. A pan of fresh coals from the sacred fire is sprinkled with fresh or dried Cedar leaves. A fragrant smoke arises and is fanned with the hands upon sacred objects and upon the persons of participants to

purify them for the ceremony. The Cedar bark is also sometimes rolled into torches which are used for hunting at night.

POLYPODIACEAE (FERN FAMILY) Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum* L.) "memakate'wîgateûk" [black leg]. The Forest Potawatomi use the black stems of the Maidenhair Fern as hunting charms thinking that if carried upon the person, they will bring good hunting luck.

RANUNCULACEAE (CROWFOOT FAMILY)

Goldthread (*Coptis trifolia* [L.] Salisb.)³⁹⁹ "asa'wasdji'bîkêns" [small yellow root]. The Forest Potawatomi use the roots of Goldthread as a yellow dye. The roots are cooked with the cloth and an indelible color is produced.

Liverleaf (*Hepatica triloba* Chaix.)⁴⁰⁰ "a'sawûsk" [yellow weed] The roots of the Liverleaf were used by the Forest Potawatomi to make a dye for mats and baskets.

Bristly Crowfoot (*Ranunculus pennsylvanicus* L. f.) "a'sawûck" [yellow weed]. The Forest Potawatomi use the entire plant boiled with rushes or flags which they wish to dye yellow, for making mats or baskets. To set their colors, they usually place a handful of clay in the pot.

Purple Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum dasycarpum* Fisch. & Lall.)⁴⁰¹ "akwatici'wûk" [mint leaf]. The seeds of the Purple Meadow Rue are dried to smoke while hunting and are supposed to bring good luck. In other circumstances, the seeds are mixed with tobacco and are the mark of a dandy. The young man will smoke this mixture when he is going to call upon some favorite lady friend.

SALICACEAE (WILLOW FAMILY)

Willow (*Salix* sps.). Carver⁴⁰² records that the Sand Bar Willow [*Salix longifolia* Muhl.] and some other species of willow are used for a scarlet dye. He says,— "Where the water has washed the soil from its roots, they appear to consist of fibres interwoven together like thread, the color of which is of an inexpressibly fine scarlet; with this the Indians (Potawatomi) tinge many ornamental parts of their dress."

SARRACENIACEAE (PITCHER PLANT FAMILY)

Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea* L.)⁴⁰³ "kokokoo'makasîn" [owl's shoe]. The Forest Potawatomi say that the old time Indians used the leaves of this plant for a drinking cup when they were out in the woods or the swamp.

SCROPHULARIACEAE (FIGWORT FAMILY)

Wood Betony (*Pedicularis canadensis* L.)⁴⁰⁴ "cagacka'ndawe soanuk"

[flying squirrel tail]. The Forest Potawatomi mix the roots of this plant with oats to make their ponies fat.

SPHAGNACEAE (SPHAGNUM FAMILY)

Sphagnum Moss (*Sphagnum* sp.) "asa'-komîk" [any moss]. The old time Potawatomi used dried Sphagnum moss for making pillows and mattresses.

TYPHACEAE (CAT-TAIL FAMILY)

Cat-tail (*Typha latifolia* L.)⁴⁰⁵ "biwiê'swkînûk" [fruit for baby's bed]. The Forest Potawatomi say that they used to strip the fuzzy seeds from the Cat-tail head to make a soft comforter on which to place the new-born infant.

UMBELLIFERAE (PARSLEY FAMILY)

Smoother Sweet Cicely (*Osmorhiza longistylis* [Torr.] DC.) "ä'sûkîtä'boe manomani'cîkoka'äcîkûk" [stickers—look like wild rice]. The Forest Potawatomi chop the root of this plant into fine bits and add it to oats or other seeds which they give to their ponies to make them fat and sleek.

URTICACEAE (NETTLE FAMILY)

Slippery Elm (*Ulmus fulva* Michx.)⁴⁰⁶ "anibi'wanak" [elm bark]. According to Simon Kaquados,⁴⁰⁷ the Forest Potawatomi from Blackwell, Wisconsin, use the bark of the Elm to make baskets.

CONCLUSION

While the Forest Potawatomi may have been an off-shoot of the Prairie Potawatomi or Mascoutens, or vice versa, we trust that we have shown them to possess a very definite culture of their own, which varies considerably from the written account by Skinner.⁴⁰⁸ We note considerable tendency to borrow medicinal plant uses from the Ojibwe and Menomini. This same practice appears to a much smaller extent in borrowing uses from the whites. Throughout historic times, the Forest Potawatomi have kept their residence in the most virgin of woodlands, and we find them today in the wildest parts of Wisconsin. Careful inquiry upon plants of recent introduction to the flora of Wisconsin will usually disclose the approximate date of introduction and any plant not used by them is subject to suspected introduction.

The Forest Potawatomi are doubly interesting to Milwaukee people because this locality was their home for a considerable length of time. It is unfortunate that they are so widely scattered in their present residence in Forest County and vicinity. This wide separation has made it difficult for

them to keep up their tribal life and to hold dream dances as often as they might if they lived upon a limited reservation. Still, with all these difficulties, they have kept their old customs fairly well intact and are transmitting them to their younger generation.

There is a considerable body of folk-lore and ethnology yet to be studied and recorded among the Forest Potawatomi and the older people are in possession of this information, so that it should offer a good field for some student. As has usually been the case, the writer feels that the three or four months spent among them has not yielded so very much of their ethnobotanical knowledge, but he hopes that this contribution will be interesting since it is the only published work upon these people, to his knowledge.

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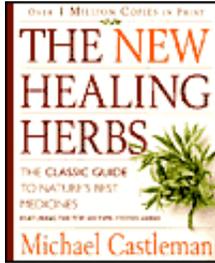
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| 372 Present. V4, P1, pl.2. | 391 Pokagon, p. 94. |
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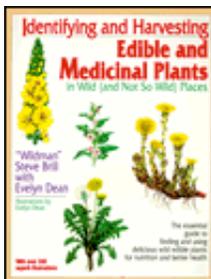
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