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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Myra Jean Perry, entitled "Food Use of 'Wild' Plants by Cherokee Indians." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Food Science.

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Myra Jean Perry

FOOD USE OF "WILD" PLANTS BY CHEROKEE INDIANS

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

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Myra Jean Perry

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ABSTRACT

Wild plants have long been a component of the diet of the Cherokee Indians. In this study, traditional knowledge of edible wild plants as a food source has been shown to exist in present day Cherokee society and the use of and beliefs about wild plants and other natural resource foods have been documented from accounts on the historic Cherokee.

It was noted that knowledge of wild plants may be passed from one person or generation to anotner by word of mouth. Attitudes and beliefs toward the consumption of wild plants affected the use of this knowledge.

The active collection of data pertained to present day food use of wild plants by Cherokee Indians. Data pertaining to plant identification, season of procurement, and preparation and preservation methods were collected with use of an interview schedule.

There were 78 plants positively identified by the informants of this study. Season of availability governed the food use of the wild plants. Preservation methods were found to extend or eliminate this seasonal availability.

Some wild plant preparation and preservation methods could be grouped into standardized form. Standard preparation methods existed for some greens and the fruit juices.

Mixing or combinations of greens was noted to be prevalent; season of availability and flavor being the main determinants of the plants utilized. Present day use was made of canning and drying as preservation methods for the wild plants of this study. Freezing was noted as a little used preservation method of the wild plants of this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to contribute data to aid those concerned with dietary programs in understanding and answering diet related questions of the Cherokee people. In agreement with de Garine (1972) and Schlegel and Guthrie (1973), this study recognizes the effect of the total culture on the food habits of the individual and his dietary needs. The focus of this research is not on dietary change, but on revelation of some traditional Cherokee food sources and appreciation of Cherokee foodways. With these concepts in mind, it is the attempt of this study to begin to develop an understanding of the food culture of the Cherokee people.

This study presents in an organized fashion accumulated data about edible wild plants utilized by the Cherokee people. The particular concern of the data collection is with Cherokee knowledge and use of edible wild plants and the attitudes and beliefs associated with this food source.

Because food use of wild plants has been prominent in the historic past of the Cherokee, data concerning dietary wild plant use has been collected from older Cherokees. A general characteristic of the older generations is to be

primarily oral, passing information to younger generations by word of mouth and demonstration. Little has been written down (Wiggington, 1972 and Grivetti and Pangborn, 1973).

Even though primary knowledge of wild plant use and lore may be diminishing, it vicariously remains, incorporated in Cherokee food behavior associated with domesticated plants. The established cooking method for vegetables, the use of drying as a preservation method, menu combinations of vegetables with corn products, and the attitudes and beliefs toward plant foods - all are affected by this aboriginal food source. From this viewpoint, the cultural history approach to food habit research (Grivetti and Pangborn, 1973) has been suggested as a methodology to enable researchers to differentiate between deeply embedded dietary habits, customs, and newly founded dietary trends.

One cannot expect to understand the total culture, the Cherokee food habits, and historic influence on present day dietary patterns with initial entry into a culture (de Garine, 1972). Accordingly, this study focuses on one segment of the Cherokee food culture. To research historic wild plant food use in the literature; present day edible wild plant knowledge, preparation and preservation methods from informants; and to note Cherokee terminology, phraseology, and informant

attitudes and beliefs of wild plant consumption are the designated areas of study.

The basis is being established so that later studies may correlate the diet to the culture in which it is observed. Given known cultural and physical characteristics and known diet, desired dietary changes can occur within the culture rather than emphasis being placed solely on the reform of certain individuals of the group (National Research Council, 1943).

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Project development

A review of the literature on historic and present day food use of wild plants and the attitudes and beliefs concerning consumption patterns of wild plants indicated a need for further study. The objectives - to investigate Cherokee knowledge and use of wild plant foods and the attitudes and beliefs associated with wild plant consumption - were correlated to the stated hypothesis: that traditional knowledge of the use of wild plants as a food source exists in present day Cherokee society. Successive trips to the Qualla Reservation in Cherokee, North Carolina, facilitated determination of the approach of the study. Methodology to insure the rights of the informants and to obtain the research goals were implemented.

Upon completion of the preliminary steps to the active collection of data, residence was established near the Qualla Reservation. Data were collected for a six week period in June and July of 1974. The following methodology and procedures were used to achieve said aims of the study:

Methodology

An interview schedule was assembled from field diary notations on two community observations (Spindler, 1970) and findings of the literature review. The interview schedule was pretested in Knoxville, Tennessee, for clarity and capacity to obtain desired research data.

In the term of residence, research methods of participant observation (Madge, 1965; Williams, 1967; and Spindler, 1970); observation and field diary (Spindler, 1970); photography (Madge, 1965); and interview (Madge, 1965; Williams, 1967; and Spindler, 1970), accompanied by an interview schedule and cassette tape recorder were used. Each interview lasted up to two hours and was kept semi-structured, open-ended, and permitting of free response.

Collection of data

Visual representation of each plant to the informant was the basis of collection of data. For plants known to the informants as a food source, questions pertaining to season of procurement, part used, preparation and preservation methods, Cherokee name and attitudes and beliefs toward consumption of the plant were asked. The plants were represented in the following forms: fresh leaf sample and/or text line drawings and/or color text photograph and/or black and

white text photograph. Fresh leaf sample, the preferred identification due to first hand nature, was utilized in 53 of the 78 plants collected. Supplementative identification of plants unable to be procured due to seasonal availability or researcher lack of familiarity of growth areas was plant illustrations in the following texts: "Wild Flowers" (House, 1932), "Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America" (Fernald and Kinsey, 1958), "Mushrooms and Toadstools" (Tosco and Fanelli, 1972), "Great Smoky Mountains Wildflowers" (Campbell, et. al., 1972), and "The Wild Food Trail Guide" (Hall, 1973).

Periodically, edible plant samples would be given to the researcher without plant identification. The plant texts listed above, "Manual of the Southeastern Flora" (Small, 1933), "Gray's Manual of Botany" (Fernald, 1950), and "Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Great Smoky Mountains National Park" (Stupka, 1964), were used in identification of the plant and assistance of local persons knowledgeable of wild plants solicited. The alternative action of taking the plant to the Botany Department of The University of Tennessee for identification was not necessary due to complete satisfaction of plant identification in plant texts and by local citizens.

Some plants were known to the informants solely in the

form of their native language. Referring to W. H. Bank's thesis (1953) on the "Ethnobotany of the Cherokee Indian" food use and Cherokee names for 29 edible wild plants were obtained. Correlating the Cherokee names with common names produced little success; Cherokee pronunciation is phonetic and not syllabetic, as is English; sound representation was not achievable. The varied forms in which a name could be given was a second problem. Responded terminologies were the common name or the name of the item or object which the plant looked like or reminded the informant of from earlier experiences. There are varied listings of plant names in Bank's thesis (1953), often as many Cherokee names for a plant as there are informants.

A cassette tape recorder was used to record data on food use of the plants known only in Cherokee terminology. These recordings were used to refer to Bank's listing (1953) (this rarely proved feasible); and for reference back to the plant at a later time in the event of identification, which often occurred with the introduction of new samples or in discussing plant illustrations in texts. The tape recordings were also used to transcribe the Cherokee names into phonemic forms.

To facilitate rechecking of plant identity, slides were

made of each fresh leaf sample, which then was pressed. The camera as a research tool served also to capture both the tangible and intangible aspects of the culture - the living conditions; the kitchen utensils; or a glimpse at the amiable character of Betty Lossiah, an informant. Description by way of verbal reduction to parallels in the viewer's own experiences could not have portrayed them so accurately.

None of the information gathered from informants is believed to be knowingly false. As data were assembled, it was occasionally fed back to informants for comment. The duplication of data was highly satisfactory as was fact agreement by informants and by edible wild plant books.

This array of checks and balances to detect error was used throughout the study. The complete process was a product of human facilities. Error is a possibility, but hopefully minimal. The purpose of the project has been to sensitize researchers to components of the present food culture of the Cherokee Indian by way of study of historic and present day wild plant food use and related attitudes and beliefs. The data obtained pertain only to the food culture of the informants of the study, all of whom are Cherokee Indians.

Informants of the study

The two major informants are Sevier Crowe and Betty

Lossiah. Sevier Crowe, newly retired and with much free time, pointed out many plants on hikes, brought in samples from the woods, and indicated edible wild plants in his yard and those he'd left untouched in his garden. He was especially proud of the Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum) growing at the end of a line of rhubarb (saying it was becoming plentiful again in the area and how he remembered it from when he was a boy) and the Jeruseleum artichoke (Helianthus tuberosus) growing at the garden edge ("the roots are used like potatoes").

Betty Lossiah, age 71, was unable to go on hikes or trails, due not to her age, but to the time factor. She worked six days a week in the summer season and made baskets in her free time.

All of the informants are of Cherokee lineage and over fifty years of age. Each have lived on or near the Qualla Reservation for the majority of their lives. All have left the area in their lifetime for purpose of schooling or travel.

Names of Persons Involved in the Study

Name	Study Form
Nettie Crowe	(N.C.)
Sevier Crowe	(S.C.)

Name	Study Form
Betty Lossiah	(B.L.)
Lish Sneed	(L.S.)
Geneva Welch	(G.W.)

CHAPTER 3

NATURAL RESOURCE FOODS USED BY THE CHEROKEE

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cherokee Indians represent the southern-most extension of the Iroquoian language family (Mooney, 1900). Cherokee habitation in the Southeast dated prior to white contact (Swanton, 1946). The "Middle Settlements" located on the headwaters of the Tuckaseegee and the Little Tennessee Rivers (Malone, 1956 and Lewis and Kneberg, 1958) were the nucleus of the Cherokee Nation. Successive references to the Cherokee people are to the Cherokee Indian inhabitants of this land area.

Flora and fauna were abundant in the land area of the Cherokee nation (Malone, 1956). Before domestication of plants and animals, food getting of the Cherokee people centered upon the activities of hunting game and gathering wild plants. The consistent availability of wild plant foods complemented the irregular success of the hunt. However, seasonal variation in location of wild plant foods in abundance required a nomadic existence. Human subsistence amassment of plant foods and the persuit of game feeding on

the wild plant yield necessitated travel in resource zones (Lewis and Kneberg, 1958 and Lee and Devore, 1968).

II. FOOD USE OF FLORA

Early historic life, preceding the advent of agriculture followed a semi-nomadic subsistence pattern of a summer horticultural and fishing season and winter hunting season. Use of wild plant foods appears congruous to the availability of cultivated food sources; the main seasons of wild plant use being the bleak agricultural seasons. Drying, an archaic preservation method, extended the availability of wild plant foods; especially the fruits and berries of the summer which were dried for fall and winter use (Witthoft, undated). Nuts were stored in the fall to be used throughout the winter (Harris, 1937).

With the passing of time and increasing complexity of culture and technology in the sense of assimilation of the white man's agricultural know-how and acculturation to his foodways, procurement of wild plant foods nevertheless remained ingrained as an important component of the Cherokee food culture. It has been noted in general that "Indians use a greater quality and variety of wild plants as food than did any American White or Negro community, these included both early Spring plants used as greens and Fall

products stored as staples" (Witthoft, undated).

Two probable factors encouraging the continuance of wild plants as a food source have been the tribal system, which favors retention of old traditions (Dimbleby, 1967), and the abundant availability of edible wild plants in the environment.

The ensuing account of specific edible wild plants and their food use in Cherokee culture are data recorded from observations and research to the present day.

Edible wild plants of the Cherokee and uses

Greens. Early Spring greens were eaten raw, in salads or as greens. Sweet cicily, great willow herb, lamb's quarters, wild ginger, peppergrass, turkey mustard, sachon, shepherd's purse, creasy greens, ramps, bear grass (spiderwort), Indian cucumber (Witthoft, undated), swamp saxifrage, hedge mustard, and wild lettuce (Banks, 1953) were often eaten as salads. Sachon (Witthoft, undated) or S›tchani (Banks, 1953) and creases (Witthoft, undated) were more commonly boiled as greens than eaten raw. Shepherd's purse, solomon's seal, crowfoot, evening primrose, twisted stalk, spiderwort (Banks, 1953), and pussley (Williams, 1930) were eaten as greens. Wild ginger and the leaves of white and yellow species of violets would be eaten sparingly in the

woods (Witthoft, undated).

Poke weed shoots were noted by John Witthoft (undated) as being eaten boiled, fresh. The leaves were eaten raw, in salads in the early spring (Banks, 1953); and the berries, which appear on the mature plant in the summer season, were used for wine and crushed to add color to canned fruit (Banks, 1953). Cherokee women of the 20th century canned poke greens and prepared them by heating them in lard and served them with scrambled eggs (Carr, 1943). Today, commercially canned poke greens and creasy greens can be bought in area grocery stores.

Nuts. Before dependence on the crops of corn and beans or when these crops were poor, nuts served as a staple for the Cherokee people. They often supplied most of the society's calories, were readily available, easily stored, and usually bland in flavor.

The quantity of intake of nuts was noted by J. R. Dodge in his report to the Commissioner of Agriculture in 1870. He said: "The quantity consumed at one time seemed incredible and would certainly be unsafe for more civilized stomachs."

Nuts were of extensive use in Cherokee cuisine throughout history. References were made in the literature to hickory nuts, walnuts, chestnuts, and acorns.

Hickory Nuts:

> "They take these Nuts, and break them very small betwix two stones, till the Shells and Kernels are indifferent small; and this Powder you are presented withal in their Cabins, in little wooden Dishes; the Kernel dissolves in your Mouth, and the Shell is spit out," noted John Lawson in 1714 (Harris, 1937).

> "Another Dish," says Lawson, "is the Soup which they make of these Nuts, beaten, and put into Venison-Broth, which dissolves the Nut and thickens, whilst the Shell Precipitates, and remains at the bottom" (Harris, 1937).

Crushed hickory nuts and corn meal mush were combined in ca-nu-chi (Malone, 1956) or cuh-nuh-tsi (with hominy) (Kilpatrick, 1966), to make a favorite dish. William Bartram noted that hickory nuts were beaten to make hickory milk (Van Doren, 1929). The oil of the crushed hickory nut served as a spread on bread (Williams, 1930). To preserve for winter, hickory nuts were "laid up for stores" (Witthoft, undated) in the fall.

Walnuts and Chestnuts:

Ground walnut meal supplied thickening for soup (Witthoft, undated). Chestnuts were reported to be roasted and baked into bread (Witthoft, undated), ground into flour (Banks, 1953) and made into soup (Witthoft, undated).

Acorns:

> "White Oak Acorns were collected and stored, especially in years when grain surpluses were small,

> and were crushed and shelled and beaten into meal for bread" (Witthoft, undated).
>
> "The Acorns thereof are as sweet as Chestnuts, and the Indians draw an Oil from them, as sweet as that from the Olive, though of an Amber-Colour. With these Nuts or Acorns, some have counterfeited the Cocoa, whereof they have made Chocolate, not to be distinguished by a good Palate" (Harris, 1937).

Availability of food sources to the Cherokee did not permanently dictate the use of nuts as a staple in the diet. Nevertheless, nuts were a popular item of Cherokee repast.

Fruits and berries. Lawson used the dichotomy "spontaneous" in distinguishing wild from cultivated plants (Harris, 1937). This nomer of wild plants is reflective of their uncontrived nature.

Many spontaneous fruits and berries were available in the region of the Middle Settlements. Some were eaten raw; others made into juice. Many were preserved for later use.

"The Hurts, Huckle-Berries or Blues of this Country are of four sorts," observed John Lawson (Harris, 1937). Huckleberries were eaten raw, baked into "bean bread", and dried (Williams, 1930 and Witthoft, undated). The favorite fruit ingredient of bread, huckleberries were substituted for beans in the basic bean bread recipe (Kilpatrick, 1966).

Con-nau-su-kah is a drink made of boiled wild grapes which have been strained and sweetened with maple sugar or

honey (Kilpatrick, 1966). Lawson (Harris, 1937) found grapes to be of the types: black bunch grapes, which yielded a crimson juice and were good for relish, and fox grapes, which he found the summer grape to be a species thereof. T-e-lq-ldi is the Cherokee name which designates the summer grape (Mooney and Olbrecht, 1932). Summer grapes have edible fruit (Harris, 1937 and Banks, 1953).

Persimmons were eaten raw (Harris, 1937 and Witthoft, undated) or stored as half dried cakes (Witthoft, undated). The Cherokees have preserved persimmons by packing them in jars (in later times) or drying them (Carr, 1945). Persimmons were gathered in the fall, a season of gathering and drying important wild plant foods (Witthoft, undated) in preparation for winter.

Passion flower fruit was eaten raw or boiled into juice (Banks, 1953), as were cherries and mulberries (Harris, 1937). Past use has also been made of dew berries, blackberries, raspberries, and the hawthorn (Harris, 1937); gooseberries and may apples (Harris, 1937 and Witthoft, undated); and ground cherries (Witthoft, undated).

Elderberries were used in jellies and for tea and serviceberries canned for winter use (Banks, 1953). Bartram (Van Doren, 1929) found strawberries and their gatherers

worthy of favorable comment. James Adair (Williams, 1930) and John Lawson (Harris, 1937) also noted Cherokee use of wild strawberries.

Roots and seeds. Primarily in the winter, roots of plants such as Indian cucumber, manroot, and the wild potato were used ground, as meal for breadstuffs, or prepared like potatoes (Witthoft, undated). Banks (1953) found solomon's seal roots to be dried and beaten into flour for bread, cowbane root baked and eaten, and wild bean seeds to be used as "beans" in bean bread. The odorous sassafras root was made into an infusion to extract the essence for a beverage tea (Banks, 1953).

Use of some roots was reserved primarily for times of shortages. In famine time, for instance, roots of the wild orange red lily were boiled and prepared like hominy (Banks, 1953); utilizing the kernel-like quality of the root.

Fungi. The meager listing of wild plant food uses in this classification included beefsteak mushrooms (Banks, 1953), morels, puffballs, and wood mushrooms (Witthoft, undated).

Food use of other wild plants. Salt was leached from a grass which grows on rocks. A strong lye was made of the grass by burning it to ashes. The lye was then boiled down

in earthenware pots and a salt precipitate remained (Williams, 1930). Solomon's seal roots, too, were ground and used as salt (Banks, 1953) and seasoning (Witthoft, undated).

Sugar or sweetening was obtained from unrefined sources prior to diffusion of the white man's foodways and food products (Kilpatrick, 1966). The honey locust (Harris, 1937; Kilpatrick, 1966 and Witthoft, undated) and maple trees (Harris, 1937 and Witthoft, undated) served as a source of sugar. Sweetening agents were extracted from the crystallized gum of the honey locust pod and from the sap of the maple (Harris, 1937 and Witthoft, undated).

III. WILD ANIMAL FOOD SOURCES AND THE CORRESPONDING MYTHS AND PROHIBITIONS

In addition to the important plant food resources from the natural environment, the historic Cherokee also made extensive food use of the fauna of the region. The ancient myths of the Cherokee, many of which are based on homeopathic belief (Frazer, 1920), often determined the edibility of the wild animals, imposing prohibitions on their food use. The categories of these food prohibitions, temporary and permanent, are common to dietary patterns of cultures who prescribe to supernatural or mythical explanations of life and existence (de Garine, 1972). The following is an account of

literature research on food prohibitions imposed by the myths of the Cherokee Indians.

Temporary prohibitions

Temporary food prohibitions are dietary restrictions which are of finite nature. They occurred in conjunction with illness, childbirth, and other components of life and living (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932 and Gilbert, 1943). The extent to which the belief in myths permeated the food culture of the historic Cherokee is undetermined.

Disease and pregnancy. Diet taboo in illness was based solely upon mythical reason and no other (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932). If one were ill and went to the medicine man for treatment, a cure would be administered following the progression: a) institution of the cure, often by local application or oral dosage of a plant remedy and verbal chant, and b) instigation of a dietary taboo to be observed, usually for four days as four was a magical number of the Cherokee (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

The foundation of the theory or belief upon which the medicine man based his practice was the Cherokee myth: Origin of Disease and Medicine (Mooney, 1900). In this myth, the beasts, birds, fishes, and insects decided to go to war against Man, who was crowding them out of existence. The

plants, friendly to Man, became the remedy to counteract the evil of the animals (Mooney, 1889, 1900).

Salt and hot food were prohibited in most diseases (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932). The dichotomy of "hot" and "cold" food rarely was a reflection of temperature. "Foods are traditionally considered as "hot" or "cold" regardless of their physical qualities (de Garine, 1972 and Messer, 1972) or spiceness (Messer, 1972); but to the possession of an ingredient which cannot be ingested over a long period of time without danger to health (Messer, 1972). "The distinction between "hot" and "cold" foods is global" (de Garine, 1972).

Historically, the "hot"/"cold" classification may have been instrumental in helping peoples to "selectively obtain" nutritional content and variety from their botanical environment (Messer, 1972).

In the case of the Cherokee woman experiencing a scorching internal fire; suffering more than she did the week before, when a healthy baby boy "jumped down", her inadherence to a tribal taboo "prohibiting all warm food to anyone in her condition" was attributed to be the cause. She was known to have eaten rabbit during her pregnancy. "That is why she is being consumed by an internal fire" was the

explanation based on mythical reasoning (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

Franz Olbrechts, whose work of 1932 was based on the field notes of the deceased James Mooney (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932) discussed Mooney's interpretation and his differences with Mooney's opinion on "hot" and "cold" foods.

> "Mr. Mooney repeatedly in his notes expresses the opinion that salt and hot food are tabooed because they have been introduced by the Whites, and are therefore thought to interfere with the action of Indian medicine. I do not quite share this opinion. Even if the use of mineral salt had not spread among the Cherokee to the same extent as it did after the advent of the Whites, yet they did know lye, and lye is prohibited by the medicine man in every case where salt is forbidden."

> "I noticed, furthermore, that now that the food introduced by the White people, such as canned goods, coffee, sugar, etc., is easily obtainable by the Cherokee, they never abstain from these articles when under medical treatment."

> "It seems to me that the reason for these restrictions are to be sought in another direction. The smarting of salt in open wounds and the scalding effect of hot food have probably given the people the notion that these two articles of diet are of a pain-aggrevating nature."

"Hot" to Olbrechts connotated temperature. Further vexed he quoted Roth (1915), who had this approach to the dietary restrictions in illness, as applied to the Guiana Indians:

> "The Piache (medicine man's) first prescription is to impose a general fast on the patient and his kinsfolk; the majority of the Piaches demand that

> no one belonging to the house should eat anything hot, anything cooked, or peppers."

Continuing, the temporary food restrictions were also of symbolic relationship to the malady they were to cure. Homeopathic belief was the basis of the food restrictions imposed by the medicine man (Frazer, 1920), the explanations of which were the ancient myths of the Cherokee Indians (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

For example, from Cherokee myths rheumatism treatment involved abstinction from squirrel, rabbit (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932), and buffalo (Mooney, 1900), due to the hunch or hump back position characteristic of these animals. The turkey neck, on account of its red, goiter-like growth, was tabooed to children or sick persons for fear that such an appendage would result (Mooney, 1900). Persons suffering from diahrrea were required to eliminate fish and chicken from their diet, "because the feces of these animals would seem to indicate that they were chronically afflicted with this very disease" (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932). All fruits and vegetables were tabooed in the case of watery blisters, because of the juicy nature of these foods (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

In the same light, the pregnant woman was to follow dietary restrictions for the duration of her pregnancy which

included:

Squirrel - the child would not go down, but "go up";

Rabbit - the child would be in a hump backed position, sleep with its eyes open, or have very large eyes;

Speckled trout - the child would have a birthmark;

Crawfish - like the crawfish, who runs backwards before maturity, the child would not come down at delivery;

Ruffled grouse - the child would not live to maturity, like the ruffled grouse who hatches large broods but loses most of them before maturity (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

The preceding wild animal food sources were "hot" foods. Plant foods are "cold" and mythical reasoning found them acceptable in illness and pregnancy excepting walnuts. If the black walnut was consumed during pregnancy, the child would be born with a broad nose (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

Unsatisfied cravings in pregnancy, a form of pica, in some societies are believed resultant in inflictions upon the body of the unborn child (de Garine, 1972). Olbrechts found no such belief in the Cherokee society (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

The dietary restrictions of the mother after the birth which were based upon myths included prohibition of fish for two days after delivery (because of the cold blooded

nature of fish, which would chill that yet to be passed blood and cause it to clot) and all hot foods or salt in her diet (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932).

Ball play. Temporary dietary restrictions reached beyond those restrictions of disease and pregnancy. In another aspect of daily life, that of competition and rivalry, were other temporary prohibitions. Ball players were forbidden by mythical reasoning to eat rabbit while in training, "because this animal so easily becomes confused in running" (Mooney, 1900). To make them "timorous in action" their opponents would strew soup made of rabbit hamstrings along the paths they were to take. Partaking of frogs was prohibited due to the brittleness of their bones, and the flesh of the hogsucker, said to cause sluggishness and loss of speed, was avoided prior to the game (Mooney, 1900).

Permanent prohibitions

Permanent dietary prohibitions were also present in accounts of historic Cherokee life (Mooney, 1900). The basis for permanent food avoidances were mythically based beliefs said to be held by some Cherokees such as: "eating the flesh of a slow-moving animal breeds a corresponding sluggishness in the eater" (Mooney, 1900).

Homeopathic belief is committed to the doctrine that

things which resemble each other are the same (Frazer, 1920). Some ancient Cherokees prescribing to homeopathic explanations of existence would imitate the cry and actions of an animal (Frazer, 1912) or the animal's diet (Mooney, 1900 and Frazer, 1912), "thus homeopathically identifying himself with the creature" (Frazer, 1912).

Homeopathic beliefs were also applied to animals introduced to the Cherokee by the white man. The cow, for example, became a part of Cherokee food lore after its introduction to Cherokee foodways from the white man. During one of many Cherokee-settler strifes, Nancy Ward (War Woman), the principle Cherokee female warrior of her time, learned of the dairy value of cattle while in captivity among the whites (Malone, 1956). The cow, dubbed the "white man's buffalo" (Malone, 1956) was in this way added to the food resources from which the Cherokee had to choose. Purposeful only as food to the Cherokee, the cow was not widely received in this time of abundant supply of wild game (Mooney, 1900). Doubly, the potent belief from myth that eating its flesh would cause sluggishness in the eater did not encourage its acceptance. The pig was even more strongly avoided due to this same belief. Mooney (1900) noted these prohibitions to be practiced by the more conservative of the Cherokee and said,

" . . . and to this day a few of the old conservatives among the East Cherokee will have nothing to do with beef, pork, milk, or butter."

Additional permanent prohibitions involved undomesticated animals such as deer and fowl. For example, the hunter would never eat the hamstrings of a deer, for fear that he would tire easily in traveling (Mooney, 1900). Adair (Williams, 1930) found in his travels all birds of prey to be considered unclean by Cherokees; not to be eaten.

"The Indian is a thorough believer in the doctrine that 'man is what he eats,'" states James Mooney (1900). He supported this statement with the following passage from Adair (Williams, 1930) which portrayed the role of permanent food prohibitions in Cherokee life.

> "They believed that nature is possessed of such a property as to transfuse into men and animals the qualities, eitherof the food they use or of those objects that are presented to their senses. He who feeds on venison is, according to their physical system, swifter and more sagacious than the man who lives on the flesh of the clumsy bear of helpless dunghill fowls, the slow-footed tame cattle, or the heavy wallowing swine. This is the reason that several of their old men recommend and say that formerly their greatest chieftains observed a constant rule in their diet, and seldom ate of any animal of a gross quality or heavy motion of body, fancying it conveyed a dullness through the whole system and disabled them from exerting themselves with proper vigour in their martial, civil, and religious duties."

The permanent prohibitions detailed have been concerned with eating the flesh of an animal. One additional permanent restriction existed in Cherokee myth and legend; the belief that ingestion of the diet of an animal gave that person characteristics of the animal. The homeopathetic belief of sympathetic correlation of like things, again was the basis of this belief; mythical reasoning was the logic of this belief. The bear was such a case (Mooney, 1900). Eating for some duration the diet of a bear would result in the nature of a bear in the eater, if not in bear form and appearance.

Relevance of food myths to the diet of the Cherokees today

Food myths, beliefs about food and its effect upon the person who ingests the food, are a part of the Cherokee culture. The temporary and permanent food prohibitions which have been previously detailed are based on belief in these myths.

Appendix A indicates that dietary prohibitions exist in Cherokee society today. The extent to which these prohibitions are mythically based remains undetermined as does the degree to which these prohibitions are followed. Further research is suggested to determine Cherokee dietary prohibitions and the logic or reasoning on which they are based and

the degree to which they receive adherence. This is necessary information for those persons planning food and nutrition education programs for the Cherokee people.

CHAPTER 4

FOOD USE OF WILD PLANTS BY CHEROKEE INDIANS

I. NON-VASCULAR PLANTS

FUNGI

Armillaria mellea, Slicky Mushroom - unilu·kwe

Season: Fall (September)

Preparation: 1. Cook in water for about one hour. Rinse. Fry in hot grease with salt (B.L.).

2. Soak in vinegar before cooking (S.C.).

Preservation: Can: Wash, boil, rinse. Pour into jar. Put one teaspoon of salt on top. Boil in jar for three hours (B.L.).

Comments: 1. "Slicky mushrooms are the best" (B.D.).

2. "(I) canned eighteen one-half gallon jars one time and every one of them was good" (B.L.).

Boletus purpureus

Preparation: 1. Slice them like hogs liver. Boil. Fry in hot grease with salt (B.L.).

2. A second manipulation procedure: Slice them just like fat back (flute). Boil, then cut

them up and fry (B.L.).

Comment: See Appendix B.

Morchella esculenta, Morel

Season: Spring (April)

Preparation: 1. Split in half and fry (B.L.).

2. Roll in meal and fry (S.C.).

3. Slice, or cook whole. "Boy, talk about something good" (S.C.).

Comment: It grows under the apple tree (S.C.) (B.L.).

Polyporus frondosus, Wishi Mushroom - wi·si

Season: Fall

Preparation: Soup. Slice wishi mushrooms and grind pumpkin seeds to meal in a konono. Add to a pot of water and cook (B.L.).

Preservation: 1. Can: Method not given (N.C.).

2. Dry: Boil, slice. Lay in sun for two or three days (B.L.).

3. Freeze (N.C.).

Comment: They grow on old stumps (N.C.) (S.C.) (B.L.).

II. VASCULAR PLANTS

ACERACEAE

Acer saccharum Marsh., Maple - wane·ʔi

Season: Spring Part Used: Sap

Manner Used: Sugar (B.L.); never actually procured by her.

BERBERIDACEAE

Podophyllum peltatum, May Apple - uniskwe·tu·ka

Part Eaten: Ripe Fruit Comment: "Taste like orange" (B.L.).

CAPRIFOLIACEAE

Sambucus canadensis, Common Elderberry

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Jelly, wine, pie (B.L.).

CHENOPODIACEAE

Chenopodium album, Lamb's Quarters

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: 1. Mix with sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata L.) and cornfield creasy (Barbarea verna) and parboil; rinse, and cook in grease until

tender (B.L.).

2. Mix with other greens - peppergrass (Lepidium spp.), dock (Rumex crispis), "whatever you got; mix lamb's quarters with it and have something good to eat" (S.C.).

COMMELIACEAE

Tradescantia virginiana, Bear Grass, Spiderwort - thakwa·li

Season: Early Spring

March, about five inches high (B.L.) (S.C.).

Part Eaten: Leaves and Stem

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: 1. Wash and put into pot. Parboil. Stems are tender when done. "Cook like sochana" (Rudbeckia laciniata L.) (mix with grease) (B.L.).

2. Mix with other greens and cook (S.C.).

COMPOSITAE

Eupatorium purpureum L., Queen-of-the-meadow - a·m titho·ʔt

Part Eaten: Root Manner Used: Salt

Preparation: Burn the root. Use ashes as salt (B.L.).

Comment: A long time ago the roots were dug for making

salt. This was at a time when there wasn't any salt (B.L.).

Helianthus tuberosus, Jerusuleum artichoke

Part Eaten: Root (S.C.) Manner Used: Root vegetable

Rudbeckia laciniata L., Coneflower, sochana - ǰo·tse·na

Season: Spring and Summer Part Eaten: Leaves and stem

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: 1. Parboil. Rinse. Put into a pan of hot grease. Boil until soft (B.L.) (N.C.).

2. Cook alone, or with poke (Phytolacca americana) (may add eggs), dock (Rumex crispis), cornfield creasy (Barbarea verna), or any other greens. Can be a combination of all (B.L.).

Preservation: 1. Can: Blanche. Boil three hours in "can" (B.L.).

2. "Some people put one teaspoon salt on top . . . when they tighten top; before boiling" (B.L.).

3. Dry: Put on a table outside on a dry day (B.L.). You can keep (store) them in a paper bag (B.L.).

4. Dry: Gather with long stems. Group into a bundle and tie together. Hang them up until you need them (B.L.).
5. Freeze: N.C. freezes sochana in the early spring, when tender.

Comment: Sochana is easily identified by its smell (S.C.) (B.L.).

Taraxacum officinal, Dandelion

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves and stem

Manner Used: Potherb or salad

Comments:
1. S.C. knows dandelion for its use as a medicine.
2. S.C. and B.L. both know dandelion to be edible, but in separate interviews, both said that dandelion tastes sour, which is an indicator of poison to them; as are white berries.
3. B.L. says, "Some people eat it like branch lettuce (Saxifraga micranthidifolia)." This is what a white lady told her. She notes that many tourists look for dandelions because they don't have other varieties of greens at home.

4. A second factor to fear of poisoning (sour) that B.L. doesn't eat dandelion greens is that she never had time to get them. She says that they come at a time when other, more preferable greens are available.

CRUCIFERAE

Amoracia lapathifolia, Horseradish

Part Eaten: Root (S.C.) Manner Used: Condiment

Comment: Horseradish is growing at the edge of S.C.'s garden.

Barbarea verna, B. vulgaris, Cornfield Creasy

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb or salad

Preparation:
1. Potherb: Parboil. Rinse. Season with grease and salt. Cook until tender (B.L.).
2. May be mixed with sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata L.) and lamb's quarters (Chenopodium album) (B.L.).
3. "Boil like mustard" (S.C.).
4. Eat cold in salad (B.L.).

Dentaria diphylla Mich. Crowsfoot - anahlskwalʌ·ski

Season: Early Spring (March) Part Eaten: Leaves and stem

Manner Used: Potherb or salad

Preparation: 1. Potherb: Parboil. Rinse three times. Put into hot grease. Add salt and a little water. Let boil until it softens (B.L.).

2. Crowfoot is strong, so rinse three or four times (S.C.).

3. Tender leaves can be eaten as salad (B.L.).

Lepidium, spp., Peppergrass

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Tender plant, roots

Manner Used: Potherb

Comments: 1. Eat the plants when small (immature) (B.L.).

2. They smell like turnips (B.L.).

Nasturtium officinale, Water Cress - a·mo uli·si

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb or salad

Preparation: Potherb: Wash. Throw into boiling water, wilt. Eat with bacon grease (S.C.).

Thalaspi arvense, Penny Cress

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Comment: B.L. knows leaves to be edible, but does not eat it.

EBENACEAE

Diospyros virginiana L., Persimmon - sa·li

Season: Fall, after frost Part Eaten: Fruit

Manner Used: Ripe fruit (B.L.) (S.C.) (N.C.), pudding (S.C.) (N.C.).

Comment: "Possums like them" (B.L.).

ERICACEA

Chimphila maculata, Wintergreen - ac^·ki inage·ehi

Season: Throughout the year Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Nibble (B.L.)

Gaultheria procumbens L., Teaberry

Season: Fall and Winter; Early Spring

Part Eaten: Berry, leaves

Manner Used: Ripe berries, tea

Comments: 1. Eat the berry when it is red (B.L.).

2. Smells like a birch (B.L.).

3. Grows way up on top of the mountain (B.L.).

Gaylussacia baccata (Wang), Huckleberry - khu·waya

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Ripe berry, canned, jam, cobbler, pie, frozen, bread

Preparation: 1. Huckleberry bread: Mix with flour just like bean bread. Mother used cornmeal, soda, huckleberry, and water (B.L.).

2. G. W. says to make a biscuit dough (flour) add huckleberries and sweeten.

Preservation: 1. Can: Boil until done. Put into jar - don't add anything (B.L.).

2. Freeze huckleberries (N.C.) (S.C.).

Gaylussacia ursina, Bear-huckleberry - elo·thiski

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Jelly, canned

Preservation: To can: Cook. Put into jar. Don't add anything (sugar) (B.L.).

FAGACEA

Castanea dentata, Chestnut

Season: Fall Part Eaten: Nut

Manner Used: In bread

Preparation: 1. Take the shells off. Put into meal like bean bread (B.L.).

2. Put chestnuts into cornmeal. Add boiling water and a little sugar (S.C.).

JUGLANDACEAE

Carya, spp., Hickory

Season: Fall

Part Eaten: Nut

Secondary Food Use: Ashes and Leaves

Manner Used: Nut, soup; ashes, lye; leaves, to wrap bean bread.

Preparation: Hickory Nut Soup; (Ko-nu-chie; recipe from G.W.). Pound hickory nuts between two stones into meal. Do not remove the shells ("Nuts and all; because you know you can't shell a hickory nut" (L.S.)). This meal is greasy and fine. Form it into a ball, about two inches in diameter. Put the ball into a pot of boiling water; one ball per quart of water. As it melts, you have soup. Ko-nu-chie is about the color of coffee with milk and is very rich. You would describe it more or less as a beverage. Sweetening with sugar is optional.

Preservation: Nut, "to keep", put them upstairs in the rafters. The warm air will keep them good (B.L.).

Secondary Food Use of Hickory Nuts:

1. Ashes; used in curing pork: "put salt and black pepper on it (dressed pig). Roll in hickory ashes. That's the best" (B.L.).
2. Ashes and leaves: Bean Bread Recipe (from G. W.). Hickory ashes, with the addition of water are used as a lye to skin corn so that it may be ground into meal with the konono. The konono is a large scale mortar and pestle instrument. To skin corn: Put corn to be skinned into a pot. Add hickory ashes and enough water to make a paste. Keep stirring to skin the corn; it turns yellow when skinned. Test with your fingers; the skin comes off when ready. When the skins are slipping off the corn, put the corn into a sifter basket. (The sifter is a flat woven basket with sides that protrude outward, with small holes in the bottom. It is of the same principle as the collander). Put it into water at the branch (stream)

and wash; rubbing the corn skins off. Grind the corn into meal with the konono. To the meal add partially cooked pinto beans which have been drained. Add boiling water and stir; the consistency should be such that you can pick up a handful of the meal and make it into a ball or cake. Dip hickory leaves into boiling water. Put the cake on the outside (underneath side) of the leaf. Wrap around the ball, several are required. Tie with strips of rush (tall grass from the branch). Drop into a pot of gently boiling water. Boil for about one hour.

Comments:

1. Hickory leaves are the best for bean bread (N.C.) (S.C.) (B.L.); you can also use corn blades (S.C.) (B.L.) (G.W.) and cucumber tree (Magnolia acuminata L.) leaves (B.L.).
2. To dry hickory leaves, corn blades, and rush: "put them into a paper bag or box and put them up somewhere" (B.L.).

Juglan cinerea L., Butternut - kno·hi

Part Eaten: Nut Manner Used: Raw

Preparation: Crack like English walnuts (B.L.).

Juglans nigra, Black walnut - kʌ·nige se·ti

Season: Fall Part Eaten: Nut

Manner Used: "Beans and corn"

Preparation: 1. Beans and Corn recipe from G.W.
Skin hominy corn. Put skinned hominy corn into a pot of water and boil for two hours. Cook pinto beans. Mix pinto beans half and half with cooked hominy. Add a handful of walnuts. Sprinkle with cornmeal to thicken.

Preservation: Nuts, "to keep", put them upstairs in the rafters. The warm air will keep them good (B.L.).

Comments: 1. "Mama used to sweeten it with molasses" (N.C.). "That's what she used because that's what we had" (L.S. - sister of N.C.). We used molasses because we didn't have sugar then; we had molasses and no sugar" (L.S.).

2. "Some people don't sweeten it at all. They put salt on it" (S.C.).

3. "You can put pumpkin in, but we just used molasses" (N.C.).

HAMAELIDACEAE

Hamamelis virginiana, Witch hazel

Season: Spring Part Used: Leaves, twigs

Manner Used: Tea (S.C.)

LIBIATAE

Frunella vulgaris, Self heal

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb

Comment: Eat the leaves when small (B.L.).

LAWRACEAE

Lindera benzoin, Spicebush - nota·tsi

Part Used: Stem Manner Used: Tea (B.L.) (S.C.) (N.C.)

Comment: Tea from the stems the year round (S.C.).

Sassafras albidum, Sassafras - khansta.tsi

Season: Early Spring Part Used: Root

Manner Used: Tea (S.C.) (N.C.)

Comments: 1. There are two types of sassafras root; red and white. Aggie Lossiah told Sevier Crowe that red roots are the best.

2. Red root only, not white roots (N.C.).

3. "If you eat ramps and smell - chew sassafras roots to do away with odor" (S.C.).

LEGUMINOSAE

Amphicarpa bracteata, Hognut - thu·ya inake·ʔi

Season: Fall Part Eaten: Underground fruit

Manner Used: As beans

Preparation: Peel them; use like beans.

Comments: "They used to dig them just like beans. They make bean bread. I've seen that kind a lot of times. There was a woman up in Big Cove, she was digging every day! Cook just like pinto beans. Don't cook them, just put them in the cornmeal with hot water" (B.L.).

Gleditsia triacanthos L., Honey locust - khahlše·tsi

Season: Undetermined Part Used: Pod

Manner Used: Sweeting, beverage

Preparation: 1. Drink: Cut pod in half on edge. Put juicy

side into a jar of water. Add sugar. This is known as Go-lus-tani (B.L.).

2. Soak the pods in a barrel of water to make the drink (S.C.).

Preservation: Put the pods in a sack and store away. To make the beverage, put a pod into warm water which has been sugared (B.L.).

Comment: G.W. ate the ripe pods raw as a child, as did S.C.

Glycine apios L., Wild bean, swamp potatoes - inage·tanenu·na, ako·hl tanehi

Part Eaten: Seed, root Manner Used: As beans, root vegetable

Preparation: 1. Uncooked seeds are substituted for pinto beans in bean bread (B.L.).

2. The roots are cooked like potatoes (B.L.).

Robinia pseudoacacia L., Black locust - khalokwe·ti

Part Used: Bark Manner Used: Tea

Preparation: Steep (B.L.).

LILIACEAE

Allium canadense L., Wild garlic

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Bulbs

Manner Used: Cooked with greens

Preparation: 1. Use with branch lettuce or water creasy or any other time that onion is used. "Cut up like onions. Boil. Put into grease" (B.L.).

2. S.C. knows wild onions to be edible.

Allium tricoccum, Ramp - uwa·sti

Season: March and April Part Eaten: Bulbs and leaves

Manner Used: Cooked vegetable

Preparation: 1. Cook like poke (with eggs) (S.C.).

2. Cook with eggs or not, always use the bulb, too (B.L.).

Polygonatum biflorum, Solomon's seal, sweet salad, sweet grass - uganasti, ukana·sti

Season: Spring (April and May)

Part Eaten: Stem and leaves (B.L.) (N.C.) (S.C.); root (B.L.)

Manner Used: Potherb: Mix with wanegedum (Ligusticum canadense) and bean salad (Steptopus roseus). Parboil. Rinse. Fry with grease and salt until soft (B.L.).

Preservation: Can: Mix with bean salad and wanegedum and blanche. Boil three hours in "can" (B.L.).

Comments: 1. The roots were used a long time ago to make bread. This was the same time that queen-of-the-meadow (Eupatorium purpureum L.) was used as a salt substitute and people ate swamp potatoes (famine) (B.L.).

Steptopus roseus, Bean salad, twisted stalk - tsu·hi·ʔski

Season: Spring Part Used: Leaves and stalk

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: Mix with wanegedum (Ligusticum canadense), sweet salad (Polygonatum biflorum); cook as greens.

Preservation: Combine wanegedum, sweet salad, and bean salad and can (B.L.).

Comment: This is one of B.L.'s three most favorite greens.

MORUS

Morus rubra, Red or black mulberry - khu·wa

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Fresh berry (S.C.) (B.L.), juice, dumpling,

jam, and canned (B.L.).

Preparation: Juice of mulberry and poke berry. Crush and strain. Add sugar and corn meal (B.L.).

Preservation: 1. Jam, method not given (B.L.).

2. Can, method not given (B.L.).

ONAGRACEAE

Oenothera fruticosa, Evening primrose

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: Parboil. Rinse. Cook in hot grease (B.L.).

Oenothera biennis - anta.tsi

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Roots (B.L.)

Manner Used: Root vegetable

Preparation: Boil, like potatoes (B.L.).

OXALISACEAE

Oxalis stricta, Sour sorrel

Season: Spring and Summer Part Eaten: Leaves

Comments: S.C. knows it to be edible.

B.L. does not eat it.

PASSIFLORACEAE

Passiflora incarnata, Passion flower, old field apricot - waka

Season: Fall (fruit), Unknown (Leaves)

Part Eaten: Tender leaves, ripe fruit

Manner Used: Leaves, potherb; fruit, fresh or as juice

Preparation:

1. Potherb: B.L. says that some people eat the leaves just like sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata) (Parboil. Rinse. Cook in hot grease, salt).
2. Fruit: The fruit is eaten raw or in a juice (S.C.).
   a. Make the juice like you would wine (crush and strain) (S.C.).
   b. Add flour or cornmeal to thicken juice (B.L.).
   c. Ripe fruit: "Apricots" are good to eat when they turn yellow. I used to eat lots of them when I was a boy" (S.C.).
   d. Peel the fruit just like eggs (B.L.).

PENTHORACEAE

Penthorum sediodes, Wild turnip - to·hsʌ·na inage·e·hi

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb

PHYTOLACCACEAE

Phytolacca americana, Poke - tsa.ytkika

Season: Spring and Summer; when edible portions are available

Part Eaten: Tender leaves and stem, immature stalk, berries, shoots

Manner Used: Leaves, potherb and cooked vegetable; berry, juice and coloring

Manipulation: Place several leaves flat one on top of another; pulling stem off. Roll crosswise, wide end first. Cut across the leaves "just like cabbage" (B.L.). Note: This is for large leaves and this method is used for other large leafed greens (dock and plantain for example).

Preparation:

1. Shoots, leaves, and stems: Parboil. Rinse three times "because strong tasting". Cook alone or mixed with other greens; sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata) is given as an example. Add eggs (B.L.) (S.C.).
2. Stalk: Peel stalk. "Cut like okra" (N.C.) (S.C.) (B.L.) or cut lengthwise (B.L.).

Parboil. Dip in egg (optional). Roll in cornmeal. "Fry like fish" (B.L.).

3. Berries: Make a juice of sour grapes and poke berries. "Make like wine" (crush and strain). Add sugar and cornmeal (B.L.).
4. B.L. knows of putting berries in canned fruit for color, although she has never done it.

Preservation: Dry: Gather into bundle. Tie. Hang up to dry (B.L.).

Comments:
1. "Eat in Spring, when two or three inches high; that's when it's good" (S.C.).
2. B.L. says she likes commercially canned poke from the grocery store and uses it, even in seasons when poke is available.
3. The root is poison; the berry, poison or medicine (S.C.).

PLANTAGINACEAE

Plantago major, Plantain - na·no ute·yth

Season: Early Spring Part Eaten: Leaves and stem

Preparation: Cut the leaves up like cabbage. Cook plantain by itself with fatback (B.L.).

Comment: S.C. knows plantain to be edible.

POLYGONACEAE

Polygonum cuspidatum, Japanese knotweed

Part Eaten: Leaves Manner Used: Cooked green vegetable

Comment: S.C. knows *Polygonum cuspidatum* to be edible. He ate it as a child.

Rumex acetosella and *R. acetosa*, Sheep sorrel

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Comment: S.C. knows it to be edible but hasn't eaten it.

Rumex crispis, Curled dock - ta·ki

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves and stem

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation:
1. Parboil. Rinse. Cook in hot grease. "Soft when done" (B.L.).
2. May be mixed with other potherbs: lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*), bear grass (*Tradescantia virginiana*) (S.C.), sochana (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) and plantain (*Plantago major*).

Comment: It grows in the cornfield (B.L.).

SAXIFRACEAE

Hydrangea arborescens, Seven bark, wild hydrangea - kahlkwo·ki tsu·ya·stu

Season: Summer Part Used: Branches, twigs (B.L.)

Manner Used: Vegetable, tea

Preparation: 1. Peel. Snap like green beans. Boil. Put into grease and cook until soft (B.L.).

2. A tea is made of it also (B.L.).

Ribes rotundifolium, R. cynosbati, Gooseberry

Season: Late Summer Part Used: Berry

Manner Used: Canned (B.L.)

Saxifraga micranthidifolia, Branch lettuce - ako·stuki·sti

Season: Early Spring Part Used: Leaves

Manner Used: Salad, cooked vegetable

Preparation: Cooked vegetable: Wilt in boiling water. Drip bacon grease on the top. Can be served with onions (S.C.) (B.L.).

SCROPHULARIACEAE

Pedicularis canadensis, Lousewort - uku·khu·sto

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves, stem (B.L.)

Comment: B.L. remembers her mother cooking lousewort and the family eating it.

Chelone, sp., Deer tongue

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves, stem

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: Parboil. Rinse. Cook in grease until tender (B.L.).

Comments: S.C. knows the leaves to be edible.

SOLANACEAE

Physalis, sp., Ground cherry - unʌ·tuhi·sta

Part Eaten: Fruit Manner Used: Fresh fruit

Comments:
1. They are yellow when they are ripe (B.L.).
2. "There's a lot of them down there at Furgeson's cornfield" (B.L.).
3. "They're sweet; eat just like grapes" (B.L.).

ROSACEAE

Amelanchier laevis, Serviceberry - uto·la ni

Season: Late Spring Part Eaten: Ripe berry

Comment: Known to be edible (S.C.) (B.L.).

Crataegus macrosperma Ashe, hawthorn

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Fruit

Comment: S.C. knows it to be edible.

Fragaria virginana, Wild strawberry - ahni

Season: Late Spring Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Fresh berry, jam, shortcake

Comments:

1. "Better than tame ones" (S.C.).
2. "Can't beat them; eat them just raw (good flavor)" (S.C.).
3. "We were thinking of planting a patch of strawberries but there are alot of wild strawberries growing around here" (N.C.).
4. "They're the best (better than domesticated) on a shortcake or in jam. They don't freeze well, though - they just turn to water" (N.C.).

Malus angustifolia, Southern crabapple

Season: November Part Eaten: Ripe fruit

Manner Used: Dried; Jelly

Preservation:

1. Slice. Dry in the sun for two or three days (B.L.).

2. Jelly; "good clear jelly" (S.C.) also pectin use.
3. Use blackberries as color for crabapple jelly (B.L.).

Rubus occidentalis L., Black raspberry - sʌ·tiwa·li or elo·-thi·ski?

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Fresh fruit, jelly, pie, canned (B.L.)

Preservation: Can (B.L.).

Comment: "Bloom in white" (B.L.).

Rubus odoratus, Wild raspberry - sʌtiwa·li or elo·thi·ski?

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Fresh fruit (S.C.), jelly, pie, canned (B.L.)

Preservation: Can (B.L.).

Comment: "Bloom in pink" (B.L.).

Rubus, spp., Blackberry

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry, shoots

Manner Used: Berry: pie, jelly, jam, cobbler (B.L.) (S.C.) (N.C.) (L.S.), canned (B.L.)

Shoots: salad or potherb

Preparation: 1. Shoots: S.C. says he has seen them mixed with salad greens.

2. B.L. knows the shoots to be edible and prepared like sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata).

Preservation: 1. Can (B.L.).

2. Can: doesn't need much sugar (N.C.).

3. Jelly (N.C.).

Rubus spp., Dewberry - sʌ·ti·wali?

Season: Summer Part Eaten: Berry

Manner Used: Fresh fruit, pie, jelly (B.L.)

Preparation: 1. Can be used in all the ways of blackberries but S.C. says he doesn't bother with them because there are plenty of blackberries.

2. B.L. says you can mix them with apples to make jelly red.

Prunus pensylvania L.f., Wild cherry - tha·ya

Part Eaten: Fruit Manner Used: Jam, pie (B.L.)

UMBELLIFERAE

Ligusticum canadense, Angelico, wanegedum - wane·kita

Season: Spring Part Eaten: Leaves, stalk

Manner Used: Potherb

Preparation: Boil. Rinse. Fry with grease and salt until soft (B.L.) (S.C.).

a. Eaten alone.

b. Mix with bean salad, sweet salad.

Preservation: 1. Can: Blanche. Boil three hours in "can" (B.L.).

a. Alone.

b. Mix with bean salad and sweet salad.

2. Can: Blanche and put into "can". Add one tsp. salt to top of contents. Boil three hours.

3. Dry: Gather fresh greens into a bundle. Tie and hang up until needed.

Comments: 1. Is B.L.'s favorite green: "They're the best."

2. "It's too good for mixing" (S.C.).

3. Wanegedum is identified (often) by smell (S.C.) (B.L.).

VALERIANACEAE

Valerianella olitoria, Corn salad

Season: Late Spring Part Eaten: Leaves

Manner Used: Potherb (N.C.) (S.C.)

VIOLACEAE

Viola blanda, White violet - ti·nta·staski unineka

Viola pensylvanica, Yellow violet

Viola spp., Blue violet - ti·nta·sta. ski

Season: Most of the year Part Used: Leaves, stems

Manner Used: As greens (B.L.)

Preparation: Mix with other greens. Parboil. Rinse. Fry with grease and salt until soft.

VITACEAE

Vitis baileyana Munson, Possum grape - khe·lati

Vitis labrusca L., Wild fox grape - the lʌla· ti

Vitis aestivalis Michx., Summer grape - kwalu·si

Vitis rotundifolia Michx., Muscadine grape

Season: Part Eaten: Fruit

Manner Used: Raw (B.L.) (S.C.), juice (B.L.) (S.C.), dumplings (S.C.)

Preparation: 1. Juice: Mix sour grape and pokeberry juice. Add sugar and cornmeal (B.L.).

2. Dumplings: Make just like blackberry dumplings (S.C.).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

I. KNOWLEDGE

Present day knowledge of edible wild plants and the accompanying tangibles (season of procurement, part of plant eaten, preparation and preservation methods) and intangibles (attitudes and beliefs of wild plant consumption) are topics of this discussion.

In this study, acquisition of food knowledge seemed to require some vehicle of transmission. To capture the intangible entity "transmission of foodways," consideration will be given to B.L., who was the source of the bulk of the wild plant data used in this study.

B.L. had little formal education (reportedly to the third grade). Her knowledge of edible wild plants was passed on to her by other persons. She cited Cherokees, Tom Lossiah (see Banks, 1953), her deceased husband, Aggie Lossiah (see Ulmer and Beck, 1950 and Banks, 1953), who was of no relation, and to the greatest extent, her mother, as those persons who gave her the greatest amount of edible wild plant information.

When she was very young, "about seven", she said, her

mother began pointing out edible wild plants as she gathered them. She in turn passed on wild plant knowledge to her children and grandchildren on similar gathering trips.

B.L.'s extensive knowledge of wild plants has not been depleted in this study; seasonal availability and this researcher's inability to procure additional plant samples dictated this condition. Most of the 78 wild plants of this study were readily identified by B.L.

Indicative of the nature of wild plant knowledge acquisition is the fact that wild plant foods are a traditional food source in the diet history of B.L. and other Cherokees before her. The term "tradition" as defined for the purpose of this study is the oral transmission of customs and beliefs, etc., from generation to generation. Correspondingly, the transmission of foodways to B.L. from generations before her and by B.L. to following generations is by word of mouth. The hypothesis of this study, that traditional knowledge of edible wild plants as a food source exists in Cherokee society today, has been affirmed. It also follows that within the confines of this study, one integral component of Cherokee wild plant food knowledge transmission is that oral transmission of foodways may indicate food sources which are of traditional nature.

Factors determining the amount of information transmitted remain undetermined. The adolescent granddaughter of B.L. was very proficient in wild plant identification. On the other hand, the grown daughter of S.C. and N.C. identified few edible wild plants. A study of the factors affecting the differences or the degrees of transmission of knowledge of edible wild plants is a suggestion for further research.

The interview schedule was employed to determine the extent of knowledge of wild plants that an informant possessed. The principle behind the questions of the interview schedule was not only to measure the extent or amount of knowledge, but to obtain as much information as possible on the food uses of each wild plant of this study. Questions which pertained to the season of procurement, part of plant eaten, and preparation and preservation methods were asked; the results of which were as follows:

Season of procurement

Early spring was found to be the season of availability for most greens; summer, for berries and fruits; spring and fall, for fungi; autumn, for nuts and seeds; and historically, winter, for roots. The season of availability may have determined the amount of wild plant food use. Correlation

will be made later in this chapter pertaining to wild green combinations and seasons of availability.

Each plant group: greens, fruits and berries, roots and seeds, nuts, and fungi were subject to preservation methods recorded in this study. A "season" of availability was extended or eliminated by these preservation methods. The extent that the use and preservation of wild plants is affected by the timing of their appearance in relation to the season of cultivated crops is undetermined. Further research is needed in this area.

Part of plant eaten

Wild plant foods seemed to offer a greater "economy" than domesticated; monetarily, or course, but also pertaining to food use. In times of famine greater use may be made of edible portions of a plant. For example, solomon's seal (Polygonatum biflorum) greens mixed with other greens, a popular dish in the study, was of greater use in famine times. The root was eaten pulvarized into flour for bread or as a salty seasoning ground onto food (Witthoft, undated). Nevertheless, the summer of 1974 was devoid of famine conditions for this population, yet this researcher found complete or almost complete food use was made of several plants. Poke (Phytolacca americana), the stalk, leaves, shoots, and

berries were utilized (the roots are poisonous); blackberry (Rubus, spp.) shoots and fruit; passion flower (Passiflora incarnata) leaves and fruit; and ramp (Allium tricoccum) leaves and bulbs were examples of near optimum plant utilization. Domesticated plants did not seem to follow this pattern.

A characteristic of wild plant foods and dishes therefore seemed to be that greater use was made of the edible portions of the plant. The use of a wild plant group at different stages of growth also increased the season of availability of food from that plant species.

Preparation

Greens. A standard preparation method for wild greens was evident (see Appendix C). Parboiling and rinsing was followed by "grease", the second cooking medium. Variances in the steps of preparation were the number of times the greens were rinsed in parboiling and the optional addition of salt. "Strength" refers to the acridity some wild greens develop with age; amount of which vary among greens at the immature and mature stages. The degree of strength determined the amount of rinsing with parboiling. Addition of salt was of personal preference, as the "grease" often was of salt cured pork.

"Mixing" of greens was a common occurrence. Mixing is the combination of two or more types of greens to produce a single dish. It was noted that a given species of wild plants did not all grow entirely in one area of a region but occurred throughout the region. Species survival is ensured by this growth pattern which, to the gatherer within the confines of a gathering area, meant either limited availability of a plant or conversely, a wide assortment of plant types. Mixing reflected the second approach to plant procurement.

The major factor determining which greens were to be combined as a dish was the time the plant is "in". For instance, in April and May, wanegedum (Ligusticum canadense), solomon's seal (Polygonatum biflorum) and bean salad (Streptopus roseus) are at optimum gathering stage. Combinations of these plants were also canned.

The plants of these combinations also had complementing flavors, the second factor in selection of wild green combinations. Some greens have a stronger flavor than others, specifically sochana (Rudbeckia laciniata) and wanegedum (Ligusticum canadense), A green mixed with either of these plants "takes on the taste" of the stronger plant. Some plant flavors dominated others, the third factor in mixing of wild greens.

Sometimes, just a "mess" of greens was desired and the experienced gatherer would gather whatever plants were available until there were enough. The amount and kinds of greens available and flavor of the greens played a complementary role to the gatherer's knowledge of wild plants which are edible, attitudes and beliefs toward the plants, and the gatherer's desire or need for the food that is being gathered.

Other wild plant foods. Juices made from fruits and berries contained cornmeal and sometimes sugar added to the crushed and strained fruit and berries. No other standards of ingredients nor manipulation were noted in the remaining wild plant food groups.

Preservation

Greens. Wild greens of this study were dried, canned, and frozen. Two methods of drying greens were used. The physical restriction of length of stem was a factor which determined which method is utilized. Greens with long stems were gathered into bundles, tied, and hung up to dry inside the home until needed. Shorter stemmed greens were spread over a table and dried in the sun for two or three days. They then were gathered and stored in a paper bag or box until needed.

Canning as a preservation method for greens was not

widely used. Two canning procedures were evident in this study. The first involved blanching the greens and boiling them for three hours in the canning jar. The second was the same as the first with the addition of a teaspoon of salt to the top of the contents to be processed.

The preservation method of freezing wild greens was not widely used by the informants. The one informant who froze wild greens desired to have the tender shoots of early spring for later use in the year.

Fruit and berries. The preservation of fruit and berries involved little drying and was dominated by freezing and canning. The absence of sugar for canning huckleberries (Gaylussacia spp.) and little sugar in blackberries (Rubus, spp.) might have suggested an adaptation to the physical need of many Cherokees to control carbohydrate intake; or the lack of plentiful sugar or sweetening sources ever present in Cherokee history. Fruits and berries were also preserved as jams and jellies.

Roots, bulbs, and seeds. No wild plants of this category were found to be preserved for later use.

Nuts. The only method to "keep" nuts in this study was that of putting them in a box or a bag and storing them indoors, usually in the rafters, until needed.

Fungi. Mushrooms were found to be dried, by slicing and drying in the sun for two or three days; canned, with a teaspoon of salt; or frozen, sliced.

II. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

The dichotomy of "attitudes and beliefs" for the purpose of this study required the following differentiation: an attitude is defined as a feeling; a belief, a conviction of truth. Attitudes in the data pertained primarily to single plants; beliefs on the other hand enveloped a whole food group of wild plants.

An attitude toward wild plants was exemplified by the following comments of an informant: "My most favorite greens are wanegedum (Ligusticum canadense), bean salad (Steptopus roseus) and sweet salad (Polygonatum biflorum); they're the best."

When an informant indicated that fresh wild greens were better for you than greens fresh from the grocery store because wild greens are fresher, she was expressing a belief. On canned greens, she noted of commercially canned greens that "you don't know how many years they have been canned" and said that home canned wild greens are better for you than commercially canned greens. There is a connotation of freshness being "better for you," a belief shared by many.

Further examples of beliefs as affecting the well being of a person are found in Appendix B.

Attitudes and beliefs involving the food use of a specific wild plant or wild plants as a whole determines the use of one's knowledge of the plant. Future study is needed to indicate the role that attitudes and beliefs play in the transmission of knowledge about wild plants known to be edible.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Wild plants have long been a component of the diet of the Cherokee Indian. Current food practices, attitudes and beliefs are documented in the history of the food culture of the Cherokee people.

The hypothesis of this study, that traditional knowledge of edible wild plants as a food source exists in Cherokee society today, has been proven. Positive identification was given to 78 esculent wild plants by informants.

Knowledge of wild plants may be passed from one person or generation to another by word of mouth. Attitudes and beliefs toward the consumption of wild plants affect the use of this knowledge. Factors affecting the degree of transmission of knowledge of edible wild plants remain undetermined. Further research is needed in this area.

The seasonal determinant of wild plant availability governed their food use. Preservation methods served to extend or eliminate the seasonal availability. The extent that the incidence of preservation of wild plants was affected by the timing of their appearance in relation to the season of cultivated crops remains to be investigated.

Some wild plant preparation and preservation methods can be categorized into standardized form. Standard preparation methods exist for greens and fruit juices. Optimum or near optimum usage of some plants existed. Mixing or combinations of wild greens was prevalent; season and flavor were the main determinants of plants utilized. Present day use was made primarily of canning and drying as preservation methods for wild plants; although some freezing did exist.

This study has shown the long time utilization and extensive knowledge of wild plant foods by the Cherokee people. In aid to further research, this study has given Cherokee pronunciation and phraseology of some wild plant data and has suggested areas of future study.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PARALLELS OF CHEROKEE FOOD MYTHS TO PRESENT DAY DIETARY PROHIBITIONS FOR DIABETES AND SWELLING

Diabetes

The present day Cherokee have a high incidence of glucose intolerance (Stein, 1965). When diabetes occurs, some Cherokees go to a modern medical doctor for treatment. Others go to the medicine man, or "Indian doctor." Those Cherokees who continue to rely upon non-professional "Indian doctors," rarely do so to the complete exclusion of modern medicine (Kupferer, 1966). Nevertheless, Kupferer (1966) found some Cherokees to believe "Indian doctors" to be able to cure cancer, diabetes, and other ailments.

The following cure for diabetes was given by a Cherokee Indian to this researcher. Parallels exist to Chapter Four of this thesis in the role that myth plays in the cure of disease. The parallels to Chapter Four are the healing attributes mythically associated with plants, the use of dietary prohibitions, and the length of the duration of prohibitions; four days. The extent to which this cure is based on the ancient myths of the Cherokee is not determined.

Plants used in the cure:

Asclepias syriaca L., Common milkweed

Xanthorhiza simplicissima, Yellow root

Goodyera pubescens, Rattlesnake weed

Clematis virginiana, Wild Clematis

Pound up the roots of the preceding plants, scraping back the "bark" from the Yellow root. Put the substance of the pounded roots into cold water and drink it.

For four days, the following dietary prohibitions are to be followed:

Absolutely no:

Salt
Grease
Milk
Butter
Strong drink (alchol)

This informant gave the preceding cure to another person (X.X), who had diabetes "bad." In discussing the cure, the following exchange took place between the administrator of the cure and this researcher:

Q. "Did you ever give it to anybody else?"
A. "No, except (X.X) and myself. I ain't got that kind any more."

Q. "Oh, did you have sugar diabetes and now you don't?"
A. "Dr. said I didn't have any."

"That's good."
"I just drank that kind, though."

Q. "So you wouldn't get it?"
A. "Uh huh."

Q. "Well, did it work?"
A. "Yeah! She got better - but she's coming back pretty soon she says, to see me."

Q. "Does she come to you often about that?"
A. "Yeah."

Swelling

Concerning a swollen foot, an informant related that he went to see an Indian doctor, who put something on the foot and said: "Don't cross a branch (a stream) for four days." The following dietary restrictions or prohibitions were imposed: "no beans or potatoes or pumpkins or anything else which water runs out of when you cut into."

As with the example given for diabetes, dietary prohibitions exist; and for the time interval of four days. The dietary prohibitions and the reasoning behind them are of the same nature as the cure and prohibitions for swelling given in Chapter Four of this thesis.

A study of dietary prohibitions related to disease and the basis of the reasoning behind the beliefs of these cures remains an unexplored area of research. Future research in this area is suggested for those interested in the food behavior of the Cherokee Indians.

APPENDIX B

BELIEFS RELATING DIET AND WELL BEING

The following beliefs pertaining to diet and well being were found to be held by informants of this study:

"Sweets and breads are what kills you."

"Wild greens are good for sugar diabetes."

"Greens won't hurt you."

"If a person has heart trouble, he shouldn't eat pork and grease."

"Too much fresh meat will make you sick."

"Wild meat will make you sick."

"The doctor says that gall stones are due to heredity. I think the diet has a lot to do with it. Eating a lot of grease will cause them."

Boletus purpureus (the common name is unknown to this researcher) is a mushroom (de-wa-li) that an informant identified in a book. This story and implied belief about Boletus purpureus was related to this researcher:

> "It made (name of person) sick. She wouldn't share it with anyone when she found it in the mountain. Said she was going to take it home to her husband. Next day she came back so sick. Got sick because she wouldn't share."

APPENDIX C

PREPARATION AND PRESERVATION METHODS FOR WILD PLANTS

There are some basic preparation and preservation methods that this researcher has found to be used by the informants with some regularity on the wild plants of this study. They are as follows:

METHOD 1 - Preparation for greens:
Wash and pick out tough stems
Parboil
Rinse (number of rinsings depends on the plant - usually is one, unless a strong plant is used (like poke or crowsfoot), then three are required)
Put into frying pan of hot grease
Add salt and a little water (optional step)
Boil until soft

METHOD 2 - Preparation for fruit juices:
Cook (optional)
Crush and strain
Add cornmeal for thickening

METHOD 3 - Preservation: Drying Procedure A
(as for greens and hickory leaves)
Gather into a bundle
Tie
Hang up until needed

METHOD 4 - Preservation: Drying Procedure B
(as for mushrooms)
Slice
Dry in sun for two or three days
Keep in paper bag

METHOD 5 - Preservation: Canning Procedure A
Blanche
Boil three hours in "can"

METHOD 6 - Preservation: Canning Procedure B
Blanche and put into "can"
Add 1 tsp. salt to top of contents
Boil three hours in "can"

Preservation methods were noted to be utilized, but the procedures not obtained in this study, for freezing and jams and jellies.

VITA

Myra Jean Perry was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on March 26, 1950. She attended schools in Texas and Florida, graduating from Largo (Florida) High School in 1968. That summer she entered St. Petersburg Junior College.

In the fall of 1969 she transferred to The Florida State University, to major in Home Economics Education. Her student teaching experience was in the subject matter of child development and interior design at Lakewood High School in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Myra received a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics Education in June, 1972. She worked for the following year in Atlanta, Georgia.

In July, 1973, she began studies towards a Master of Science degree with a major in Food Science at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Requirements for the completion of the degree were met in December, 1974.