

EXCERPT FROM RECORDED INTERVIEW OF HOWARD LUKE TALKING ABOUT THE
USE OF STINKWEED

CONDUCTED BY BILL SCHNEIDER AND CHARLES HAMBY

IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

SEPTEMBER 12, 1996

ORAL HISTORY 96-35_PT.1

CHARLES HAMBY: Well, what type of herbs do you use here?

HOWARD LUKE: Well, this one here, this one here they call it, in our -- in our language they call it tth'en-menee. And you just boil it up, you know, you boil it up and you just go like this. And you don't keep them in plastic bag or anything like that. You gotta keep them in a sack or paper bag, 'cause if you put them in a plastic bag they're gonna -- they'll sweat and it'll -- like it'll melt.

CHARLES HAMBY: Do you have what this translates to in English?

HOWARD LUKE: It's stinkweed.

CHARLES HAMBY: Ah.

HOWARD LUKE: Yeah, stinkweed. Yeah.

CHARLES HAMBY: And what would you use stinkweed for?

HOWARD LUKE: Well, you use it for everything. If you've got arthritis, you just boil it, boil that thing, boil it up. And you'll get a rag and you just put it over your leg like that or wherever -- your shoulder or put it in there. And that'll work. That'll work for you. But you've got to really believe in that otherwise they ain't gonna -- I use it pretty near all the time everytime I -- I get so bad, you know, and I give my hip in there.

CHARLES HAMBY: Okay, now you mentioned that stinkweed you use for the arthritis. Can it be used for other things like if you have a -- you pulled a muscle or something?

HOWARD LUKE: Yeah, you could use it for anything, you know, like cramp and stuff like that. You get cramp, you know, and stuff like that. Like you say, you pull your muscle or something like that, you put it back in place. But you gotta put it on real tight cloth. Them days, you know, we used to have good cloth. We used to get good wool in them days. And that stuff just soaks right in there, you know. And they just wrap it up in there like that.

CHARLES HAMBY: Okay, now, what about using the stinkweed as a tea?

HOWARD LUKE: Well, I -- I don't know about that. I never -- I never tried that. But they got regular stuff for -- they -- I got some out here that we use it for tea. They're long and you dry them, too, just like this one. You dry them, and then whenever you want them you -- you got 'em.

Well, that stuff, that stinkweed?

CHARLES HAMBY: Yes.

HOWARD LUKE: They use that too for their eye.

CHARLES HAMBY: Okay. If you make --

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HOWARD LUKE: You -- you just boil it up and then you put that piece of rag and you put it in your eye. 'Cause mama had bum eye all the time. She had one -- one side bum eye, so she used that all the time.

CHARLES HAMBY: Okay.