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Our Visit to Bracebridge... Home of Cancer Nurse, Rene Caisse

by Kim Veltin

Driving into this beautiful town of Bracebridge, we saw the large red brick building sitting at the top of the hill, where it all happened in 1935. The building is now being used for law offices. The bronze plaque on the building is a wonderful tribute to the work once done there by Nurse Caisse.

Rene Caisse was a nurse living in Canada, who for almost sixty years treated hundreds of people with an herbal remedy she called Essiac (her last name spelled backwards). She discovered this remedy through a patient in the hospital where she worked who was cured of breast cancer. The patient used the herbal remedy given to her by an Ojibwa Indian herbalist.

Rene left the hospital at age 33 in 1922 and went to Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada where she began administering Essiac to all who came to her. The majority of those whom she treated came on referral with letters from their physicians certifying they had terminal forms of cancer and had been given up on by the medical profession as not treatable.

Rene began gathering the plants and preparing the herbal remedy herself in her own kitchen in a building lent to her to treat patients. She administered Essiac both orally and by injection with positive results. In cases of severe damage to life-support organs, her patients died. But they lived far longer than the medical profession had predicted, and more significantly, they lived without pain. Still others, listed as hopeless and terminal without severe damage to life support organs, were cured and lived 35-45 years (many are still living).

So startling was the effectiveness of this simple herbal remedy, it could not be ignored, and the Canadian Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Parliament became involved. Friends, former patients and grateful families petitioned the Canadian officials for Rene Caisse's right to administer this remedy to anyone who asked for it without the threat of interference from authorities. Fifty-five thousand signatures were collected on the petition.

In 1938, Essiac came within three votes of being legalized by the Ontario government as a remedy for terminal cancer patients. Essiac formula is quite possibly the most important discovery of Western Herbal Medicine.

The four main herbs that make up Essiac are Burdock Root, Slippery Elm Inner Bark, Sheep Sorrel, and Indian Rhubarb Root. The herbs help to normalize body systems by cleansing the blood, purging toxic build-up, promoting cell repair and aiding in effective assimilation and elimination. When the four herbs are combined it is believed that their individual beneficial effects are enhanced, an effect commonly called "synergy."

Given modern interest in alternative medicine and progress in scientific understanding of the human immune system, this original Ojibwa Indian Formula remains at the forefront of all herbal formulas of its kind.

Traveling to Bracebridge was a dream come true for me, as this remedy saved my own life and many others. We stood next to the large bronze statue of Nurse Rene Caisse and the Indian Totem Pole in the memorial garden near the bridge driving into Bracebridge.

We visited her grave site as well and the newly-built Rene Caisse Memorial Theater, Sports Complex, and School. The people of Bracebridge will always remember the sacrifice and diligent work of Rene Cassie in helping to save humanity from this dreaded disease called cancer.

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