

Brauche, Folk Healing of the Germans from Russia

Electronic mail message from Chris Burkart, Saskatchewan, March 2012

I read the on-line article from the Bismarck Tribune and can say I know we had a lady in Holdfast, Saskatchewan who was a healer. Her name was Mrs. Bachmann and she was mid-wife and healer for the town. My mother told me that Mrs. Bachmann was the mid-wife when I was born in 1944. That didn't mean anything until many years later, when I found out all nine of my siblings and I were not born in a hospital.

When I was very young - perhaps 3 or 4, I remember that my brother caught ringworm on the inner side of his left forearm. It wasn't an uncommon affliction at that time; he contracted it from a calf on our farm. When the sore was about the width of a tennis ball, my mother went to a doctor, paid \$5 for a salve he mixed up in his office. She was told to make sure my brother put it on the sore several times a day. The sore grew larger, covering an area almost from the wrist to the elbow, instead of growing smaller, so my mother made the decision to visit Mrs. Bachmann.

She was a tiny lady who lived in a small house in town. After talking with her awhile, Mom told Mrs. Bachmann about my brother's arm. Mrs. Bachmann began to prepare the materials for my Mom and asked Mom to follow the directions she was about to tell her. Just like in the article, Mom was asked if she believed the ringworm could be cured and my mother said she did believe that it would be healed. Mrs. Bachmann filled a small clear bottle with blessed water from a crock that Mrs. Bachmann filled from a large container at the Catholic Church in town. Mom was told she was to put the blessed water on the sore, tell my brother he had to speak out loud that he believed the ringworm would be cured. I don't remember if there were instructions about how many times the blessed water had to be applied, however a week after that visit, the sore was gone and all that remained was a slightly pink area. There might have been more to the instructions, however that was what I witnessed.