

# Dr. Kate Brown Squires was Thompson Township's own

## "Medicine Woman"

by Elaine Hasings



Thompson had its own Dr. Quinn. Though not a licensed physician, many a Thompsonite owed their lives to Kate Brown Squires, a real guardian angel, who was always there with a helping hand whenever called, be it a birth of a child or flu or even boils. She always had a remedy on hand.

She raised two daughters Pearl Olson and Kittybelle Windandy plus a niece Viola Squires.

She had five siblings Edith Edwardson, a former correspondent of the Thompson news column, Anges Yoeman, Bertha Johnson, Ben Brown and Ira Brown who was my uncle by marriage. The boys left Thompson but Ira later returned to make his home with his sister Ede.

Kate was wonderful with home remedies. My dad had Quinsy sore throat every haying season. Even the doctor lancing it the last time didn't help. He was about gone until Kate told him what to gargle with. He never ever had another bout of Quinsy. To this day dad, my sister and I still use it if we feel a sore throat coming on. Pearl and Kittybelle were also very active in community affairs, through Kittybelle worked in Chicago until she retired. She came back with her daughter Eris to make a home here. Pearl with her daughter-in-law Ellen was writing a book on the history of The Big Springs and Indian Lake State Park. Through both are Manistique popular resorts, we always were proud to claim them as they are in Thompson Township.

The long cold winters are still cold, but not as noticeable with all the modern equipment. It was terrible before the new US2 was built, as we just had a two track sand road that passed our place. Old US2 went around by Cooks and my cousin and I did not live two miles from the school (still standing).

We had to wade knee high each morning carrying our tin dinner

buckets with a sandwich below and the top part held the milk which I didn't like. Homemade bread was such large loaves, a sandwich would make a meal today. I sometimes took cold pancakes spread with home churned butter and jam.

Mr. Olson, Pearl's husband drove a roller with a team of horses, a huge heavy roller, and he had many of roads to pack down so was late afternoon before he got up our way. Mr. Flodin brought the children that lived further to school in a covered sleigh. I never ever had a ride in it, but we had a wonderful neighbor Oscar who would pull us, my sister and me, to school on our sleigh with our faithful dog following every day.

I also don't remember if Pearl and Ellen ever finished the book they had started. History to me meant hard work.

Springtime found us all wearing heavy knee high farmer's boots to get to school through the mud. I had a cousin who was in his glory pulling stunts on the teacher. One spring he put some leaks in his boots. Wow! What a time was in Miss Jenks room until the culprit was discovered and sent home.

I was always ashamed of the clothes we had to wear and say yet today they caused my bad arthritis of old age. Not that they were not good we just had to wear too many.

A Mr. Cousins, I think was his name, paid for all the country children to have tonsils out and eye tested. You never saw in a life time so many school children wearing glasses in this county. When I was nine years old, I and five others were sent from Thompson to Ann Arbor, why so far I do not know. A younger cousin cried so much from home sickness they didn't take all of us home at once. An older cousin and I were there two weeks. They took our tonsils out they day before Christmas Eve and sent us home. A Mr. Neville from town came for us and that was a long journey in those days. He stopped overnight at one of his friend's homes. They put me in a room alone with the door shut. In a stranger's home I was so afraid yet today I have claustrophobia. I think from that trip, but I am getting away from the subject as I always do.

The way I was dressed I was afraid to get undressed in front of the nurse, long johns, a brace to keep my shoulders back and stockings, a pair of sateen bloomers, two slips, a flannel and a wool dress, cotton stockings and a pair of knitted ones, high top brown shoes with galoshes over them (Summers we went bare foot except for Sunday school) a heavy wool coat made from one of my mom's, a knitted hood, scarf and mittens.

I was put in a room with another girl to get into a night wrap, and found to my surprise she was dressed the same way.

Now if more doctoring was needed that Kate could not do Dr. Tucker was called. I was scared of

him and would hide under the bed. But in 1944 when my daughter was born C section (rare then) plus no anesthetic, I was very glad to cling to Dr. Tucker's hands.

Thompson had three churches, the Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist. I know the Catholic one was by the town hall and later moved to the Joe Hoholik farm. The Lutheran church burned when the town had the big fire. We stood in the school windows watching it with tears in our eyes. It was in Swede town. Where the Methodist Church was I do not know. I only know that my Gram belonged. Seems to me, it was in Mr. Severes home, but I am not sure. There was also a grange hall somewhere and the ladies always quilted in our parlor. I was only allowed in the clean it. The quilting frame stood in middle of the floor. I think Gram gave them all to relatives for gifts. We had no light line up our way until the 40s so we always had wood fires.

A Kalamazoo stove was in every room. Wood was cut by my great-uncle. Heat upstairs would be through a grate in the floor over the stove so we crawled quickly between the feather beds and raced downstairs to the kitchen range in the early mornings.

Gram lived to be 87 years old and very senile. In later years

now it would be called Alzheimer's.

Not many places had wells. Water on the farm was from the spring fed creek until we came back. Pa had Gram have a well drilled. It is going strong yet today. There were two flowing wells in the village. One by the old hotel and one on the Chesbroughs back lawn. The school teacher filled the jar at school early each morning with the children filling it as it was empty. The spring was just down the hill.

Cattle ranged the plains from those who had big flocks before the hi way was built. Ours wasn't so big, just 40 head, and we had the pasture land all fenced in.

Our mail was carried by carriers from Manistique to the local post office. It was a very important occasion as all gathered at the post office to visit and get their mail every day. I enjoyed the walk. I might be wrong but I think our post offices were first in the old hotel with Mrs. John Olson post mistress then the James Smith acting post master. Next it moved to the cobblestone store (now the Trading Post) with Grace Jewett post mistress. Then back to the Hero store which was sold to Wallace Arnold. Then George Gram, then Hugos. After that it went back to where the old hotel was run by Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Cox. When they retired

Mrs. Velma Babbitt had it in a small building near the edge of US2. Then back to the Cobblestone store run by Mrs. Lousie Schave, and then it was Mrs. Phyllis Tweedie, after which it was closed like lots of small post offices. We were put on routes.

