

said, "What are they, grandma? What do you do with that?" I said, "That's 'Indian salts'. Indians use that for salts--epsom salts (a powerful laxative). You dry it. You scrape the skin off--the outer skin. You scrape it. Then inside it's going to be like a turnip--shpe of a turnip. You slice it and then you dry it on a clean rag. And then when you need a physic, you just scrape that after it dries up. It turns into a white powder. And then you just stir it in either cold water or warm water. You stir that--about a tablespoon or two tablespoons or something like that. And you take it. It's kind of got a bitter taste. In a little while that thing works you. That's what it's for," I told him. He stood there with his mouth open. "Well, grandma," he said every once in a while-- "Yes," I said, "That's Indian medicine."

(Have you ever had any of that yourself?)

Yes. My mother, I think, gave it to me. Like when they have headache or something like that, it's very good for you.

(Did you have it more than one time?)

Just about one time. That's about the only time.

(Did they ever use that gourd for anything?)

No.

(If your mother was going to give that to you for a laxative, would she have to go out and dig a root or would she already have it on hand?)

They have it on hand. See, it was after it was dried. You can't use it green--you can't scrape it. It's too wet, yet. That's the reason you have to peel it like you do potatoes--sweet potatoes.

And then after it's all clean, that's when you slice it. And then you just--it's kind of spongy, like. Every bit like a turnip.

And then you keep watching it, and turning it over in the sun and after it dries, that's when you scrape it. It makes a white powder,