

# The First Canadian Prescription

Glen Brown

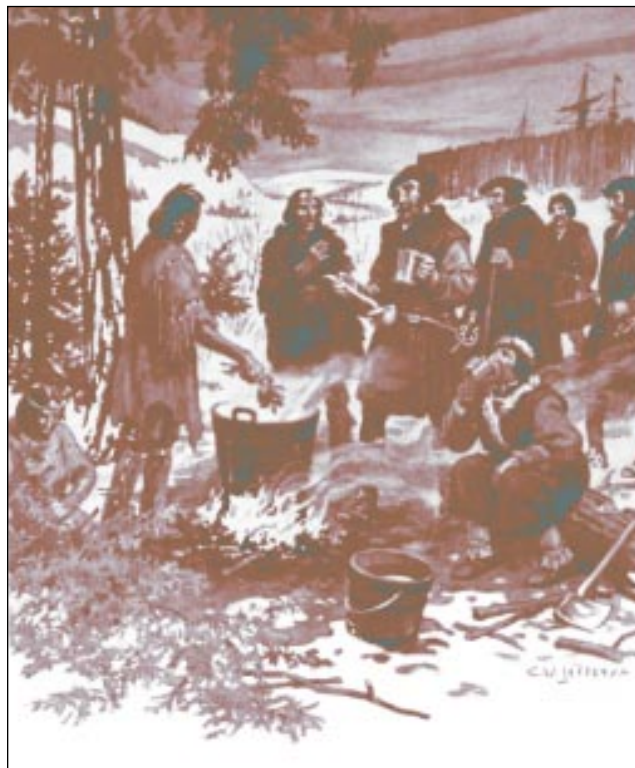
The focus for the front cover of *CJHP* in 2003 is important Canadian medical institutions and discoveries.

Although many Canadians think that medical care originated in North America with the arrival of European explorers and settlers, the original explorers found the resident Aboriginal tribes to possess a knowledge of medicine and treatment that was equal or superior to their own. The native peoples in most areas of North America were familiar with the medicinal value of many indigenous plants, herbs, and roots. The early explorers and subsequent settlers were fortunate that the natives shared their knowledge of the treatment of a wide range of ailments that the Europeans encountered. Unfortunately, the Aboriginal peoples did not have treatments for many of the infectious diseases transported by the Europeans, and the devastation that these conditions caused among the native population is one of the sad consequences of North American exploration.

#### Source

Heagerty JJ. *The romance of medicine in Canada*. Toronto (ON): Ryerson Press; 1940.

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The Company of Jacques Cartier spent the winter of 1535–1536 on the Rivière St-Charles at Quebec City. During their stay, they suffered severely from scurvy. An Aboriginal told Cartier of the native remedy: hemlock twigs and bark boiled, the liquor to be drunk and the dregs used as a poultice for the swelling and inflammation caused by the disease. Artwork reproduced from Heagerty JJ. *The Romance of Medicine in Canada*. Toronto (ON): Ryerson Press; 1940.