

Snake Bite Remedies of the 1800's

There were a number of "remedies" for snake bite in the 1800s, before the advent of antivenins.

- Frontiersmen believed that to put gun powder on the bite and set it alight would burn the venom right on out.
- Ammonia was a common remedy through the 1700s and 1800s. many people took to carrying a small bottle of ammonia when they ventured into rattlesnake country, which they could apply to the bite.
- A very painful but common remedy was to get a knife and cut out as much of the wound and (hopefully) the poison as possible.
- A poultice (a soft moist mass of bread and clay, usually heated, spread on cloth over the skin) was sometimes applied to treat an aching, inflamed, or painful part of the body
- There was even a belief that drinking a great quantity of whiskey would counteract the snake poison: what they didn't realize was that alcohol only speeds up distribution and absorption of snake venom.