

THE FOLKLORE OF SORCERY

Sara Collins

Dr. Montell

Folk Art and Technology

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THE FOLKLORE OF SORCERY

The Salem witchcraft hunt constituted one of the worst " reigns of terror" in the United States. The impact of the hunt is still very evident today. Therefore a study of the folklore of spells and incantations would lend insight into those years.

Before the fourteenth century, witchcraft was still known as sorcery. The tales I am dealing with can be grouped into three different categories. Those spells and incantations dealing with black magic shall be called "Black Magic" sorcery and will constitute the first part of this study. Secondly, a section pertaining to the spells and incantations that deal with personal problems and needs will be discussed. The last category to be dealt with is concerned with various methods of divining.

No internal
relationships

Black magic, according to H. W. Percival, editor of The Word magazine, is the use of magical powers for selfish reasons or purposes. Its participants employ any and all possible means to obtain the end in view. Many results are achieved by the use of elementals or spirits which facilitate communication and permit the exercise of power.

With black magic the best results usually occur when the lethal side and influences of the moon prevail. ^{what place?} The place is often made artificially by consecrating it with rites to the purposes. To this line of magic belongs the calling of an elemental into existence and then sending it out on a mission to do some bodily harm to and even cause the death of persons against whom it is sent. The elemental can be made to take a human or animal form when attacking. Usually this attack is made in a dim and dark place.

Spells were often used in Salem to help with personal problems. Several of these have been handed down today. I found in my study that groups of students are responsible for a lot of the spells still heard today. It is the "fear of the unknown" that still arouses the attention and curiosity of other members in a peer group. These spells, therefore, should follow those of black magic.

The last group of spells are those most often used for divining. Out of my interest in Tarot cards, as a divining factor in the telling of fortunes, comes these spells that deal with the different methods of divining.

In Salem in 1692, nineteen people were hung for committing the crime of witchcraft. Today witchcraft is

*You jump
from the past
to the present
& vice versa
without
warning*

1. H. W. Percival, "Ghosts that Never Were Men," The Word, 22 (January, 1916), pp. 209-210.

still secretly and in some places in California practiced. I first started out on this project by contacting some people I had worked with this past summer. I have always been fascinated by the occult and have some Tarot cards myself which I use to tell fortunes. It was the telling of fortunes this summer to my friends that brought the other methods into focus. When I started collecting these tales I got in touch again with these people. They were only too willing to help. While I was talking with them they told me of a "rumored" witch. I asked the location and a couple of us went out and visited with her. After the tension was eased and I assured her it was not going to get her into any trouble, she decided to let us interview her. After the initial interview Miss Magrundy and the collecting of the spells was finished, I contacted Debbie Garret and told her of my findings. She suggested I go with her down to the University of Cincinnati campus and I did. This was a very profitable experience, as I was able to obtain some more spells.

Repeat

My only real problem was with Miss Magrundy. She was afraid that she would get into trouble. After talking with her we decided to identify her by her maiden name. Then and only then would she reveal some of her many spells.

The method I employed was just the simple interview. I do not believe the field is exhausted I'm sure others could find more spells or incantations.

The Area

Most of these spells originally came from the New England area. I have chosen to collect these from the Cincinnati area as that is where my home is and where the most informants could be contacted. These areas and I have grouped them into three classifications, those spells told to me at an amusement park, those told on a college campus, and those told by an "acclaimed witch" of a certain area.

Informants

Debbie Garrett- Debbie is presently a senior at the University of Cincinnati campus. She is majoring in Education. These tales we have submitted to this report came from several group encounters with her and her peers around the campus.

Miss Elizabeth Magrundy- This is the "acclaimed" witch from the "Gingerbread House" in Mason, Ohio. She has asked that these be inserted with the stipulation that her complete identity not be revealed. She has not always lived in Mason, being originally from the New England Area.

Greg Picciano - Greg is a Junior at Xavier University in Cincinnati Ohio. Greg and I worked together this past summer at an amusement park where he learned I was interested in fortune telling. We swapped methods so I reapproached him and he told me these methods included in the section on divining.

Kathy Combs is also an acquaintance I worked with this summer. She is currently an IBM computer programmer with the Amusement park.

Craig Taylor- is currently a professor of Sociology at Western. While talking one night he told how a voodoo practice was still used by his wife to bring him good luck.

Miss Elizabeth Magrundy
Mason, Ohio
Class "B" text

To evoke Spirits

Well honey first of all you have to go to the crossroads. You know what crossroads are. Well then you go on a Friday night and take with you this candle of honey wax, ox tallow and swallow's liver. Now when you get to the crossroads light the candle on one of the corners. While you do this you have to call on the devil. " I am calling you to me in order that you may acquaint me with - now here you have to say what you want of him- this moment. Then if you get impatient it doesn't work, but take a gun loaded with incense and dirt -- that dirt has to be on top. Fire this and pretty soon that ole dark man will come.

Sara Collins
12th street
Bowling Green

Miss Elizabeth Magrundy
Mason, Ohio
Class "B" text

To evoke the Dead

Now this has to be done on a Friday night also, you see
Fridays are good days to go out. Now listen, go to a cemetery
at midnight this has to be a cemetery where a shooting has taken
place. Go to a man's grave, taking along with you a white candle
one leaf of a wild acacia, and a fully loaded gun. When you
get there call upon the dead to arise and follow you. After
saying this you will hear a real stormy noise, do not get
scared, but fire one shot. When the dead appear you must not
run away, but you should take three steps backward
saying I trust in God to protect me. You say this
three times also.

Sara Collins
12 th street
Bowling Green, Ky.

Miss Elizabeth Magrundy
Mason, Ohio

Class "B" text

To Send Back the Dead

Ok now let me try to remember this-- It's kinda hard
my memory forgits. Oh yes-- First you pick up a handful
of dirt from the ground. Then you throw it in the four
different directions. Now you have to say these words;
" Go back from where you came, from dirt you were
created, to dirt you may return.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green, Ky.

1-11

Mr. Craig Taylor
Bowling Green, Ky

Class "B" text

My wife takes some paper dolls for the number of people I'm going to be around. She makes a paper doll for me and puts it on the top of the bunch. Then she clasps them all together and sticks them away. They bring me good luck.

Sara Collins
12th street
Bowling Green

Miss Debbie Garrett
Iuka Drive
Madeira, Ohio

Class "B" text

To destroy a father's kindness

First you fix up a bath with a great amount of catkins,
seven leaves of Palma- Christi,-- You know that is a plant
for good luck, I don't remember where to get it but
I saw some in Spencer's once, take three leaves
for God the father, son, and Holy Ghost. Now you
have to burn incense cause that was one of the gifts
brought to the Christ child. Now dig three holes
one for the Mother, the Father and hold the child
over the holes three times. You have to say "Satan
take leave of this child as Judas left and betrayed
Christ."

Sara Collins
12 th Street
Bowling Green Ky.

Miss Debbie Garrett
Iuka Drive
Madeira, Ohio

Class "B" text

To relieve a woman of Childbirth Pains

Now for this you have to make a tea for the woman to drink. Make a tea of the following dirt from the four corners of the house, Pains, Verbena, and Elm Wood. write the woman's name on paper, the ashes of which must be mixed with the tea. Before you give her the tea, go to the rear of the house and face to the east--- for the rising sun comes up in that direction and it is supposed to bring light over darkness. Now call the woman three times-- you will find that on the third time she will reply and soon after the pains will leave.

Sara Collins
12 th Street
Bowling Green, Ky

Miss Debbie Garrett
Iuka Drive
Madeira, Ohio

Class "B" text

To help an injured eye

Kill a black chicken; take the liver and put it in a small quantity of water and set in the sun for three days. Place the bottle--I forgot you have to put it in a little bottle-- now let's see oh Yes put the bottle in the sun facing the east. You must say "as Juillee is my guide let me see as thou father saw. " This works too as we all tried it one night when Arlene couldn't get her contact out of her eye. And I tell you she tried everything before we remembered this. I don't remember where I first heard this it is something I've heard at home.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green, Ky

Miss Debbie Garrett
Iuka Drive
Madeira Ohio
Class "B" text

For Toothaches

Get hold of a good strong nail. Threaten the tooth three times with a stone. You say "Abracadabra" three times. then you go to a mango tree and make a cross on it. Cut off the cross and boil the bark and wet the sick tooth. The ache will be gone.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green, Ky.

Greg Picciano
Xavier University
Cincinnati, Ohio

Class "B" text

Egg Glass Divining

This is similar to the crystal ball, but unfortunately not used too often. The white of an egg is poured into a glass being substituted for the crystal ball. Then you gaze on the white and the picture forms and you can tell what is going to happen.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green, Ky

Greg Picciano
Xavier University
Cincinnati, Ohio

7-17

Class "B" text

Key and the Bible

First, take a key and insert it between the pages of the Bible and the answer to the question is found in the word to which the key points.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green, Ky

Kathy Combs
Buckeye Crescent Drive
Madelina Ohio

Class "B" text

Sieve and Shears

You have to have two people to do this. One is to hold each end of the shears. A sieve is held suspended between the points of the shears. Questions are asked, the answer depends on the movements of the sieve.

If it goes to the right that is yes and to the left that is no.

Sara Collins
12th Street
Bowling Green

Kathy Combs
Buckeye Crescent Drive
Madeira, Ohio

1-19

Class "B" text

Witch cake

This cake consists of meal mixed with the urine of the afflicted person. It is designed to tell you who is bewitching the person. You bake it in the fire and then feed it to a dog. The dog will go directed to the person that is doing the bewitching/.

Sara Collins
12 th Street
Bowling Green, Ky.