

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:16,203

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:16,203 --> 00:00:20,726

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

3

00:00:20,726 --> 00:00:34,174

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

4

00:00:34,174 --> 00:00:37,376

The woman calls herself a witch.

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00:00:37,376 --> 00:00:41,698

She claims to be performing an ancient ceremony of candle magic.

6

00:00:41,698 --> 00:00:48,782

The power of the planets has been petitioned, and as the paper burns, a spell is cast.

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00:00:48,782 --> 00:00:53,465

This right of witchcraft is being practiced in Salem, Massachusetts, a place where people

8

00:00:53,465 --> 00:01:04,471

believed to be witches were once put to death.

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00:01:04,471 --> 00:01:08,994

Salem, Massachusetts is richly endowed with history and culture.

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00:01:08,994 --> 00:01:15,718

For most of us, it is still best known as the site of America's witch trials.

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00:01:15,718 --> 00:01:21,401

The past has left the prominent mark, and Salem has come to embrace the witch, at least

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00:01:21,401 --> 00:01:23,922

in some respects.

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00:01:23,922 --> 00:01:33,608

The witch is the town's symbol, and also a constant reminder of a reign of fear and terror.

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00:01:33,608 --> 00:01:40,412

The witchcraft hysteria of 1692 actually began here in the neighboring city of Danvers.

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00:01:40,412 --> 00:01:44,574

It was once called Salem Village.

16

00:01:44,574 --> 00:01:48,416

Dr. Linda Caparal is a social psychologist.

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00:01:48,416 --> 00:01:52,979

She has studied the witchcraft hysteria that once swept over the people here.

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00:01:52,979 --> 00:01:59,543

Recently, she visited the historical society in Danvers.

19

00:01:59,543 --> 00:02:09,148

In December of 1691, eight girls were afflicted with what the Puritans called distempers.

20

00:02:09,148 --> 00:02:18,313

These were characterized by delusions of one sort or another, by severe convulsive fits,

21

00:02:18,313 --> 00:02:22,996

by odd gestures and disorderly speech.

22

00:02:22,996 --> 00:02:28,039

The girls were examined and judged to be possessed.

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00:02:28,039 --> 00:02:36,204

Several months later, accusations of witchcraft were made, and these were taken quite seriously

24

00:02:36,204 --> 00:02:43,288

by the community, and we have the beginning of witchcraft trials.

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00:02:43,288 --> 00:02:47,850

In an atmosphere full of frenzy, the girls told the court of numerous people who they

26

00:02:47,850 --> 00:02:50,972

felt were in league with the devil.

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00:02:50,972 --> 00:02:56,175

In 1692, witchcraft was a capital offense.

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00:02:56,175 --> 00:03:06,861

At the end of the Salem witchcraft trials, 20 people had died.

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00:03:06,861 --> 00:03:13,465

Nearly all of the victims were hung here, on Salem's Gallows Hill, now an old and deserted

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00:03:13,465 --> 00:03:16,507

playground.

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00:03:16,507 --> 00:03:29,634

At the cemetery in Salem lie the bodies of some of the judges who presided at the trials.

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00:03:29,634 --> 00:03:34,277

Despite its terrible history, witchcraft now thrives in Salem.

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00:03:34,277 --> 00:03:38,760

Meet Laurie Cabot, the city's official witch.

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00:03:38,760 --> 00:03:45,724

People commonly believe that witches are the exact definition of the Webster's Dictionary

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00:03:45,724 --> 00:03:47,204

Holes.

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00:03:47,204 --> 00:03:53,648

It says that a witch is an ugly old hag who cavorts with demons and devils or makes a

37

00:03:53,648 --> 00:03:56,890

pact with the devil in blood.

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00:03:56,890 --> 00:04:03,174

People also believe that witches probably drink blood and eat babies, and of course that's

39

00:04:03,174 --> 00:04:05,255

not true.

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00:04:05,255 --> 00:04:12,339

The word witch comes from the words magus, magi, and the Greek word magi, which still

41

00:04:12,339 --> 00:04:22,264

means witch today, and the word witch means wise person or seeker of knowledge, basically.

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00:04:22,264 --> 00:04:26,747

In the center of Old Salem stands a shop called Crow's Haven Corner.

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00:04:26,747 --> 00:04:31,190

It's a kind of sorcery boutique which was opened by Laurie Cabot.

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00:04:31,190 --> 00:04:46,638

It has become a popular gathering place for those who claim to be witches.

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00:04:46,638 --> 00:04:52,002

The shop has appealed to curious tourists, but it also stocks the herbs and potions that

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00:04:52,002 --> 00:04:56,364

are needed by a witch.

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00:04:56,364 --> 00:04:59,926

Laurie's daughter, Jody, is an actively practicing witch.

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00:04:59,926 --> 00:05:03,728

It has a wonderful scent, so if the person is someone that you know or would like to

49

00:05:03,728 --> 00:05:09,291

know in the area, it will just by smelling the scent of the ribbon, it will attract you.

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00:05:09,291 --> 00:05:27,182

Laurie's younger daughter, Penny, will soon become a member of the coven.

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00:05:27,182 --> 00:05:37,788

Laurie's coven has gathered to initiate a new witch.

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00:05:37,788 --> 00:05:44,392

The initiate is Penny, Laurie's 16-year-old daughter.

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00:05:44,392 --> 00:05:48,394

This rarely photographed ceremony is based on ancient rites.

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00:05:48,394 --> 00:05:54,918

Today, it is an amalgam of many different practices gathered over the centuries and adapted

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00:05:54,918 --> 00:06:05,804

to modern times.

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00:06:05,804 --> 00:06:19,172

Laurie begins the rite by casting a magic circle around the entire coven.

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00:06:19,172 --> 00:06:28,937

Each witch is then anointed.

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00:06:28,937 --> 00:06:34,820

I charge this circle to protect us from all negative and positive energies and forces

59

00:06:34,820 --> 00:06:37,462

that may come to do us harm.

60

00:06:37,462 --> 00:06:40,584

So moat it be.

61

00:06:40,584 --> 00:06:46,947

I draw into the center of this circle the energy of the universe and the wisdom of the

62

00:06:47,068 --> 00:06:49,069

pentacle.

63

00:06:49,069 --> 00:06:50,910

So moat it be.

64

00:06:50,910 --> 00:06:55,392

We bind your hands in infinity.

65

00:06:55,392 --> 00:07:02,036

We bind your creativity to the earth to aid us and help us in the name of Isis, the great

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00:07:02,036 --> 00:07:05,878

mother and the holy maiden.

67

00:07:05,878 --> 00:07:23,088

Lady Day, on quiet Lady Day, with blossoms in her hair, comes the form of the fairy maiden

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00:07:23,088 --> 00:07:34,615

weaving green everywhere.

69

00:07:34,655 --> 00:07:40,618

I charge you, Penny Cabot, witch.

70

00:07:40,618 --> 00:07:44,460

I give you the wisdom of the universe.

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00:07:44,460 --> 00:07:51,705

We give you the responsibilities of creativity, fertility, and all wonderful and good things

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00:07:51,705 --> 00:07:53,506

to the earth.

73

00:07:53,506 --> 00:07:59,149

So moat it be.

74

00:07:59,149 --> 00:08:11,796

By her mother's declaration, Penny Cabot has become a witch.

75

00:08:11,796 --> 00:08:20,001

As a new witch in the coven, it is now Penny's duty to perform alone a sacred ritual.

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00:08:20,001 --> 00:08:26,525

In a forest not far from Salem, Penny gathers the tools to cast a spell.

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00:08:26,525 --> 00:08:34,369

With pine needles, leaves, and from her witch's cord, she will summon the powers she needs.

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00:08:34,369 --> 00:08:37,571

The spell will be for herself.

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00:08:37,571 --> 00:08:44,935

It will focus and concentrate her natural powers of witchcraft.

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00:08:44,935 --> 00:08:51,739

Her wand is a branch she has found.

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00:08:51,739 --> 00:08:57,222

With it, she scribes a circle that she hopes will harness the earth's natural powers to

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00:08:57,222 --> 00:09:01,745

strengthen and protect her.

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00:09:01,745 --> 00:09:07,748

Today in Salem alone, at least 400 people call themselves witches.

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00:09:07,748 --> 00:09:11,190

All are active and deeply committed.

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00:09:11,190 --> 00:09:15,393

Being a witch to me means being more aware of your surroundings, being able to use more

86

00:09:15,393 --> 00:09:20,996

of your mind and make the life around you work more for you and to help other people.

87

00:09:20,996 --> 00:09:25,999

I became a witch because my goal in life is to raise my consciousness and it's a tool

88

00:09:25,999 --> 00:09:26,999

to do that.

89

00:09:26,999 --> 00:09:32,803

I'm a witch because it'll better myself and the people and animals around me.

90

00:09:32,803 --> 00:09:38,046

I became a witch just by basically getting involved in all occult matters and wanting

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00:09:38,046 --> 00:09:42,488

to know about other phases of consciousness, which I think is really important because

92

00:09:42,488 --> 00:09:45,090

we don't use enough of our brain capacity to begin with.

93

00:09:45,090 --> 00:09:50,092

The best thing about being a witch is being able to use the vibrations of material things

94

00:09:50,172 --> 00:09:52,174

to work for you in the environment.

95

00:09:52,174 --> 00:09:56,536

I can control my environment through correct thinking, through putting the correct thought

96

00:09:56,536 --> 00:10:00,178

into the atmosphere by concentrating.

97

00:10:00,178 --> 00:10:01,859

I don't think everyone should be a witch.

98

00:10:01,859 --> 00:10:06,542

I don't think it's for everyone because to be a witch is a commitment and to commit

99

00:10:06,542 --> 00:10:11,865

yourself you have to spend a good deal of your life studying, learning about the world

100

00:10:11,865 --> 00:10:13,786

around you, various things.

101

00:10:13,786 --> 00:10:16,628

If we do healings, we have to know about anatomy.

102

00:10:16,628 --> 00:10:22,351

We have to be willing to make that kind of a commitment and that's not for everyone.

103

00:10:22,351 --> 00:10:28,194

For Laurie Cabot and the members of her coven, witchcraft is not an idle interest.

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00:10:28,194 --> 00:10:34,198

It is an integral part of their lives.

105

00:10:34,198 --> 00:10:38,600

At 6 a.m., most of Salem, Massachusetts is still asleep.

106

00:10:38,600 --> 00:10:45,604

For Laurie Cabot, it is the time when the day begins.

107

00:10:46,965 --> 00:10:51,408

For Laurie, witchcraft is not something dark and secret.

108

00:10:51,408 --> 00:10:55,970

It is power and a knowledge to be shared.

109

00:10:55,970 --> 00:10:59,532

She does so every morning for a Boston radio station.

110

00:10:59,532 --> 00:11:02,614

It's Laurie Cabot's Daily Witch Report.

111

00:11:02,614 --> 00:11:06,056

So let's find out what's happening out there, cosmically speaking, with the good witch of

112

00:11:06,056 --> 00:11:07,497

the East, Ms. Laurie Cabot.

113

00:11:07,497 --> 00:11:08,497

Good morning, Laurie.

114

00:11:08,537 --> 00:11:09,978

It's Friday, June 20th.

115

00:11:09,978 --> 00:11:11,619

Good morning, everyone.

116

00:11:11,619 --> 00:11:16,942

The moon is in Libra and the emphasis is on good manners, consideration, and tact.

117

00:11:16,942 --> 00:11:22,305

Venus, Saturn, and Neptune are harsh today, so hurt feelings are bound to happen.

118

00:11:22,305 --> 00:11:25,907

Just bliss out and fantasize a lot and wear rainbows.

119

00:11:25,907 --> 00:11:29,309

This is Laurie Cabot, a good witch from Salem.

120

00:11:29,309 --> 00:11:35,113

Remember, every ending is a beginning and for all of us, this is law.

121

00:11:35,113 --> 00:11:39,115

Where we enter in, from there we must withdraw.

122

00:11:39,115 --> 00:11:42,117

Bye-bye.

123

00:11:49,081 --> 00:11:56,085

Like most witches, Laurie believes she is expert at making potions of all kinds.

124

00:11:56,525 --> 00:12:01,328

When the potion is nearly done, she imbues it with her own power.

125

00:12:01,328 --> 00:12:06,331

This potion is for protection and meant to be rubbed on the skin.

126

00:12:06,331 --> 00:12:13,335

I charge this potion to protect me from all negative and positive energies and forces

127

00:12:15,336 --> 00:12:20,339

that may come to do harm, so molded be.

128

00:12:23,340 --> 00:12:30,344

The potion is a pungent mixture containing sea salt, verbane, frankincense, myrrh, and

129

00:12:30,344 --> 00:12:33,346

woe's hair.

130

00:12:33,346 --> 00:12:37,348

Three times a week, Laurie travels to the nearby city of Marblehead.

131

00:12:37,348 --> 00:12:43,352

The purpose of her trip is not to practice witchcraft, but to teach it to interested students.

132

00:12:48,355 --> 00:12:50,356

Welcome to Witchcraft 2 class.

133

00:12:50,356 --> 00:12:54,358

This is the class that you're going to learn about witch tools.

134

00:12:54,358 --> 00:12:56,359

It's our most exciting class, of course.

135

00:12:56,359 --> 00:13:01,362

It's fun to learn about mixing potions and about magic wands.

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00:13:01,362 --> 00:13:04,364

Everyone thinks it's so frivolous.

137

00:13:04,364 --> 00:13:07,366

The magic wand varies extremely.

138

00:13:07,366 --> 00:13:11,368

This is sterling silver. It has the pentacle on the top.

139

00:13:11,368 --> 00:13:16,371

We have potions, and we know potions are organic perfumes.

140

00:13:16,371 --> 00:13:20,373

We're going to learn how to make a potion for every sign in the zodiac.

141

00:13:20,373 --> 00:13:24,375

We're going to also learn how to make our own little spell kit.

142

00:13:24,375 --> 00:13:28,378

This is a healing spell, orange from mercury.

143

00:13:28,378 --> 00:13:30,379

That's right, it's to aid healing.

144

00:13:30,379 --> 00:13:32,380

In here is something very simple.

145

00:13:32,380 --> 00:13:36,382

This is sea salt, and this is going to prevent illness.

146

00:13:36,382 --> 00:13:43,386

What we're going to do is teach you the culmination of all these things so that you can put them together

147

00:13:43,386 --> 00:13:47,388

and actually perform or put a spell together and do your magic.

148

00:13:47,388 --> 00:13:52,391

You can use your energy and your power to heal or to change things.

149

00:13:52,391 --> 00:13:55,393

Maybe change the weather.

150

00:13:55,393 --> 00:13:58,395

These are very important tools for you.

151

00:14:00,396 --> 00:14:04,398

June 21st, for most of Salem, marks the beginning of summer,

152

00:14:04,398 --> 00:14:10,402

for witches, it is a high holiday, a time for celebration and worship.

153

00:14:10,402 --> 00:14:13,403

It is the summer solstice.

154

00:14:14,404 --> 00:14:18,406

Lori Cabot conducts a magic circle with her coven.

155

00:14:19,407 --> 00:14:29,413

I charge this circle to protect us from all negative and positive energies and forces

156

00:14:29,413 --> 00:14:32,414

that may come to do us harm.

157

00:14:32,414 --> 00:14:34,415

So-Motive B.

158

00:14:36,417 --> 00:14:42,420

On the solstice we draw in the energy of the sun and Jupiter into this place.

159

00:14:42,420 --> 00:14:46,422

We allow it to circulate in this circle.

160

00:14:46,422 --> 00:14:49,424

So-Motive B.

161

00:14:56,428 --> 00:15:01,431

I charge this chalice with the energy of Jupiter and the sun

162

00:15:01,431 --> 00:15:04,433

and the gift of the great mother Isis, So-Motive B.

163

00:15:04,433 --> 00:15:06,434

So-Motive B.

164

00:15:06,434 --> 00:15:11,437

Those who today practice witchcraft regard it as a religion.

165

00:15:11,437 --> 00:15:16,440

It has only been in recent times that its unorthodox rituals have even been tolerated.

166

00:15:18,441 --> 00:15:25,445

We ask that we be granted correctness, balance, purity,

167

00:15:25,445 --> 00:15:30,448

and the power of the forces in this circle for the good of all people.

168

00:15:30,448 --> 00:15:32,449

So-Motive B.

169

00:15:32,449 --> 00:15:34,450

So-Motive B.

170

00:15:41,454 --> 00:15:44,456

We now hold this energy within our bodies.

171

00:15:44,456 --> 00:15:50,459

The witches now form a cone of power, uniting and concentrating their energy.

172

00:15:54,461 --> 00:15:58,464

Finally, the magic circle is uncharged.

173

00:16:04,467 --> 00:16:06,468

The circle is broken.

174

00:16:12,472 --> 00:16:16,474

If Laurie Cabot had practiced witchcraft in colonial Salem,

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00:16:16,474 --> 00:16:18,475

she most certainly would have been hanged.

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00:16:18,475 --> 00:16:23,478

In the 17th century, spirits, devils, and demonic possession were thought to be very real.

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00:16:23,478 --> 00:16:27,480

Witches were believed to be the human servants of evil.

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00:16:27,480 --> 00:16:34,484

Even so, what was the reason that Salem Village suddenly fell into a violent episode of witchcraft hysteria?

179

00:16:34,484 --> 00:16:39,487

Dr. Linda Caparal has carefully developed a new and compelling theory.

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00:16:40,488 --> 00:16:48,492

Since the time of the Salem trials, there have been numerous explanations as to the causes of the crisis.

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00:16:48,492 --> 00:16:53,495

And these explanations include that there was mass hysteria,

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00:16:53,495 --> 00:16:59,499

that there was fraud, that the girls were play-acting, and that they falsely accused people.

183

00:16:59,499 --> 00:17:04,501

Another explanation is that there was indeed witchcraft in the neighborhood,

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00:17:04,501 --> 00:17:09,504

that the girls had been involved with it and became mentally ill as a consequence of their guilt.

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00:17:09,504 --> 00:17:17,509

These explanations are not really adequate because they don't address the originating causes of the symptoms,

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00:17:17,509 --> 00:17:20,511

which first caused the period in so much concern.

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00:17:20,511 --> 00:17:25,514

I think that the original causes of the girls' behavior,

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00:17:25,514 --> 00:17:30,516

and this behavior was what started the crisis, was eating contaminated bread,

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00:17:30,516 --> 00:17:35,519

and that the bread is contaminated with a parasitic fungus known as urgot.

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00:17:35,519 --> 00:17:40,522

Urgot is a fungus which grows on grain, most especially on rye,

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00:17:40,522 --> 00:17:48,527

and it has a number of potent pharmacologic agents in it, especially one called isoergy, from which LSD is derived.

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00:17:48,527 --> 00:17:56,531

Was the Salem witchcraft hysteria the result of demonic possession, or of a then unknown form of chemical poisoning?

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00:17:56,531 --> 00:18:06,537

The symptoms that are alluded to in the trial records are pinpricking, choking, disorderly behavior, convulsions, hallucinations.

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00:18:06,537 --> 00:18:11,540

These are all the kinds of symptoms that you would expect from convulsive ergotism.

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00:18:11,540 --> 00:18:17,543

Was this the devil loosed in Salem in 1692?

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00:18:17,543 --> 00:18:23,547

Today, the people of Salem seem, at least, to tolerate their witches,

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00:18:23,547 --> 00:18:28,550

and the public practice of witchcraft is taken in stride.

198

00:18:28,550 --> 00:18:33,553

Laurie Cabot claims to have the power to radically change the weather.

199

00:18:33,553 --> 00:18:39,556

On the waterfront of Salem, she gave it a try.

200

00:18:39,556 --> 00:18:48,561

I call on the archangel Uriel to come and do my bidding.

201

00:18:48,561 --> 00:18:58,567

I call on the archangel Gabriel to come and do my bidding.

202

00:18:58,567 --> 00:19:06,571

I call on the archangel Michael to come and do my bidding.

203

00:19:06,571 --> 00:19:15,577

I call on the archangel Raphael to come and do my bidding.

204

00:19:15,577 --> 00:19:21,580

We ask that this be granted.

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00:19:21,580 --> 00:19:27,584

The weather did change a little, but no one seemed to mind.

206

00:19:27,584 --> 00:19:32,586

I don't have any objections to witchcraft in Salem at all. I enjoy it. It's good for my business.

207

00:19:32,586 --> 00:19:37,589

I don't have any objection at all. I think if they want to practice witchcraft, they should be able

to.

208

00:19:37,589 --> 00:19:39,590

I think it's great that they're doing their own thing.

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00:19:39,590 --> 00:19:44,593

The witchcraft stories that go around here draw a lot of people in.

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00:19:44,593 --> 00:19:48,596

It's clear that in the Bible, the witchcraft is condemned.

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00:19:48,596 --> 00:19:54,599

The people who are practicing it are not condemned if they're willing to give it up later.

212

00:19:54,599 --> 00:20:02,604

But I feel like they're postponing the fullness of life they might enjoy if they look to the true source.

213

00:20:02,604 --> 00:20:10,608

And not just playing into the devil's hands, which they're doing, whether they're conscious of it or not.

214

00:20:10,608 --> 00:20:17,612

Now the witches in Salem don't give us any problems. They're very low-abiding.

215

00:20:17,612 --> 00:20:24,616

People often ask me, do you think the witch trials are over in Salem, or could witches be persecuted again?

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00:20:24,616 --> 00:20:34,622

And I have a feeling because of our lack of education, there's a possibility through people's belief systems that it could happen again

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00:20:34,622 --> 00:20:42,627

if we do not educate ourselves well enough. People need excuse the expression scapegoat

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00:20:42,627 --> 00:20:47,629

somewhere to put their anger and their unexplained happenings.

219

00:20:47,629 --> 00:20:52,632

But if they really knew what we know, it could never happen again.

220

00:20:52,632 --> 00:20:58,636

We don't intend it to happen. It won't happen to the witches of Salem. I can guarantee you that.

221

00:20:59,636 --> 00:21:06,640

Despite the horrifying past, witchcraft in Salem is alive and well and determined to survive.

222

00:21:10,643 --> 00:21:17,647

The witchcraft hysteria that swept through Salem nearly 300 years ago ended as quickly as it began.

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00:21:17,647 --> 00:21:27,652

Many of the accusing girls made poignant public apologies, and Massachusetts became the first state to remove witchcraft from its catalog of capital offenses.

224

00:21:27,652 --> 00:21:34,656

Perhaps the worst of all demons and devils are ignorance, intolerance, and fear.

225

00:21:39,659 --> 00:21:45,663

Coming up next in Search of probes the tricks of the trade that made Houdini the world's greatest escape artist.

226

00:21:45,663 --> 00:21:52,667

Then agents unraveled the events surrounding the murder of a state prosecutor on FBI, the untold stories.

227

00:21:52,667 --> 00:22:01,672

And later tonight, Hex Factor Week continues on History's Mysteries with a journey into America's psychic past from seances to CIA telepathy.

228

00:22:01,672 --> 00:22:05,674

At 8 here on the History Channel where the past comes alive.