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WITCHES

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—
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FAMOUS FACES OF THE *Witch World*

Eight people known around the globe for their role in the origins of the art of magic.

BY PATTY ADAMS MARTINEZ

✿ Hypatia, here teaching at the Museum of Alexandria, calculated the positions of specific stars.



HYPATIA

THE FEMINIST SCIENTIST

The saying “well-behaved women seldom make history” could have been written about Hypatia, a renowned mathematician, astronomer and philosopher. She was born somewhere between 350–370 A.D. in Alexandria, Egypt, and was a total disrupter. While most women handled domestic chores at home, Hypatia—whom *Math Horizons* writer Hardy Grant describes as having “the spirit of Plato and the body of Aphrodite”—read and listened to her mathematician-philosopher father, Theon, discuss ideas with other scholars. He taught her arts and humanities, and she inevitably became a teacher herself sharing knowledge about the motions of the planets, number theory and conic sections.

She had a gift for breaking down complicated subjects into bite-size fun facts that were easier to digest and understand, and she drew large crowds during her public lectures, which often expanded on the works of Plato and Aristotle. Soon, she rose to be head of a school of philosophy in Alexandria. And forget ladies fashions, Hypatia wore the robes of a scholar traditionally reserved for men, according to philosopher Damascius.

Alas, Christianity was becoming the dominant religion of the region, and she was an unabashed pagan. Though Hypatia believed in religious tolerance for all, not everyone agreed. Among those naysayers

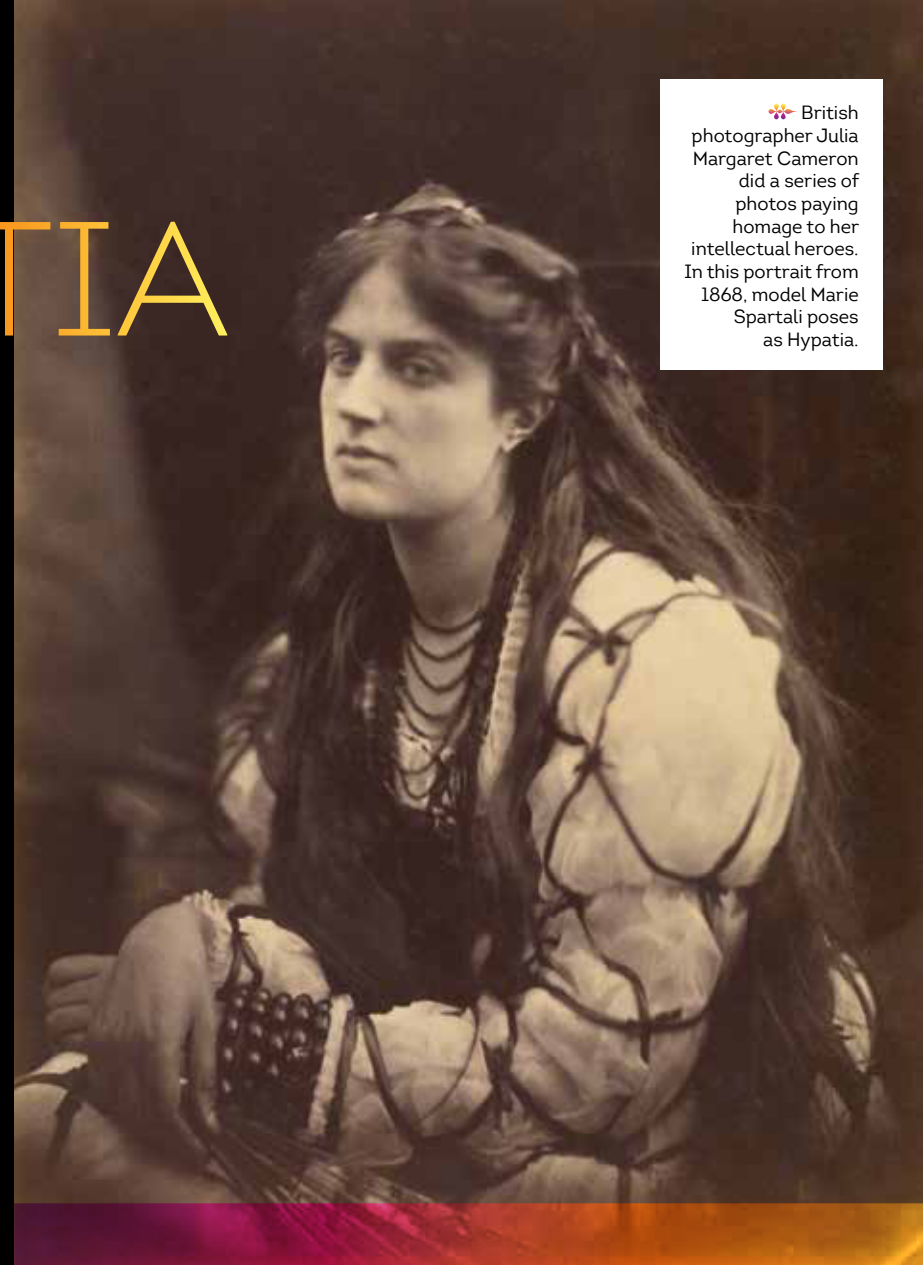
was Bishop Cyril—a religious zealot in the vein of his uncle Theophilus, who had ordered the last remnants of the Library of Alexandria be destroyed when he’d been archbishop, you know, heathen texts

and all. Cyril accused Hypatia of turning people away from Christianity. Linking her with Satan, he declared her a witch and said she was causing chaos by advising her friend, Alexandria’s governor Orestes, against persecution of religious minorities. Eventually, Cyril convinced others she had to be silenced for the good of the state.

In March 415 A.D., a mob led by a magistrate named Peter the Lector gathered his fellow zealots, many of them monks, and hunted Hypatia down as she made her way from the university. Dragging her out of her chariot by her hair, they ripped off her clothes and took her to a church, where they peeled flesh from her body, pulled her limbs apart and burned them. While much of her work was lost, she eventually became a feminist symbol, and her life has been the subject of multiple books and films.



✿ British photographer Julia Margaret Cameron did a series of photos paying homage to her intellectual heroes. In this portrait from 1868, model Marie Spartali poses as Hypatia.



MARGUERITE PORETE

THE SOULFUL HERETIC

Christian mystic, Marguerite Porete, is thought to have been born in Hainaut, a French-speaking principality in the Holy Roman Empire, in 1250. She belonged to a female order known as the Beguines, who lived similarly to nuns—in a frugal commune with an immense dedication to prayer and serving the poor—but without formally taking religious vows. They were forbidden to preach, but the Church's clergy supported the Beguines' ideals and acts of kindness...that is, until the Beguines were ordered to dissolve in 1311.

Porete wrote the book *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, which was a guide to attaining higher spiritual consciousness. In Old French rather than the day's preferred Latin, she described seven stages of the life of the soul beginning with being touched by grace through to the seventh stage, after death. Not surprisingly given the Church's disdain for women of influence at the time, the book was deemed heretical by a commission of 21 theologians, and the Bishop of Cambrai condemned it to be publicly burned in her presence at Valenciennes.

The writer was ordered not to circulate her ideas again. Nevertheless, she persisted. By late 1308, she was jailed in a Paris prison. Nearly two years later, in May 1310, she was tried for heretical depravity for circulating "a book of lies and false preaching." Porete refused to recant her words. She was convicted and burned at the stake on June 1, 1310, at the Place de Grève in Paris.

Though the Inquisition tried to silence her, *The Mirror of Simple Souls* was translated into Latin, Italian and Middle English, and continued to circulate anonymously for centuries. In 1946, it was finally attributed to Porete.



THE DISSIDENT SAINT

Around 1260, Guglielma, a widow with a grown son, first appeared in Milan. She was rumored to be the daughter of the King of Bohemia born in 1210, but the claim has never been substantiated. She was a mystic and prophet who predicted the end of the world. Despite her denials, devotees believed Guglielma was the Holy Spirit incarnate and when the world ended, she would be the one to be resurrected.

According to historian Barbara Newman, Guglielma's "simple but charismatic teaching and her reputation as a healer quickly attracted disciples, both women and men, who clung to her with fierce loyalty." The impact she created far outlasted her lifetime. Little is known about her cause of death

on Aug. 24, 1281, but her body was buried in the Cistercian Abbey of Chiaravalle in Milan. Nearly two decades after her death, in 1300, her followers were put on a three-month trial and the "confirmed heretic's" body was exhumed, her tomb was dismantled, images of her were destroyed, and disciples' writings were burned, as were Guglielma's bones.

According to Newman, part of Guglielma's great legacy is "a belief in the priestly capabilities of women; an inclusive ecclesiology embracing the ultimate salvation of Jews, Saracens and pagans; a fascination with such charismatic phenomena as visions and prophecies; and vivid hopes for a utopian future."

Guglielma

WERE THEY OR WEREN'T THEY?



ANNE BOLEYN

The second of King Henry VIII's six wives, Anne Boleyn, was accused of being a witch in the 16th century because she never carried a child to term (she had a miscarriage of what was described as a

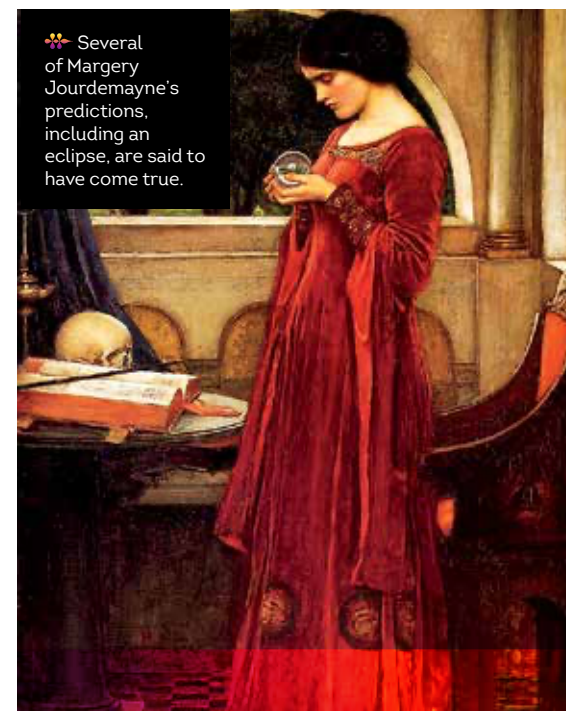
"monstrous" fetus and deformity, which supposedly signaled that the mother was a witch) and the king was later found to be impotent (a plausible occurrence at the hands of a witch). She also allegedly committed incest with her brother and carried on other countless affairs—with her initiating the sexual experiences (a sign for the times that the devil must be involved!). Boleyn was never formally charged with being a witch, but she was found guilty of conspiring to kill the king, incest and adultery (with five men, including her brother). Her punishment? Beheading, of course.



GRIGORI RASPUTIN

Grigori Rasputin had the reputation of being a miraculous healer, either a god- or devil-given power. The Siberian native first came into notoriety when he was said to have saved the life of the czar and

czarina of Russia's son, Alexei, a hemophiliac. While historians, such as Pierre Gilliard, have speculated that the bleeding likely stopped as a result of Rasputin's insistence that he not ingest any more aspirin (a known blood-thinning agent), at the time it was believed his mystical powers saved Alexei. Rasputin's reputation as a possible witch grew stronger when, in 1914, he was stabbed in the stomach and miraculously made a full recovery. Legend has it that in late 1916 he was poisoned, then shot multiple times, but he was still able to escape and only finally died when he drowned in an ice-cold river. However, an autopsy showed no poison was found in Rasputin's system and that he died from a single bullet to the head. So, signs now point more to him *not* being a practitioner of magic.



Several of Margery Jourdemayne's predictions, including an eclipse, are said to have come true.

MARGERY JOURDEMARYNE

FERTILITY WITCH

In 15th-century England, Margery Jourdemayne—known as the Witch of Eye—was basically the Planned Parenthood of Smithfield. She worked with women, mostly nobility, who were either hoping to conceive or were seeking help to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. She was convicted of practicing witchcraft in 1430 and was imprisoned in Windsor Castle for two years until her husband saved up enough money to bail her out. She was released with a pledge to stop using her magic. But she's said to have immediately returned to creating fertility potions and helping those in need. She kept under the radar until late June 1441 when she was accused of heresy.

While working with the Duchess of Gloucester, Eleanor Codham,

Jourdemayne used wax figures in her spells to help the duchess get pregnant, but instead they were thought to be enchanted poppets intended to help kill King Henry VI. It looked particularly bad combined with the fact that the Witch of Eye and two other supposed conspirators, Roger Bolingbroke and Thomas Southwell, also charted the king's astrology and predicted his imminent death...and the duchess' husband was next in line for the throne.

The Witch of Eye was condemned to death by a court presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury and was burned at the stake in Smithfield, England, on Oct. 27, 1441.

Jourdemayne has since become infamous, appearing in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 2*, and many poems from the time.

MOLL DYER

RECLUSE IN THE WOODS

If the 1999 faux-documentary *The Blair Witch Project* scared the daylight out of you, then you already know a little something about Moll Dyer, who's said to be the inspiration for the movie.

Dyer was described by townspeople as being tall and extremely thin with piercing eyes and peculiar mannerisms. She was a recluse living in the woods (in the manner of many a suspected witch) of what's now considered Leonardtown, Maryland, in the 17th century.

An older woman, thought to be a widow, she was known for concocting herbal potions, and was suspected of casting spells. Whenever disease, a bad harvest or an unexpected death happened, people whispered that Dyer was the one causing it. The winter of 1697 was brutal for the area: crops froze, people and livestock were dying, then the flu epidemic hit, wiping out even more young and healthy townspeople. Yet, the mysterious woman in the woods survived.

The men of the town decided that Dyer must be a witch who was bringing the death and despair upon them—and she must be stopped. Her house was set on fire by an angry mob, causing her to flee in the middle of one of the coldest recorded winters. She was found days later frozen to a large rock, in a kneeling position with one hand raised to curse the men who had attacked her. Her knees left permanent impressions in the stone. The Dyer Curse is said to have caused brutally cold winters, barren crops and sudden deaths to townspeople in the years since.

Legend has it that her ghost still wanders through the woods on the coldest winter nights and some believe that the rock she died on is also cursed. People who have touched it have reported experiencing dizziness, coughing spells, even fainting.

✿ To preserve Moll Dyer's rock, the local Historical Society and town commissioners had it relocated to Tudor Hall in 2021.



✿ Tituba shared some stories of magic with the girls, which got her in trouble with the Parris.

TITUBA

THE ORIGINAL SALEM ACCUSED

The infamous witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, began in January 1692, when a group of girls—including the town minister Rev. Samuel Parris' daughter Betty, 9, niece Abigail, 11, and their friend Ann, 12—began behaving strangely, screaming, contorting their bodies, and complaining of being pinched by specters. The local doctor diagnosed them as having been “bewitched.” On the advice of a friend, Tituba—the Parris' enslaved person from the West Indies—used a “witch cake” to try to help, but the girls then accused her, and town outcasts Sarah Osborne and Sarah Good, of hexing them.

Tituba was the first to be arrested. Initially, she resisted, but eventually confessed, claiming she, too, had been the victim of spirits. “The devil came to me and bid me serve him.” She described elaborate images of black dogs, red cats, yellow birds and a man who wanted her to sign his book, which she did. “Her statement was taken to be a confession,” Marilynne K. Roach, author of *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege*, tells *Witches*. “In addition to implicating Osborne and Good, Tituba mentioned others, who were then questioned and held for trial.”

And the hunt began. Over 200 people were eventually accused

of being witches with about 150 arrested and 19 hanged (another died while in custody). Many of the accused were outspoken women, Quakers and slaves, although nearly anyone could find themselves in trouble (especially if you took issue with the trials) until royal governor William Phips finally stepped in.

In a later interview with Robert Calef for his *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, Tituba said Rev. Parris had beaten her until she confessed and then instructed her on what to say when questioned, which may explain why her tale was so consistent with tropes of demonology of the day. After the trial, Parris refused to pay Tituba's jail fees and sold her.



✿ The legend of Marie Laveau has been material for all manner of media, including songs, films, novels and more. She's been the inspiration for a Shel Silverstein poem and even a Marvel Comics character. On the TV series *American Horror Story: Coven*, Angela Bassett played her.

MARIE LAVEAU

THE VODOO QUEEN

You must get in line, a long line, if you want to pay respects to Marie Laveau, the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans. As the second most-visited grave in the U.S. (behind only Elvis Presley's), Laveau's tomb became so overcrowded by people wanting to pay their respects—and ask for her favors from beyond the grave—that you can now only enter the St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 on a guided tour. But the tours, too, are bustling with believers and skeptics of the French Quarter's most famous former resident.

Born in New Orleans in 1801 to a wealthy biracial businessman, Charles Laveau, and his mistress, Marguerite Darcantrel, a freed slave, the Voodoo priestess was raised by her grandmother on her mom's side, and was brought up practicing both Voodoo and Catholicism. At 18, Laveau married Jacques Paris, a Haitian immigrant and cabinetmaker, in New Orleans' St. Louis Cathedral. But not long into their marriage, her groom mysteriously disappeared, and she began calling herself the "Widow Paris." To support herself, she became a hairdresser to the local aristocracy, where she was privy to the secrets of the city's most powerful people (even then people talked in the stylist's chair!).

Two years after her husband disappeared, the healer met French nobleman Christophe Dominick Duminy de Glapion, the descendant of an aristocratic French family and a veteran of the Battle of New Orleans. Since he was white, and interracial marriages were not allowed, the two

never legally married but were together until his death in 1855.

As revealed in the 1930s Louisiana Writers' Project, the home of Laveau was set up for good magic in the front (i.e., spells and charms to bring love, wealth and luck), surrounded by candles and pictures of holy saints, and dark magic in the back (for those who wanted to kill people, drive them off, break up lovers, etc.). Many wanted her counsel, others feared her, and she ultimately became one of New Orleans' most influential individuals.

She famously led public Voodoo rituals full of dancing and singing in Congo Square and, despite strict segregation laws, people of all races participated.

It's said that Laveau counseled famous historical figures, including Napoleon and Aaron Burr, as well as many of the French Quarter's high-powered lawyers, legislators and merchants. According to her obituary in *The New York Times* in 1881: "There were business men who would not send a ship to sea before consulting her upon the probabilities of the voyage" because her predictions "nearly always came true." As a healer, she's said to have helped save countless people from yellow fever and cholera.

Fifteen percent of New Orleans residents still practice Voodoo today, no doubt in large part due to Laveau. "Voodoo is about finding ways to survive conflict and trouble," explained Voodoo priestess Miriam Chamani to the *Times* in 2003. "As long as you're doing the work of helping people get through difficult times, you're doing the work that Marie Laveau was all about."

✿ "He is a myth. No other man has so many strange tales told of him." *Vanity Fair* wrote of Aleister Crowley in 1915.



MASTER OF DARKNESS

Aleister Crowley was dubbed "the Wickedest Man in the World" and he absolutely reveled in it. While he got along well with his father, Edward, an engineer who retired early to become a traveling preacher, Crowley and his mother, Emily, often butted heads. So much so that she nicknamed him "The Beast," which was said to be a point of pride for him.

Born Edward Alexander Crowley in Warwickshire, England, on Oct. 12, 1875, Crowley adopted the name Aleister, the Gaelic form of Alexander, as his preferred

moniker. At just 8, he was sent away to a religious boarding school. As he got older, he became skeptical of Christianity and began questioning what he saw as inconsistencies in the Bible.

So he rebelled against his parents' strict religious values by doing drugs (from psychedelics to opiates and heroin), regularly visiting prostitutes (which reportedly left him with syphilis) and sleeping with men and women (sometimes at the same time). For shock value, he often said he "sacrificed 150 children a year," referring to the number of times he

ejaculated without resulting in a pregnancy (because his family's Christian values said sex was reserved for procreating).

The world traveler and expert mountain climber is often erroneously called a Satanist, but Crowley didn't accept the Christian concept of Satan. He *did* have an affinity for the number 666 and he took humor in sending "Anti-Christmas cards" to friends. He's quoted as saying, "One would go mad if one took the Bible seriously; but to take it seriously one must be already mad."

In his autobiography, the writer-poet stated his goal was to "restore paganism in a purer form." His influences were eclectic and included Eastern religions and practices like Hindu yoga and Buddhism, the scientific method, ceremonial magic, alchemy, astrology and tarot. He told his disciple Karl Germer that magick (he spelled it with a "k") "is getting into communication with individuals who exist on a higher plane than ours. Mysticism is the raising of oneself to their level."

In 1904, while in Cairo, the occult philosopher claimed to hear a voice that espoused philosophies over three days, which he took notes on, and titled it *Liber AL vel Legis* or *The Book of the Law*, which became the cornerstone of Crowley's religion, Thelema.

His writings were largely influential and inspired Gerald Gardner, the founder of Gardnerian Wicca; Australian artist Rosaleen Norton; Scientology founder, L. Ron Hubbard; and Satanists Anton LaVey and Michael Aquino. "In native talent, penetrating intelligence and determination, Aleister Crowley was the best-equipped magician to emerge since the seventeenth century," wrote occult historian Richard Cavendish.

Crowley passed away in 1947 at age 72. Nearly 60 years after his death, Crowley was voted 73rd in a 2002 BBC poll generating the 100 Greatest Britons. ◀

ALEISTER

✿ Crowley influenced pop culture decades after his death. His likeness appeared on the album cover of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in 1967; his motto of "Do What Thou Wilt" was inscribed on the vinyl of Led Zeppelin's album *Led Zeppelin III* in 1970; his name was a lyric in David Bowie's song "Quicksand" in 1971; and Ozzy Osbourne co-wrote a song called "Mr. Crowley" for his *Blizzard of Ozz* album in 1980.

CROWLEY



The *Ultimate* Witch Bucket List

Commemorate centuries-old covens—and mourn their losses—at these spooky haunts that just might give you goose bumps.

BY PATTY ADAMS MARTINEZ



BURYING POINT CEMETERY



Pay Your Respects in Salem, Massachusetts

Salem, Massachusetts, is no doubt the most famous city for witch trials in America. For a quick history lesson, start by exploring *The Salem Witch Museum* at 19½ Washington Square North, where you'll learn all about what caused the town's hysteria, how the trials proceeded and their tragic outcomes, which led to the death of 20 accused men and women. Then proceed to *The Salem Witch Trials Memorial* at 24 Liberty St., which sits on a 5,400-square-foot plot of land next to the Old Burying Point cemetery, where the notorious trial judge John Hathorne is buried. Built in 1992 for the 300th anniversary of the Salem Witch Trials, the memorial—based on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—was designed by artist Maggie Smith and architect James Cutler. According to the book *The Best of Cutler Anderson Architects*, “The designers approached the idea of injustice through four words:

silence, deafness, persecution and memory. To represent silence, they organized the site to emphasize the surrounding tombstones as mute watchers looking into the memorial. For deafness, they inscribed the historical protests of innocence on the entry threshold and had them slide under the stone wall mid-sentence. For persecution, they planted black locust trees. For memory, they inscribed the names, dates and manners of death on stone slabs, which were then cantilevered from the stone wall as benches.”

The Salem Witch Trials Memorial isn't the only monument in the area. The *Proctor's Ledge Memorial*, located at 7 Pope St.—the location of the executions—is dedicated to the 19 people who were hanged during the trials (this does not include Giles Corey, who was pressed to death). The memorial features a semi-circular wall with 19 stones engraved with the names and execution dates of the victims. In nearby Danvers, which was a part of Salem when the trials took place in 1692, lies the *Salem Village Witchcraft Victims' Memorial* at 172 Hobart St., which was built in 1992 and is located across the street from the former site of the Salem Village meetinghouse. Built by the Witchcraft Tercentennial Committee of Danvers, it features a granite colonial pulpit on a broken chain of shackles and an eight-foot wall with the names and testimonies of the victims. *The Howard Street Cemetery*, located at 29 Howard St. in Salem, is also another place you can pay your respects as it's one of the primary burial grounds associated with the trials.

❖ A statue of Roger Conant, Salem's founder, stands in front of the city's Witch Museum.





DELPHINE LALAURIE

✦ The LaLaurie Mansion (which was once owned by Nicolas Cage) featured heavily in *American Horror Story: Coven*.



Take a Witches Brew Tour Around New Orleans

Head South to the Big Easy for a guided walking tour filled with chills and thrills. *The Witches Brew Tours* (witchesbrewtours.com) meet up in the heart of New Orleans' French Quarter. Depending on the route you choose, you can hear hair-raising tales of witches, Voodoo priests, vampires and ghosts. Stops include such scary sights as *LaLaurie Mansion*, 1138 Royal St., where Delphine LaLaurie is said to have maliciously tortured and killed many enslaved workers. You can also learn about the town's rich Voodoo history and its famous practitioners such as Marie Laveau, who may grant you a wish if you visit her tomb at *St. Louis Cemetery No. 1* (one tour even includes a BYOB view of this and two other cemeteries). On your own time, you can check out *Congo Square*, where Laveau led Voodoo dances and rituals and the *Historic Voodoo Museum* at 724 Dumaine St., which showcases many of the city's magic artifacts.



HISTORIC VOODOO MUSEUM



ST. LOUIS CEMETERY NO. 1

CONGO SQUARE

Congo Square is in the "vicinity" of a spot which Negroes always used before the arrival of the French for celebrating their annual dance festival and was employed sacred ground. The gathering of enslaved African workers in Congo Square emphasized as early as the late 1700's during Louisiana's French colonial period and continued during the Spanish colonial era as one of the city's public markets. By 1805, Congo Square had become famous for the gatherings of enslaved Africans who danced, sang and traded in Sunday afternoons. By 1810, these gatherings numbered as many as 800 to 1000 people. Among the most famous dances were the Bamboula, the Galoube and the Congo. These African cultural expressions gradually overlapped into West Coast Indian traditions, the favored form and especially New Orleans jazz and rhythm and blues.

Walk the Pendle Trail in Lancaster, England

Literally follow in the footsteps of the women and men who were hanged as witches in 1612 as documented in Thomas Potts' *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*. The local witch hysteria all started here on March 18, 1612, when John Law of Halifax refused to give anything to beggar Alizon Device. Soon after, he was partially paralyzed and accused Device of putting a spell on him. She confessed and outed her grandmother Elizabeth Southern, known as Old Demdike, as a witch as well as members of the Whittle family, led by Anne Whittle (known as Mother Chattox because of her clicking teeth, she was rumored to be a grave robber who collected teeth and skulls to complete her spells).

In total, 10 people were put on trial as witches, so the trails following the route the accused were likely to have walked have 10 markers along the route and each contain a verse comprising the poem "The Lancashire Witches" by U.K. poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy. From Barley to Lancaster, England, there are two shorter walking loops (3½-miles and 4-miles long). But if you want the full experience, take the 45-mile driving or biking trail that starts at the *Pendle Heritage Centre* on Colne Road, Barrowford, Burnley, which features a museum and walled garden (pendleheritage.co.uk). You'll cross Pendle Hill and the Forest of Bowland, finishing at the infamous *Lancaster Castle*.

It's believed the accused witches were held in The Well Tower, known since as "The Witches' Tower," which was



✦ Witches weren't the only ones persecuted at Lancaster Castle: religious minorities were also tried and convicted here.



PENDLE HERITAGE CENTRE

built around 1325 and had three underground dungeons. Conditions were so terrible that Demdike, who was about 80 at the time, died in a cell before the trials began on Aug. 16, 1612. They took place over three days and the final verdicts were called on Aug. 20, when all remaining nine defendants were sentenced to death by hanging.

For a more lighthearted remembrance, spend a few hours at the *Pendle Sculpture Trail* in Aiken Wood in Barley, where 10 sculptures made of wood, steel and stone memorialize the 10 persecuted witches of Pendle.

✦ On the Pendle Sculpture Trail you can spot a Dryad nymph in a tree and snakes and jewels adorning stacked stoneworks.





Meet Fellow Spellcasters at Witchfest in London

Witchfest International is the largest witchcraft festival in the world, held in Croydon, in South London (witchfest.net). According to the Office for National Statistics' religion census, Croydon is the U.K.'s witch capital with more Wicca followers than anywhere else in the country. The one-day

event—which made its debut in 2002 and is set to be held in November—draws over 4,000 people a year per Children of Artemis, a members-only club for pagans and witches that organizes the fest.

You'll find up to six talks or workshops per hour, covering topics such as popular pagan

fiction, spell crafting, moon magic, wands and mystical influencers like Aleister Crowley. Speakers include writers, historians, mediums, astrologers and Wiccan high priestesses. There are also live bands, DJs and dancers to keep the participants enchanted and entertained.



✿ It's not just witches: A weather observation center is also atop Brocken.



BROCKEN-WITCH IN HARZ MOUNTAINS



✿ Think the museum looks like a place where zombies might crawl from the floor? You're right!

the Westfords Region of Iceland, about a three-hour drive from Reykjavik, lies the two-story *Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft* at Höfðagata 8-10, Hólmavík (galdrasýning.is). It's a quirky little museum, in a small town of 300, that shares tales of spells used for practical purposes, like conjuring up milk-sucking demons to steal neighboring farmers' milk, making yourself invisible, and waking the dead—zombies—to annoy enemies.

There's a long history of people in the area turning to magic to solve their problems in love, wealth and revenge—that is, up until the 17th century, when what is known as the Icelandic *Brennuöld* (The Age of Fire) took place. Then, over 200 people were charged for practicing sorcery or for being in possession of "dangerous magical artifacts." It was common practice back then to blame your misfortunes on someone you weren't fond of, who then had to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was not a sorcerer. If suspiciously inscribed pieces of wood or raven feathers were found in his possession, the offender was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The first man in North Iceland to be burned as a sorcerer occurred in 1652, when Jón Rögnvaldsson was charged with raising a zombie to cause harm to his enemy. Two years later, in *Trekyllisvík*, three men were burned at the stake for sorcery and a witch hunt followed in Iceland, from 1654 to 1690, with another 16 men and one woman burned at the stake. At the museum, you can learn about invisibility spells and "see" an invisible boy as well as spot replicas of zombies and milk monsters. But perhaps the most disturbing sight is a replicated pair of necropants. According to folklore, a sorcerer would dig up a dead man's body (with permission before his death) and remove his skin from the waist down in one large piece. He must then place a stolen coin from a widow in the groin area, along with a magical piece of paper, step inside the fleshy pants and wear them as his own. Anyone who does this should reap good fortune.

After that rather dark and disturbing museum tour, you'll likely want to head to decidedly lighter local destinations for whale watching, horseback riding and to take a puffin boat tour to Grimsey Island.



Visit the Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft

While witches are traditionally thought of as female, more men were accused of using witchcraft in Iceland than women. In Hólmavík village, on the east side of

Celebrate Witches' Night in Northern Germany

At 3,747 feet, *Brocken* is the highest peak of the *Harz Mountain range*. It's often submerged in a thick mist, making it appear even spookier. This is where witches are said to have danced with the devil (first documented in writings from the 1300s). Some 400 years later, German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe famously referred to this black sabbath in his 1790 work *Faust*.

Legend has it the witches made sacrifices to Norse gods and celebrated Walpurgisnacht (Witches' Night) every year on April 30, the eve of May Day. It's now celebrated in Brocken annually with thousands of revelers coming to celebrate dressed as witches and devils. They're known to build legendary bonfires, partake in the most mysterious brews, shoot off fireworks and climb the 62-mile path, *Harz Witches' Trail*, which runs from *Osterode* through an enchanted forest of rocky canyons and towering cliffs onto *Thale*. (You can also take the *Brocken Railway* to the *Harz National Park*

✿ Built in 1898, the Brocken Rail was damaged in WWII, and returned to public use in 1990, when Germany was reunified.



and *Botanical Garden* if you are not much of a hiker.) When you reach the plateau, stop for selfies with the witch and demon statues at the *Hexentanzplatz* (which fittingly translates to the devil's dance floor). Then, for the most epic view, head to the *New Goethe Way*, a 10-foot-wide path leading to the peak. There, just imagine yourself soaring off astride your broomstick!

✿ All manner of devilish creatures can be found at the Hexentanzplatz.



✦ Originally built in the 18th century, Rose Hall was restored and reopened in the 1960s.



Catch a Glimpse of the White Witch in Rose Hall, Jamaica

Now a wedding venue with a gorgeous tropical garden, well-manicured golf courses and panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea, it's hard to believe the *Rose Hall Great House* in Montego Bay, Jamaica, is where so much death and despair is said to have taken place in the 1800s. Legend has it that Annie Palmer, who was dubbed the White Witch of Rose Hall by her enslaved people, was born in England in 1802 to

an English mother and Irish father. She moved with her parents to Haiti in 1812 and soon after her folks died of yellow fever, leaving her nanny, a Voodoo priestess, to raise her. When her nanny passed away, Annie traveled to Jamaica as a teenager in search of a husband, who would take care of her. She is said to have cast a love spell on John Palmer, the wealthy owner of the Rose Hall estate. Folk tales allege Annie poisoned Palmer to take control of the plantation, then quickly married another



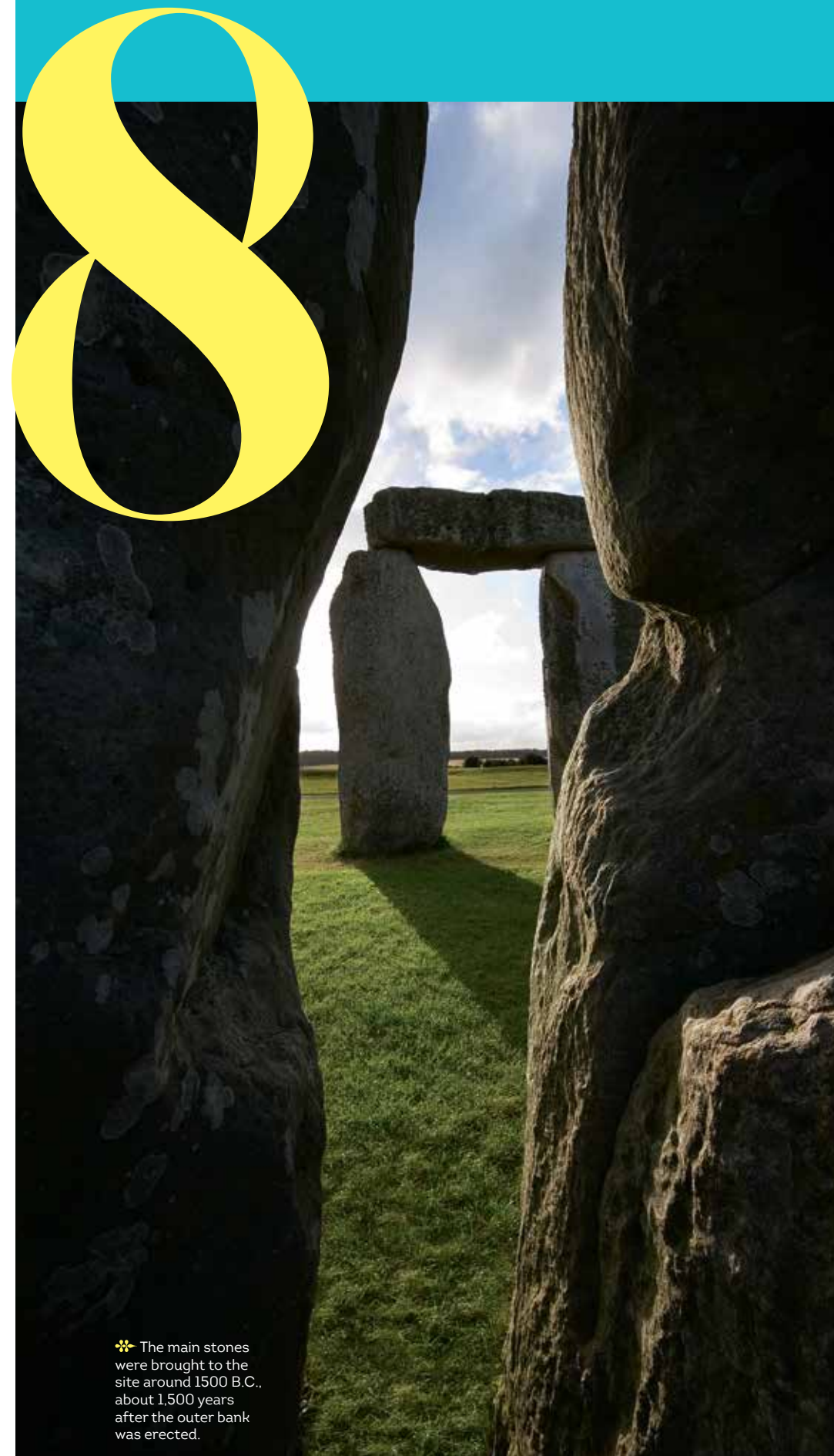
wealthy landowner, stabbed him for more inheritance, and strangled a third husband when she grew tired of him.

All the while, she purportedly tortured her enslaved people (some of whom she also slept with) and killed their infants, using their bones and blood for spells. While there's no proof of any of the above claims, according to folklore, she was killed by one of her enslaved lovers and then buried in a tomb behind the house. Her enslaved people tried to trap Lady Palmer's spirit in the tomb, but the spell was not completed, and because of that, some say her ghost still roams the property to this day.

The faint of heart can take a day tour of the grounds, which highlights the architecture and gardens, while the braver of the bunch should explore the night tour, which points out hidden tunnels, bloodstains and the places each of the White Witch's husbands supposedly met their demise.

You can also tour Johnny Cash's home at *Cinnamon Hill Great House* (the Man in Black even wrote a song about the murdering mistress) and play a round of golf at the *White Witch Golf Course* or the *Cinnamon Hill Golf Course* (Rose Lane, Kingston), which boasts spectacular water views and breezes.

WHITE WITCH GOLF COURSE



✦ The main stones were brought to the site around 1500 B.C., about 1,500 years after the outer bank was erected.

Experience a Solstice at Stonehenge

If you're looking to get in touch with magic, head to Wiltshire, England, and marvel at the glory of Stonehenge. This awe-inspiring ring of monolithic stones that has been attracting magical tourists for more than 5,000 years allows you to connect to and ponder the former rituals that took place in the Salisbury Plain.

The whole layout of the stones is positioned in relation to the sun, so visiting on the summer or winter solstice (June 21 and Dec. 21, respectively) is a way to relive the bygone celebration as the light hits the heels of the rocks. Though you'll be with a crowd of thousands, it's the only time visitors are actually allowed inside the stones and there are plenty of ceremonies and festivities to enjoy.

Just a day trip from London via train, there's a visitors center with exhibits depicting how the builders lived and worked while the formation was being constructed—you can even duck inside one of the Neolithic houses. The area surrounding the stones is full of Bronze Age burial grounds.

Just make sure you book your ticket well in advance through the English Heritage Society's website (english-heritage.org.uk), as Stonehenge is one of the most popular attractions in the nation. ◀

"NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE WHAT DROVE PREHISTORIC BRITONS TO EXPEND SO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT ON ITS CONSTRUCTION."

✦ *Lonely Planet*