

## Mountain Magic: Explore the Secrets of Old Time Witchcraft

**Rebecca Beyer**

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Rebecca Beyer's fresh, can't-miss book *Mountain Magic* is a love letter to the traditions, folklore, and people of Appalachia.

A mix of a history and an occult guidebook, *Mountain Magic* is intent on dispelling negative stereotypes about Appalachia and reminding the world of the traditional folk magic of the Appalachian people, who blended African, European, and Indigenous lore and practices into a methodology all their own. Beyer, a native of Western Pennsylvania, is a knowledgeable guide through this culture; her connection to and reverence for the land and its history is evident throughout.

The text details different types of magical practitioners found in Appalachia, some familiar—such as Water Witches—and some more novel, like Burn Whisperers who could “[talk] the fire out of burns” and Blood Stoppers who could stop severe bleeding, sometimes “just by being told the name of the patient.” Appalachian folk medicine is similarly detailed, including a description of The Appalachian Folk Blood System and botanical healing practices that sprang from Appalachia's unique biodiversity. Regional charms and curses are also elaborated upon, including instructions on making witchballs—“a hair ball ... made of various combinations of animal hair, wax, or certain plants”—to remove bewitchments.

Imbued with a love of people and place, *Mountain Magic* is a standout occult text.

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (March / April 2023)

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