

THE PEOPLE OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND, SHARE
A HARD-WORKING, HARD-PLAYING
HERITAGE. BUT THEY ALSO SHARE SOMETHING ELSE: PRIDE.



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p. 24

TWICE MONTHLY



Salem's Lot

OLD MAN COREY WAS A PECULIAR MAN. ON that, everyone agreed. He lived a scandalous life for most of his 80 years, only to join the First Church in Salem, Mass., in the waning days of his existence.

The old man was never convicted of any serious offenses. Sure, he'd had run-ins with the law and dustups with neighbors and other townspeople. But his reputation was one shaped — as many reputations often are — by idle chatter that, when left unchecked, can tear apart a business. Or in the case of Giles Corey, can tear apart a village.

Back in those days, a man might be arrested based on a combination of accusation and reputation. So when the law would haul him in for questioning about a fire or about a man mysteriously dying shortly after leaving his property, Old Man Corey did what any wrongfully accused man would do: He cursed the scoundrel who spoke his name improperly. From time to time, he'd vow revenge. Truth was, Old Man Corey, by most accounts, was a hardworking, God-fearing man who owned a considerable amount of property in Salem and the surrounding areas. A property owner had power, and Old Man Corey used his power to put an end to those perpetrating the malicious malignment of his character. He sued several people for defamation. And he won. Shortly thereafter, he was accepted into the First Church in Salem.

When he'd been with the church for almost a year, Old Man Corey demonstrated that he'd changed his ways. He spoke less coarsely and immersed himself in his new religious surroundings. As did his third wife, Martha, who was herself a gospel woman. Indeed, they lived a regimented, Puritanical life for a good year. That's when something wicked happened.

A spiritual fever consumed Salem, Massachusetts. Four local girls said that they were visited by witches in the night and tormented. They accused their neighbors of casting spells over them, of trying to force their hand into signing the devil's book. They were convincing, to be sure, and other townspeople started accusing their neighbors of spellbinding their cows, their cats, their children. Come summertime, the accused became the damned, excommunicated by the church and ultimately, condemned to die.

Old Man Corey was a fervent supporter of these witch trials. He was a man of God now, and he certainly didn't want his beloved village — let alone his considerable amount of property — to be bewitched. He only mildly protested when his wife, Martha, was carted away to be tried, convicted, sentenced and later hanged for the felonious crime of witchcraft.

And then one day, the authorities came for him. Corey was accused of being a warlock by some of the village's young girls. He was brought before the local magistrates and asked to enter a plea: guilty or not guilty. Old Man Corey didn't speak a sound.

The punishment for such insubordination was *peine forte et dure*, or hard and forceful punishment. More specifically, Old Man Corey was to be crushed until he pleaded. Although a guilty verdict would have sent Giles Corey to the gallows, a refusal to stand trial elicited a sentence of torture. He was to be unclothed, laid on his back in a field, and a large board was to be placed on top of him. Then came the boulders. Large boulders would be piled on until Old Man Corey either pleaded — or died.

He was a proud man; he was a learned man. He knew that a conviction would mean that he'd be stripped of his land, thereby rendering his heirs and dependents penniless. He also knew that to stand trial meant a guaranteed hanging. For Giles Corey, the gates of justice were closed.

Two days passed, and boulders were continuously piled on. Each time he was asked how he pleaded, his response was consistent and curt: "More weight." Finally, at noon on Sept. 19, 1692, Giles Corey was asked one last time if he was ready to enter a plea. One last time, the old man breathed in — drawing as much air as his constricted chest could — and bellowed out a barbaric call: "More weight!" With that, the capstone was laid, and Old Man Corey was pressed.

Now, 319 years after the infamous Salem Witch Trials, modern-day Salem is a wiccan's haven (page 28). Learn about this secretive yet philanthropic coven and dispel the misconceptions that have been passed down for three centuries. When you're through, take a trip to Salem. Legend has it that the ghost of Giles Corey appears in the Howard Street Cemetery right before a tragedy befalls the village. Perhaps it's worth a stroll down Howard Street come the 31st to see what fate has in store.

Happy Halloween, Salem.



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