

WITCHES – FAIRFIELD COUNTY

The Salem witch trials were not the last of its kind to be held in North America. In 1999 I visited the history museum in Fairfield County, South Carolina and was shown some news paper articles and one article from FATE magazine that all referenced a manuscript written before 1854 by Mr. Philip Edward Pearson. It talks about an illegal trial where a lady named Mary Ingelman was accused, found guilty and tortured for being a witch in 1792 in my county. I had always thought that in America there were no other witch trials after 1692. Now I wonder how many other "witch" trials have been held in our country, hidden away and not talked about. Mr. Pearson practiced law in South Carolina and had served for many years as the Solicitor of the South Carolina Middle Circuit which included Fairfield County. He later moved to Metagorda Texas, but not before selling his manuscript, History of Fairfield County, South Carolina to a Dr. John H. Logan. The manuscript ended up in Mr. Lyman C. Draper's historical source-material collections which is now in the library of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, Wisconsin. In the year of 1792 in Fairfield County there were many strange things happening to the people that lived there. At that time, in a neighboring county, a group called the Gifted Brethren were broken up for practicing hypnosis and mis teaching the trinity of the Christian church. One of its founders was tried in Charleston S.C. for heresy and found guilty and hanged. Also in 1792 many cattle got sick and people began to act possessed. Four people were accused of witchcraft, including Mary Ingelman. She was accused by Rosy Henley for putting a spell on her and her sister. Both Henley and her sister were reported to have been levitating and could not be held down "by the utmost exertions of four strong men." Another accused person was Mr. Joe Fairs of Lower Fairfield County who supposedly afflicted Drury Walker's two children in a similar way. Mary Ingelman was also accused by her son from a previous marriage, Adam Free, for causing one of his cows to spring up into the air and fall down and break its neck. Adam Free's son, Jacob also testified that Mary Ingelman turned him into a horse. A second person also accused her of turning him into a horse and rode him to a "grand convention of witches" where the devil complimented Mary Ingelman on her horse. She replied "Ah,...This is that rascal Collins!" The four accused individuals were taken from their homes to Mr. Thomas Hill's farm 5 miles south of Winnsboro. Mr. Hill was chosen as the "judge" in this illegal trial. The "sheriff" and "executioner" was a poor man by the name of Mr. John Crossland. The only evidence presented were the depositions of the people who claimed they were afflicted. The accused offered no defense. They were found guilty and tied to the building's joists and were flogged severally. Then their feet were held "to a bark fire and confined there until the soles popped off." After this hideous torture they were let go. But Mary Ingelman did not get far from the Hill's farm before she was assaulted

Fairfield Genealogical Society Newsletter – September, 2012¹¹ yet again by a man who threw her down and put a pine log across her neck. She was saved the next day by a kind person who came across her on the path. Mary Ingelman was the only one to get a judge, Rev. William Yongue, to issue a warrant for the arrest of Mr. John Crossland who was tried and found guilty of aggravated assault and fined five pounds. He never paid the fine and left the county after his trial. From the manuscript Mr. Pearson described Mary Ingelman as a "neat, tidy and descent old lady." She was born in Germany and was knowledgeable in pharmacy and "her application of simples in the cure of country complaints was the result of much observation and gratuitous practice...." In the archives of the History Museum of Winnsboro are some photos of Mary Ingelman's house taken before it was torn down in the early

1970's. On the side of the chimney was a rune which are commonly found on many traditional buildings in Northern Europe. One of the reasons runes are placed on houses is for protection. The rune on Mary Ingelman's chimney was a diamond shaped rune which is the Germanic traditional version of the rune Ingwaz. This is the rune of fertility, good fortune and creative power. Inguz is the name of a Fertility God and God of fire and is the guardian of the hearth fire. Also the word "inglenook", which is Scottish in origin, means chimney corner. Also note the similarity between the Mary's last name and the rune's name. Mary Ingelman very well may have been a Christian of German decent who came to America for religious freedom, like the women of Salem Massachusetts in 1692. From the rune on her home and the description of her being an herbalist and healer there is no doubt she was knowledgeable in some old way like many of our ancestors were that came to America. They brought with them their stories, folklore, traditions and healing crafts which have slowly been dying out over the last 200 years. With the revival of Paganism in the US many new generations of Witches and Wiccans are either rediscovering their Pagan roots or are lucky enough to have been passed on the healing arts from their parents, Grandparents, or Great-grandparents. Bibliography:Gandee, Lee R. "The Witches of Fairfield, S.C.." FATE Jan. 1970: 36-44 Letter between P. Edw. Pearson and Dr. Thomas Cooper, April 26, 1837. Dickson, Frank A. "Fairfield 150 Years Ago Letter Written by P. Edward Pearson of Winnsboro In 1837 Tells That "Burning & Beatings" Were Resorted To Here In 1792", (2/8/1940)

---Can't read what news paper it was copied from By Will Kale, submitted by Pelham Lyles