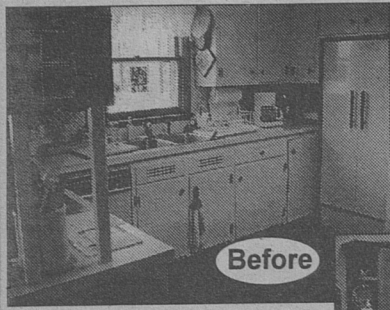


From Drab:



Before

Is your kitchen everything you wish it could be?

to *Dream*



After

Drop in or call us to make your remodeling dreams a reality!

Exclusive dealer of fine cabinetry from



DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen

BY WORLDWIDE™

Making your remodeling dreams come true.®
Independently Owned and Operated Franchise

451 Lawrence Place
Williston, VT 05495
Tel.: 802-879-1900
Fax: 802-879-2991
www.DreamMaker-remodel.com

Good legal advice can make all the difference.

Langrock Sperry & Wool offers the services of 22 lawyers with over 300 years combined experience in all areas of the law — including two lesbian attorneys with special expertise serving the legal needs of the g/l/b/t/q community.

SUSAN MURRAY & BETH ROBINSON

With offices in Middlebury and Burlington

Middlebury (802) 388-6356

Burlington (802) 864-0217

smurray@langrock.com brobinson@langrock.com

Langrock Sperry & Wool, LLP

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Vermont CARES now offers...

ORAL HIV TESTING

FREE AND ANONYMOUS.
NO NEEDLES.

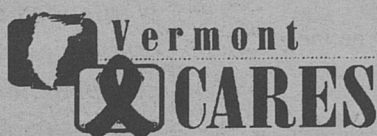
KNOWLEDGE = POWER

For local information...

- ◆ In the Burlington area, contact Amy or Erin at 1-800-649-2437.
- ◆ In the Montpelier area, contact Emily at 802/229-4560.
- ◆ In the Rutland area, contact Lee or Mary Kathryn at 802/775-5884.
- ◆ In the St. Johnsbury area, contact Penni at 802/748-9061.

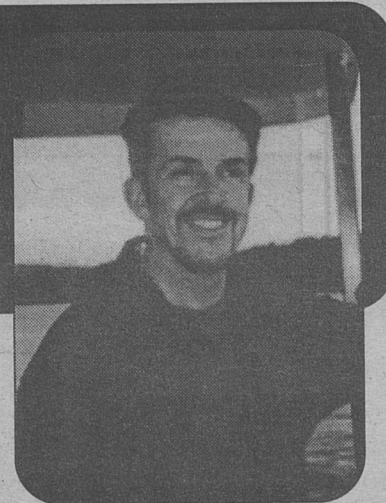
800. 649. 2437

www.vtcares.org



Stonehenge to Stonewall

by Charlie Emond



LAVENDER PAGANS AND NAKED PURITANS

You can always tell it's Halloween by all those tacky witch dolls crashing into walls and trees. But consider that Thanksgiving also has a witch connection. The pointy black hats and buckle shoes should be a giveaway. Yep, our Founding Fathers also wore those black hats and buckle shoes, and that grim bunch did not find witches amusing.

The Puritans saw more of the Devil than any people in history. They saw him in witches, in the world of nature, in the heathen Indians, and—of course—in homosexuals.

Remember that out of their stern Christian view came the Salem witch trials. They claimed that "the Devil may be angrier at the churches here because of their greater holiness." Whatever! They sure saw a lot of him!

The Puritans first moved out of England to Holland, but they hated it there because their children were attracted to the Dutch way of life, "the Children being drawne away by evill examples into extravagance and dangerous courses." (If you know anything at all about Amsterdam, this should come as no surprise.)

But they saw sin everywhere, and regarded sex as the work of the Devil. It is a wonder that they managed to reproduce at all. Despite this column's headline, I doubt any Puritan was ever actually naked. (Although I discovered, to my surprise, that the "Naked Puritans" is the name of a rock group!)

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

"Sodomy and buggery... have broken forth in the land!" wrote Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor Bradford with alarm in 1642. (I still think there is something in the water down there.) The Governor asked the religious leaders at Plymouth Plantation for help with this problem.

As with witches, the universal solution was burn the culprits at the stake. It is interesting to read the accounts of the trials and note the questioners' intense concern for "where did you learn this? Who taught you this vice?" as if it wasn't something that just came naturally.

They concluded that it was somehow catching, and of course, the work of the Devil. They called same-sex activity "hindering the generation of mankind," and they were liberal enough to include women. At one point, Rev. John Cotton appealed to the General Court of Massachusetts to include "carnal fellowship of man with man, or woman with woman" as capital crimes.

TALK OF THE DEVIL

Those Puritans also had a seriously unbalanced focus on witchcraft. In September, 1689, they executed "twenty people and two dogs as witches" Talk about zeal! Of course, the women taken up in these witch hunts were generally just lonely widows. The whole witch-burning movement, in fact, can be interpreted as an attempt by men to enclose women not under male control. (Not sure what the dogs were guilty of, but I'll bet they were female!)

The sad truth is that the Pilgrim Fathers were only following in the footsteps of Christians back in Europe. The burning at the stake of witches, homosexuals, and heretics was officially sanctioned by the church in the 1500s, and the unfortunate victims numbered in the tens of thousands. This horror story reached its peak during the Inquisition. The Church kept its hands clean by turning the actual burning over to civil governments only too happy to oblige.

The term "faggot" is said to come from this time, from the bundles of sticks used to bum both witches and homosexuals.

THAT OLD DEVIL MOON

Although the Puritans offered frequent thanks for "the spetial providence of God" (even though half of the 102 died their first winter!), they should have been thanking the Indians.

That idyllic picture of these two different ethnic groups sitting down in 1621 to eat the first Thanksgiving dinner and watch a football game together is, of course, totally bogus. They held absolutely no respect for Indian culture or beliefs, just as they were against Wicca, the Old Religion from Europe, which pre-dates Christianity.

As in Native American religions, true witches believe the individual has access to the divine, and they live in harmony with nature. Wicca has a non-sinful view of sex, and an appreciation of the worth of women. Also like with Indian faiths, Wicca is a remarkably gay-friendly religion, often served, in the past, by cross-dressing men.

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS

This immediately brings to mind our own Radical Faeries, one of the quirkier aspects of gay America, founded by legendary gay-rights activist Harry Hay. This group believes in the sacredness of nature and the earth, and holds that we are each other. Its gatherings focus on the mutual tending of "the-garden-of-who-we-are." Curiously, the concept that "Each faerie is divine and speaks for himself" is remarkably close to the democratic ideals of our Pilgrim Fathers!

Since childhood, then, we have pictured those smiling Pilgrims and Indians sitting down to pumpkin pie and turkey with cranberry sauce. How wrong that picture is.

At that First Thanksgiving table were innocent people destined to die homily at the stake, as well as the Wamapanoag Indians (assuming they were allowed in at all), for whom this feast was the death knell of their culture. Will the real Devil please stand up!

You can have their turkey. I think I'll spend my Thanksgiving dancing in the woods with the Radical Faeries!

Next time: When the Lights All Went Out in Massachusetts

For More Information: This gay history column is the 35th in a series that began in prehistory. *Gay American History* by Jonathan Ned Katz has the rest of the story. If you are a new OITM reader, or have not followed this column from the beginning, you might want to catch up by checking the OITM Archives (www.mountainpridemedia.com) and clicking on "Stonehenge to Stonewall."

Charlie Emond has a bachelor's degree from Queens College and master's degrees from both Dartmouth and Keene State. He teaches college history courses in Springfield and White River Junction. Stonehenge to Stonewall is syndicated by Above the Fold, LTD, info@abovefold.com