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SILENT SENTINELS: ARCHAEOLOGY, MAGIC, AND THE GENDERED CONTROL OF
DOMESTIC BOUNDARIES IN NEW ENGLAND, 1620-1725

By

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Dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology, Cultural Heritage Studies

The University of Montana
Missoula, MT

May 2013

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Abstract Content:

The following dissertation is an historical archaeological study of the material culture of gendered protective magic used by Anglo-Europeans in seventeenth-century New England as a tactic to construct boundaries that mitigated perceived personal, social, spiritual, and environmental dangers. Such boundary construction was paramount in the seventeenth-century battle between good and evil epitomized by the belief in and struggle against witchcraft. This dissertation sought to answer three interrelated research questions: 1) What constitutes protective magical material culture in seventeenth-century contexts and how is it recognizable in the archaeological record? 2) What signifies gender specific protective magical practices and what can these differences relate about gender roles, identity, and social relationships? and 3) In what way and to what degree is the recourse to traditional beliefs significant in coping or risk management contexts? Synthesizing data from historical and folkloristic sources, and reviewing all accessible archaeological site reports and inventories from State Historic Preservation offices and principal site investigators for domestic structures in New England ca. 1620-1725 provided data to catalog and develop a typology of potential magical items. Analyzing these data then allowed the assessment of domestic and gendered patterns of magical risk management strategies. Magical content was frequently embedded within or symbolically encoded in architectural or artifactual details, whose gendered association tended to correspond with gender role activities or responsibilities; however, the general omission of magical interpretations in historical archaeology limits the visibility of potentially magical objects in site reports and inventories, so it is likely a wider range of materials and contexts exist. The final result of this dissertation was the construction of a criterion model for the identification and interpretation of magic in historical archaeological contexts, which extends the notion of ritual from specialized places and materials, and communal behaviors to include quotidian objects and settings, and individual practices. Ultimately, the results of this dissertation extend the field of the archaeology of ritual and magic in particular, and the broader field of archaeology more generally by providing theoretical and methodological tools for understanding and recognizing how magical belief contributes to physical and metaphoric boundary construction and maintenance.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Time and space limit my ability to officially credit all those who have been instrumental to my overall success and specifically to my present undertaking. The first person to whom I owe a debt of gratitude is Dr. Henry Harrington who planted the germ of doctoral aspiration in my head on my last day as an undergraduate in his Victorian British Literature class many years ago here at UM. My life has taken a long and circuitous route, but I found my way back to the University of Montana to fulfill the dream Dr. Harrington first inspired. Dr. Kelly Dixon’s enthusiasm and support for and confidence in my abilities have opened important and challenging new doors for me for which I will be eternally grateful. I would not be where I am now were it not for her. To Dr. G.G. Weix and Dr. Richard Sattler I extend heartfelt thanks for their time and commitment to my success through their rigorous academic expectations. As my non-departmental committee members, I could not have hoped for a greater expert in his field than Dr. Kenneth Lockridge to share his knowledge, insights, and passion for historical inquiry; and Dr. Ellen Baumler for her enthusiasm and otherworldly perspectives. Throughout the entire process, Dr. John Douglas, although originally designated as a surrogate advisor, has proven to be an invaluable guide and facilitator ever ready and willing to offer constructive critiques of my work to push me to greater heights of achievement. To all I offer sincere thanks for their generous gifts of expertise, mentoring, and patience.

I would also like to acknowledge others who have assisted me with the acquisition of source materials or have read and/or listened to my ideas as they have coalesced into this dissertation. Many thanks go to Donna McCrea of Mansfield Library; Rolene Schliesman of the Montana Historical Society; my fellow graduate students and colleagues, Helen Keremedijiev, Bethany Campbell, Matt Walsh, and Mary Bobbitt; my academic colleagues engaged in the
archaeology of ritual and magic, Dr. Owen Davies, Dr. Christopher Fennell, Brian Hoggard, M. Chris Manning, and Dr. Ian Evans; my sounding boards, kindred spirits, inspirations, and dear friends, Ann Atkins, Melanie Knadler, and Louis Sexty; Riley Workman, Ronald Newbury, and Amanda Atkins for their time and efforts proofreading various drafts; to Caitlin Sterchi for the beautiful original artwork painted expressly for this dissertation; and the numerous interested parties who have attended my conference presentations and provided feedback. No expression of my gratitude would be complete without mention of the event and associated people that literally changed my academic and personal life and set me on the course that eventually lead me to my present pursuit. I am forever indebted to Drs. Robin Reid, Judy Ford, and Verlyn Flieger and the NEH Tolkien Summer Institute for showing me a new path.

As grateful and indebted as I am to all the aforementioned people, my greatest and most heartfelt appreciation goes to my family: to my parents for instilling in me a profound sense of personal, familial, and social obligation, for teaching me what is truly important in life, for encouraging me to always strive for excellence by reaching for the stars without losing a firm footing on the ground, and for enfolding me in their generous and boundless love and support through all my life’s ups and downs; to my elder son, Peter Newbury, whose quiet reserve conceals a creative force and fierce integrity that endlessly surprise and inspire me; to my daughter-in-law, Bobbie Newbury, for providing a model for determination and perseverance, and for her support and commiseration as we have both pursued doctoral degrees; to my granddaughters, Isa and Alora Newbury, for all the great adventures, road trips, and dancing in the rain that keep me young in body and spirit; and to my younger son, Riley Workman, whose thirst and talent for life radiate in his eyes and smile and brighten my world like a nova. I love you all more than words could ever express.
This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Donald A. Riley (1932-2011),
the foundation of my life;
and my brother, Robert W. Riley (1957-1991),
my eternal best friend.
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The Old Woman and Her Cats

*John Gay (1685-1732)*

Who friendship with a knave have made,
Is judged a partner in the trade.
The matron who conducts abroad
A willing nymph, is thought a bawd;
And if a modest girl is seen
With one who cures a lover’s spleen,
We guess her not extremely nice,
And only wish to know her price.

‘Tis thus that on the choice of friends
Our good or evil name depends.

A wrinkled hag, of wicked fame,
Beside a little smoky flame
Sate hovering, pinched with age and frost;
Her shriveled hands, with veins embossed,
Upon her knees her weight sustains,
While palsy shook her crazy brains:
She mumbles forth her backward prayers,
An untamed scold of fourscore years.
About her swarmed a numerous brood
Of cats, who, lank with hunger mewed.

Teased with their cries, her choler grew,
And thus she sputtered: ‘Hence, ye crew.
Fool that I was, to entertain
Such imps, such fiends, a hellish train!
Had ye been never housed and nursed,
I, for a witch had ne’er been cursed.
To you I owe, that crowds of boys
Worry me with eternal noise;
Straws laid across, my pace retard,
The horse-shoe’s nailed (each threshold’s guard),

The stunted broom the wenches hide,
For fear that I should up and ride;
They stick with pins my bleeding seat,
And bid me show my secret teat.’
‘To hear you prate would vex a saint;
Who hath most reason of complaint?’
Replies a cat. ‘Let’s come to proof.
Had we ne’er starved beneath your roof,
We had like others of our race,
In credit lived as beasts of chase.

‘Tis infamy to serve a hag;
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag;
And boys against our lives combine,
Because, ‘tis said, you cats have nine.’
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ritual and magic were formerly part of everyday life, but by association with fantasy fiction and occultism they have now acquired an aura of sensationalism that has discouraged investigation... [Yet] like all human activities, ritual customs, intended to gain advantage or avert disaster by supernatural means, have left their mark on the archaeological record (Merrifield 1987:xiii).

1.1 The Archaeology of Magic and Ritual

Although written over twenty-five years ago, Merrifield’s assessment of the archaeological consideration of magic and ritual as cited above, remains surprisingly valid today, especially in the field of American historical archaeology where fewer than forty publications and graduate theses combined have specifically focused on magic. This lacuna in archaeological investigations of the historic past, and particularly of the seventeenth century—usually epitomized by the Salem witch trials—seems ironic considering the historical documentation of the often tragic consequences of this belief system. The paucity of attention to this area of human experience prompted me to undertake research into the practice of gendered magical belief systems by Anglo-European colonists in seventeenth-century New England. Studying ritual and magic as tactics to mitigate perceived personal, social, spiritual, and environmental dangers and as empowering strategies in dangerous, unfamiliar, and unpredictable landscapes provides a viable approach toward a more comprehensive understanding of the spatial and material constructs past people used to negotiate their worlds.

A plethora of extant historical documents and folklore sources describes the use of magical objects by Anglo-European colonists in seventeenth-century New England (Mather 1692; Drake 1869; Bacon 1896; Steiner 1901; Hazlit 1905; Burne 1913; Carpenter 1920; Villiers 1923; Read 1925; Thompson 1932; Burr 2002 [1914]), yet no focused archaeological study of
magic from this time and place has been undertaken to date. What is known about seventeenth-century Anglo-European beliefs and practices comes primarily from British scholarship (Davies 1999, 2007; Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Hoggard 2004). Only five historical archaeologists have pursued general studies of magic use in the United States and Australia that span wide geographic areas and temporal ranges, usually focusing on a particular behavior such as intentionally concealing apotropaic objects or particular artifacts like witch bottles, shoes, or cats (Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Geisler 2003; McKitrick 2009; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). As important as these general studies are for establishing the temporally and spatially widespread continuity of traditional Anglo-European beliefs, they provide only a broad cultural explanation of the practices without consideration of gender, age, social relations, or localized circumstances. To flesh out the data from these few archaeological studies, it is necessary to add folkloristic and historical accounts of magical practice in seventeenth-century New England and compare these with archaeological site reports for the same temporal and spatial domain. Using these three interdisciplinary datasets of magical belief and practice provides a basis from which to (1) develop a model for ritual identification criteria by which variability of belief systems can be measured in the everyday context of vernacular sites and (2) assess domestic and gendered patterns of risk management strategies.

The need for and potential benefits of such a research agenda is clear. For decades historical archaeologists have uncovered seemingly anomalous artifacts that they classified as rubbish, ritualistic, or simply unknown. They have also examined and misidentified magical mundane objects and misinterpreted the associated deposition formations of those artifacts by viewing them through a morphological functionary lens that gives primacy to utilitarian explanations over belief-based interpretations (e.g. see discussions in Merrifield 1955, 1987;
Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; King 1996; Walker 1998; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Gazin-Schwartz 2001). Thus, many of these artifacts, and the insights they can provide about risk management and boundary construction and negotiation, may lie hidden in archaeological site reports misidentified or misclassified.

Only within the last ten years have American historical archaeologists seriously considered the significance of magical artifacts in the United States; furthermore, those researchers comprise a very small group and are almost exclusively concerned with African slave or African American contexts (Whitten 1962; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Klingelhofer 1987; Brown and Cooper 1990; King 1996; Samford 1996; Stine et al. 1996; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Brown 2001; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Lawrence (2003:1) explains the lack of attention to Anglo-American traditions in archaeology noting that, “Because of their ubiquity, the British have been an unproblematised category that is frequently the silent ‘other’ in archaeological studies that encompass identity, gender, race, domination and resistance, culture contact, [and] post-colonialism…” To understand the processes of cultural interaction and admixture, the maintenance of traditional beliefs, and the genesis of new responses born from the challenges and conflicts inherent in colonization contexts, it is not only valid, but essential to give equal consideration to the magical expressions of all cultural groups.

Anthropological, historical, and folkloristic studies have long recognized and documented the use of magic to mediate risk in cultures around the world (Merrifield 1955, 1987; Turner 1969; Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Weisman 1984; Renfrew 1994; Walker 1995; Frazer 1996 [1890]; Davies 1999, 2007; Fennell 2000, 2007; Renfrew and Bahn 2000; Levene 2002; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Paine 2004, 2008). However, historical archaeologists have virtually ignored this risk management stratagem in Anglo-European contexts within colonial
New England. As magical belief and practice were integral factors influencing daily decision-making regarding personal safety, identity, and interrelationships in the seventeenth-century, it is vital that archaeologists gain a better understanding of the forms and functions of such beliefs. Without recognition of these objects and behaviors, researchers lack critical data that help explain how and why past peoples negotiated and constructed particular spheres of authority and security. By cross referencing a survey of folklore sources, historical primary documents and secondary sources, and reviews of archaeological site reports, this research project seeks to verify evidence of magical practices that have been overlooked or misinterpreted in the archaeological record to provide archaeologists with a more expansive approach for reconstructing the life-ways of seventeenth-century New Englanders (Yentsch 1991b; King 1996; Walker 1998; Gazin-Schwartz 2001).

Understanding risk management strategies through time can provide insight into how people manage space as defensive, offensive, and empowering mechanisms that define distinctions between and relationships with others. Additionally, because women were most often associated with witchcraft and magic in seventeenth-century New England, attention to the ways in which gender affects these strategic constructs can offer new perspectives on the use of material culture, the organization of space, the interaction with natural and built landscapes, and the negotiation of social and familial relationships. People of the past used magical material culture as supernatural agents to establish protective barriers (albeit invisible) around their homes, their property, and themselves. Evidence of this eternal concern for mitigating the social boundaries between safety and danger (i.e., the “us” and the “them”) by erecting protective barriers around one’s home and community is still visible in the twentieth and twenty-first century phenomenon of gated communities (Blakely and Snyder 1999; Low 2004). Both these
studies emphasize the continuing “drive to redefine territory and protect boundaries” (Blakely and Snyder 1999:99) as a response to perceived rather than actual dangers (Low 2004:11)—a behavior conceptually linked to the responses to perceived dangers in historical contexts like the seventeenth century. Ultimately, the research presented in this dissertation constitutes a novel approach to studying human history by using archaeological evidence to understand fear, and particularly gendered dimensions of fear, that can contribute to a broader comprehension of the range of human responses and boundary constructions in the face of perceived dangers.

1.2 Dissertation Research Goals

This dissertation research focuses on the area of seventeenth-century New England that experienced a high occurrence of witchcraft related events, specifically Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island (Map 1.1). Of course, seventeenth-century

magical practices and beliefs were not restricted to witchcraft. Magic was also used for
divination, medical practice, fertility, and protection against a host of enemies, both natural and
supernatural. However, it is within the witchcraft trial depositions that the everyday usage of
magic was often recorded. These five New England states have the greatest number of
documented number of witchcraft accusations and legal actions during the seventeenth- and early
eighteenth- centuries of all colonial American regions (Weisman 1984; Karlsen 1987; Godbeer
1992; Demos 2004).

The extant court documents from these areas include descriptions of magical and
countermagical objects and behaviors employed by the Anglo and European citizenry of early
New England, a few examples of which have been identified in the archaeological record (Baker
2001; Hoggard 2004; Becker 2005; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Additionally, there are numerous
British folklore collections of beliefs, customs, and proverbial wisdom as well as seventeenth-
century magical texts like grimoires, almanacs, and physick books available that can be
historically and culturally linked to the people who settled these particular areas (Thomas 1971;
the period 1620 to 1725 for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode
Island provides a significant body of data to effectively cross-reference magical beliefs,
behaviors, and material culture of the time to the archaeological record. The dates chosen for
this project reflect the inclusive dates for which there is historical documentation for witchcraft
accusations or belief in New England, beginning with the establishment of Plymouth Colony in
1620 and concluding with the last official witchcraft accusation in Maine in 1725 (against Sarah
Keene of Kittery, Maine). These dates do not imply that belief in magic and the subsequent use
of magical material culture was bounded by these parameters; rather for the purpose of this research, these dates provided a feasible starting point from which to reassess the archaeological record to more accurately interpret the role magical strategies played as gendered coping mechanisms in a turbulent time and place. Thus, the research was framed around three broad but interrelated questions:

1) What constitutes apotropaic magical material culture in seventeenth-century contexts and how is it recognizable in the archaeological record?
2) What signifies gender specific apotropaic magical practices and what can these differences relate about gender roles, identity, and social relationships?
3) In what way and to what degree is the recourse to traditional beliefs significant in coping or risk management contexts?

Although essentially exploratory, this dissertation contains the general hypothesis that seventeenth-century New England Anglo colonists employed magical beliefs as part of a greater belief system to empower themselves in averting or mediating perceived personal, social, spiritual, and environmental dangers. In order to analyze the magically associated objects, behaviors, and themes found within the folklore and historical accounts, I established three patterned categories of use and behavior: crisis patterns, gender patterns, and physical patterns. Data concerning crisis patterns allowed testing of the hypothesis that apotropaic use fluctuates and is most prevalent in times of increased social, political, or environmental instability. The gender pattern data provided insight into protective magic use differentiation amongst women and men, as well as across age, status, and familial standing. Special focus was given to the gender pattern since less attention has been given to understanding the role of gender in the use of protective (apotropaic) magic in either Anglo-European or African-American contexts than has been applied to more generalized cultural practices (Karlsen 1987; Seifert 1991; Wilkie 1997; Demos 2004). Finally, data related to physical patterns revealed concepts and issues of spatial control and boundary permeability.
The datasets used to support this dissertation’s goals included:

1) **Historical Documents and Sources:** To locate firsthand accounts of magical use required a perusal of historical documents including court records, essays, pamphlets, sermons, letters, diaries, magic books, and almanacs. It also included consideration of artistic motifs found on gravestones, boundary markers, furniture, textiles, and art work. Specific persons, locations, and forms associated with the use of magical objects along with more general confirmation of magical belief was gleaned from these sources, which were then cross-referenced with the folklore data.

2) **Folklore:** This component comprised the collection and systematic analysis of folklore sources applicable to the inhabitants of seventeenth-century Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, to compile a typological, gendered, and contextual inventory of magical objects and behaviors that should be visible in the archaeological record. This inventory noted all particulars (e.g. gender, age, season, restrictions, orientation, placement, material composition, etc.) associated with the belief that would relate to cultural, gender, and physical patterns.

3) **Archaeological Site Reports:** After accessing the archaeological site reports for the five states covered in this project and selecting those domestic sites that match the 1620-1725 parameters, I cross-referenced the inventory compiled from the folklore and historical document data to the objects and contexts described in the site reports. Where these items intersected or where potential reinterpretations seemed evident, all pertinent information was gathered, analyzed and formulated into a model for identifying and interpreting evidence of gendered magical folk beliefs in the archaeological record and how those beliefs operated as risk management strategies.
The first step in analyzing the above data entailed identifying magical categories and creating a typology of apotropaia found in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island from 1620 to 1725 similar to Roper’s (2003) endeavors in typologizing medieval to twentieth-century English charms. Roper is primarily interested in a comparative study of English and European charms, while this research focused on understanding the maintenance of a broader range of seventeenth-century Anglo traditional risk management strategies as well as their adaptation in unfamiliar environs. Apotropaic characteristics including material composition (metal, ceramic, floral or faunal, etc.), form, function, orientation, seasonality, deposition, gender association, and intent were coded and corresponding data from folklore and historic sources charted and compared to determine what patterns, if any, of magical belief and practice would emerge. By coding the various apotropaic themes, it was possible to isolate the three patterns (crisis, gender, and physical) of related factors that were then compared and cross-referenced with artifact assemblages from specific archaeological sites.

The second outcome of this project was the development of magical identification criteria by which variability of belief systems and their gendered signatures can be measured in domestic sites. Turner (1969) and Renfrew and Bahn (2004) (see Table 6.3) formulated a criterion model for identifying ritual in archaeological contexts based primarily upon the premise that ritual and its associated material culture are anomalous and isolated. This criterion model is insufficient for understanding magic and ritual in domestic contexts, however, as researchers familiar with folk belief practices have demonstrated that often magical objects are neither unique nor spatially separated from mundane contexts. Historical archaeologists working both in Anglo-European and African-American sites admit many everyday objects used as apotropaic devices are misidentified, thus leading to misinterpretations of human agency and motivation (Merrifield
1955, 1987:20; Samford 1996:107, 109; Wilkie 1997:102; Walker 1998:249; Leone and Fry 1999:374; Gazin-Schwartz 2001:273). The model derived from this project is intended to provide a starting point for new identifications and reinterpretations and to complement the Renfrew and Bahn model, as this expanded model delineates mundane rather than anomalous characteristics and contexts that have potential magical associations. The model can then be used to reevaluate previously excavated site materials as well as provide guidance for on-site excavation procedures and interpretations leading to a better understanding of how people through time intentionally and actively cope with their fears and insecurities by manifesting apotropaic devices as risk management strategies.

In studies of African and African-American slave and freedman sites, the mapping of magical assemblages according to their physical orientations and correlations with threshold spaces has been compared to African cosmologies and mythologies to reveal their underlying meanings (Brown and Cooper 1990; Samford 1996; Wilkie 1997, 2003; Leone and Fry 1999; Brown 2001; Davidson 2004; Joseph et al. 2011). Each of these studies employed a behavioral analogy to West African practices in which direct correlates to the use of symbols, colors, directional correspondences, and materials were compared to the cultural traditions and geographic origins of enslaved Africans. It was my goal to see if a similar approach using behavioral analogies to Anglo-Celtic magical beliefs and practices in Britain would likewise explicate how seventeenth-century New Englanders perceived, demarcated, and protected personal, social, political, and spiritual thresholds.

My previous and ongoing research related to threshold spaces as paradoxically vulnerable and reinforced, as liminal negotiating places, and as spaces of potentiality and transformation, dovetailed seamlessly with this dissertation’s goals as each of these constructs has historically
been addressed through a variety of magical applications at vernacular dwelling sites. In particular, magical applications primarily associated with boundaries or threshold spaces in Anglo-European contexts principally served as risk management strategies to empower people in a dangerous and unpredictable world. The ultimate goal of this dissertation is to provide a new intellectual framework that inspires further research into magical boundary marking as a gendered strategy of control and negotiation, drawing attention to the ways in which belief affects how and why men and women use material culture, organize space, interact with natural and build landscapes, and negotiate social and familial relationships.

A review of the articles published over the past forty-five years in the journal *Historical Archaeology* indicates that most historical archaeological research emphasizes the socioeconomic aspects of past peoples; an approach that Merrifield (1987:1) challenges by asserting that enactment of magico-religious beliefs:

…has produced immense activity that must have left almost as many traces in the archaeological record as any of the basic human activities that are concerned with satisfying hunger, constructing shelter, or providing defence against enemies. In a sense it must be regarded as even more basic, since it concerns man’s view of himself in his earthly environment, and activities arising from it inevitably pervade all other fields of human action.

The mundane and pragmatic focus on socioeconomic central to much archaeological research, excavation, and interpretation often precludes consideration or incorporation of the underlying belief systems that shaped the material culture found in the archaeological record. Only when particular artifacts stand out as particularly enigmatic or anomalous are ideological interpretations sought from alternative sources like religion or folklore (Klingelhofer 1987; Brown and Cooper 1990; Deetz 1996; Samford 1996; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Brown 2001). An archaeological study of magical material culture, being inherently
linked to supernatural belief systems, requires theoretical grounding in these ideological traditions.

Two theoretical frameworks often guide comparative research of belief systems. The first, diaspora studies of culture contact and assimilation presuppose either a creolization or concealment of traditional beliefs (Brown and Cooper 1990; Wilkie 1997; Barth 1998; Davidson 2004). The second, cultural continuity theory, advocates the idea that cultural groups intentionally adhere to traditional beliefs and life-ways to retain group identity and cohesion, especially in times of extreme stress (e.g., emigration, epidemics, natural disasters, and spiritual insecurity) or self-imposed isolationism (Glassie 1971, 1995; Oliver 1976; Dorson 1986; Fischer 1989; Barth 1998; Fennell 2007). While not the primary theoretical approaches to this research, in reviewing the data for this dissertation, I considered the accuracy of these two theories in regards to Anglo-European beliefs systems in seventeenth-century New England, as they do play a part in the overall understanding of the choice and use of traditional strategies in risk management. The belief in and use of magic represents a complex suite of psychological, emotional, cosmological, and pragmatic considerations, and, therefore, no one theoretical approach can account for the archaeological evidence of such behaviors. Since the use of magic as a risk management strategy implies both the existence of threat and the intentional recourse to tactics to directly mitigate that threat, approaching this study through a combination of functionalist theory (Malinowski 1955[1925]), psychological fear theory (Douglas 1985; Gray 1987; Tarlow 2000; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Bourke 2005; Callanan and Teasdale 2009; Sayfan and Lagattuta 2009; Carro and Vidal 2010; Tucker 2010) and agency theory (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Foucault 1984; Millege 1997; Vyse 1997; Gell 1998; Barrett 2000; Cowgill 2000; Dobres and Robb 2000; Wobst 2000; David and Kramer 2001) provided the most sustainable
explanatory scheme to account for the motivation and agentic power behind magical material culture.

1.3 Chapter Summaries

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into five chapters organized as a progression from general background information to narrow consideration of the specifics of data collection, datasets, and analysis.

To ground the study of magic and archaeology in seventeenth-century New England within the broader field of magical belief scholarship, Chapter 2 provides first a general discussion of magic with definitions and comparative cultural examples of gendered practices succeeded by an explication of the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation. Beginning with the historical background of the anthropological and archaeological theories of ritual and magic, it continues with a consideration of multidisciplinary theories, including the psychological theory of fear and agency theory, as viable explanatory frameworks through which to understand the use and material manifestations of magical material culture in seventeenth-century New England. This discussion is followed by a brief overview of recent historical archaeological research on Anglo magical material culture in New England and elsewhere in British regions to ascertain what has and what has not been considered and/or accomplished as yet.

Chapter 3 establishes the cultural context for this dissertation by first examining the worldview and magical mindset shared by seventeenth-century Christians. It then proceeds to an explanation of the British geographical origins and the motivations, expectations, and tribulations that contributed to the Puritan colonists’ overall experience as one of heightened anxiety and fearfulness. To highlight the relationship of gender to the magical mindset and to the tribulations of the colonial experience in New England, Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion of
the rigid and explicit delineation and enactment of Puritan gender expectations. Together these chapter topics serve to establish seventeenth-century New England as a time and place especially disposed to the belief in and practice of magic.

Chapter 4 presents the process of locating and evaluating the historical, folkloristic, and archaeological data sources used in this dissertation to both make transparent the completeness and validity of the datasets and to assist future researchers with ideas about the relative values and potentialities of multiple resources.

Following the outlining of data sources presented in Chapter 4, the succeeding chapter turns to analysis and interpretation. Chapter 5 is comprised of the detailed historical, folkloristic, and archaeological datasets and their analyses. The results of which provide the information for the construction of usable and meaningful apotropaic material culture typologies.

Finally, Chapter 6 revisits the dissertation goals expressed at the commencement of this dissertation to draw conclusions about apotropaic material culture and its archaeological presence, gender, risk management strategies, and boundary construction based upon the data abstracted, analyzed, and interpreted through this research. At this point a revised criterion model for recognition of magic and ritual in the historical archaeological record is offered for future researchers as a complementary model to the ritual identification model that is currently referenced (Renfrew and Bahn 2004:416-417). Lastly, recommendations are proposed for continuing historical and archaeological investigation of magic, ritual, gender, and risk management.
CHAPTER 2: Background to the Study of Seventeenth-century New England Magic

2.1 Chapter Overview

Before presenting the research methodology, datasets, and analysis of archaeology and Puritan gendered magical practice, several background components need to be discussed. First, to understand the force of magical beliefs and situate the Puritan mindset and experience in a wider anthropological framework requires a comparative consideration of the cross-culturally shared conceptions of the nature of magic including the definition of key terms. Secondly, the premise that magical practice can and does have a gendered aspect must be substantiated through known examples as comparative models, which may provide valuable insights for both recognizing and interpreting gendered magical behaviors in New England contexts. Finally, to corroborate the viability and importance of magic as an archaeological topic in general and as a meaningful approach to colonial New England archaeological studies in particular, a review of the history and current state of the archaeology of magic is provided.

This chapter begins with a designated section providing a clarification of terms associated with magic, including the distinction between religion and magic, and the relationship of ritual to both. Additionally, it expressly delineates the parameters of domestic and boundary guarding (apotropaic) magic that form the focus of this dissertation. Following the presentation of these definitions and dissertation parameters is an examination of the virtually universal nature and workings of magic with their emphasis on sympathetic associations and threshold spaces, which also underlie the seventeenth-century Anglo-European understanding of magical power. As illustrative cross-cultural examples that demonstrate these characteristics of magic and to specifically provide evidence of gendered associations with magical practice, this chapter section
concludes with discussion of Indian *kolams*, Balinese and European apotropaic needlework, and African-American domestic magic.

The second section of this chapter moves from the more broadly anthropological consideration of magic to its archaeological significance and study. The first half of this section provides a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that have historically guided the anthropological study of magic and the three theories, that when combined, furnish the interpretive lens for this dissertation. This section concludes with a review of the state of the archaeology of magic and ritual within historical archaeology, emphasizing work addressing North American sites and cultural groups; and a review of the archaeology of magic focused specifically on colonial New England.

Together, the first section of Chapter 2 detailing the particulars of magical belief and gendered practice and the second section assessing the approaches, contributions, and lacunae of historical archaeology’s undertaking of the archaeology of magic and ritual, furnish the foundation upon which the data presented in the succeeding chapters rest.

2.2 Defining Magic

2.2.1 *Comparative Look at the Nature of Magic*

Any exploration of magic and its associated devices necessitates a clarification of terminology. The terms apotropaia, amulets, talismans, and charms appear in various works in synonymous use; however, some scholars (Gonzáles-Wippler 2003; Paine 2004, 2008; Skemer 2006) assert the terms carry related but distinct meanings and purposes. Borić (2003:48) integrates all magical terms and strategies under a broad construct he refer to as the “technology of protection” and specifically denotes as “‘apotropaism,’” i.e. protective cultural practices as a means of fighting the calamities of life.” He (Borić 2003:60) goes on to define apotropaism as:
…the powers attributed to symbols, images, decorations, objects, places or practices that serve to protect from the harm that ‘other worldly’ beings and immaterial spirits (demons that inhabit the world) can inflict on vulnerable and unprotected individuals….apotropaic actions and images stop or ‘trap’ the evil forces; on the other hand, they can undo negative…events that have already occurred.

For the sake of clarity, in this dissertation the term *apotropaia* follows Borić’s definition above; *amulets* comprise the group of apotropaic objects worn or attached; *talismans* are objects or written scripts that possess the ability to protect and to radiate an innate power; *charms* attract positive power or luck as well as work to control persons or situations and may be written, symbolic, or of other material form. One additional term, *spiritual midden*, describes the collections or caches of apparent refuse ritually concealed as apotropaia.

Glucklich (1997:vi) observes in *The End of Magic*, the word ‘magic’ itself has become overworked in the sense that we currently use it to describe a myriad of joyous feelings, aesthetic phenomenon, illusionary entertainments, ritual experiences, occult practices, superstitious beliefs, and fairy tale fantasies. In reality, however, belief in and practice of magic as a metaphysical force continues to flourish in varying degrees and manifestations throughout both non-Western and Western cultures around the world including the United States (e.g.; Briggs 1962; Glucklich 1997; Vyse 1997; Gell 1998; Ankerloo and Clark 1999a, 1999b, 2002; Davies 1999; Dohmen 2001; Paine 2004, 2008; Lehman et al. 2005; Bailey 2007; Milnes 2007; Anderson 2008; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Some of these practices and beliefs represent continuous, dynamic traditional lore (Hohman 1820; Gell 1998; Davies 1999; Welters 1999; Paine 2004, 2008; Bailey 2007; Milnes 2007; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b) while others have more modern origins in the New Age movement (Jones 2004; Luhrmann 2005). Regardless of their provenance, magical beliefs and expressions continue to play vital and active
roles in people’s lives around the globe in the modern world (Shweder 1977; Rozin and Nemeroft 1990; Rozin et al. 1995; Søresen 2007). A comparative examination of magical belief and material culture historically, synchronically, diachronically, and cross culturally may provide insight into the popular magic of seventeenth-century New England, its characteristics, dynamics, practitioners, material manifestations, and meanings.

In addition to distinguishing among the terms for apotropaia, we must also consider the term *magic* as a multivalent concept. As Kieckhefer (1989) reminds us in his book *Magic in the Middle Ages*, the definitions and applications of magic are both culturally and temporally determined. Even within a given culture, time, and spiritual mindset, there exists a range of distinctions concerning magic’s existence, power, use, and virtue. The medieval and early modern distinction between demonic magic and natural magic is of primary importance when studying the use of magical objects as domestic apotropaia and understanding how and why magic could be employed to protect oneself and one’s domicile without spiritual compromise. According to Kieckhefer (1989:13), it was the source of the magical power that mattered. Demonic magic derived its power from demons while natural magic manifested itself within nature, and thus was not in violation of or opposition to Christian doctrine, but was rather understood as one aspect of the doctrine of signatures. It must be kept in mind, however, that this was not always so straightforward, as the same natural substances (like herbs, metals, and animal parts) may be used in both demonic and non-demonic magical practices and rituals.

The terms *magic* and *ritual* require further explication and definition. Both *magic* and *ritual* defy simplistic and bounded characterization, being by nature inadequate abstractions coined to collectively express the interface of objects, processes, and relationships, oftentimes between the natural world of humankind and supernatural realm of deities, spirits, and demons as
noted above by Kieckhefer. As a result, numerous definitions of *magic* and *ritual* have been formulated by researchers (Evans-Pritchard 1933; Malinowski 1955[1925]; Lévi-Strauss 1963; Turner 1969; Thomas 1971; Mauss 1972[1902]; Merrifield 1988; Keickhefer 1989; Tambiah 1990; Bell 1997; Glucklich 1997; Renfrew and Bahn 2000; Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Aure 2004; Insoll 2004; Davies 2012). I am concerned with magic and ritual as systemized practices whose symbolic structured enactments express an underlying belief in the connection and power between the elements involved (e.g., material manifestations, texts, gestures, and temporal and spatial prescriptions) and the efficacy of the desired outcome of the performance. I also assert that while rituals may not necessarily incorporate any magically based belief or behavior, magical practice always involves ritualized observances. A brief review of various conceptualizations of magic and ritual will help clarify my usage of these two terms.

Bell (1997) provides a useful historiographical examination of ritual theory and definition. She points out that, “Traditionally, ritual has been distinguished from other modes of action by virtue of its supposed nonutilitarian and nonrational qualities” and adds, “A number of theorists have used these distinctions in even subtler extensions, such as distinguishing religious rituals from magical rituals” (Bell 1997:46). These distinctions posit that nonutilitarian rituals constitute religious worship while nonrational (but utilitarian in seeking a practical end) indicate magical practice. Insoll (2004), Malinowski (1955[1925]), Mauss (1972[1902], and Thomas (1971) particularly attempt to define magic as a distinct system of belief and practice distinguishable from religion and one often embedded with a negative connotation of superstitious ignorance or demonic implication. Insoll (2004) explicitly omits any discussion of magic in his *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion*; Mauss (1972[1902]) likewise overtly attempts, with little success, to distinguish between religious belief and ritual and those constituting magic.
Although Thomas’ title, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, implies these two constructs represent different and incompatible belief systems, he actually demonstrates that the subtle distinctions between Anglo-European religious and magical belief and ritual from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century depended upon the practitioners’ perspectives more so than any formal structure or purpose attributed to either construct such as those implied by the nonutilitarian and nonrational characterizations noted by Bell.

Bell’s (1997:x) review reveals “that there is no clear and widely shared explanation of what constitutes ritual or how to understand it. There are only various theories…all of which reflect the time and place in which they are formulated.” This statement, while referring to the theorists and their relative temporal and social positioning, also applies to the practitioners and participants of ritual and magic as it is ultimately more relevant to understand these concepts as they were perceived by the people of the particular time, place, and culture under study. Crapanzano (1980) concurs by stressing the cultural relativism of ritual, an idea he substantiates through his study of circumcision rites in Morocco in which he demonstrates that although a particular ritual element may be practiced by numerous cultural groups, the ritual forms, functions, and meanings are not universal, but rather unique to the given group.

For the purpose of my research, I do not confine ritual to a public performance as is often assumed of religious observances, rather I view ritual as encompassing a wider latitude of variation from periodic, private, personal, and secret (as many applications of seventeenth-century popular magic would have been) to regulated, public, social, and overt (characteristic of formalized religious and political ceremonies). This definition allows for a continuum of ritualistic variations combining public/private and covert/overt aspects in numerous degrees and permutations. A ritual performance entails varying combinations of texts, objects, gestures, and
acts believed by the participant(s) to work in communion by virtue of some metaphysical relationship between the ritual components and a naturally inherent force or power. In the case of magic, for example, this power might be the belief in sympathetic associations, in other words, that objects bearing any similarity to each other can affect each other. In formal religious services, it is divine power that is tapped and channeled through ritual performances. However, petitioning or invoking this same divine power frequently also underlay magical medicinal remedies and apotropaic charms and amulets. Rituals, then, provide a multidimensional conduit through which symbolic messages and metaphysical power can flow for the participants’ benefit. The spatial, temporal, and material rules defining any particular ritual are culture and context specific.

Any belief in the supernatural constitutes a worldview that accepts the unverifiable existence of beings, forces, and influences inhabiting an invisible metaphysical realm. This realm invariably coexists and interacts with the empirical terrestrial world. Technically, all formal religious belief and practice with its sacred texts and objects fits the definition of magic stated above: enactments expressing an underlying belief in the metaphysical connection and power between the elements involved and the efficacy of the desired outcome of the performance. For the purpose of this dissertation, I am, however, not concerned with religious magical practice and paraphernalia. Rather, my focus is on the manifestation and implementation of magical enactments by laypersons in domestic contexts, particularly those of seventeenth-century New England. Such practice is known as popular magic to distinguish its participants, praxis, material culture, and contexts from either official church rituals or activities of the intelligentsia involved in alchemy, astrology, or necromancy (Thomas 1971; Butler 1979; Kieckhefer 1989; Hoggard 2004; Davies 2007; Bever 2008).
The range of magical beliefs and applications, of course, spans a wide latitude. Virtually every undertaking in societies around the world may have at some point included magical components as attested to by numerous anthropological studies ranging from Malinowski’s (1955[1925]:28) observations on Trobriand islanders employing magic in fishing and gardening; to Hauser-Schäublin et al.’s (1991:117) exploration of the Balinese embedded conceptualization of magical power in textile designs; to Gmelch’s (2005:294) discussion of American baseball ritual magic. Magic has been utilized to divine the identities of thieves, witches, and future spouses; to promote luck, prosperity, and successful hunting; to bring rain and enhance plant, animal, and human fertility; to punish or harm enemies; to heal and protect body and property; to prognosticate the future; and to appease, propitiate, or petition spiritual forces. To expound upon all forms and purposes of magic is beyond the scope of my research. Instead, in this dissertation I am concerned with magical practices that fulfill the two criteria stated in the dissertation title: magic associated with domestic domains, broadly conceived and gendered behavior. Additionally, the focus here is the material magic expressions employed in various cultural traditions as boundary apotropaia rather than intangible verbal or performance charms. However, an understanding of the multiplicity of magical materials will assist in determining which manifestations may be retrieved from the archaeological record and which may prove too ephemeral to leave a recoverable footprint.

**Boundary and Threshold Concepts**

To understand supernatural and magical folk belief associated with boundaries necessitates understanding the conceptual ideology of threshold spaces, an ideology that finds expression in art and literature as well as religious and folk belief. Novelist Günter Grass (1964:130) captured the universal attribution of supernatural forces with thresholds when he wrote, “as everyone should
know, a doorway is the favorite dwelling place of evil.” Numerous scholars note the importance of threshold spaces as supernaturally powerful in African and African American belief systems (e.g. Oliver 1980; Walton 1980; Ferguson 1991; Leone and Fry 1999; Brown 2001; Anderson 2007). Likewise, Layard (1937), Gell (1992), Huyler (1995), and Dohmen (2001), demonstrate through examination of the apotropaic practice of kolam construction in India the centrality of thresholds in those traditions. Similar protective attention is given to thresholds space in China (Allan 1999:107), the Middle East (González-Wippler 2003; Paine 2004); Belize (Awe, lecture 2009) and Europe (Merrifield 1955, 1987; Essabal 1961; Evans 1971; Kittredge 1972; Puhvel 1976; Kieckhefer 1989; Johnson 1993; Lloyd et al. 2001; Flipovic and Rader 2004; Hoggard 2004).

Thresholds are conceived as both physical and intangible, as both literal and metaphorical. The physical boundaries of buildings and properties were often perceived as the literal and metaphorical liminal thresholds between the living and the dead; the material and the spirit; the public and private; the decent and the indecent; the sacred and profane; male and female; single and married; insiders and outsiders; and danger and security. While the evils of the world hovered around the exteriors of home and farmstead, the people within found themselves negotiating a sense of control and safety through their belief and faith in apotropaic threshold applications. The concept of negotiation is here apt due to the inherently paradoxical nature of thresholds as they represent and function as the most protective and the most vulnerable points in any structure. For example, doors provide entrance into space sheltered from the natural elements, physical threats, or intruders, while they simultaneously breech the integrity of a structure’s wall. Thus, the very path to safety is also one of the most inviting for danger. Windows permit essential light and air enabling inhabitants to conduct their daily activities; however, windows also allow outsiders to be privy to insiders’ movements, possessions, and secrets.
Smoke holes or chimneys conduct the hearth-fire smoke up and out of the home, but unlike windows and doors, can never be closed and, thus, invite free commerce for any malicious traffic directly into the house through the hearth (Fig. 2.1). In each instance, those openings that establish a sense of well-being and security paradoxically produce feelings of unease and vulnerability.

Thresholds have long been envisioned as having three dimensions. Not only are they the demarcations for the dichotomies of in/out, us/them, and safety/danger, but they simultaneously establish a liminal zone that operates both physically and psychologically: physically because the threshold itself is neither inside nor outside the structure and thus creates the concrete boundary between inhabitants and evil and provides a solid surface upon which amulets can be attached;
and psychologically because liminality suggests existence within a spatial and temporal sector outside mundane reality. Probably the penultimate place of liminality is a crossroads embodying four thresholds. As Puhvel (1976:167), notes, “In the recorded folklore of many lands crossroads are associated with the appearance and activities of various, generally uncanny creatures—ghosts, witches, and demons of many kinds. They are a place where mysterious preternatural phenomena occur and magic rites of multiple sorts are performed.” It is in this liminal realm, whether a building’s threshold, a property boundary, or a place perceived as the portal between worlds, like a crossroads, that supernatural forces reside and, therefore, it is where apotropaic agents would be the most effective guardians.

Because the physical liminal spaces represented the points most vulnerable to permeability, they were most likely to be reinforced through the application of magically empowered objects and rituals. In order for the objects to be efficacious in the realm of the supernatural they, too, needed to cross the threshold from the material realm to the spirit world. Thus, the objects were often either beyond their usefulness or were ritually “killed” by being intentionally damaged in some way to transition across to the otherworld. Bent pins in ‘witch bottles;’ broken swords in rivers and peat bogs; worn out shoes in chimneys, walls, and roofs; and sacrificial animals or other objects intentionally destroyed in the process of magical ritual represent a few variations of this concept (Merrifield 1955, 1987; Eastop 2001; Hoggard 2004; Anderson 2008; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Additionally, placement of material objects at liminal crossroads, thresholds, or intersecting points (e.g., corners of buildings or property lines) constituted their transition into the spiritual realm. This placement may be visible as in the case of Indian threshold designs called kolams (Layard 1937; Oliver 1980; Gell 1992; Huyler 1995; Dohmen 2001); Filipino hanging pots on porches (Peterson 2005); or Anglo-European burn marks on rafters and
stable doors (Lloyd et al. 2001); but, they may also be rendered invisible through intentional burial, submersion, or concealment to further emphasize their status as spiritual agents. Due to their concealed depositions, these artifacts have the highest chance of survival in the archaeological record and so comprise the largest and most varied sample of prehistoric and historic magical material culture from around the world ranging from cave pictographs (Alves 2001) to Babylonian Demon Bowls (Bohak 1995; Levene 2002) to Hoodoo or Voodoo charms (Cochran 1999; Leone and Fry 1999; Anderson 2008) to Anglo-European witch bottles (Merrifield 1955, 1988; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005).

While architectural thresholds or geographical boundaries appear relatively straightforward, they symbolize a more complex interface between the built environment and the human physical and spiritual body. Architectural historians like Gaston Bachelard (1994), Robert Blair St. George (1998), Paul Oliver (1980), Matthew Johnson (1996), and Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore (1977) along with archaeologist Dušan Borić (2003) espouse the metaphorical implications of the human body with the threshold points of architectural structures. Each explores the symbolic anthropomorphizing of doors as mouths, windows as eyes, roofs as heads, and hearths as hearts and the subsequent correlation between the well-being of the protected structure and the well-being, both physical and psychological, of the inhabitants. Based on his research in South East Asia, Tore Hakansson (1980:84) asserts that:

> Throughout man’s known history he has decorated his body with signs and symbols in the form of ornaments, tattooing, costumes and dresses. In particular the orifices had to have magical protection from demons and evil spirits. This need for magic protection was also extended to man’s dwellings and homes, and especially to their entrances.

While Hakansson’s connection of body to house in this quote is only implicit, he expounds upon the connection more explicitly in his discussion of youth houses constructed by the Kiwai
Papuans of British New Guinea. These houses incorporate carved human figures as support posts that are believed to animate and magically protect the structure and its inhabitants in a mimetic interplay between humans, architecture, and supernatural forces.

The cosmic relationship between human body, architecture, and divine power may find its most overt expression in Balinese architectural construction. According to Eiseman (1990:190-191), “Using an ancient doctrine of architectural principles, the Asta Kosala Kosali, a Balinese architect seeks to design a building that is in physical, environmental, philosophical, and organizational harmony with the human body, which itself is nothing but a scaled down version of the Balinese cosmos.” He continues with detailed descriptions of how the household compound head male’s bodily measurements are used as the measurements for the buildings and their placement and orientation to each other. Elaborate rituals accompany each step of the construction process to ensure approval and protection of the gods, with each undertaking guided by prognostication of the most auspicious day and time for harmony, balance, and prosperity.

Blair St. George illustrates that a similar cosmos-architecture-body concept underscored the Puritan vision that found explicit expression in seventeenth-century sermons. He argues that “New England houses…were guided by an aesthetic grounded in the poetics and politics of communion and covenant theology” and “signaled the persistence of a deferential concept of the social and political body that retained the hierarchic body of Christ as its key cultural metaphor” (1998:145). Thus, malevolent breaches to either physical body or house represented violation of the other and, ultimately, as an attack upon the sanctity of the Christian community, which was metaphorically described as both a house and a body.
Obviously, there exists a metaphorical as well as phenomenological connection between people and their domestic structures. The experiential relationship between space/place and human well-being lies at the core of many magical practices as a means to protect both life and property. According to Foucault, “Space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (1984:252), an idea that Price-Chalita (1994) and Smith (2007:85) translate as expressing a language of power:

Spatial language clearly represents power differentials in a variety of ways. People lacking access and power may be expressed in an abstract or unnamed manner as people denied space, displaced, or placeless. Spatial language is also used to represent the relational and explicitly the oppositionality of social relations, using the relation of other spaces in such metaphors as margin/center, periphery/core, or inside/outside. The spatial metaphor of power difference may also be well defined in terms of (and control over) spatial concepts such as the body, borderland, or home.
While this intimate connection between body and space centralizes power in the actual control of space, this represents but one aspect of people’s ability to wield authority over their designated domestic spheres. To understand other aspects of power and their part in magical belief and practice requires consideration of the nature and functions of magic.

W. R. Halliday stated in an early twentieth-century article, “All magic is in a sense a conflict” and that anthropologists recognize “that magic is based on power” (1910:147). While these may seem rather obvious assertions, Halliday builds upon these two concepts to explain the secret and terrifying nature of magical belief. According to Halliday, everyone innately possesses power that resides in even the minutest of bodily parts like hair or nail clippings. As concentrated containers of an individual’s essence, they can both inflict harm upon others and be used as conduits to harm their originator. In fact, as Halliday notes and as substantiated in numerous sources, it is generally the weak, the young, the ill, the dead, the unbaptized or uninitiated, and animals that are considered most susceptible to magical harm (Halliday 1910; Dundes 1992; González-Wippler 2003; Paine 2004; Milnes 2007). Healthy, strong adults inherently possess essential power; sorcerers or witches are attributed with wielding a greater degree of this power but not with monopolizing it. The belief that all people manifest some degree of innate or essential power accounts for the confidence in their ability to create and utilize counter-magical efforts against the magic of maleficent persons and forces. Magic is indeed about conceptualizing, weighing, and generating one’s power in response to specific circumstances.

In instances of bewitchment, demonic possession, casting of the evil eye, or similar confrontation with malevolent power, Halliday’s equating of magic to conflict is incontestable. However, in practices like scrying (using a reflective medium to prognosticate the future) for
divining one’s prospective spouse or carrying a holed stone for good luck, the notion of conflict seems less applicable. It can be argued that even these practices express, albeit more subconsciously, a sense of antagonism toward and fear of those persons or forces that may inhibit one’s success, prosperity, and happiness. Magic as a fear/conflict construct can serve as the general theory from which context and cultural specific examples of magic as risk management strategies like those espoused by Malinowski (1955[1925]) for the Trobriand Islanders, Wilkie (1997) for African American slaves, or Peterson (2005) for the Philippinos can be understood. Beyond, or rather implicated with, risk management lays magical practice as an empowering agentic. In undertaking the effort of gathering the appropriate materials and ritualistically assembling and activating them, the magical practitioner demonstrates a confidence in his or her own authority and power to manipulate or otherwise affect supernatural forces for personal advantage. Communally recognized skill in constructing apotropaic devices like intricate kolam designs (Figure 2.3), mouth-blown evil eye beads (Figure 2.4), or elaborate embroidery patterns (Figure 2.5) may contribute to the individual’s sense of empowerment.

**FIGURE 2.3.** Indian *kolam*. Canadian Museum of Civilization 2000.
As manufacturers of magical objects or merely as wielders of magical power through the implementation of such objects, these individuals enact a sense of personal and social identity. Personal identity as a skilled craftsperson can be evinced from the quality of products one produces and the acknowledgement of such by one’s community. Additionally, one’s social identity as one successfully enacting expected social and gender roles may in part be
demonstrated through magical practice if the use of magic to protect or enhance one’s family or livelihood is interpreted as an extension or further dimension of one’s duty.

As previously noted, magical objects may be overt and readily recognized for their magical purpose. Evil eye beads hung over doors or in windows in Turkey, complexly woven fencing in Romania, ceramic ‘beckoning’ cat figures in Japanese windows, white paint under and around windows in Yemen and Cameroon, and horseshoes placed above house and stable doors in Anglo-European contexts all rely upon their observability in order to trap or repel malign influences (Paine 2004). Others require an element of stealth to capture or affect intended targets unawares. This is the secret aspect Halliday alluded to. In particular, he suggested that the concealment of a magical charm and its subsequent rumored existence, are sufficient to cause the target terrifying unease. Wilkie (1997) and Anderson (2008) offer similar interpretations of African and African American based uses of magic in Conjure, Hoodoo and Voodoo traditions. In these traditions the magical objects are usually buried at threshold or crossroad points over which the intended target would normally pass, or they would be disguised in the target’s food or drink to secretly cross the bodily threshold.

These are hardly the only types of secrecy. Certainly, the restrictions inherent in the notion of taboo must be understood as a type of secrecy that enhances the potency and efficacy of magical objects and their handlers. Taboo entails the customary designation of people or things as prohibited, sacred, or accursed and imposes a system of restrictions built around those taboo entities. Taboo often dictates what can be known, named, spoken, seen, touched, heard, eaten, or owned. Both the possessor of the taboo object or knowledge and the uninitiated participate in the secrecy surrounding the taboo: the possessor by keeping the secret, and the uninitiated by having but a vague peripheral understanding that he or she is not privy to the
particular secret (Douglas 1979). Another type of secrecy can be equated with Edgar Allan Poe’s short story, “The Purloined Letter” in which the sought for letter was concealed in plain sight (Poe [1902] 1985). In other words, magical objects may appear as Poe ([1902]1985:197) says, “hyperobtrusive,” or so obviously in plain sight that they are completely overlooked or dismissed as worthless or irrelevant. The planting of certain trees like rowan, oak, yew, or hawthorn by house corners and entrances might be considered merely ornamental or shade producing by those who fail to understand the plants’ association with magical protection (Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Poole and Stokes 2006). Unfortunately, many archaeologists also overlook the hyperobtrusive magical material culture at archaeological sites that remain hidden from their eyes disguised as quotidian household objects, thus emphasizing the power of long held secrets.

Finally, silence may be construed as a variant form of secrecy. In societies where a particular group has limited venues for verbal expression, such as women in seventeenth-century New England who were schooled to “govern their tongues” (Bauman 1983; Willis 1995; Kamensky 1996, 1997; Craun 2007), or African slaves whose access to reading and writing was forbidden by law and their opportunities to speak openly rigidly restricted (Klingelhofer 1987; Ferguson 1991; Samford 1996; Wilkie 1997; Cochran 1999; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Brown 2001; McCarthy 2001; Anderson 2008), the use of magical objects that are neither spoken or written of, provide a secret language through which these disenfranchised groups can metaphorically communicate their fears, identities, hopes, and strengths.

Up to this point I have emphasized the conflict and conflict resolution nature and function of magic that include forms of risk management, empowerment, identity maintenance, and agency. In each instance, there is an implied expectation of change with the practitioner in
consort with the magical objects acting as catalyst. Much like the trickster figure of folk tales whose actions instigate a series of events, often with destructive consequences before order is restored, magical practitioners’ use of magic to identify evil doers or to protect themselves by harming others seeks to retain a social order by affecting some change. Mauss (1972 [1902]:76) asserts that the magical practitioner “is always conscious that magic is the art of changing.” In this sense, there is a pragmatic rationality behind magical use that the practitioner employs to achieve his or her desired end. This notion of dynamic change contrasts with other functionalist ideas that magic is used to maintain a status quo (Malinowski 1955[1925]). However, magical belief and practice cannot be confined to such limited functional repertoires.

Early anthropologists including Edward Tylor, Sir James Fraser, and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, characterized magical belief and practice as pseudo-science and primitive irrationality occasioned by the believers’ undeveloped evolutionary stage (Tambiah 1990). For these people magic simply functioned as a poor substitute for scientific understanding. Anthropology has moved far beyond these early ethnocentric theories. Not only is a magical worldview no longer considered a misconception of scientific principles, but magical beliefs and practices are now being analyzed for their experiential, psychological, and neurobiological attributes, which will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.3.1 below (Tambiah 1990; Gell 1992, 1998; Glucklich 1997; Boyer 2001; Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004; Bever 2008). The phenomenological aspect of magical belief and participation extend beyond the rather pragmatic functions of risk management and social maintenance. Akin to religious participation in a spiritually charged world, magical practices can connect adherents to a supernatural realm. Glucklich succinctly summarizes this academic shift in magical analysis by stating:

According to the worst misconception, magic compels natural or supernatural forces to obey human will, whereas religion acts by supplication to a god who
may or may not respond. With the rise of symbolical interpretation of magic, this distinction has stopped making sense. If the magical act is a form of expressive speech, which is not compelling but meaningful, then magic and religion become two types of one phenomenon: a symbolic rationality in relation to the sacred (1997:221, emphasis in the original).

Understanding magical practice as a meaningful and personally gratifying experience, which may include notions of aesthetics, sacredness, or even apotheosis, requires broadening both expectations of the material manifestation of magical material culture and how to interpret them.

_Demarcating the Domestic_

Beyond the understanding of the nature and functions of magic, including the conceptualization of threshold spaces, any examination of magic associated with such threshold boundaries must explicitly consider what and where such boundaries lay. For the purposes of my research it is necessary to specifically delimit the parameters of the ‘domestic.’ This task, however, proves more problematic than one might initially assume. The domestic sphere cannot simply be contained by a house’s four walls or by the fence enclosing the household and its garden. Neither can a domestic sphere—whatever spatial area that may encompass—be wholly attributed to one gender’s authority as the domestic arena equates to the inhabited domain of both men and women, albeit in various patterns and permutations across cultures. Domesticity incorporates both the built landscape of a residential habitus and the symbolic bearers of the domestic concept. The line between domestic and non-domestic overlaps and blends under particular circumstances while it may attain a marked clarity at other times.

This fluidity of domestic boundaries and associated gender roles can be seen in seventeenth-century New England where the domestic realm generally included house, garden, and immediate yard and outbuildings, while the outlying fields and commercial undertakings constituted the non-domestic. Women’s work primarily occurred within the domestic realm;
however, when required by their husbands’ absence, illness, or lack of ability, they were expected to extend their working sphere to that normally designated as the non-domestic male purview including both field and town (Earle 1898; Clark 1920; Koehler 1980; Ulrich 1982; Hawke 1988; Duby and Perrot 1993; Hufton 1995; Mendelson and Crawford 1998; Holliday 1999[1922]; Crawford and Gowing 2000; Wiesner 2000; Schutte et al. 2001). In such cases they assumed the responsibilities and demonstrated the skills of a deputy husband (Ulrich 1982:41).

Does the extension of women’s work beyond the boundary of house yard, extend the boundaries of the domestic as well if women were the embodiment of domesticity? Men shared the immediate domestic sphere with women, working, eating, relaxing, and sleeping in overlapping space. Additionally, this domestic space was sometimes shared with live-in servants and apprentices. In what sense does the engagement in commercial or other business associated activity within a household space render the space non-domestic? As Ulrich (1982:38-39) asserts:

…we described an imaginary boundary stretching from house to yard, separating the domain of the housewife from the world of her husband. It is important to recognize that in reality no such barrier existed. Male and female space intersected and overlapped. Nor was there the sharp division between home and work that later generations experienced.

This fluidity of boundaries makes direct association of magical material culture with gender and household space problematic in these semi-autonomous overlapping spheres. It does not, however, preclude the possibility—even probability—that particular forms of apotropaic practice were gender related. Both women and men, occupying and utilizing the same domestic space, would have incorporated magical material culture into that shared space, but likely with different signatures and foci (Seifert 1991).
While acknowledging the artificiality of discrete domestic and non-domestic spheres in seventeenth-century New England and the possibility of alternative conceptualizations of similar spheres in other cultural traditions, it is nonetheless, necessary to demarcate manageable spatial parameters when undertaking an archaeological study. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I define domestic space as all land and built structures comprising a household’s holdings. This would include the dwellings, yards, outbuildings, gardens, fields, and forests that cumulatively constitute a household’s owned and regulated world. By including what may be conceived as ever widening circles of influence radiating out from the center of the dwelling to the outer boundaries of field and forest, not only are all potential boundaries accounted for (from hearth to property line), but additionally, consideration of apotropaia associated with each type of boundary and activity area provides for more nuanced interpretation of the gendered connection to magic and its contexts.

*Magical materiality*

Virtually every type of material and expressive medium has been employed as magical material culture. In domestic contexts these materials and mediums derive from quotidian sources in contrast to the specialized objects usually associated with religious or otherwise more formalized rituals as explicated by Renfrew and Bahn (Renfrew 1994; Renfrew and Bahn 2000). Magical material culture includes everyday utilitarian objects constructed of wood, metal, minerals, glass, and ceramic; plants, animals, and soil; foodstuffs; textiles; and human components like hair, nail clippings, and excreta. Many of these forms or substances comprise the totality of the magical object (e.g., animals, horseshoes, ceramic pots, and pierced coins); however, some serve as canvases upon which practitioners work magical designs (e.g., wooden furniture and embroidered textiles) while others are the medium used to create the magical
design, text, or object (e.g., rice flour for *kolams*, paint around windows, and blood for text). The ubiquitous and mundane nature of domestic magical material culture can obscure the magical associations since the objects or substances may vacillate between non-magical and magical use or may be used as both simultaneously.

Magical materials, their usage, and expression differ culturally, but many traditions seem to share similar conceptualizations of magical agency. One common idea holds that evil (whatever shape it takes) can either be diverted, confused, or trapped by objects that engage its sensibilities. These objects usually capture evil’s attention through complex designs, bright colors (especially red and blue), shiny or reflective surfaces, diverting sounds, or imitative images (like eye beads to deflect the evil eye) (Merrifield 1987; Dundes 1992; Gell 1992; Welters 1999; Dohmen 2001; Gazin-Schwartz 2001; González-Wippler 2003; Hoggard 2004; Paine 2004; Peterson 2005).

Another widespread aspect of magical belief concerns the connection between objects and victims/practitioners and their source of power. Sympathetic magic, first formalized by Tylor as early as 1871 as “the association of ideas” and further developed and expounded by Frazer in 1890 (1996[1890]) and Mauss in 1902 (1972[1902]), premised the belief that like affects like; however, their subsequent consideration of sympathetic magic revealed that it finds various permutations throughout the world. In some cases the sympathy may reside in a physical resemblance or symbolic similarity between two objects, in which case an object that looks like or is perceived to express shared qualities with another has the ability to affect the other. This can manifest in three ways: like produces like, like acts upon like, or like cures like (Mauss 1972[1902]:84). The object of similarity need not be concrete; abstract images or names may be sufficient. In other situations the sympathetic notion, termed “contiguity,” posits that any part of
the whole represents its totality and thus any manipulation of the parts (like hair, nail clippings, etc.) will result in a like manipulation of the whole. Contiguity also refers to the apparently causal relationship between events and objects that occur either simultaneously or sequentially in the same time or space (Zusne and Jones 1989:16-17). Related to contiguity, sympathetic contagion espouses the belief that anything a person or animal has had contact with retains a direct connection with that person or animal and can be used in the same way as actual bodily parts. The final form of sympathetic magic—sometimes termed ‘antipathetic’—sees a correspondence between opposites. Although conceptualized as a distinct aspect of magical belief, theoretically antipathy is the underlying relationship in like cures like because the same element or quality produces the opposite effect (i.e., Sucking on a frog to cure a ‘croaking’ cough produces the opposite state of non-croaking or non-frogginess) (Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Mauss 1972[1902]; Frazer 1996[1890]; Wilkie 1997; Kieckhefer 2000). Today psychological studies are proving that even if people deny holding any magical beliefs, they still reveal deep-seated notions of sympathetic, contagious, and contiguous associations between humans, objects, and contamination or danger (Shweder 1977, Rozin and Nemeroff 1990; Rozin et al. 1995; Sørensen 2007).

The material culture of domestic magic associated with gender considered in the following section of this chapter includes examples of magical objects that repel or capture evil through complexity and diversion as well as magic that works through the various modes of sympathetic association that illustrate these sympathetic correlations.

2.2.2 Comparative Look at Gender and Magic

Published anthropological, archaeological, and historical works discussing ritual magic and magical material culture proliferate; however, within those works researchers more often
focus upon the ritual or the magical objects than on the relationship between the magical enactments and the particular people involved. Consideration of how gender, age, social position, or any other distinguishing human factors are integral to or constituting of the magical practices commands less analysis. In cases where gender seems directly correlated to magical practice, the connection frequently receives implicit rather than explicit recognition and consideration. Occasionally researchers stipulate if production of particular apotropaic objects has a gendered component. Only men create Turkish evil eye beads, for example (Akyüz 2002). However, the relation of gender to magical production and practice remains unexplored. In this section I will briefly present three comparative examples of domestic magical material culture to illustrate and question the engendering of particular magical practices: Indian kolams, Balinese and European needlework designs, and African American charms.

**Indian kolams**

The daily creation of Indian threshold kolam designs provides a highly visible case of gendered domestic apotropaic behavior. These intricate interwoven knot-like or continuous loop patterns created with colored rice flour (traditional) or chalk (modern) appear on thresholds twice a day, at sunrise and again in late afternoon, across India (Figure 2.3). Always constructed by women, they cross both regional cultural differences and caste boundaries (Layard 1937; Gell 1992, 1998; Dohmen 2001). According to Dohmen, “The drawing of the designs, as stated, is an exclusively female domain and is considered to be part of housework activities” (2001:13). As with other household chores, girls learn and practice creating kolams from a young age. While Dohmen equates kolam creation with the ideology of traditional womanhood and domesticity and discusses them in terms of negotiating modern global vs. traditional rural Indian identities, she makes no connection between these apotropaic devices, women, domesticity, and the
magical properties and meanings expressed through the *kolams’* designs and ritual creation. Rather she treats them primarily as an unrecognized and undervalued female vernacular art form whose visibility is overt and ubiquitous upon the doorsteps of thousands of households everyday while simultaneously rendered hyperobtrusively invisible because they are naught but another mundane female household chore.

Gell (1992, 1998), while also interested in the anthropology of artistic creation and symbology, provides a more detailed analysis of the magical purpose informing *kolam* designs and construction. He identifies an entire category of artistic work as ‘apotropaic art,’ which includes among other expressions *kolams*, needlework, woodcarving, tattooing, knotwork, coin designs, and labyrinths. Like these other designs, threshold *kolams* “are demon-traps, in effect, demonic fly-paper, in which demons become hopelessly stuck, and are thus rendered harmless” (Gell 1998:84). The *kolams* have a twofold protective power: they are representative of *naga*, the cobra deity of protection and fertility, and they contain their own apotropaic power to capture or divert evil through their complex patterns (Gell 1992). Like Dohmen, Gell emphasizes that these highly artistic and intricate creations are constructed by women on their household thresholds twice a day. Although he delves deeper into the magical mechanisms of apotropaic patterns as demon traps, he offers no analysis of the obvious gendered nature of this widespread and ubiquitous domestic threshold magic and the agentic power women wield through their creation.

acknowledges the artistic and the ritualistic components of these apotropaic expressions with a
nod to their female creators, but goes no further than Dohmen or Gell in connecting the gendered
and magical aspects into a meaningful relationship.

Needlework designs

In Paine’s (2004, 2008) extensive look at the variety of amulets found worldwide, she
depicts numerous examples of apotropaic embroidery and woven designs incorporated into
clothing and other textiles from cultures across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas but does
not mention who was responsible for their production and how or if gender played an
appreciable role in the process. It is easy to assume that needlework, especially the type
associated with children’s clothing or household linens, represents women’s work, but such
assumptions must be verified. After all, other textile production, such as carpet, cloth, and
blanket weaving is undertaken by both men and women in many cultures. These textiles, just like
embroidered clothing and household items, also incorporate magical designs and symbols. This
being the case, is the production of particular types of needlework magic gender specific? The
answer is ‘yes’ for some cases. In Bali, for instance, the weaving of the geringsing (a special
magically protective cloth) is solely the province of women; however, the cloth is worn by
everyone and is used to adorn offerings and inanimate objects as well. It protects both the
thresholds of the built environment as well as the human somatic thresholds and is considered
indispensable as a material agent in the complex relationship between the Balinese people and
their numinous world (Hauser-Schäublin et al. 1991).

While textile design and creation may or may not be gender specific in all cultures,
similarly to the female created Balinese geringsing, in European cultures embroidery and other
needlework forms have traditionally been female tasks. Parker’s (1989:11) study of embroidery
shows that “during the seventeenth century the art [of embroidery] was used to inculcate femininity from such an early age that the girl’s ensuing behavior appeared innate.” Through practice works, like cross-stitch samplers, girls perfected not only their sewing skills, but also learned rudimentary reading and writing skills (Holme 1921; Pesel 1931; Monaghan 1988; Parker 1989; Ring 1993; Rosen 1995; Sarti 2002). These were not palettes for creative license, but rather were canvases to reiterate customary designs, symbols, and messages. “The enormous popularity of certain images at different moments indicates that they had specific importance and powerful resonances [power?] for the woman who chose to stitch them” (Parker 1989:12). The skills honed on these practice pieces would later be applied to a range of clothing items for the entire family and to household linens and curtains (Earle 1898; Holme 1921; Holliday 1922; Pesel 1931; Hawke 1988; Parker 1989; Ring 1993; Welters 1999; Crawford and Gowing 2000; Paine 2008). As apotropaia the embroidered designs were concentrated around openings (e.g., thresholds of body and house). For clothing this meant needlework encircled caps, hems, sleeves, necklines, pant legs, belts, and waistlines; for houses apotropaic embroidery edged window, doorway, hearth, and bed curtains (Welters 1999; Paine 2004, 2008; The Textile Blog 2010). Welters (1999:7), speaking of the intricate needlework designs on traditional garments from across Europe and Anatolia concurs that, “The ability of folk dress to guard the body against evil is evident in embroidered symbols placed at strategic locations on clothing. Such locations include hems, necklines, sleeves, and other areas thought to be vulnerable to entry by harmful spirits.” These items served as metaphoric threads knitting the family and home together in a protective skein provided by the women of the house as extensions of their wifely and motherly obligations to the well-being and prosperity of their households. One might assume that the time, effort, and expense incurred to produce some of these elaborate works, would indicate
the importance placed upon their protective power and upon the skills and duties of their creators. While these assumptions may seem reasonable, they are not necessarily true. Consideration of the Indian kolams would also prompt such assumptions, yet according to the few anthropological studies addressing them, no such value is apparent. This, of course, may simply be due to the researchers’ approaches and research agendas, rather than an accurate reflection of the importance and meaning of kolams.

Studies like those of Hauser-Schäublin et al. (1991), Welters (1999), and Paine (2004, 2008) provide ample illustration and documentation of the importance and ubiquitous use of apotropaic needlework from across the world to shield body and home from evil forces, mostly utilizing the notion of complexity or distraction to avert or trap those forces. Bright and or magical colors, intricate patterns, flashy or reflective materials, magical symbols, and sound producing objects are all incorporated into textiles for personal and household threshold protection. For all the description and documentation of these apotropaic materials and practices, researchers neglect to ask what such behaviors say about the people who enact them. When the responsibility for production of something deemed so necessary for everyone’s well-being falls to one group, class, or gender, it should lend itself to questions about value, authority, empowerment, and identity of that special group as well as about the inter-relationships between and among people and their worlds.

Considering needlework creations from a material culture perspective, one major omission stands out in the representation of needlework apotropaia, especially the more elaborate works. Nowhere does anyone discuss the procurement of raw materials. Unless one assumes that the same women who crafted the needlework pieces produced the wool, spun and dyed the threads, and wove the cloth upon which they stitched, there would have to be a system of
exchange (trade or monetary) to acquire the needed materials. For more elaborate works that incorporated beads, mirrors, and bells, the needle workers need access to an even broader exchange system. The extent of their participation in acquiring and control over raw material choices for apotropaic purposes in comparison to similar market or other exchange system participation for non-apotropaic purposes would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between apotropaia and gender or other social group distinction.

African American Charms

The study of African American belief in and utilization of magical material culture dominates the archaeology of ritual and magic in the United States, and so far represents the only published consideration of gender as a critical factor in the structure and enactment of such beliefs, and this consideration is undertaken by only one researcher. Wilkie’s statement (1997:92), “If we are to successfully study gender within African-American households, we must consider the magical dimension of gender relationships, and likewise, if we are to consider magical practices, then we must consider gender,” emphatically asserts that gender and magic for African Americans in colonial and slave contexts constitute an integrated system. Although most studies of African American beliefs (usually dealing with hoodoo, conjure, and voodoo) make no distinctions between male and female beliefs and practices, Wilkie first situates magic predominantly within the domestic sphere, then examines the gendered dimensions of magic within that household context. With the exception of magic associated with mortuary ritual, virtually all African American magical artifacts have been found within the domestic boundaries of house and yard. In these settings, the intimate proximity occasioned by cohabiting amplified the inherent tension between males and females. African American worldviews espoused the belief in innate male and female magical powers. These powers resided within one’s bodily
fluids and waste. Therefore, to magically harm another, one only had to acquire the sperm, urine, menstrual blood, or excrement of that other to use in a charm against him or her. Living together gave men and women greater access to such personal substances (Wilkie 1997).

According to Wilkie (1997:92), women’s charms were often to keep the family bound together. To accomplish this, they would urinate in their husband’s or children’s bathwater. Similarly, by adding their menstrual blood to their husbands’ meals, the men would be bound to the women forever. Men, aware of these charms, could implement counter-charms to protect themselves or take other preventative measures to foil female charm use. As Wilkie notes, the gendered use of magic impacted the daily activities and tasks of a household. If women generally were responsible for cooking, but the men feared being ‘charmed,’ then they might take over the cooking as a way to ensure their own protection. This type of understanding of how gender-based magical beliefs impact behavioral decisions and ultimately the archaeological record exemplifies the importance of belief systems in constituting behavior and, by extension, material culture (Wilkie 1997, 2003).

In the examples of kolams and needlework, the household assumes a homogeneous unity that must be protected from external disruption. In contrast, the African American belief in potentially antagonist forces residing in males and females appears to focus on internal disruptions. This is not to suggest that apotropaia to protect the African American households were not used or were not gendered, but only that the integral male-female magical opposition has a decidedly more explicit expression in African American belief than in the other traditions considered here.

From the brief examples presented above of kolams, needlework, and African American charms, it can be stated unequivocally that gendered apotropaia exists in various cultural
traditions—both in production and practice. I do not question whether or not seventeenth-century Anglo-Europeans also had gendered expressions of magical belief and practice. Rather I ask what such gendered magic looks like and whether or not it is recoverable in the archaeological record, either alone or in conjunction with historical documentation. Associating magical marks, designs, and depositions with fears, tasks and structures known to be the province of a particular gender provides a starting point from which to test such hypotheses. Correlating artifact use with gender provides the foundation upon which more significant observations and insights about the historical past can be built.

While much anthropological, historical, archaeological, and folkloric evidence exists to support the premise that humans from all cultures have used or currently still employ apotropaic devices to protect their domestic boundaries from misfortune, this is an area that has received limited attention from archaeological researchers. Compilations like Paine’s (2004) *Amulets: Sacred Charms of Power and Protection* document the staggering variety and scope of the material culture of magic and its distribution across cultures. Yet little is really understood about the underlying connections between people, their magical beliefs, their material culture, and the implications of those connections. Material culture, particularly in archaeological contexts, can appear divorced from the human agency which both generated and used it. This sterile perception strips material culture of its social, political, and/or symbolic meanings. This point is especially salient for magical material culture if one considers the fearfully charged circumstances in which they were used as well as their powerful supernatural associations. They were more than mere utilitarian objects; their power and efficacy existed both within their material forms and was integrated within the ritualistic performance of their making and use. Their use constituted deliberate engagement with the powers of good and evil, which implies
some degree of danger or risk. Studying such psychologically charged circumstances through a focus on gendered threshold apotropaic beliefs and behaviors may provide insights into the human processes of negotiating a sense of existential security and personal empowerment. The following section presents a discussion of the multidimensional theoretical approach used in this dissertation to interpret the gendered use of apotropaic materials in historic contexts.

2.3 The Archaeological Study of Magic

This section on the archaeological study of magic is divided into two major parts. The first part reviews the historical anthropological theories of magic followed by the presentment of the three combined theories used as the interpretive framework in this dissertation. The second part of this section provides a review of the current state of historical archaeological research on magic.

2.3.1 Theory and the Archaeology of Magic

2.3.1.1 History of Anthropological Theory of Magic

Historical archaeological researchers of magic and ritual have not formulated their own theories to explain magical material culture. Instead, the field has applied those theories developed by cultural anthropology whose earliest studies focused on attempts to account for spiritual belief systems (i.e., religion) of non-Western tribal peoples and to understand the formation and manifestation of religious practices. Although the people under study integrated magical belief and practice into their ritual behaviors, the anthropologists—through an ethnocentric bias—made a clear distinction between religion and magic (Tylor 1871; Evans-Pritchard 1929; Malinowski 1955[1925]; Turner 1969; Mauss 1972 [1902]; Frazer 1996[1890]; Stein and Stein 2005). For the anthropologists, religion equated to belief in and supplication to deity figures for a community’s well-being, while magic was a pragmatic mechanism for
individuals attempting to bring about specific consequences for their own benefit.

Distinguishing between magic and religion allowed for the development of different theoretical explanations for the purpose and existence of such practices.

The two most prominent theories of magic espoused either functionalist or evolutionary interpretations. The functionalist theory of magic is most directly attributed to Malinowski (1955[1925]) and his work with the Trobriand Islanders and is reiterated by Evans-Pritchard’s (1929) consideration of the Azande of Africa with the caveat that functionality is culture specific. Malinowski believed that in order to understand the adherence to magical belief, it was necessary to determine how such beliefs actually benefited the adherents; in other words, to ask, ‘What does magic do? How does it satisfy human needs?’ His answer (Malinowski 1955[1925]:90) was:

Magic…enables man to carry out with confidence his important tasks, to maintain his poise and his mental integrity in fits of…despair and anxiety. The function of magic is to ritualize man’s optimism, to enhance his faith in the victory of hope over fear. Magic expresses the greater value for man of confidence over doubt, of steadfastness over vacillation, of optimism over pessimism.

This core explanation of magic’s functions remains a valid one when applied to the manifestations of magical belief and use in seventeenth-century New England. As Thomas (1970:54) notes, “After several generations of anthropological writing it is hardly necessary to stress that English witch beliefs [and by extension the uses of magic], like those elsewhere, helped to account for the misfortunes of daily life.” However, this functionalist explanation merely provides the foundation upon which more nuanced explanations must be erected; explanations that seek out an understanding of the underlying fearful motivators and the patterns of subsequent agentic behaviors employed by magic users to alleviate those fears.
The second most common magical theory—evolutionism—espoused the idea iterated by Tylor (1871), Frazer (1996 [1890]), Mauss (1972 [1902]), and partially adhered to by Malinowski (1955[1925]) that magical belief represented the most primitive degree of humankind’s understanding of nature—a kind of pseudo-science, but also a precursor to true religious belief. Frazer (1996 [1890]) went so far as to place the three concepts on a primitive-to-civilized scale: magic gives way to religion, which in turn ultimately gives way to positivistic, objective science. This scheme shared much in common with some of the ideas championed in the seventeenth-century Enlightenment movement (Thomas 1970). Both seventeenth and twentieth century evolutionary magical theories have since been proven erroneous (Kerr and Crow 1986; Tambiah 1990; Guthrie 1993; Davies 1999, 2012; Boyer 2001; Burton and Grandy 2004; Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004; Bailey 2007). Not only is magical belief still a vital aspect of cultures around the world, but its popularity and visibility in Western cultures has expanded exponentially in the past two decades as evidenced by the rise of modern paganism (e.g., Wicca) (Greenwood 2003; Jones 2004; Magliocco 2004), the billion-dollar New Age Movement industry comprising everything from Eastern religious traditions to every form of occult belief and practice (Kerr and Crow 1986; Lau 2000; Beardsley Ministry 2001), and the strong adherence to supernatural and superstitious beliefs as reported in recent Gallup polls (Moore 2005) and psychological studies (Albas and Albas 1989; Zusne and Jones 1989; Vyse 1997; Ridolfo et al. 2009; Subbotsky 2010). What is more, cognitive anthropologists and neurobiologists are now finding evidence that magical thinking is a natural brain process in which the brain connects similar, simultaneous, or concurrent patterns into cause-effect relationships without substantive evidence, or alternatively, looks for a cause for every event when immediate causes are not evident (Guthrie 1993; Cunningham 1999; Boyer 2001;
Anthropologist Stewart Guthrie (1993) explores this propensity in his book *Faces in the Clouds* and demonstrates that “there is now overwhelming evidence that humans are naturally predisposed to pay attention to the presence of potential agents in their environments, even to the extent of investing inanimate objects with human qualities on the flimsiest of pretexts” (Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004:190). In other words, the brain needs to see connections between events and will create those relationships out of whatever patterns are most available in the moment.

These new cognitive theories allow scholars of magical practices to situate their research in a primarily functional framework, but with a broader understanding of the importance of such practices in the maintenance of both physical and mental well-being as natural processes of the human mind, especially in negative or dangerous settings. This understanding should lead to the formation of new research questions about the consequences and responses of individuals in high stress situations with varying degrees of access to power or control. For example, Whitson and Galinsky’s (2008) preliminary work explores ‘illusory pattern perception’ in such instances.

### 2.3.1.2 Psychological Theory of Fear

Fear, considered one of the instinctual survival mechanisms that motivates animals, including the human animal, to behaviors designed to alert and defend against potential threats (real or imagined), has received a great deal of attention by behavioral psychologists, neurobiologists, sociologists, and anthropologists (Parkin 1985; Gray 1987; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Bourke 2005; Mawson 2005; Callanan and Teasdale 2009; Carro et al. 2010; Tucker 2010). Dennett (1971), Guthrie (1993), Barrett (1996), and Czachesz (2007) in their analyses of cognition and magical belief each espouse the idea that humans “developed an oversensitive
reaction to the presence of [non-human] agency in the environment, which contributed to the emergence of belief in gods and spirits” (Czachesz 2007:15). This notion of ‘intentional agency’ (Dennett 1971; Barrett 1996) in the environment explains both the need for people to protect themselves from these forces and the rationality of magical recourse to effectively neutralize the threats. Understanding the primal fear motivator coupled with the belief in an agentic environment holds the key to interpreting gendered magical use in seventeenth-century New England, as artifacts exhibit minimal gendered distinction. Magical material culture seems to reflect a connection between context, fear, and gender that can only be understood in light of an understanding and identification of the fears harbored by women and men both independently and jointly. Examination of the historical sources discussed later in Chapter 4 indicates that women and men in New England, ca. 1620-1725 did indeed experience gender-specific fears in addition to non-gendered fears (Table 2.1). This is not to say that men did not fear their wives dying in childbirth or that women were not concerned by the consequential hardships due to crop failure, rather these gendered fears indicate those that were most personally and directly experienced by men or women. Therefore, the agency to most effectively address these fears must be wielded directly by the men and women experiencing the fearful situations. To reach this understanding requires some basic background on the psychological theories of how people perceive and cope with fear.

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<tr>
<th>Women’s Fears</th>
<th>Shared Fears</th>
<th>Men’s Fears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death in childbirth</td>
<td>God’s wrath</td>
<td>Occupational injury/death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
<td>Crop failure, loss of livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to provide food, clothing, comfort</td>
<td>Other supernatural attack</td>
<td>Financial failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to teach and raise socially successful offspring</td>
<td>Inability to assure family’s health/well-being</td>
<td>Inability to provide for family (shelter, security, stability, inheritance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to protect house, yard, foodstuffs</td>
<td>Property boundary violation</td>
<td>Inability to protect house, stables, barns, fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>Identity boundary violation</td>
<td>Sociopolitical failure, lack of public authority and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompetency in female tasks</td>
<td>Inability to successfully conform to gender expectations</td>
<td>Incompetency in male tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witchcraft accusation/slander</td>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>Slander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age/widowhood perils</td>
<td>Environmental dangers (storms, fire, forest, night, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian abduction</td>
<td>Indian attack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft by servants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack by live-in servants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Studies of fear have produced observations of behavioral responses to and analytical breakdowns of the dimensions and characteristics of the emotion. Basic responses to fear-states include the freeze-fight-flight triad. This response formulation provides three options for the frightened person in a threatening situation: to remain motionless and hope the danger passes; to attack the threat in some manner in an attempt to eliminate it; or to run away to a place of safety hoping the threat will be unable to follow. Gray (1987:139) describes a more ubiquitously observable behavior pattern, however. The approach-avoidance conflict behavior pattern illustrates the often conflicting instinctual directives that say, on the one hand, to approach the danger to assess it more closely, versus an immediate avoidance of the perceived threat by retreating from it without a thorough appraisal of the situation.

[66]
The use of apotropaic magic seems to combine the ‘approach conflict’ and the ‘fight’ responses by the user first considering (or perceptually creating) the source and characteristics of the threat and determining what type of magical remedy would be most efficacious, followed by the implementation of that remedy to disarm or eliminate the threat. In some instances magic was used once the danger was clearly identified, and in other cases it was employed proactively. Halliday (1910:153) also noted these two options for magically responding to threats:

There are indeed two ways of dealing with hostile magic powers: (1) to avoid the possibility of contact, to conceal your name, to keep silent, to keep still, to conceal carefully the fragments of your clothing, hair, nails, etc.; (2) if contact is unavoidable, to get the upper hand by taking the initiative, by anticipating the contact, by asserting your own [power].

Both scenarios suggest magic users recognized their fears and actively engaged in taking control of the frightening situations, substantiating that the use of magic as a risk management stratagem was premised on fear as the motivator and agentic power as the catalyst to risk resolution.

The field of psychology generally distinguishes between anxiety and fear. Bourke (2005:189) notes, “according to most commentators, the word ‘fear’ is used to refer to an immediate, objective threat, while anxiety refers to an anticipated, subjective threat.” In other words, threats that can be named (e.g., witches, the evil eye, demons) generate fear, while vague feelings of vulnerability or uncertainty (e.g., Will God grant me salvation?) induce anxiety. These divisions are generalizations at best, since, “what is an ‘immediate and objective’ threat for one group [or individual] may simply be an ‘anticipated and subjective threat for [others]’” (Bourke 2005:190). However, studies of these two states (better conceptualized as points along a continuum) have demonstrated that there is a tendency for anxious people to withdraw and fend for themselves against the perceived danger, while fearful people are more apt to congregate for mutual support and defense (Bourke 2005:191). The use of magical material culture in

[67]
seventeenth-century New England appears not to exhibit this tendency. In this particular context, individuals turned to apotropaic devices to manage specific fears rather than vague anxieties, while simultaneously people gathered together in prayer as a strategy to mitigate both fear and anxiety inducing vexations.

The investigation of fear has recently expanded to include consideration of gender and space as important variables in the perception of and response to threat that may offer insight into understanding the gendered use of magical material culture in seventeenth-century New England. Callanan and Teasdale’s (2009) examination of modern examples of gender differences in the fear of crime establishes not only that such differences do exist, but that these distinctions are primarily culturally constituted. According to their research, gender role expectations strongly affect what people fear, what they admit to fearing, and how they respond to those fears. According to their study, women admitted to having more fears than did men. Gendered fear also seems to be implicated with spatial conceptualizations. Blunt and Varley (2004) and Tucker (2010) examine how domestic space is both invested with emotions and actively constructed to alleviate distress, while Carro et al. (2010) look to public spaces to understand perceptions of safety or danger in areas outside the domestic sphere and, thus, personal control. Carro et al.’s (2010:312) study additionally associates gender with differential circumstantial degrees of fear, in which women demonstrated a greater perception of danger in certain public environments than men did in the same contexts.

Lerner and Keltner (2001:147) divide perceptions of fear into two types: ‘unknown risk’ and ‘dread risk.’ Unknown risk refers to those uncertain hazards that, if known, may not necessarily be out of one’s scope to address. Dread risk, on the other hand, denotes those dangers that are perceived to be beyond an individual’s ability to control. Whitson and Galinsky
(2008:116), in their research on the relationship between fear, control, and perception, verify that:

The desire to combat uncertainty and maintain control has long been considered a primary and fundamental motivating force in human life and one of the most important variables governing psychological well-being and physical health. In contrast, lacking control is an unsettling and aversive state, activating the amygdala, which indicates a fear response. It is not surprising, then, that individuals actively try to reestablish control when it disappears or is taken away.

Both women and men experience these two fearful states (and many gradations in between), but they may not necessarily perceive the same situations or threats as ‘unknowable’ or ‘uncontrollable.’ This gendered distinction is evident in the fears expressed by New England colonists in historical documents. Since the implementation of apotropaia was believed and intended to physically impede the forces of evil, these forces must not have posed dread risks to those using magical material culture. Taking into consideration these notions of fear, control, and perception and correlating them with the behaviors of seventeenth-century women and men provides a clearer window through which to interpret magical material culture as well as to think about the complex, often intangible, magical and religious underpinnings of the both the recent past and the present day.

Humans have, of course, always lived in a world fraught with uncertainty and destructive forces that dramatically impact their daily lives. Certainly these concerns have varied in their specificity across time and space; however, the underlying fears associated with a dangerous world remain the same. Survival in a danger-filled world requires recognition of and protective action against those elements capable of inflicting harm upon those not prepared or in control. This can be a relatively straightforward matter if the threats are direct and uncomplicated; but when those destructive powers are invisible, unpredictable, incomprehensible, or as Clifford
Geertz asserts, “…life threatens to dissolve into a chaos of thingless names and nameless things…” (1973:91), then people construct various supernatural beings to give a tangible or explanatory form to their fears. These beings provide a target at which the society can apportion blame, use to explain misfortunes, validate cultural identity, justify actions against others, and thus establish a sense that humans have the upper hand. They are cultural metaphors that, according to Gilmore (2003:12):

Embod[y] the existential threat to social life, the chaos, atavism, and negativism that symbolize destructiveness and all other obstacles to order and progress, all that which defeats, destroys, draws back, undermines, subverts the human project…”

This need for order, control, and sense of security has inspired people to invent fantastic creatures, sometimes as grotesque chimeric animals; but, other times as creatures imbued with supernatural powers whose malevolent intent targets humankind (see Appendix B). They assume a variety of shapes, but as grotesque as they are, French philosopher Gilbert Lascoult (cited in Gilmore 2003:21) asserts that they are only the result of the “bricolage that creates the monster out of scraps of reality.” They are ‘reshuffled familiarity.’ In other words, they are stitched together as aspects that represent what frightens a particular society or culture; people do not create wholly new beings because they could not relate to absolutely alteric forms (Guthrie 1993; Gilmore 2003). These malevolent creatures are the physical manifestations of the particular socio-political or spiritual fears present in a society. Beliefs in such creatures naturally necessitated the development of effective magical preventative and curative counteragents to use against them.

The question of magical usefulness is, of course, not one of empirical testing of iron, dead cats, urine, red thread, or any number of other administrations, to determine their expediency in defusing malicious intent. Anthropologist George Ewart Evans (1966:55) explains that the
efficacy of apotropaic devices is measured in their ability to make the house or farmstead “…at least feel a more secure place…” He goes on to say (1966:55):

Magic, whatever its pretensions, is ultimately addressed to the mind of the person or persons concerned, its exterior object being no more than an extrapolation of his own desires or fears; and although—like prayer or ritual—its direct effect on external reality is almost certainly nil, its influence on the mind of the participant might be considerable.

Therefore, protecting oneself and one’s home from Geertz’s “thingless names” and “nameless things” through rituals and objects that established defensive boundaries allowed people to believe they had some measure of control over the evils that co-habited their worlds. It is this sense of safety—not the actuality of safety—that permitted people to live productively.

Not surprisingly there exists a connection between the construction of these defensive boundaries and the English word ‘fear,’ which are integral concepts of this dissertation. The etymology of the term and its cognates reveals a connection between the term and the precise circumstances in which many people found themselves and recognized as life threatening. Developed from Old English faer meaning danger or peril, it is a cognate with Old Saxon far meaning ambush; Old Icelandic far meaning misfortune and plague; and the Gothic derivative from ferja—referring to “one who lies in wait, an observer or a spy” (Barnhart 1988:372-373). This idea of ambush seems to underlie the use of threshold apotropaia the world over (e.g., Burdick 1901; Essabal 1961; Oliver 1976; Hakansson 1980; Gell 1992; Bohak 1995; Akyüz 2002; Levene 2002; Peterson 2005) and is certainly applicable to seventeenth-century New England. Whether the perpetrators of evil upon a household are specifically identified as witches, fairies, demons, or the evil eye or are envisioned as nebulous malignant forces, they are all imagined to “lie in wait” for their opportunity to insinuate their way into homes and barns, crossing thresholds at gates, doors, windows, hearths, roofs, and wall intersections. Due to their supernatural nature, it
would be impossible for human agency alone to stand guard against them; human agency in
consort with powerful countermagical agents was required to erect impassable barriers between the
people and the sources of their fears.

2.3.1.3 Agency Theory

In addition to theories of functionality and fear, the research components for this study
are also predicated upon agency theory, which, as Dobres and Robb (2000:3) succinctly
characterize, provides a framework for researchers to consider “how acting, feeling, and relating
subjects constituted themselves under circumstances beyond their full comprehension and direct
control.” As previously noted, early anthropological studies of magic primarily approached the
individual or community enactment of magical rituals through functionalist (Malinowski
1955[1925]; Turner 1969) and evolutionary theories (Tylor 1871; Mauss 1972 [1902]; Tambiah
1990; Frazer 1996[1890]), but historical archaeological interpretation of African American,
Scottish, English, and German magical material culture emphasizes either a Marxist dialectic
(Samford 1996; Leone and Fry 1999; Davidson 2004) or practice theory, which espouses the role
of traditional schema in an individual’s behavioral choice options (Brown and Cooper 1990;
Wilkie 1997; Brumfiel 2000; Fennell 2000, 2007; Brown 2001; Gazin-Schwartz 2001). Both the
Marxist dialectic and practice theory represent variations of agency theory that seek to connect
artifacts with “peoples’ intentions to change something from what it was to what they thought it
should be, or to prevent change that would take place in the absence of those artifacts” (Wobst
2000:42).

Agency has been defined as both the power to make choices and employ action (Barrett
2000, 2001; Pauketat 2000; Boucher 2001; Shapiro 2005; Frank 2006), and the power over
others or circumstances through an authority not shared by subordinates (Leone and Fry 1999;
Cowgill 2000; McGuire 2002; Dobres and Robb 2006). Together these concepts allow a consideration of how individuals in seventeenth-century Anglo-European contexts employed agency through magical devices to actively engage in constructing their own realities and in wielding influence over people and situations. Barrett (2000, 2001) and Pauketat (2000) concur that agents acquire, to varying degrees, knowledge, resources, and abilities requisite to participation within their relative temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts. Barrett (2000:66) asserts that:

The agents are enabled according to the abilities of their bodies, the resources they command, their knowledgeability, and the extent to which this knowledgeability penetrates the world around them. They therefore participate in a particular way of recognizing the world and of expressing their own security within it. They read the world according to certain traditional prejudices which they share with others, and become social beings by being recognized, through discourse and relationships of power.

Barrett’s summation implicitly addresses one of the major points of debate amongst agency theorists, that of ‘rationality.’ There exists a pervasive assumption that most people generally behave in a rational way based on a sense of reasoning that dictates a normal or correct way of being. Attempting to extrapolate agentic motivation, intention, and processes without due consideration of what constitutes rationality within the particular context under study can lead to erroneous interpretations. Cowgill (2000:55) notes that “we must be extremely careful about what aspects of rationality are universally applicable, and which aspects are more context-specific.” Other scholars (Nielsen 1974; Buchowski 1988; Lukes 2000), likewise, assert that rationality, and especially the rationality of magical use (see Buchowski 1988), require thoughtful analysis of what signifies culturally logical behaviors and decision-making frameworks. Thus, application of agency theory, to be revealing of any significant insights on gender, magical belief and practice, and mitigation of risk, must explicitly include consideration
of not only what constituted rational options for seventeenth-century women and men, but also what variables triggered deviation from what was deemed reasonable. The parameters of rationality and deviance exist within worldviews and must be measured against the actions of individuals in this context.

As magical use entailed a degree of risk on the part of the user, it must be assumed that the perceived threat against which the magical elements were used must have outweighed the danger incurred by using the magic. In other words, people would have consciously applied risk-benefit assessments to their situations (Douglas 1985:30). People of the seventeenth century had several available options to address such threats—some more socio-politically or religiously sanctioned than others—yet many actively chose to seek out and employ magic as the most direct remedy to their situations. As Clark (1997:457) expounds:

Study after study has shown how, all over Europe, ordinary people regularly appealed not…to the collective conscience of the Church, but to local practitioners skilled in healing, divination, and astrology for help with their everyday problems.

Colonists in seventeenth-century New England also utilized the services of these local practitioners as can be deduced from the numerous sermons and treatises (Figure 2.5) admonishing parishioners who sought such services and employed magic rather than committing all their troubles to God through prayer (Mather 1689, 1692b; Butler 1990:68-76; Godbeer 1992:21) even though magical practice was illegal in most colonies (Butler 1990:68).

The historical and archaeological evidence from Britain and New England clearly support the assertion that women and men, through their understanding of cosmic and supernatural forces, utilized their own abilities to navigate the anxious and fearful uncertainties of life by choosing from an array of potential solutions to their frightening situations and then personally implementing those solutions. Viewing the historical, folkloristic, and archaeological datasets on
magical material culture through this agentic perspective, combined with the acknowledgement that fear was the prime motivator behind magical use, and the acceptance that magic does operate functionally to create a sense of ease and control, I have established as solid as possible a theoretical framework for examining, interpreting, and explaining gendered magic use in seventeenth-century New England.

2.3.2 Recent Archaeological Research on Magic

A perforated coin buried in the cellar; a jumble of ceramics, quartz crystals, and beads under the kitchen floor; an old shoe and a dead cat in the chimney; a stoneware jug containing pins, hair, and traces of urine under the threshold; odd markings scratched, burned, or painted on hearth lintels, floor boards, and roof rafters: Only within the last fifteen years have American historical archaeologists begun to credit such enigmatic depositions as worthy of deliberate and purposeful investigation. Today these researchers still comprise a very small coterie, although
their numbers are increasing. Cultural anthropologists, folklorists, and historians, on the other hand, have collected and studied examples of magical folk beliefs from around the world, including the United States, since at least the eighteenth-century (e.g., Bacon 1896; Steiner 1901; Hazlit 1905; Burne 1913; Carpenter 1920; Villiers 1923; Read 1925; Thompson 1932; Malinowski 1955[1925]; Kittredge 1972; Mauss 1972 [1902]; Bourne 1977 [1725]; Frazer 1996[1890]), but it was not until British archaeologist Ralph Merrifield published *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* in 1987, that archaeologists began to seriously regard ritualistically deposited magical artifacts. However, Merrifield’s influence has been slow to permeate American historical archaeology as can be deduced by the relatively few scholars who reference magical artifacts in site reports, articles, or research specifically querying the manifestation of traditional beliefs in American archaeological contexts (Fremmer 1973; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Klingelhofer 1987; Brown and Cooper 1990; King 1996; Samford 1996; Stine et al. 1996; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Deetz and Deetz 2000; Fennell 2000, 2007; Baker 2001, 2007; Brown 2001; Davidson 2004; Dixon 2005; McKitrick 2009; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Baker, Becker, Davidson, Deetz and Deetz, Fremmer, King, McKitrick, and Fennell in their respective works on horseshoes, witch bottles, grave goods, and German *hexeri* comprise the entirety of historical archaeologists who have published on the material culture of Anglo-European popular magic in America, whereas the majority of scholarly work on magic within the United States centers on African American traditions. Of these only Fennell (2007) has published a book that critically focuses on the significance of magical artifacts and what they potentially can reveal about the lives of past individuals and cultures. His work has most directly challenged the prevailing correlation of magical material culture with non-European “others” (Fennell 2007:96), although Deetz and Deetz (2000:86-100) do stress the prevalence of Anglo magical
belief and practice at Plymouth Plantation in their work on Plymouth Colony. Other researchers (Davidson 2004; Manning 2012b) have addressed the possibility for cultural admixture obtaining between Anglo-European, African, and Native American magical material culture to reveal the potential pitfalls in directly or uncritically attributing particular materials or practices to specific cultural groups. Other than noting that women were accused of witchcraft in greater numbers than men, researchers within historical archaeology, whether concerned with Anglo-European or African American studies—with the exception of Wilkie (1997) and to a lesser extent Brown (2001)—have generally ignored the interplay of gender, age, or class with magical belief and practice. As a result, the archaeology of ritual and magic within American historical archaeology has yet to broaden its parameters to both recognize and understand the material manifestation of magical belief across all cultural and social domains.

The archaeology of ritual and magic gained credence during the late 1980s and early 1990s when a theoretical paradigm shift occurred within archaeology. The advent of post-processual interpretative theory and the processualist correlate, cognitive theory, raised important questions about the symbolic and ritualistic factors constituting and influencing human behavior. The British archaeologists Hodder (1990) and Merrifield (1987) challenged the processualists’ emphasis on form and function classification and quantification of artifactual data epitomized in South (1977), and which, in effect, ignored the contextuality of ritualistic and/or magically conceived assemblages and associated meanings. Merrifield (1987:194) lamented the inattention to artifact association in mixed depositions as spatial, material, and symbolic relationships were precisely the factors, rather than the artifacts’ basic morphologies or utilitarian functions, that constituted the deposit’s ritualized meanings (see also Osborne 2004). In this lamentation he stressed that magical contexts and assemblages “ought to be recognized in the first instance as
evidence of an event, possibly complex, that is part of the history of the site, and may indicate a crisis in the lives of its occupants” (emphasis in the original).

Although working in prehistoric sites, Walker (1998:246) echoes the same frustration that:

too often in archaeological inferences, the forms of objects are used to identify their functions and by extension the functions of the places or contexts where they are found….The study of ritual prehistory has been retarded by a too narrow focus on the formal designs of artifacts.

The same assessment can be applied to the identification and analysis of magical material culture in historical archaeology. Walker suggests an alternative approach to analyzing all artifacts, not just magical or ritualistic material culture, but undoubtedly especially suited to distinguishing ritual artifacts. He proposes a system that “assigns artifact function on the basis of the behaviors an artifact actually participates in during the course of its life history” (1998:246). Walker’s focus on an artifact’s life history was not a novel concept as it is based on Schiffer’s (1972, 1976, 1987) work on behavioral archaeology. Griffiths (1978) asserted similar ideas in analyzing the actual utilization of ceramics through use-marks, rather than through functions originally intended by manufacturers. Within an analytical system that values artifact use over form and assumed function, archaeologists anticipate the multifunctional and multivalent nature of objects and have a much greater chance of accounting for archaeological remains. The question then becomes, how can artifacts identical in formal attributes be distinguished behaviorally? By considering four aspects of artifact variability, Walker asserts that disparate behaviors of otherwise similar objects can be determined. These four aspects, “numerical frequency, placement in space, association with other objects, and formal attributes” (Walker 1998:247), correspond to Merrifield’s concept of contextuality (1987). I have constructed a simple example
using a horseshoe (Table 2.2) to illustrate the applicability of Walker’s artifact variability approach to identifying mundane objects as magical material culture.

**TABLE 2.2.** Sample application of Walker’s Artifact Use Identifier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Object: Horseshoe</strong></th>
<th><strong>Intended Function</strong></th>
<th><strong>Apotropaic Ward</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numerical Frequency</strong></td>
<td>Multiples</td>
<td>1 (or possibly magical number multiples)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placement in space</strong></td>
<td>In/near livestock, agricultural, or blacksmithing areas</td>
<td>In/on/near or embedded in doors and walls of residential or livestock structures at threshold points; in dairying activity areas; associated with cosmic directions or measurements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associated objects</strong></td>
<td>Other livestock, agricultural, or farrier equipment</td>
<td>Domestic thresholds components; butter making equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal attributes</strong></td>
<td>Crescent shaped to fit horses’ hooves</td>
<td>Crescent/vessel shaped to trap evil; usually too worn for proper use for horses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the importance of contextuality over individual formal attributes has gained general acceptance since the 1990s (Wheeler 1995; De Cunzo 1996; King 1996; Walker 1998; Beaudry 1999; Osborne 2004; Herva 2009; Chadwick 2012; Manning 2012b), Lu Ann De Cunzo’s (1996:12) battle-cry, “Context is everything,” has yet to permeate American historical archaeology’s mainstream to the extent necessary to recognize and understand the complexity of magical and/or ritualistic behaviors.

Due largely to Hodder and Merrifield’s early influence, the archaeology of ritual and magic has flourished in Britain with major projects like the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project at the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton; The Concealed Shoes Index at Northampton Museum; and websites and archives managed by researcher Brian Hoggard. Each of these projects serves as a research clearinghouse and archive for thousands of
magically deposited apotropaic objects found in historic buildings dating from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. Their archives predominantly house British materials; however, they also contain several artifacts or records of concealed finds from around the world. Other related research is exemplified by the British interdisciplinary team of Virginia Lloyd, John Dean, and Jennifer Westwood who pooled their respective expertise in 1997 to use experimental archaeology, art history, ethnography, and folklore to document and interpret apotropaic burn marks in post-medieval vernacular and religious architecture in East Anglia (Lloyd et al. 2001). Timothy Easton’s (1988, 1999a, 1999b, 2011) work on spiritual middens and apotropaic marks comprise the most comprehensive studies on these two aspects of British magical material culture. Currently, Owen Davies, history professor at University of Hertfordshire, England, and author of several books and articles on popular magic, continues to pursue funding for an international research project on the material culture of post-medieval magic and its diachronic adaptation through British colonialism around the world. As an adjunct to this British colonial study, Ian Evans (2011) recently completed his doctoral dissertation on traditional British practices of concealed apotropaia in Australia. According to Davies (personal communication 2009), although Continental Europe also claims a treasure trove of traditional folk beliefs and associated material culture documented in historical and folkloristic studies, it produces scant archaeological research on historical ritual and magic. Consequently, Britain continues to lead the vanguard in magical material culture studies.

Historical archaeologists in the United States, on the other hand, are just beginning to question enigmatic artifacts as potentially meaningful before summarily dismissing them as rubbish, lost toys, broken jewelry, or graffiti (Leone and Fry 1999; Manning 2012b). Conversely, the artifacts may strike the archaeologist as extraordinarily odd, thus garnering
enough interest to be labeled as unknown or ritualistic (Deetz 1963; King 1996; Luckenbach 2004). In other cases, archaeologists lack the knowledge or perspective to penetrate the utilitarian or quotidian mask concealing particular folk belief applications, resulting in artifactual misclassification and misinterpretation (Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Peterson 2005).

Beyond the recognition of magically associated material culture, and ultimately the rationale for pursuing their explication, lies the quest for understanding the multivalent nature of traditional belief systems and their roles in constituting, challenging, maintaining, or altering bounded personal and social conceptualizations (Chadwick 2012). This quest is hampered by the limited scope and approach to the archaeology of ritual and magic in the United States.

Two significant shortfalls characterize the current state of the historical archaeology of magic: 1) the majority of academic historical archaeological work on magical material culture in the United States published to date concerns non-European traditions, and (2) the investigations of magical material culture overlooks other important factors like gender, age, and class and their associations with magical belief and practice. The greatest emphasis of this work focuses on the African and African American beliefs and practices of conjuring and hoodoo, particularly in slave contexts (Klingelhofer 1987; Brown and Cooper 1990; Samford 1996; Stine et al. 1996; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Bankoff et al. 2001; Brown 2001; DeCorse 2001; Davidson 2004; Dixon 2005). The only four notable exceptions include research conducted by scholars Becker (1978, 1980, 2005), Gramly (1981), King (1996); Deetz and Deetz (2000), Fennell (2000, 2007), and McKitrick (2009) whose works focus on European colonists in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, and the mid-Atlantic respectively; although Fennell, too, specializes in African American diaspora studies. Regardless of the cultural group credited with specific magical material culture, be it non-European or Anglo-European, historical
archaeologists persist in attributing beliefs and practices to a generalized, non-personalized population without questioning how the age, class, or gender of practitioners can affect or be interpreted in the archaeological record.

A review of the available literature on the archaeology of ritual and magic reveals two recurrent and erroneous assumptions embedded in the approach and interpretation of magical depositions in the United States. The first assumption leads archaeologists to immediately associate such finds with African Americans—enslaved and freedmen (Fennell 2000; Leone and Fry 1999; Lewis 2005). The second assumption associates magical finds with African Americans, but attributes the practice to an adoption of anachronistic Anglo-European beliefs (Whitten 1962; Davidson 2004). Davidson (2004:26) in particular fails to account for African provenance when he stresses a non-African origin of perforated coin charm by noting they were “in use in western Europe and especially the British Isles as early as the pre-Christian era.” In his apparent attempt to avoid the first ethnocentric assumption by showing that Anglo-Europeans also historically held magical beliefs, he overstates the connection of perforated coins to British origins. Actually, perforated coin and metal disc charms existed throughout the ancient world pre-dating British use; many African tribes would likely have been aware of them or were using such charms prior to European contact (González-Wippler 2003; Paine 2004). Only Fennell (2007) moves beyond these two assumptions by explicitly confronting such ethnocentric interpretations to consider a third possibility for a magical object—a small clay skull—he uncovered from a late eighteenth-century house in Virginia. In a pluralistically colonized setting, Fennell explores the possibility that the skull may be associated with persons other than African American slaves, and, in fact, concludes rather convincingly that it was probably a German hexerei charm. Too readily associating magical objects with one group reinforces a
perception of the group’s inferiority, backwardness and/or ignorance; attributing them with the objects but crediting the source of the belief to Anglo-Europeans effectively accomplishes the same end. In this case, on the one hand, Anglo-Europeans seemingly have evolved beyond such irrational practices, and on the other hand, African Americans have to adopt Anglo-European beliefs because they presumably lack a rich and complex heritage of belief of their own. In both instances, a Eurocentric bias is subconsciously lurking just below the surface.

Due partly to the increased interest and excavation of African American sites, including slave quarters, cemeteries, residences, and businesses, the preponderance of magical objects addressed by American historical archaeologists derive from these contexts (Klingelhofer 1987; Brown and Cooper 1990; Samford 1996; Stine et al. 1996; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennell 2000, 2007; Bankoff et al. 2001; Brown 2001; DeCorse 2001; Davidson 2004; Dixon 2005). African and African American magical depositions thus far identified usually consist of perforated coins, hoodoo conjure kits, flora and fauna elements, and beads found in threshold and burial contexts. Interpreting African magical material culture has led researchers like Wilkie (1997), Cochran (1999), and Leone and Fry (1999) to view such traditional practices in dialectical terms as empowering, identity-affirming statements as well as agentic behaviors to negotiate personal and class tensions. Wilkie’s work goes furthest in advocating a diachronic understanding of African American traditional and creolized belief systems and their broader social meanings. She alone briefly addresses gender as a revealing factor in interpreting magical assemblages. She notes that for many African groups, women and men represented opposing and dangerous forces that could be mediated through magical administrations (Wilkie 1997:90-91). She particularly cites examples of magic employed by women against men with the acknowledgement that men would retaliate by avoidance or reciprocal magic. Her emphasis on
female magical practice and her observance that virtually all African American magical depositions emerge from household sites (Wilkie 1997:90), implies a stronger association with female empowerment than with male agency, although she is not able to greatly expound upon this suggestion within her brief article. However, Wilkie provides strong encouragement for continued and expanded research of African American magico-religious material culture that should serve as a model for historical archaeologists studying other groups.

American historical archaeologists frequently address culture contact situations and the role material culture plays in cultural identity maintenance, adaptation, or assimilation. Although scholars stress traditional beliefs were integral to identity negotiations in African American, Native American, and Chinese cultures, these publications generally overlook the importance of traditional beliefs in Anglo-European identity constructs. In the seventeenth-century, issues of identity-cultural, spiritual, social, and gender—were explicitly discussed in sermons, broadsides, and legal proceedings (Bercovtich 1975; Bauman 1983; Kamensky 1996, 1997; St. George 1998; Craun 2007). While recognition of Euro-, African-, and Native magical material culture depends upon an understanding of their respective traditional forms, numerous historical archaeological studies on culture contact (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Hardesty 2003; Nassaney 2004; Lightfoot 2006; Fennell 2007) stress the dynamic, reciprocal, and creative exchange and adaption of cultural forms that occur in contact situations. Each also stresses the power of cultures, especially non-dominant ones, to employ resistance strategies that effectively maintain cultural identity. As Loren (2008), Nassaney (2004), Praetzellis and Praetzellis (2001) and Wilkie (1997) illustrate, these strategies might include using elements of the dominant group’s material culture to express entirely different
meanings and beliefs. Thus, the presence of artifacts associated with one culture appropriated for use in magical contexts by another group must be interpreted through the appropriator’s lens.

Once again a closer analysis of social variants, including gender, age, and class in addition to ethnicity, in culture contact interfaces extend our ability to recognize such variables archaeologically and generate more nuanced interpretations of specific human agency at both relative and generalized scales. Although European, African, and Native American magical material culture conform to their relative cultural traditions, within colonizing and cultural contact contexts syncretic or hybrid forms, functions, and meanings should be expected to emerge and converge. As one aspect of protective house magic demarcates the space between the known Self and the alteric Other, understanding how culture contact affected these forms, functions, and meanings provides historical archaeologists with another critical interpretive layer from which to reconstruct the coping and inter-relational strategies of culturally disparate peoples inextricably bound together through irreversible events.

A third interpretative pitfall, and one that is seemingly inherent in the analysis of magically associated artifacts because of their relative or apparent scarcity on any given site and the dearth of direct ethnographic or written documentation concerning such beliefs, results in problems of sample size. Davidson’s (2004) article clearly reveals the difficulty in accurately interpreting magical behaviors, especially when handicapped by a combination of erroneous assumptions and minimal data. Actually, many magical artifacts go unrecognized in the archaeological record, especially the Euro-American record, due largely to erroneous assumptions about the nature of ritual and ritualistic material culture (Walker 1998; Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Aure 2004; Insoll 2004; Peterson 2005). Colin Renfrew (1994) and Renfrew and Bahn (2000) created a criterion model for identifying ritual in archaeological contexts. While
the model explicates sixteen markers, it can be summarized as designating ritual and associated ritual objects as anomalous morphologically, spatially, and temporally and agrees with Turner’s classic observations of formalized ritual behaviors (1969). Renfrew admits that these observations, which were developed as a key for recognizing religious ritual in prehistoric contexts, are not conclusive (Renfrew 1994:51) and have yet to be tested in historic environments or specifically with magical ritual. While these criteria may hold true in some situations both in prehistoric and historic settings, they do not account for cultures that make no distinction between sacred and secular or do not divide magic or ritual from mundane contexts. Likewise, archaeologists must explicitly question their assumptions about what is and is not anomalous as well as their assumptions about the very nature of ritual behavior (Bell 1997; Walker 1998; Insoll 2004).

This question of anomaly sits at the crux of archaeological recognition of magical material culture and often constitutes the major criterion by which magico-ritualistic artifacts are distinguished. However, what appears anomalous in the archaeological record may be the result of various site formation processes (Schiffer 1972, 1987), cultural beliefs, unique individual expression, or merely researcher expectation of what should or should not be found in particular contexts. It is often assumed, as Gazin-Schwartz (2001:267) claims, “that ritual behavior is mysterious, unusual, and inaccessible” and is somehow unknowable to the archaeologist—an attitude reminiscent of processual archaeology prior to the development of cognitive and interpretive archaeology, but one that, unfortunately, still plagues research agendas as is evident from the lacunae of published works that include consideration of folk belief and ritual in their interpretations.
Part of the difficulty in ascertaining the magical or ritualistic nature of artifacts lies in the fact that the objects utilized in such contexts were frequently quotidian utilitarian items as Gazin-Schwartz (2001), Peterson (2005), Walker (1998), Chadwick (2012), and even Renfrew (1994) acknowledge. Their depositions, unless markedly unusual, or as Hodder (1990:222) notes are “odd and...not understood,” are frequently interpreted as the result of standard formation processes (i.e., loss or intentional discard). While some magical depositions are, in fact, enacted through discard behavior such as offerings or supplications tossed into ditches, wells, or rivers (Merrifield 1987; Osborne 2004, Chadwick 2012), many are deliberately placed under floorboards or within walls not as a discard, but as a long term active agent (Merrifield 1987; David and Kramer 2001). Gazin-Schwartz illustrates through her study of everyday ritual in northern Scotland that comparing folklore sources (e.g., proverbs, superstitions, customs, etc.) often reveals a ritualistic explanation for the deposition of mundane objects like scissors, knives, shoes, and bent pins that could otherwise be misinterpreted. To enhance archaeologists’ ability to distinguish between the ordinary and the extraordinary, it is critical that they view their archaeological sites through the eyes of the sites’ builders and inhabitants. This will require a broader knowledge of the import of traditional beliefs and folklore and a keener awareness of the connectivity, what Robert Blair St. George (1998) calls “the poetics of implication,” between the innumerable threads of cultural belief and practice. St. George (1998) challenges historians and archaeologists to extend their research parameters to understand that every behavior, every material manifestation of colonial New England connects or is ‘implicated,’ entangled, and bound together with traditions and beliefs stretching across time and cultures. Alexander et al. (1977: xiii) similarly stress that:

…no pattern is an isolated entity. Each pattern can exist in the world only to the extent that it is supported by other patterns: the larger patterns in
which it is embedded, the patterns of the same size that surround it, and the smaller patterns which are embedded in it.

The same can be said of any historic time and place as no historic context exists in temporal or spatial isolation (Beaudry and George 1987; Yentsch 1991b; King 1996).

Through my work as an editorial advisor for The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), I have analyzed every article published in the Society’s journal, Historical Archaeology, from its beginning in 1967 to the present (almost 1,200 articles). This analysis indicates that American historical archaeologists primarily pose pragmatic research questions concerned with world systems theories of colonization, economics, and industry. This focus generally precludes or marginalizes consideration of ritualistic and magico-religious behaviors as important indicators of cultural worldviews, identity, personal and social relationships, and risk or crisis management strategies, except in the case of non-European sites. As a result, historical archaeology’s treatment of magical material culture has historically created a skewed representation of who historically used magic and why. At the 2011 SHA annual conference a pre-conference workshop was held to discuss the on-going challenge of identification and interpretation of magical material culture. This workshop attracted a veritable who’s-who of historical archaeologists specializing in African American slavery and diaspora studies. Without the interjections by Christopher Fennell and myself, consideration of Anglo-European magical belief and practice would probably not have been discussed at this workshop. The workshop, however, did pave the way for a dedicated symposium on magical material culture presented at the SHA annual conference in 2012. The “Manifestations of Magic: The Archaeology and Material Culture of Magic and Folk Belief” symposium boasted thirteen presenters discussing a range of beliefs and practices. Of the thirteen, nine addressed Anglo-European examples from Britain, Australia, and the United States. The dominate theme of these papers was typological
with the emphasis on intentionally concealed objects, particularly footwear and dried cats, and spanning the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, although my paper on the embeddedness of worldviews in magical practice and Brian Hoggard’s and Timothy Easton’s papers, both on magical practice, did provide theoretical considerations. At the very least, the symposium established magical belief and practice as spatially, temporally, and culturally wide-ranging phenomena potentially relevant to all archaeological contexts. The force of the symposium presenters’ work has subsequently prompted a proposal to dedicate a thematic issue of *Historical Archaeology* to these papers. In addition, the web-editor of the SHA website has, at my request, created a blog forum specifically for discussion and data sharing of information pertinent to the archaeology of magic and ritual. These limited events indicate that a small undercurrent of continual interest in and research of magic as an important aspect of human expression and experience is beginning to make, if not waves, at least ripples in the pond of historical archaeology.

*Gender and Magic in the Archaeological Record*

While the artifactual evidence for Anglo-European magical practice seems elusive, artifacts representing the presence of men and women are assumed plentiful; however, historical archaeologists have a comparatively difficult time in both instances constructing an interpretive model that unambiguously allows them to extrapolate gender from the archaeological record. Relying on the occurrence of male or female related personal items like clothing fasteners or smoking products, or correlating ceramic quality, design, and abundance with gender to determine the presence of men and women at a given site, archaeologists attempt to draw larger conclusions about spatial, temporal, and occupational gendered divisions (Seifert 1991; Yentsch
It does little good in trying to ascertain gender by using pre-established categories devised to solve other types of problems or simply to serve as consistent terminology in the naming of categories. Neither of these widely used taxonomies distinguishes items used by women from those used by men, and neither separates other artifact categories into types that would enable the archaeologist to discern gender in the archaeological record.

In contexts where these domains overlap, are culturally constructed differently than expected, or represent single-sex situations, typical markers prove insufficient for interpreting gender (Johnson 1993; Wurst 2003; Spude 2005). Archaeologist Donna Seifert (1991:1) states, “Women and men do different things; even when they do the same things, they do them differently because of different experiences and values.” Additionally, as Sarah Milledge Nelson (1997:2) discerns, “the meaning and consequences of gender vary, depending on the intersection of gender with other social identities, such as race, class, ethnicity, and age.” Thus, the difficulty of abstracting gender from artifactual evidence is complicated by numerous context specific factors, which must be accounted for prior to interpreting artifacts, features, or behaviors as indicative of gender.

Prevailing archaeological thought assumes women and men have occupied distinguishable activity spaces with women primarily confined to the domestic sphere while men’s activities principally occur outdoors or in public arenas (Wurst 2003:226). Archaeologists assume artifacts representing cooking, cleaning, sewing, childcare, and domestic decoration signal female presence and identity. Male presence, on the other hand, speaks through heavy tools, equipment, and weapons; alcohol and tobacco; and business related articles. These distinctions are valid to a point, but as Milledge Nelson (1997:12-13) states, “linking artifacts
with gender…is a tricky business” and “must be argued separately for each historical case.” In the case of historical archaeology, a preponderance of artifactual data emerges from middens and privies. Since these data generally comprise mixed contexts with no other diagnostic associations with spaces or activities, their gendered attribution remains speculative.

In domestic vernacular architecture, like that of seventeenth-century New England, one or two rooms sufficed for a range of simultaneous, contiguous, and consecutive activities undertaken by men, women, and children (Demos 1970; Ulrich 1982; Karlsen 1987; St. George 1998). To ascertain to what degree and in what particulars these tasks were shared or divided requires more knowledge about social and gender organization than artifacts alone can provide. To extrapolate gender from the multilayered Puritan domestic spaces requires archaeologists to understand spatial organization and control rather than discreet gender-defined activity zones. As Ulrich (1982:38) notes for colonial New England, “Almost any task was suitable for a woman as long as it furthered the good of her family and was acceptable to her husband.” Thus, the scope and association of artifacts equated to gender, even in explicitly patriarchal societies that overtly defined gender roles like seventeenth-century New England, defies simple attribution.

For archaeological gender studies of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, researchers rely heavily upon ceramic and decorative artifactual data as indicative of female presence and influence (Yentsch 1991; Milledge Nelson 1997; Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998; Delle et al. 2000), but these objects and their connection to ideologies of affluence, gentility, and consumerism lack relevance for seventeenth-century Puritan households where simplicity and temperance were generally the norm, at least until the latter part of the century.

If confidently attributing gender to mundane material culture remains problematic, it is hardly surprising that archaeologists already shy of magico-religious interpretations should be
wary of gendered magic practice. Virtually all discussion of Anglo-European magic derives from historical works on witchcraft that meticulously verify the roles of women and men in witchcraft trials—both as victims and accusers. However, there has been no attempt to determine or understand the connection between magic use and gender historically or archaeologically in a broader framework than witchcraft allows (e.g., MacFarlane 1970; Thomas 1971; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974; Karlsen 1987; Godbeer 1992; Willis 1995; Demos 2004; Davies 2007). The resulting publications consequently present magical belief and practice as homogenous and non-gendered. Rather than a comment upon magical belief per se, this monolithic grouping represents the continuing androcentric paradigm characteristic of historical archaeology (Spencer-Wood 2007:31). Since practically all historical archaeological explorations of magic deal with non-European practitioners, this lumping indicates at best a lack of researcher insight, and at worst embedded biases toward the research group (Klingelhofer 1987; Samford 1996; Stine et al. 1996; Leone and Fry 1999; Fennel 2000, 2007; Brown 2001; Davidson 2004; Dixon 2005). Wilkie (1997:92) challenged archaeologists to move beyond this monolithic mindset by asserting, “If we are to successfully study gender within African-American households, we must consider the magical dimension of gender relationships, and likewise, if we are to consider magical practices, then we must consider gender.” Her rally remains unheeded for African-American sites and unacknowledged for Anglo-European contexts. In both instances, insight into the social realities and underlying worldviews informing those social constructs is necessary to the understanding of how, why, and by whom magic was used in the past. To locate gendered popular magic in the archaeological record requires innovative perspectives from which to understand those expressions that are gender distinct and those that appear ambiguous but may
reveal gendered values. One such perspective aligns the common placement of magical objects at physical thresholds with metaphorical sociocultural boundaries.

Most apotropaia was associated with passage points or literal boundaries: doors, gates, windows, hearths, chimneys, roofs, and property lines (Essabal 1961; Evans 1971; Mauss (1972[1902]); Fairbanks 1982; Renfrew 1994; Renfrew and Bahn 2000; Davies and Blecourt 2004; Hoggard 2004; Paine 2004; Davies 2007). St. George (1998) discusses these physical boundaries as symbolic body metaphors asserting that magically protecting house and property thresholds sympathetically and metaphorically implied protecting the physical, spiritual, and political body. Gell (1998) provides additional evidence of gendered threshold apotropaia extending from architecture to clothing through artistic creations in India, Vanuatu, and Ireland that concur with St. George’s body/architecture implication while elucidating yet another source of magical material culture—art—that has received little archaeological attention. The study of apotropaia can contribute a cogent dimension to relational dynamics that has been lacking in archaeological studies focused solely on economics and socio-political themes. The social dialectical dynamics occurring at the metaphorical boundaries of public/private; good/evil; appropriate/inappropriate; and male/female, which are symbolically represented by architectural passage points, provide researchers an alternative perspective from which to interpret gender roles and agency.

Of course these binary constructs imply a simplistic delineation of opposites—an outdated and insupportable dualistic viewpoint characteristic of early structuralist theories. However, some basic tenets of structuralism remain valid. Structuralists, in contrast to Binfordian New Archaeologists, espoused the belief that the human mind was recoverable in artifactual evidence since the mind was responsible for ordering all human activity and creation.
As Leone (1982:742) explains, “the human mind categorizes and divides; creates contrasts and opposition, … it reverses, displaces, and distinguishes between inside and outside, culture and nature, male and female; furthermore, … the mind uses a limited repertoire of contrastive categories like these to think about virtually all reality.” While not denying the human mind as the architect behind all human action guided by processes of structuration, current structuralists understand that these contrastive categories are to a degree socioculturally constituted and exhibit more fluidity and multidimensionality than previously considered.

A conference held in September 2009 at the University of Northampton, UK, on the permeability of household thresholds debated the futility of binary concepts like public and private, arguing that the same space can have fluctuating degrees of private or public access and use dependent upon a number of context specific factors. But situating the binary constructs as scalar terminals allows consideration of the fluidity and permeability of these boundaries and the points of intersection and negotiation they occasion. The multiplicity of intermediary states between the binary terminals offer archaeologists of ritual and magic tantalizing opportunities to understand how women and men magically manipulated their world. Ultimately, attention to the ways in which gender affects these strategic constructs can offer new perspectives on the role of belief in how and why women and men use material culture, organize space, interact with natural and build landscapes, and negotiate social and familial relationships (Tringham 1973; Kent 1990; Lawrence 2000; Barile and Brandon 2004). In general, the archaeology of ritual and magic has made some headway into mainstream historical archaeological discussions and practices in the United States as is evidenced by the work on African American sites and by the recent presentations at the SHA conferences. Archaeological consideration of magical beliefs
and practices, and particularly those of Anglo-Europeans, as an important aspect of the historical past remains, however, principally peripheral to other research agendas.

2.3.3 Archaeological Research on Magic in New England

If the archaeology of ritual and magic has been slow to permeate the field of American historical archaeology, it has been an almost non-existent approach to the time and region most associated with supernatural belief in American history—seventeenth-century New England. Although a plethora of historical documentation (e.g., sermons, court depositions, spell and recipe books, and monographs) survives that describes the use of magical objects by European colonists in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England, no archaeological study of magic from this time and place has been undertaken to date. A mere handful of historical archaeologists have published even short discussions of the widespread belief in and practice of magic in colonial New England (Gramly 1981; Deetz and Deetz 2000:81-100; Baker 2001, 2007; Becker 2005). Other individual archaeologists working in the New England region may be aware of some aspects of magical material culture through their association with these published archaeologists, through reading publications, or by attending the SHA sessions, but they have not contributed in any tangible sense to an archaeology of ritual and magic.

The area of the eastern United States that has garnered the greatest degree of archaeological attention on magic is the Chesapeake region of Maryland and Virginia. Lying just south of the New England area and colonized roughly contemporaneously with the New England colonies, Maryland and Virginia have provided several archaeological sites containing magical material culture—mostly African American (e.g., for Maryland see Painter 1980; Klingelhofer 1987; King 1996; Cochran 1999; Leone and Fry 1999; Luckenbach 2004; Moorehouse 2009; for Virginia see Maillots 1999, 2000; Fennell 2000, 2007; Edwards 2001, 2004; McKitrick 2009).
Additionally, to the west of New England, Pennsylvania has also been the focus of archaeological inquiry into magical practice (Becker 1978, 1980; Alexandrowicz 1986; McCarthy 2001). Most of the evidence of magical belief and practice in New England, including puppets, concealed footwear, and concealed cats has come not from archaeological work or sites, but from historic preservation projects, property demolitions, or private renovation, remodeling, or maintenance jobs (Geisler 2003; Northampton Shoe Museum files 2010; Hoggard personal communication 2010; Evans personal communication 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). These finds are chance occurrences that seldom come to academic attention or find inclusion in archaeological studies. Manning (2012a, 2012b), with a background in both historic preservation and archaeology, is attempting to document and synthesize as many of these finds as possible, regardless of their geographic location or historic era. This endeavor is an important one for the field of the archaeology of ritual and magic, as it establishes that Anglo-European popular magic was indeed practiced in virtually all areas of the United States spanning the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries and provides some examples of the magical material culture used. Regardless of the wealth of evidentiary materials that Manning has accumulated for the northern United States, archaeologists in the New England region have neither reported nor published on popular magic at their sites, with the exception of Gramly (1981), Deetz and Deetz (2000), Baker (2001, 2007) and Becker (2005). With so little attention given to the archaeology of ritual and magic at New England sites, it is hardly surprising that no archaeological project in this region has been undertaken with magic at the core of the research design.

When turning to historical documentation concerning popular belief in colonial New England as a starting point for archaeological investigation, one finds any reference to Anglo-
European (and particularly Puritan) magical beliefs is bound up with explications of the witchcraft trials and becomes subsumed within that framework or focuses on the elite fascination with astrology and occult texts (Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974; Butler 1979; Karlsen 1987; Godbeer 1992; Demos 2004). In order to generate meaningful questions that address the holistic high stress circumstances of seventeenth-century life in colonial New England with particular attention to the implicated role of gender constructs in the practice of magic requires archaeologists to get beyond the historian’s narrow focus on witchcraft. This dissertation seeks to not only fill a current gap in archaeological scholarship through its analysis of gender-related magical use, but to also serve as a seed for the burgeoning field of the archaeology of ritual and magic by stimulating the generation of more divergent research questions and interpretations of Anglo-European material culture associated with high stress environments.

The following chapter will establish the magical worldview and the highly stressful context that constituted daily experience for seventeenth-century Anglo-European New England colonists and inclined them toward belief in and recourse to magical resolutions.
CHAPTER 3: Cultural Context: Seventeenth-Century New England

3.1 Chapter Overview

The trek through the history of colonial New England has been a well and oft-trodden one. Historians of Early America like Daniel Boorstin (1958), Darrett Rutman (1965), Edmund Morgan (1966), John Demos (1970, 1972, 1986, 2004a, 2004b), Kenneth Lockridge (1970, 1981), Jon Butler (1979, 1990), Jonathan Fairbanks (1982), Jack Greene (1984, 1991), David Hall (1989, 1991), Mary Beth Norton (1996), Robert Blair St. George (1998), and Nathaniel Philbrick (2006) in company with innumerable others provide thorough examinations of the English conditions and events that precipitated the immigration of tens of thousands of men, women, and children to the northeastern shores of North America in the seventeenth century. Their scholarship explores the transformative processes that converted the “English” into New Englanders. Numerous other historians of Early America have focused on religion and witchcraft, particularly the most infamous of colonial New England events, the Salem witch trials, to attempt an understanding of the sociopolitical power dynamics enacted through identification and punishment of those perceived to be threats to the communities’ religious, social, and political interests (Starkey 1963; Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1972, 1974, 1977; Weisman 1984; Karlsen 1987; Hall 1989, 1991; Godbeer 1992, 2005; Briggs 1996; Reis 1997; Demos 2004a; Baker 2007). My intent here is not to reiterate what these authors have so comprehensively discussed, but rather to establish the high stress context in which New England immigrants found themselves by considering factors such as environment, culture contact, community construction, and gender role expectation and fulfillment. I propose that the challenges associated with these factors, in conjunction with the prevailing supernatural worldview of the seventeenth-century, motivated New Englanders to
employ traditional magical practices as mediating strategies to lessen their fears toward an unfamiliar geographical and sociopolitical landscape.

The northern colonies comprising New England, predominantly settled in the seventeenth-century by immigrant Puritan communities seeking relief from religious persecution in England, offer a unique context for the inceptive archaeological study of Anglo-American magical belief. Beginning as early as 1620, but concentrated in the great migration of 1630 to 1641, Puritan settlers came to the northern Atlantic American coast to establish their biblical “City Upon a Hill,” their own spiritual and civic kingdom on earth. Unlike their more economically motivated neighbors to the south in the Middle and Chesapeake colonies, New England colonists initially sought opportunities to distance themselves as much as possible from participation in the broader secular world (Philbrick 2006). Puritan immigrants with their insular and exclusive community policies, emphasis upon self-sufficiency, and explicit spiritual worldview attempted to create a circumscribed world based on their literal translation of the Bible while escaping what they saw as the evils and corruption of the world they left behind in England (Lockridge 1981).

What particularly situates Puritan New England as a good subject for an archaeological study of popular magic is not that Puritans were unique in their belief in witches, demons, ghosts, and fairies or their acceptance that magic was both wielded by these creatures and was available to be used against them. On the contrary, Kittredge (1972), in the most comprehensive explication of English magic and witchcraft belief published to date, goes to great lengths to document the magical mindset of all seventeenth-century Anglo and European peoples (not just Puritans), including the educated and the everyday masses. Speaking specifically of New England Puritans, Hall (1991:8) notes, “for the colonists as for their European contemporaries,
the natural forces at work in the everyday world were overlain by and interwoven with moral, spiritual, and supernatural forces.” This observation holds true for colonists throughout the Middle, Chesapeake, and Southern colonies as well (Drake 1869; Thomas 1971; Demos 1972, 2004a; Kittredge 1972; Bourne 1977[1725]; Butler 1979; Hall 1991; Willis 1995; Ekirch 2005; Davies 2007). Rather, New England’s primacy for a nascent study of Anglo-American magical material culture is propelled by the fact that only in the Puritan colonies does history record an acute concentration and intensity of legal action against and severe punishment for maleficent magical practice (Taylor 1908; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1972, 1974, 1977; Koehler 1980; Karlsen 1987; Hall 1991; Demos 2004a). Karlsen’s (1987:14) study located 344 witchcraft accusations and 35 executions in New England between 1620 and 1725. No executions for witchcraft occurred in the Middle and Chesapeake colonies, although there were formal accusations in Virginia, Maryland, New York, and North Carolina (Fischer 1989; Norton 1987). Certainly, not all magical practice directly relates to witchcraft, but occasions of witchcraft prosecution provide the most abundant source of historical documentation describing such practices.

The intent of this chapter is to provide an historical background of early seventeenth-century New England and its English colonial immigrants as a backdrop to an archaeological study of gendered, popular magic in this context. The most salient goal of this chapter is to establish the inherently metaphysical nature of the Puritan worldview. Puritans sought to understand every cause and effect, every misfortune and reward, and every decision and behavior through a supernatural lens. This framework included absolute belief in God’s providence, or attribution to God for everything from illness to storms (Demos 1972, 2004a; Hall 1991; Kittredge 1972; Thomas 1971). Additionally, it comprised the idea of wonder. Wonder, as Hall (1991:8) explains entailed any “unexpected event….[and] drew on pre-Christian notions
of nature as animate, or as charged with spirits.” In other words, the Puritan worldview maintained pre-Christian and medieval conceptualizations of the universe as a multidimensional construct inhabited and powered by a host of supernatural forces from the natural magic of plants and minerals to the divine power of God to the demonic maleficium of the Devil and his minions. The implication of wonder and providence provided the schematic structure through which Puritans could conceive of an influential interrelationship between spiritual and physical forms (Hall 1991).

The second focus of this chapter is to situate the Puritans’ supernatural worldview in New England and begin to understand how popular magical practice fits in this context. To do so requires consideration of the particular hardships that challenged the Puritan immigrants as they struggled to create their New Jerusalem. Some of these challenges were environmental and included coping with and adapting to: the dangers of wild frontiers; new climatic and topographical unknowns; and unfamiliar subsistence practices. Contact and interaction with the indigenous peoples of Northeastern America posed another critical challenge for the newly arrived Puritan.

A further trial facing the new colonists entailed the actual establishment of their new order. Certainly they brought with them from England traditional ideas and knowledge about the structure of society, towns, government, and religious community; yet, as Zuckerman (1977:194) observes:

… in their endeavors to defend…traditional insularity, they shattered the continuity with the past that was a hallmark of the English localism they sought to conserve. For the communities which could be constructed on a wilderness coast were wholly new communities, without indigenous customs, without elders who had lived there all their lives, without ancient burying grounds or even any old buildings. Traditional ends had therefore to be achieved under novel circumstances by novel means.
In addition to attempting to reconstruct English ways upon a primal and foreign land, they explicitly endeavored to recast those English ways into their own idealized vision of a pure and proper civilization. This vision necessitated overt explication of social and spiritual roles, identities, and relationships in a startlingly new context. The tensions occasioned by the construction and negotiation of these roles, identities, and relationships often found expression through supernatural channels. These expressions included recourse to cunning folk for magical justice or protection, witchcraft prosecutions to resolve sociopolitical conflicts, and vilification of popular magic to reinforce official religious authority (Mather 1692a, 1692b; Hale 1697; Hall 1984, 1989, 1991; Godbeer 1992). Together they demonstrate the pervasiveness of supernaturally-based difficulties impeding the successful realization of the Puritans’ New World Order.

The reason for focusing upon the challenges Puritan colonists confronted stems from historically documented accounts of English popular magic practice and witchcraft accusations arising from high stress and social conflict situations (Halliday 1910; Starkey 1963[1949]; Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1972, 1974, 1977; Weisman 1984; Karlsen 1987; Hall 1989, 1991; Godbeer 1992, 2005; Willis 1995; Briggs 1996; Kamensky 1997; Reis 1997; Demos 2004a; Ekirch 2005; Bailey 2007; Baker 2007; Davies 2007; Bever 2008). While not advocating that all magical belief and use directly functioned as risk management or conflict resolution strategies, primary evidence supports these as two important functions of magical practice and belief for colonial Puritans. Therefore, an examination of the manifestation of popular magic and its variations in a transplanted context under the extreme conditions encountered by Puritan colonists in New England should provide at least one
comparative dataset from which to understand the use and transformation of traditional ideology in colonial environments.

The third, and ultimately the distinguishing perspective of this study over any other historical or archaeological work, concerns the relationship between gender and magic. Many historical studies on witchcraft in Old and New England note the significant gender differences in numbers of accusations and severity of punishments. Approximately four times more women than men were formally accused of witchcraft; women were more likely to be convicted than men; women more often received the harshest punishment; and most men accused of witchcraft were in some way intimately related to an accused female “witch” (Karlsen 1987; Hall 1991; Willis 1995; Briggs 1996; Reis 1997; Demos 2004a; Davies 2007; Bever 2008). To warn against too simplistic a correlation between women and witchcraft, Hall (1991:7) asserts that witch-hunting in New England was gender-related, not gender specific. Whatever the relevant factors, the response of the colonists in seventeenth-century New England, like the response of Europeans in general, was to assume that women were particularly drawn to witchcraft and the devil.

What goes unexamined is repeated evidence of the gender-relatedness (or gender specificity?) of magical or countermagical practice itself among those accused of witchcraft and those official practitioners known as cunning folk. Davies’ (2007) look at cunning folk in England revealed that these professional practitioners were as likely to be men as women. However, he did not consider the possibility that there might be a gendered dimension to the clientele, their concerns, or the types of magical advice or instruction they were given. It is also probable that women and men by-passed these cunning folk altogether. Rather they sought out, constructed, and employed gendered magical material culture for themselves, for as Clark (1997:472) stresses, “while experts in healing, divination, counter-witchcraft, and so on, existed in most communities, the
techniques they employed, as well as the assumptions they relied on, were, in principle, accessible to all.” Would a comparison of these actual practices to witchcraft accusations show a similarly disproportionate number of women actively utilizing magic/countermagic; or would such a comparison reveal a more equitable distribution of magic/countermagic practice across genders like Davies’ study of cunning folk suggests? In either case, the question of what signifies gender-related or gender specific magical/countermagical practices and what these differences relate about gender roles, identity, and social relationships has, until now, not been asked.

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment supposedly represented a dawning of rational thought that vanquished belief in magic and superstition from the Anglo and European worlds (Thomas 1971; Tambiah 1990; Glucklich 1997; Davies 1999, 2007; Bailey 2007). However, Bailey notes the idea of a ‘disenchanted’ world was more a construct of scientifically-minded seventeenth- and eighteenth-century elites than a paradigm shift in popular worldview (Bailey 2007:215). Nevertheless, this Enlightenment construct has produced the modern Western general perception that belief in magic comprised an historical episode out of which reason, science, and technology have arisen to ‘correct’ and replace naïve cosmologies espousing intersecting spheres of visible and invisible forces or agents. To undertake an archaeological study of the seventeenth century requires researchers to recognize this Enlightenment fallacy and accept the pervasive magical mindset of the Anglo-European populace of this time period.

This chapter will first provide insight into the worldview and magical mindset of seventeenth-century New England Anglo colonists with examples of how those beliefs were embedded within magical practices that can be seen expressed materially in the archaeological
record. After establishing the palpability and immediacy of the supernatural for Anglo-Europeans of this period, the succeeding section surveys the particular circumstances of the Puritan colonial immigrants by considering their origins, motivations, and expectations, and the tribulations they encountered that could occasion the recourse to magical practice for mitigation. The final section of this chapter turns to an examination of the rigid gender constructs that established and dictated the acceptable parameters of behavior and activities for women and men, emphasizing the highly stressful circumstances occasioned by these paradigms.

3.2 Worldview and Magical Mindset

Labaree (1972:125) succinctly paints a picture of the sparse material but rich ideological baggage carried by seventeenth-century colonists on long, cramped, and dangerous journeys to a New World:

The early immigrants to America brought with them few of their cherished possessions from the Old World, aside from a trunk or two of clothes and perhaps some household utensils. But these first colonists, and all who followed in their footsteps, brought intangible possessions as well—their ideas and customs—in short, their culture.

These ideas and customs included a deeply embedded metaphysical worldview in which the spiritual worlds of God, the Devil, and nature interfaced with the daily workings of mortal humans. As Goodwin et al. (1995:43) assert, “Knowing the logic by which a past culture operated provides a basis for projections about what their members were likely to do in a given situation.” Chadwick (2012:302) adds that it is “through material metaphors and processes of ritualization, [that] everyday objects were incorporated into acts of cosmological and spiritual meaning.” A critical first step, then, in recognizing magical material culture involves understanding the embeddedness of worldviews, particularly aspects of cosmology, in the use and pattern of magical material culture as the cultural logic behind and informing magical belief.
To reach this understanding requires a consideration of what worldview and cosmology actually entail. A comprehensive and concise definition for worldview comes from Stein and Stein’s (2005:31) *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. They define worldview as:

…the way in which societies perceive and interpret their reality…Their worldview provides them with an understanding of how their world works; it forms the template for thought and behavior; and it provides them with a basic understanding of the origin and nature of humankind and their relationship to the world about them.

In other words, one’s worldview not only establishes the “facts” of the construct of this empirical world, but also ideas and attitudes about the unseen aspects of life—such as time, direction, spirits and spiritual realms. One’s worldview establishes values and determines what is right, appropriate, and normal providing a shared language of concepts and symbols. (See Redfield (1952) for a further discussion of worldview.) Biblical scholar, Sigmund Mowinckel (2012[1953]) coined the term ‘magical worldview,’ noting that magic is not a religion in itself, but is rather a conceptual framework (i.e., a worldview) that provides “a particular way to understand things and their mutual connectedness.” Although worldview is not synonymous with religion, in societies with highly structured religious institutions, like seventeenth-century Anglo-European Christianity, these ideas are embedded within their religious doctrines and permeate their behavioral and material expressions.

Implicated within worldview is a group’s cosmology, or beliefs about the structure and principles of the universe and the place of humans, animals, plants, and supernatural beings within that cosmic order. One’s worldview stipulates what kind of relationships and interactions can exist amongst the elements of the cosmos (Redfield 1952; Glazier 1997; Demos 2004; Stein and Stein 2005; Mowinckel 2012[1953]). Worldview informs cultural ideas about the right way
to be in the world, and by extension how people physically, materially, and ideologically enact their cosmology through their daily lives.

One aspect of cosmology concerns the structure, sometimes referred to as the cosmic architecture, of the universe (Willis 1993). This structure entails the mathematical or numeric divisions that define physical and metaphysical aspects of reality and conceptualizations of space, time, and directionality. The consistency of these divisions across all domains of perception, thought, and belief provide a sense of cosmic interrelatedness and completeness. Thomas (1971:265) further explicates this interrelationship by stating that, “The cosmos was an organic unity in which every part bore a sympathetic relationship to the rest.” This organic unity found expression in complex interplay of religion and astrology. For the early English immigrants to New England, cosmological beliefs were explicitly expressed through the doctrine of Calvinist and other Reformationist theologies that espoused a divine grand design in which absolutely every component of the world and every occurrence of nature or mankind were created and directed by God (Thomas 1971; Cohen 1986; Rumsey 1986). Rumsey (1986:7) states that, “Luck, chance, fortune or fate did not exist is such a world;” therefore, since “the will of God was inherent in all things” (Rumsey 1986:8), life contained no random or meaningless events or correspondences (Demos 1972; 2004a; Kittredge 1972; Hall 1989). Most eminent British physicians and herbalists of the seventeenth century (e.g., Nicholas Culpeper, Simon Forman, and William Lilly) supported this grand design idea by advocating a direct relationship between all earthly life and the celestial bodies, which, of course, were both created by God and were conceived to be the heavenly realm, thus validating the use of horoscopes and other astrological computations and divinations as reliable procedures in everything from medical treatment to finding lost goods to divining the future (Butler 1990:22). From this understanding
of the implication of heaven and astrology, it makes sense that “as Essex Puritan, Thomas Pickering said, men and women sought out occult practitioners to “resolve, direct, and helpe” them to regain “a harmonious relationship with the universe and heal their afflictions” (Butler 1990:22). Correlating the symbolic elements of numerological associations and directional connotations found in the Bible to those events of divine providence experienced or witnessed in everyday life, reinforced both the veracity of a cosmos omnipotently ruled and directed by divine authority as well as the validity and efficacy of those structural symbolic elements (Thomas 1971).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter or dissertation to discuss every possible symbolic element embedded within Christian doctrine (Wile 1934; Farbridge 1970; Metzger and Coogan 1993; Schimmel 1993; Ryken et al. 1998), so as a primer to this complex subject and for the purposes of illustration this section focuses on numerology. To reiterate the point of implication, however, it will conclude with a brief connection between numerology and directionality and the importance each may play in the understanding of magical material culture in archaeological contexts.

Numerology and Number Symbolism

Islamic cultural historian Annamarie Schimmel’s (1993) research into the symbolic and magical associations of numbers and number systems throughout Eastern and Western traditions provides an illuminating introduction to the various ways numbers and number systems operate in different cultures. Throughout the millennia, Classical, Islamic, Hebraic, and Christian philosophers, theologians, mystics, alchemists, mathematicians, and scientists have contemplated the mystery, meaning, and influence of numbers (Farbridge 1970; Schimmel 1993). Included among the countless tracts written upon the subject are the many European Christian treatises
appearing in the 16th and 17th centuries (Schimmel 1993; Davies 2009). Many of these scholarly works include consideration of magical number figures like the quinary sator-rotas palindrome square, which was usually inscribed as (Fennell 2007:107; Davies 2009:13):

```
SATOR
AREPO
TENET
OPERA
ROTAS
```

Although the exact meaning of this palindrome, which dates to at least ancient Pompeii, is still debated, one translation reveals “that [since] the letters were also reformulated to spell PATER NOSTER twice, [and] arranged in the form of a cross, might suggest it was of Christian origin” (Davies 2009:13). Another translation gives the charm more affective power and implies a more direct and agentic relationship between individuals and the cosmos. Fennell (2007:107) notes that the palindrome “translates roughly as ‘the sower Arepo holds steady the wheels,’ thus invoking a creative force that controls the wheels of the cosmos and the vicissitudes of fortune.”

Similarly, the magical word spell ‘abracadabra’ is not only required to be written triangularly (Aubrey 1670:87), but the total number of letters it contains equals 66, illustrating the multilayered embeddedness of magically potent numbers; in this case the number three. The abracadabra spell cited by Aubrey was effective against ague, if as he recommends, one “write[s] this following spell in parchment, and wear it about your neck. It must be writ triangularly:”

```
ABRACADABRA
ABRACADABR
ABRACADAB
ABRACADA
ABRACAD
ABRACA
ABRAC
ABRA
ABR
AB
A
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[109]
Both the sator-rotas and abracadabra figures appear frequently in written and inscribed magical charms (Milne 2007).

Other numerological ideas discussed in these magical treatises concerned the seemingly mystical nature of particular numbers like the number *nine*, whose multiples always have *nine* as the sum of their digits (e.g., \(4 \times 9 = 36\) (\(3 + 6 = 9\)); \(147 \times 9 = 1323\) (\(1 + 3 + 2 + 3 = 9\)). One common aspect across cultures, Schimmel notes, concerns a metaphysical power associated with or believed to be inherent within particular numbers. According to Schimmel (1993:10):

> numbers have been attributed with special, secret powers that make them fitting for magical conjurations and, of course, for astrological prognostications. Even the “high” religions recognize the religious importance of certain numbers and their mystical character. …In magic...the correct use of numbers plays an immense role, for each number is seen in its power-field and in its cosmic connections.

In the Western tradition, the power of numbers derives from ideas traceable at least to the Pythagoreans and Plato and further developed by the Neoplatonists and Gnostics (Farbridge 1970; Schimmel 1993; Ryken et al 1998). These ideas espouse three basic concepts that can be seen underlying numerological constructs in seventeenth-century Christian thought (Schimmel 1993:16):

1. Numbers influence the character of things that are ordered by them.
2. Thus, the number becomes the mediator between the Divine and the created world.
3. If one performs operations with numbers, these operations also work upon the things connected with the numbers used.

The first and third of the above ideas clearly reiterate the sympathetic association between numbers and objects, a basic and universal element in magical thought and operation (Thomas 1971; Frazer 1996 [1890]).
Every number has its particular symbolic meaning and/or power, which may be enhanced or expressed through sums or multiples (Farbridge 1970; Metzger and Coogan 1993). This can be demonstrated by analyzing the number *seven*, which represents perfection, but as a sum of *three* (the divine) and *four* (earthly directions and seasonality), that sense of perfection takes on a deeper nuance of totality, unity, and divine design. Of course, *seven* could also be construed as the sum of *two* (duality, division, polarity) and *five* (interrelationship between human and divine expressed in the pentagram and discussed below), which suggests a re-membering of the sundering of divine unity that occurred at the time of creation and that set humans apart from the godhead (Cohen 1986). Multiples of a number increase its influence exponentially, which is seen especially in the number *nine* being *three* times *three* and considered one of the most powerful of all numbers in cultural and religious systems worldwide (Farbridge 1970; Metzger and Coogan 1993; Schimmel 1993). Regardless of the multiple permutations and meaningful combinations abstractable from numbers, within the Christian tradition of seventeenth-century English colonists three numbers seem to have wielded the greatest symbolic meaning and magical power: *three* (ternary/triad), *five* (quinary/quintet), and *seven* (septenary/heptad) (Woodfin 1942; Farbridge 1970; Metzger and Coogan 1993; Schimmel 1993; Ryken et al 1998).

The following sections will examine the Christian meanings of the numbers *three*, *five*, and *seven* and their uses in magical charms, remedies, and counter-witchcraft magic using a variety of seventeenth-century source documents and artifactual evidence from Britain and Colonial America to demonstrate the correlation between cosmological worldviews, numbers, and magic.

*Ternary*
Christian cosmology espouses a tripartite cosmos divided into two supernatural realms (heaven and hell) and one mortal world sandwiched between. The vertical hierarchical arrangement of these three realms also has implications for understanding the significance and meaning of vertical and horizontal placement and association, which will be discussed in relationship to numerology at the conclusion of this section. The tripartite structure of the cosmos repeats in the triune godhead of Father-Son-Holy Ghost (Figure 3.1)—a construct that serves as the numerical model as well as the source of supernatural power underlying magical charms (Thomas 1971).

**FIGURE 3.1.** Christian Trinity. Woodcut from a Book of Hours, Paris, 1524.

Numerous magical written and spoken charms dating from antiquity to the nineteenth century require the repetition of phrases or actions three times (or multiples of 3—usually 6, 9, 12, 15, and 21) and often include an invocation of the Trinity or other biblical figures. Testimonies of suspected bewitchment or demonic temptation frequently claim three visitations,
seductive attempts, or days elapsing during which the events transpired (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977; Burr 2002). An example of this correlation of time with a ternary construct comes from Cotton Mather’s (1692a:261,265) “A Brand Pluckt out of the Burning,” which is an account of the sufferings of the apparently bewitched Mercy Short of New Hampshire that states, “after what was little short of an Entire and a Total Fast for about Nine Dayes together, in those miseries, at length she gained about Three Dayes Remission” and then again later “Shee having obtained a liberty of eating for three dyaes after a fast of nine days, was immediately compelle unto another fast, which lasted for about fifteen days together.”

Cotton Mather (1692b:142-159) in his treatise On Witchcraft, reminds readers of the Devil’s three temptations of Jesus, which would certainly have been the model for the seventeenth-century faithful describing their struggles against Satan’s minions. Likewise, it must be remembered that Jesus’ resurrection occurs on the third day, after which he appeared three times to his disciples. This idea of restoration through Christ from the grip of bewitchment would have been an internalized belief for Puritans; thus, incorporating the numerical correlate of three days to recovery or demise is culturally logical in Christian thought. The Bible, of course, literally overflows with triads (Metzger and Coogan 1993; Schimmel 1993; Ryken et al. 1998), a motif not lost on those who endeavored to live their lives as literally by the Holy Book as possible.

The use of the number three is well documented in written charms, magical medicinal cures, and magical material culture. The following few examples abstracted from scores of similar charms and cures illustrate the widespread and apparently essential inclusion of ternary elements as the efficacious catalyst in magical work:

Ady Candles in the Dark (1655) cited in Brand (1888:749-750)
“An old woman in Essex, who was living in my time…every night she lay down to sleep she charmed her bed, saying:
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on’
“This would she repeat three times.”

“Another old woman came into an house at a time when as the maid was churning of butter, and having labored long and could not make her butter come, the old woman told the maid what was to be done…they used a charm to be said over it, whilst yet it was in beating, and it would come straightways, and that was this:
“Come butter come,
Peter stands at the Gate
Waiting for a butter’d cake,
Come butter come.”
Come butter come,
“This, said the old woman, being said three times, will make your butter come.”

John Aubrey (1670:87):

To cure the Tooth-Ach:
“Mars, hur, abursa, aburse”
Jesu Christ for Mary’s sake,
Take away this Tooth-Ach.”
Write the words three times; and as you say the words, let the party burn on paper, then another, and then the last. He says, he saw it experimented, and the party “immediately cured.”

John Aubrey’s (1686:12):

When I was a boy a charme was used for (I think) keeping away evill spirits: which was to say thrice in a breath,
Three blew Beanes in a blew bladder,
Rattle, bladder, rattle.

For magical material culture, one of the most common occurrences of ternary elements appears in or associated with witch bottles, devices used to identify and retaliate against a suspected witch. Although witch bottle forms and contents vary (see the witch bottle chart, Table 5.8), (Blagrave 1682; Merrifield 1955, 1987; Hoggard 2004; Becker 2005; Manning
2012a, 2012b) they virtually always incorporate a ternary component as is illustrated in Blagrave’s (1682:154) instructions from *Introduction to Astrology* on two ways to identify a witch:

…stop the urine of the Patient close up in a bottle, and put into it three nails, pins or needles, with a little white salt, keeping the urine always warm: if you let it remain long in the bottle it will endanger the witch’s life.

In the same source, Blagrave provides an alternative method for countering bewitchment using horseshoes that incorporates the ternary component as the magical catalyst:

…get two new horseshoes, heat one of them red hot, and quench him in the patients urine, then immediately nail him on the inside of the threshold of the door with three nails, the heel upwards: then having the patients urine set it over the fire, and set a trivet over it, put into it three horsenails, and a little white salt: Then heat the other horseshoe red hot, and quench him several times in the urine, and so let it boil and waste until all be consumed; do this three times.

**FIGURE 3.2.** Gravestone of Sara Safford 1712, Merrimac Valley, MA.

Archaeologically, triads and multiples of threes manifest not only in witch bottle contents or horseshoe nails, but are also frequently represented through symbolic figures or images such
as in the number of petals on apotropaic (magically protective) daisy wheels (also called hexafoils), triplicate intersecting circles, and triangles found inscribed near structural thresholds like doors and windows, on mile or boundary markers, and on gravestones (Figure 3.2) (Ludwig 1966; Wasserman 1972; Jacobs 1973; Kull 1975; Duval and Rigby 1978; Bouchard 1991; Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Gage and Gage 2003).

Other apotropaic markings, like the circles noted by researcher Timothy Easton (1999a, 1999b), occur in triplicate on hearthstones, doorstones, and gravestones and burned on rafters. Lloyd et al.’s (2001) examination of tear-drop shaped burn marks on doors, rafters, and hearths mentions “multiple groupings” but does not specify the actual number, an oversight not uncommon even for those researchers specifically studying evidence of magical belief and practice. Paying closer attention to the number of marks will potentially yield more examples of magically associated numbers and objects. Additionally, triangles, the geometric triad, can be found repeatedly on hearth lintel supports called witch posts (Figure 3.3), gravestones, doorstones, and mile markers (Gage and Gage 2003).

That the number three was, in fact, used magically is reinforced by Robert Calef’s (1700:317) admonition in using it with such intent when he warns, “…I must earnestly Intreat all my readers to beware of any superstitious conceits upon the Number Three....;” however, he continues by admitting he has witnessed healing from bewitchment associated with three fasts and three days of recovery. The plethora of charms, invocations, and material examples utilizing the number three or its multiples could easily fill an entire volume. It would be misleading to imply, however, that this particular number held a monopoly on magico-spiritual importance.

Quinary

As noted, each number has its own meaning, yet many are implicated with others in ways other than as sums or multiples. The number five is one such case. Although the number five has its own biblical associations, the most common quinary-based symbol in seventeenth-century Anglo-American society was the pentagram or pentangle—a figure comprised of three triangles—an observation certainly not lost on the devout Christian. When the human form and the pentangle were overlain, a natural relationship was perceived, which is reiterated in humans having five fingers per hand, five toes per foot, and five senses (Figure 3.4).

FIGURE 3.4. Pentagram and Pentangle of Solomon.
These ideas find explicit expression in John Aubrey’s *Remains of Gentilism and Judaism* (1687:51):

This figure of three triangles intersected and made of five lines, is called the pentangle of Solomon, and when it is delineated on the body of a man, it is pretended to touch and point out the five places wherein our Saviour was wounded. And therefore there was an old superstitious conceit that this figure was a *fuga Daemonum*, the Devils were afraid of it.

According to Shuffelton’s (2008:36) research on biblical numbers, there was understood to be a correspondence:

…between the five wounds of Christ (in the hands, feet, and side), the five senses in which he was afflicted, and the five senses (or “wits”) through which mankind can be tempted. The series of fives applied to the five-pointed star on Gawain’s shield in *Sir Gawain in the Green Knight* suggests how such correspondences could be used as a kind of talismanic protection, providing both a key to understanding the hidden connections of universal order and to overcoming the world’s dangers.

Numerous charms use the association of Christ, suffering, and the number five with healing magic. An example from Reginald Scot (1584:141) illustrates such a charm:

There must be commended to some poore begger the saient of five Pater nesters, and five Aves, the first to be said in the name of the partie possessed, or bewitched; for that Christ was led into the garden; secondlie, for that Christ did sweat both water and bloud; thirdlie, for that Christ was condemned; fourthlie, for that he was crucified guiltless; and fift lie, for that he suffered to take awaie our sinnes.

As noted at the beginning of this section, cosmological understanding required a consistency of ideas and associations across all domains of perception, thought, and belief to provide a sense of cosmic interrelatedness and completeness. An instance of this interconnectedness finds expression in the Doctrine of Signatures (Coles 1656:85; Culpeper 1814[1692]: v-vi) that proposes that all God’s plants have some physical attribute identifying them with their uses or the diseases they are meant to treat. Leighton (1970:87) provides some examples of this sympathetic association as it relates to disease:
God was thought to have left little clues in the leaves of the plant, or its flowers or roots or juice as to the disease or the organ for which it was intended, as see liverwort’s leaf-shape and the spots on the leaves of lungwort, poppies for hemorrhages and agrimony for jaundice, the root of mandrake for sterility, birthwort for diseases of the uterus, and so on.

This same Doctrine of Signatures found application in identifying magically powerful plants. One in particular was directly related to the number five and the pentangle. The rowan tree or mountain ash (Sorbus aucuparia) was believed to be a powerfully protective agent against witchcraft (Jones 1995; Paterson 1996; Gifford 2000) and was frequently planted at the four corners of domestic structures or in the yard, an indicator useful for archaeologists locating a site as well as evidence of magical practice and belief (Gazin-Schwartz 2001:273). The signature that marks this tree as inherently protective is the pentagram on the base of each fiery red berry it bears (Figure 3.5).

FIGURE 3.5. Rowan berry pentagrams. Photo by author.
Like the ternary elements found in witch bottles and incised symbols, tangible quinary magical forms can be seen in the archaeological record. In addition to the rowan berry pentagrams, other quinary forms may manifest as carved five-petalled rosettes on gravestones, as quintet grouping of objects or words, or as pentangle or pentagon designs in or on architectural or other feature components and artifacts. The latter are exemplified in a pentagonal pit containing five (or possibly more) headless chickens discovered in historic London Town, Maryland by Al Luckenbach (2004) and a concealed bottle inscribed on one side with a pentagram and located in the soffit of the Raitt Homestead Farm Museum in Eliot, Maine (Manning 2012a, 2012b).

While apparently not as common (or at least not as recognized by researchers) as ternary elements in magical usage, quinary symbolism still possessed compelling associations with divine power that found expression in magical practice.

*Septenary*

The most common biblical number, *seven*, occurs over 500 times throughout the Bible, and according to Ryken et al. (1998:774), “Of the numbers that carry symbolic meaning in biblical usage, seven is the most important.” Perceived as the perfect number of God, it combines the divine trinity with the earthly quaternion, and it represents the six days of creation and one day of holy rest (Farbridge 1970; Metzger and Coogan 1993; Ryken et al. 1998). As the framework for creation, it underlies all notions of cosmic structure and is, therefore, implicated in all other aspects of order. Most directly related to this divine order and creative construct is the seven-day week, one day of which is sacred. This seventh day, or Sabbath, signals a crucial differentiation from the other six (Ryken et al. 1998:775). Associating this connotation of exceptionality and divine power with a seventh occurrence could potentially manifest in magical practices.
The most common use of the sevens found in magical belief seems to be the power inherent in seventh sons of seventh sons or seventh daughters of seventh daughters to affect cures, conjure spirits, or foretell the future (Leach 1950:999; Opie and Tatem 1989:346-347). It appears to signify an ultimate ‘completeness’ pregnant with creative or generative potential. From this perspective, frequency of the number seven in alchemical pursuits can be understood as representing the creative, transformative source of the philosopher’s stone that was believed to convert base metals into gold, cure all diseases, and indefinitely prolong human life (Pettigrew 1844).

The number seven does appear occasionally in folklore sources; for example, Kittredge (1972:167) notes a countercharm for unbewitching butter churns by boiling butter, milk, seven needles and nine pins and pouring the mixture into a churn. Ironically, although seven occurs more frequently in Holy Scripture than any other number and has an especially powerful spiritual association, there has been no reported observance of its use in archaeological contexts. This omission may be more indicative of the lack of researcher knowledge and attention concerning the importance and meaning of numbers than of an actual absence of septenary components in magical material culture. Heptad and quintet numerical symbols may be so hyperobtrusive, so blatantly obvious, that archaeologists have simply not registered such patterns as indicative of purposeful and meaningful behavior. Reanalyzing both the contexts and attributes of previously interpreted magically associated finds may reveal overlooked quinary and septenary aspects.

While this section has focused on numerology as an illustrative example of the magical mindset of seventeenth-century Anglo-European Christians, as mentioned at the beginning, other cosmological constructs dealing with orientation and implicated with numerological representations would also likely be integrated into magical practice and potentially useful for
archaeologically identifying such practice. One of these constructs is the vertical hierarchy of the cosmos with the divine realm at the zenith, the human world occupying the middle zone, and the demonic spirit world situated in the lowest depths. This hierarchy found explicit expression in not only spatial order, but also in the triune inter-relational order of God, Human, and Nature (which included the demonic spirit world). This order in turn established and reiterated analogous political, social, and familial hierarchies (Norton 1996; St. George 1998). Uprightness and its correlate ‘highness,’ corresponded to the godly, whereas ‘lowness’ both symbolized and was literally the antithesis of the divine and rightness (Calvert 1992; St. George 1998). In Calvert’s (1992:32-33) examination of childrearing, she explains how the importance of verticality was of paramount concern:

American colonists regarded crawling as a demeaning, animalistic form of locomotion beneath the dignity of any human being. Moving about on all fours was fit only for beasts, savages, wild men, the insane, and the subjugated as a token of their subjection….Western culture inculcated a very powerful symbolic language of the hierarchy of things, from Hell below to Heaven above, from the crawling of beasts to the marching of kings.

This vertical association had a lateral correspondence as well: up (or high/correctness) correlated to the direction right and a forward orientation, while down (or low/incorrectness) correlated to left and a rearward orientation. It should be no surprise that the Latin term for left is sinister, which underscores the negative connotation attributed to left-ness and its other associations of down and behind (Russell 1984:71). Additionally, the positive alignments were equated with men and the negative ones with women (Needham 1973; Wile 1934). Again, these associations of right with men and godliness find reiteration throughout the Bible. Wile’s (1934:339-340) in-depth analysis of right and left in cultural and religious usage states concerning the Bible, “In no instance is the left hand given a position of honor, superiority or
righteousness.” Further, he breaks down every reference to right and left and notes that the right hand has eighty mentions (all positive and ‘righteous’) compared to the twenty-one negative left citations. The biblical establishment of left with iniquity can be summarily demonstrated by St. Matthew 25:41, “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

During a symposium on the material culture of magic at the 2012 Society for Historical Archaeology conference, discussion with fellow presenters on the manifestation of right and left within magical contexts prompted researchers to comment that they have never given thought to the potential significance of these orientations. One scholar noted her research indicates that concealed apotropaic footwear is predominately comprised of left shoes (77%). She was also aware of one concealed cat that had had its left paw severed and intentionally positioned (Manning 2012a). At the Rev. Richard Buck Site (44JC568) ca. 1630-1650, Jamestown, Virginia, Maillos (1999: 35, 2000: 42-43) reported the burial of a young woman between 18 and 24 years-old who had “at her left elbow…an Elizabethan sixpence, minted between 1582-1584. This coin, a crossed variety, had been bent and broken in half with each coin half further folded (likely around a ribbon or similar organic cordage) forming a bracelet.” These few instances suggest that right and left orientations were deliberately incorporated into magical material culture. It is certain that right/left concepts played a role in magical ritual as corroborated by various authors discussing the required hand used to harvest magical plants or the proper direction in which people or objects must move for rituals to be effective (e.g., Aubrey 1670, 1687; Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003). Moving toward the right, or sunwise/clockwise, appears to be the norm for positive actions, while moving leftward, or widdershins/counterclockwise, was often attributed to the rituals of witches, demons, or fairies. Understanding the associated
meanings of high/low and right/left, their gendered implications, and their relationship to numerical correspondences of magico-religious worldviews may assist archaeologists in both recognizing artifacts as magical material culture and understanding them via the cultural logic of the people who used and believed in them.

Locating and recognizing evidence for magical belief in seventeenth-century New England necessitates not only a meticulous analysis of witchcraft court depositions, sermons, diaries, and ‘physick’ and grimoire (recipe and spell) books for descriptions of charms and other practices, but extends to a broader examination of all material culture upon which symbolic designs were wrought (Mellinkoff 2004), and to all contexts in which the colonists sought to effect a protective barrier between good and evil. For lay users of magic, the general intent was protection from the maleficent powers of witches and other evils and was predicated on the establishment of a system of boundaries that protected property and households:

It was as if the witch and her victim were battling back and forth across a vital territory where boundaries had assumed the greatest possible significance…. Countermagic strategies were designed to establish clear and impermeable boundaries… (Demos 2004:199).

In a wild new land, establishing clear boundaries between themselves and the fearful unknowns would have been paramount. Applying magical symbols or devices to objects representing real or metaphorical boundaries would have provided some sense of protection at these vulnerable thresholds.

Puritans, because of their abhorrence of idolatry and their general preference for modesty and simplicity in dress and furnishings, have been incorrectly assumed to be totally opposed to ornamentation. In actuality, they produced a wide range of decorated objects from gravestones to furniture to property markers ornately carved with recurring symbols as noted above in
delineating ternary and quinary patterns (Ludwig 1966; Gramly 1981; Gorman and DiBlasi 1982; Hijiya 1983; Ulrich 1997; Easton 1999a, 1999b; Gage and Gage 2003; Mellinkoff 2004). While it is reasonable to assume some designs were purely aesthetic and some religious, it is also reasonable to expect that a people whose worldview was framed by supernatural parameters would incorporate magically significant symbols into both the mundane and spiritual objects they produced. Many of these symbols could have operated as both religious and magical simultaneously. English examples of designs burned or carved into rafters, above doors, and on hearth lintel supports (witchposts) for magical protection establish just such a traditional precedent (Easton 1999a, 1999b, Lloyd et al. 2001; Hoggard 2004; Mellinkoff 2004; Ryedale Folk Museum, personal communication 2010). Seventeenth-century New England boundary stones, doorstones, gravestones, coffins, and hearths share similar iconography with these English examples and with each other (Ludwig 1966; Benes 1978, 1992; Geddes 1981; Gramly 1981; Gorman and DiBlasi 1982; Fischer 1989; Gage and Gage 2003; Seeman 2010), but apart from strictly religious interpretations, only Fischer and Gramly attribute magical meaning to the symbols. Of course, as symbols, their meanings are neither univocal nor fixed. They are collections of “qualities such as color, shape, and size…that are temporarily assembled and experienced as meaningful by people” (Robb 1998:338) within a society and rooted in correspondences with cultural worldviews. The connection between the similar circles, whorls, rosettes, hexafoils, spirals, hearts, and floral and geometric motifs found on these stones and those decorating furniture, chests (e.g., Figures 3.6 and 3.7), hearth supports, coffins, and possibly needlework have yet to be thoroughly analyzed. Likewise, a comparative study between New England symbols and English correlates remains to be done. Robb (1998:338) reiterates the importance of understanding the connections between such symbols and their use
as a means to better interpret the past when he states, “Because how symbols were used was as important to their meaning as any pre-fixed referent, archaeologists have to carry out close contextual analysis.” Even a cursory analysis of the repetitive motifs found on such a wide spectrum of objects, indicates that the New England Puritan colonists embarked upon journeys fraught with dangerous unknowns with an arsenal of traditional magical expressive modes based upon and justified through a complex cosmological framework.

**FIGURE 3.6.** Writing Box with hexafoil carving, 1659. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Although historical knowledge gleaned from court depositions, legal statutes, spell books, almanacs, and diaries provides much information about what seventeenth-century New England Puritans believed in and how they employed magic in various forms to mitigate the dangers inherent in their world, there remains much we as twenty-first century scholars do not know or understand about the Puritans’ supernatural mindset. Historical documentation and limited archaeological evidence indicates that New England colonists transplanted at least some of their traditional understanding concerning the spiritual nature of the cosmos. Excavated witch bottles along with written descriptions of the making and using of this form of apotropaia to identify and destroy a suspected bewitcher show a direct line of continuity to English precedents (Merrifield 1955, 1988; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Baker 2007). Yet, insight into a few magical forms and practices remains inadequate for scholarly understanding of ambiguous generalizations and documentation not analyzed for gendered differences, contextual relationships, or spatial/temporal correlates. Some of these patterns have begun to materialize out of the extant written records of seventeenth-century New England presented here, but a looming query still remains: How are these beliefs and practices manifested in the archaeological record? Simply discovering a witch bottle under the threshold or a concealed shoe in a wall provides nothing more than a substantiation of historical facts. To move beyond such a tautology, the presentation above shows how to extend the current knowledge of magical objects and practices to include understanding of the nuances, circumstances, and practitioners of magical practice and to determine if particular forms of magic can be used as determinates for gendered presence and behavior. Having a greater conception of the underlying logic of the Anglo-European Christian magical mindset provides the appropriate cultural lens through which the New England Puritan experience can be comprehended. The following section considers the social and natural settings
of the high stress circumstances that epitomized the daily experiences for these immigrants, which in turn affected the expression of the magical worldview discussed above.

3.3 Origins, Motivations, Expectations, and Tribulations

3.3.1 Origins and Motivations

The beliefs held by seventeenth-century Puritans, although explicitly espoused to be divorced from Catholic superstition and Popery, were a complex legacy of pre-Christian, Classical, Catholic, and Protestant concepts concerning the nature and empirical agency of good and evil (Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Kieckhefer 1989; Bailey 2007; Russell and Alexander 2007). According to Karlsen (1987:2-3):

The colonists shared with their counterparts in England many assumptions about what kinds of people witches were, what kinds of practices they engaged in, and where and how they attained their supernatural power. They also knew how to detect witches and how to rid their communities of the threat witches posed. Indeed, belief in the existence and danger of witches was so widespread, at all levels of society, that disbelief was itself suspect.

While there were some commonly held ideas, like the power of sympathetic magic with its various permutations of like images, contiguous parts, and contagious imprinting, specific variations manifested in localized geographic areas (Davies 2007; Kieckhefer 2000; Kittredge 1972; Mauss 1972[1950]; Thomas 1971). In attempting to uncover the traditional beliefs carried to the New England colonies of Connecticut (and New Haven), Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, a reconstruction of those colonists’ places of origin becomes essential (e.g., Map 3.1). Although often glossed in historical and archaeological colonial studies as a homogenous and ubiquitous ‘British’ cultural mass, Lawrence (2003:4) stresses that:

British is an ethnic identity….No ethnic group can be conceived of as a bounded, static or homogenous entity, and this is certainly true of the British….Individuals are socialized within particular cultural systems that shape and are shaped by individual practice, and these practices and beliefs,
or habitus (Bourdieu 1972), are shared with others within the same cultural system…. As ethnicity is relationally defined against the otherness of someone else, how that ‘other’ is constituted will help to determine which of the available elements of habitus will be incorporated in an ethnic identity within a particular context.

Not only can it not be assumed that all New England groups shared exactly the same ideas and practices, but the fact that culture and custom are fluid and dynamic and adapt to new contexts must also be taken under consideration. Allen (1981) uses five communities in Massachusetts to illustrate the simultaneously conservative and dynamic nature of colonial experience. His study revealed that each of these towns perpetuated the agricultural, social, religious, and political structures of the particular English locale from which the town’s inhabitants originated. At the same time, their new environment necessitated improvisation and substitution of behaviors and methods when traditional modes proved untenable. Most importantly, Allen’s (1981:8) research confirms that “subcultural patterns of behavior, often manifested in regional and local differences, were a persistent phenomenon through the greater part of the seventeenth century in Massachusetts.” In addition to intra-colony differences, Koehler (1980) points out how different the colonies could be from one another in terms of religious tolerance, gender equality, ideas of criminality and punishment, acceptable grounds for divorce, and willingness to prosecute accused witches. He dedicates an entire chapter to what he calls “The Rhode Island Alternative” to illustrate that within the Puritan stronghold of New England, Rhode Island had a “singularly un-Puritan cast of mind” (Koehler 1980:301). Rhode Island became the sanctuary for those lapsed or outcast Puritans from other colonies who sought a different spiritual or personal path from that allowed or tolerated in more orthodox Puritan areas like Massachusetts and Connecticut. Stemming originally from the same English home-counties as the colonists of the stricter Puritan communities, the Rhode Islanders demonstrate
how culture and custom can acquire alternative forms in response to a range of variables in a new context. Even though all Anglo-European colonists shared the same general cosmological worldview, there existed a range of variability in the behaviors of those colonists as evidenced by the disagreements between colonies in matters of religious and legal tolerance. Because Rhode Island stands out so distinctly from its New England neighbors, it provides an ideal area for comparative analysis with Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Maine.


Fischer (1989) attempts to narrowly define the settlement of Massachusetts as initially predominantly from East Anglia (60%); however, as Anderson (1991) and Greene (1991) note, Fischer includes a much larger demographic area within his ‘East Anglia’ than is usually denoted
in regional studies and fails to demonstrate a distinctive East Anglian culture transplanted unto New England soil. The other 40% of immigrants Fischer cites as originating from thirty-four other English counties, with a slight concentration from the area where the western counties of Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire intersect (Fischer 1989:34). He notes that most of these western immigrants diverged from Massachusetts Bay Colony to establish their own distinctive communities in Connecticut, Nantucket, and Maine, leaving Massachusetts primarily a seat for East Anglian and, specifically, Essex County, England colonists. This correlation with Essex leads Fischer (1989:128) to compare witchcraft cases in East Anglia and Massachusetts, noting that, “In England, every quantitative study has found that recorded cases of witchcraft were most frequent in the eastern counties from which New England was settled.” Demos’s (2004a:12) research indicates, “…interestingly, the figures look most nearly equivalent when New England is matched with the county of Essex alone. Essex was beyond a doubt a center of witch-hunting within the mother country; and Essex supplied a disproportionately large complement of settlers for the new colonies across the seas.” Both Fischer and Demos vacillate between identifying specific areas (e.g., Massachusetts, Essex County) and ambiguous regions (e.g., New England, East Anglia) and attempting comparisons without clearly defining the geographic parameters for those comparisons. As a result, identifying the origin of and ascribing particular traditional beliefs and practices to any given colonial setting becomes problematic. Robert Anderson (1995) attempted to correlate New England colonists arriving between 1620 and 1633 with their English home counties, a task he could only accomplish for two-fifths of those whose names were extant. Table 3.1 shows the origins of those he was able to positively trace.
### TABLE 3.1. Regional origins of immigrants to New England, 1620-1633 (N=409)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North, Northwest</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West, Southwest</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands, Central</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **North, Northwest** = Lancaster (3), York (6), Cheshire (1); **West, Southwest** = Shropshire (3), Gloucester (2), Devon (18), Somerset (24), Dorset (27), Wiltshire (3), Berkshire (1), Hampshire (7), Warwick (4); **Midlands, Central** = Worcester (7), Nottingham (4), Leicester (5), Lincoln (25), Northampton (4), Oxford (1), Buckingham (1), Hertford (11), Bedford (8), Derby (2); **Southeast** = Norfolk (14), Suffolk (54), Essex (55), Kent (15), Surrey (16), Sussex (1), Cambridge (6), Middlesex (2), Huntingdon (2); **London** = 43; **Netherlands** = 31


A more localized microscale examination of both English and colonial customs is required in order to trace and understand the conservative, dynamic, and adaptive aspects of specific magical beliefs and practices in New England (Little and Shackel 1989).

The figures presented by Fischer (1989), Anderson (1991), Greene (1991), and Demos (2004a) all neglect inclusion of those immigrants and sailors (while not great in numbers) hailing from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales that contributed their localized beliefs to the English admixture (Heyrman 1984). It is important to include these other localities when assessing what supernatural beliefs may have found expression in colonial New England in response to the environmental, sociopolitical, and cultural challenges inherent in settling a new world that were shared by all (as an example of the range of belief in supernatural beings in addition to witches held by the English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, see Appendix B).

#### 3.3.2 Environmental Challenges

The first Puritan immigrants made an enormously optimistic leap of faith to undertake the creation of their New World Order, naïvely and confidently expecting to arrive at a land of abundance and prosperity. William Cronon (1983), in his ecological history of New England
through culture contact and colonization, explains how accounts of virtually infinite numbers of animals, fish, birds, trees, and wild fruits and berries mislead new immigrants into believing subsistence in the new land would require little effort. Neither were they sufficiently informed of the extreme variation of topography, soil types, and plant and animal life. The descriptions they received encompassed only limited coastal or riverine areas and were confined to spring and summer observations. In short, they arrived at a world that did not coincide with their preconceived expectations (Cronon 1983; Philbrick 2006). *Mayflower* passenger and governor of Plymouth Colony from 1621 to 1651, William Bradford, upon landing at what was to become Plymouth Plantation, substantiates their disappointment:

> …sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel [even] to known places,…full of wild beasts and wild men…Neither could they as it were, go to the top of Pisgah to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save toward the heavens) they could find little solace or content in respect of any outward objects (cited in Bercovitch 1975:45).

This was a world that required an extensive process of landscape learning on their part before successful settlement could be achieved.

Rockman (2003:4) posits that three basic forms of environmental data combined in varying degrees and acquired over differing temporal spans comprise a workable knowledge of a given landscape. Of course, this process is a dynamic one in which the landscape learners in turn alter the given landscape throughout each step. She labels these forms as: locational, limitational, and social:

Locational knowledge includes information relating to spatial and physical characteristics of particular resources….Limitational knowledge refers to familiarity with the usefulness and reliability of various resources, including the combination of multiple resources into a working environment….Social knowledge is the collection of social experiences that serves as a means of transforming the environment or a collection of natural resources into a
human landscape (Rockman 2003:4-6).

Of the three, Rockman cites locational as the easiest and quickest to acquire with the most pronounced elements like water sources, topographical features, and some obvious food resources locatable within days, weeks, or months. Limitational knowledge, however, can take up to a generation or two before the cycles of weather, seasonal foodstuffs, and uses of particular resources are observed and learned. Of the three, social knowledge requires the longest to acquire, as it incorporates socio-politically imprinted and associated connections with the land that accrue over several generations (Rockman 2003:4-6).

The first immigrants, and those who subsequently arrived and pushed further into the unsettled reaches, lacked all three forms. Additionally, they encountered all three types of obstacles, as delineated by Rockman, that bar access to the environmental information they needed. Population, social, and knowledge barriers may affect the acquisition of the three forms of environmental knowledge to varying degrees. According to Rockman (2003:15), population barriers relate to the “compatibility with resident population[s]; considerations include both…population density and relations/compatibility with respect to economic system[s].” Related to population barriers, social barriers include the “resident population’s defense of territories [and] information storage and transfer systems” (Rockman 2003:15), or in other words their willingness and ability to share their knowledge with outsiders. Finally, knowledge barriers refer to the “existence of usable, previously collected information” (Rockman 2003:15). Puritan colonists arrived in New England with virtually no usable a priori knowledge of the new landscape, which represented their first obstacle (knowledge barrier). Second, they intruded upon an already inhabited land without consideration or knowledge of the carrying capacity of that environment or of the cultural compatibility with the indigenous population (population
In fact, they arrived with firmly entrenched notions that this new world was theirs for the taking. As Robert Cushman (1622) states in *Mourt’s relation, a relation or journal of the English plantation settled at Plymouth in New England, by certain English adventurers both merchants and others* (cited in Main 2001:19):

> But some will say, what right have I to go live in the heathens’ country? This then is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live lawful: their land is spacious and void, and there are few and do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts. They are not industrious, neither have they art, science, skill, or faculty to use either the land or the commodities of it, but all spoils, rots, and is marred for want of manuring, gathering, ordering, etc.

Third, the combined native defensive stance and the colonial reluctance to learn from and emulate sustainable native environmental practices precluded effective knowledge transfer across cultures (social barrier) (Cronon 1983; Blanton 2003:196; Philbrick 2006).

Compounding the initial difficulties inherent in learning and adjusting to a new landscape, especially one whose realities proved significantly more difficult than expected, was the fact that many of the first immigrants were not farmers or husbandmen. Although they brought livestock and provisions, the majority of the colonists hailed from the urban artisan class and was unskilled in the type of agricultural labor required for transforming New England into an ‘English’ agricultural area (Fischer 1989). Virginia Anderson’s (1991:4-5) analysis of 590 immigrants whose originating locale could be verified found that 364 were from urban market centers, and of those, 200 came from towns exceeding 3,000. Using data abstracted from Virginia Anderson (1991) and Robert Anderson (1995), Main (2001:33) constructed the information exhibited in Table 3.2 to explicate the demographic composition of New England immigrants:

[135]
### TABLE 3.2. Occupations of male immigrants, age 15+, to New England, 1620-1638 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1620-1629</th>
<th>1630-1633</th>
<th>1635-1638</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% (N=94)</td>
<td>% (N=300)</td>
<td>% (N=219)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth Manufacturing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Manufacturing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this table indicates, the typical male immigrant to New England for the first decade of colonization originated from urban settings and occupations. Those with some farming skill were still disadvantaged, however, as the climate of New England proved to be both considerably wetter and colder with shorter growing seasons than their home counties. The seventeenth-century experienced the Little Ice Age that kept average temperatures low, occasioned frequent and violent storms, and caused extremely cold winters making traditional English agricultural practices untenable (Cronon 1983; Fischer 1989). In addition to climatic incompatibility, many of the crops familiar to English farmers were also unsuited to New England’s topography and soil composition.

These unexpected climatic extremes and the colonists’ own unpreparedness resulted in high mortality rates. “At Plymouth alone, half the Pilgrims were dead before the first winter was over” (Cronon: 1983:36). Those arriving in the summer of 1630 with John Winthrop’s fleet, having brought insufficient supplies with them, expected both houses and ample provisions would be awaiting them in Salem or Charlestown. Neither was the case and hundreds died before
a ship bearing food and supplies arrived the following February (Main 2001:41). For colonists that did survive their initial landings, Kupperman (1979), although speaking specifically of Jamestown, Virginia colonists, notes that it took approximately a year for immigrants to recover from the transatlantic voyage and acclimate to their new situation. This adjustment period, known as ‘seasoning,’ entailed recuperation from a complex combination of physical and psychological ailments like “apathy, inactivity, …anorexia” and malnutrition (Blanton 2003:195). Kupperman (1979:39) says malnutrition “interacted with the psychological effects of isolation and despair and each intensified the other.” New England colonists presumably would have suffered similar adjustment issues.

A passenger on one of the Winthrop ships, Thomas Dudley, later wrote, “Salem, where we landed, pleased us not” (cited in Fischer 1989:55). Not only did the rocky and wild terrain fall short of their paradisiacal expectations, but their weakened conditions further hampered their ability to cope with the hardships before them. Among those arriving in Massachusetts Bay in June 1630 were many weak from the long voyage and suffering from scurvy. In addition to those who perished during the transatlantic voyage, once on land virtually every family lost members to feverish death requiring the burial of several bodies every day. Fearing for their own survival in these desperate circumstances, nearly one hundred colonists decided to return to England almost immediately (Fischer 1989).

Colonists soon discovered their new land was literally filled with life threatening dangers. The forests teemed with large predatory animals like bears, wolves, and mountain lions that did not exist in England; the indigenous peoples appeared to colonists to be the embodiment of demons; and the land and climate fatally took their toll as colonists struggled to adapt (Cronon
An additional aspect that would have intensified the fear associated with these dangers concerns the beliefs and attitudes about darkness in general and nighttime in particular. Folklore sources reveal the connection between darkness and forests. Forests and nighttime provided cover for supernatural denizens like fairies and their ilk (see Appendix B), which could prove dangerous to humans and domestic livestock (Demos 1970; Bourne 1977[1725]; Porteous 2002[1928]; Briggs 2003[1967], 1978, 1976; Ekirch 2005; Koslofsky 2011). So, too, did the darkness and forest provide camouflage for criminals, and in the case of New England, Indians. According to Koslofsky (2011), Ekirch (2005) and Demos (2004b), however, the darkness of nighttime had even deeper meanings for seventeenth-century Anglo-Europeans. Darkness itself was the domain of the Devil and, thus, the time when evil spirits and beings roamed free. The
darkness of night and forest combined provided the setting most associated with interactions between the Devil and his human converts (Figures 3.8 and 3.9) (Demos 2004b:6).

**FIGURE 3.9.** Night as a time for heightened supernatural power: transformation, flying, and mischief. Seventeenth-century English woodcut.

Night air was believed to be a pestilent vapor that could cause illness and death just by breathing it. Even the language used to describe the coming of night reveals the belief that night was a palpable, negative entity that threatened human well-being: “Evening does not arrive, it “thickens.” Wayfarers are “overtaken” [by night].” Night ‘falls.’ (Ekirch 2005:xxxi). These impressions were probably even more pronounced in colonial landscapes characterized by small isolated communities. During this period, Ekirch (2005:xxxi) observes:

> For most persons, the customary name for nightfall was “shutting-in,” a time to bar doors and bolt shutters once watchdogs had been loosed abroad. For night—its foul and fetid air, its preternatural darkness—spawned uncertain perils, both real and imaginary.

If night stimulated such fears in a familiar and comparatively less dangerous setting, its power to generate similar fears in the wilderness of New England must have been amplified and

[139]
compounded by the deep darkness of the forests, the geographical and cultural isolation of the colonists, and the unfamiliarity with the landscape. Night’s fearful connotation, however, transcended its tangible reality. Demos extends the correlation of night with evil even further suggesting that night served New England Puritans as the ultimate metaphor for everything mysterious, unknown, dangerous, and deadly, including their own sinful darker sides (Demos 2004b:6). The association of darkness with the demonic found expression in a variety of instances; for example, the devil was referred to as the prince or lord of darkness and mishaps occurring in daylight were more likely to be attributed to natural or accidental causes while those happening at night were generally considered produced by supernatural forces (Demos 2004b; Koslofsky 2011). Demos (2004b:4) notes that darkness, requiring the boundaries of house and door to stand between it and the people it endangered, simultaneously acted as a barrier itself between the family units inhabiting each household:

The neighbors—all the folk with whom, in the daytime one had worked or bartered or gossiped—were now, and throughout the period of darkness to come, set apart. In a sense, experience at night was privatized: each man, woman, or child enclosed within his or her own family. Then, next morning when the sun came up, the boundaries expanded again, and one’s ties to the wider community were restored.

This observation has significant implications that will be made clearer in Chapter 5 when data from the witch trial records are presented demonstrating the interrelationship between boundaries and perceptions of vulnerability and conflict.

The environmental conditions, including the ecology, climate, and natural rhythms of day and night, challenged Puritan colonists by confronting them with extremes to which they had little or no experience. They did, however, have experience in England with lesser degrees of some of these environmental factors (storms and other inclement weather, infertility of land or livestock, fears of the ‘night-season’) that they attempted to mitigate through the use of magical
protection (Evans 1971; Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Ekirch 2005; Davies 2007, 2009; Koslofsky 2011). One of these climatic elements that caused excessive anxiety was thunder. As noted New England during the seventeenth century experienced more frequent and more violent storms than were known in England (Cronon 1983). While these tempests alone were cause for concern, the widespread belief that storms—particularly thunder and lightning—were providential (sent by God as punishment) or conversely were engendered by witches and the Devil contributed greatly to New England colonists’ anxiety (Figure 3.10). Thunder, more so than lightning, was thought to cause death and destruction, as sounds (including the spoken word) “had intelligent sources with intent and power…Sounds did things in the world. They moved people about, struck them, and in the case of thunder, actually killed” (Rath 2003:11). Thunder’s destructive power, like all other aspects of the cosmos for seventeenth-century New Englanders, was directly related to biblical conceptions, in this case, the “seven thunders” that presage the apocalypse and last judgment (Rath 2003:20). Numerous accounts survive from both Britain and New England of deaths and property damage attributed to the sonic force of thunder. Faced with the magnitude of New England’s environmental ordeals, Puritans’ recourse to magical charms against these difficulties seems highly probable.

FIGURE 3.10. The Devil and host of demons creating thunder and storms on house roof. From frontice piece of *Saducismus Triumphatus*, 1682.
In his 1629 treatise on gardening, John Parkinson (1976[1629]:1) makes an astute observation that transcends mere commentary on the luxury of selecting the perfect gardening spot and equally describes the general situation experienced by most colonists in their new habitation:

The several situations of mens dwellings, are for the most part unavoideable and unremoveable; for most men cannot appoint forth such a manner of situation for their dwelling, as is most fit to avoide all the inconveniences of winde and weather, but must bee content with such as the place will afforde them…

The best situations for their towns, houses, fields, and gardens proved difficult, if not impossible to acquire in the rocky, forested, swampy, and harshly alien landscapes of New England. But as Parkinson sagely notes, people must strive to make their situations workable and be contented with the result. In the rugged, unforgiving wilds of New England, establishing homes in situations “unavoideable and unremoveable” surely offered opportunities to employ magical assistance as well as religious faith and physical labor to transform their dangerous circumstances into ones more pacified.

3.3.3 Native Contact and Interaction

Prior to their arrival in New England, English Puritans’ conceptualization of the indigenous peoples they would encounter had been shaped by what Simmons (1981:56) described as “a mythical model that originated in their Christian past.” The Native Americans depicted in European woodcuts and paintings since the fifteenth century seemed to paradoxically embody both the idealism of Classical form and the naked savagery of barbarism (Barber and Berdan 1998; Loren 2008). These images and the Puritan cosmology comprised of forces of good and evil embroiled in a continuous struggle combined to create a framework from which colonists could “comprehend evil both within and outside themselves” and thus “interpret cultural differences between themselves and the native people whom they encountered”
For the most part, the English colonists viewed native people as an inverse to everything they construed as Godly and, thus, exemplified violation of Puritan codes of ‘normalcy’ and righteousness.

When considering cultural conceptions of normalcy, it is helpful to contemplate three categories through which normalcy is determined and weighed: physical, behavioral, and customary. The physical category includes expectations for ordinary variations and responses in regards to both human and natural states of health, disease, and death. Thus, human or animal birth defects; mental illness; and inexplicable physical failings or abilities may be construed as signs of monstrosity. The behavioral category comprises issues of extreme gender role violation; savage or bizarre violence, and deviant sexual behavior like bestiality and necrophilia (Kamensky 1997; Karlsen 1998). The final type, customary, refers to the vilification of other cultural groups by targeting their alteric foodway, sartorial, religious, and warcraft customs as barbaric, demonic, or monstrous (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Briggs 1996; Barth 1998; Loren 2008).

To create and maintain a righteous, legitimate, and recognizable identity for themselves against which they could compare and measure their opposite, New England colonists manifested images and ideologies of demonism. Anyone or anything conveying physical, behavioral, or customary attributes that threatened their established worldview was interpreted as dangerous to the world order; thus, New Englanders projected their ideas of monstrosity (witchcraft or demonism) onto their native neighbors, as well as onto those in their own communities who violated their socio-religious expectations like Quakers, Antinomians, and Anabaptists. Such vilification created justification for their own violence against outsiders. Simmons (1981:65) states, “…Puritan war against Indians was war against devils or the agents
of devils. Captivity by Indians was interpreted as a journey into Hell.” In fact, redeemed captives’ descriptions of their Indian captors were virtually indistinguishable from their descriptions of the Devil (Starkey 1963[1949]). Identifying Indians with the forces of evil allowed Puritans to fit these alteric people into their framework of good and evil and cast the native peoples as yet another of those malign forces sent by God to test them.

MAP 3.2. Native settlements and Trails. Used by permission of Nipmuc NIAC.

Initially, of course, the arrival of Anglo immigrants at Plymouth in November of 1620 without sufficient provisions, shelter, or knowledge of the landscape created a crisis situation in which their very survival depended upon the resources and assistance of the native inhabitants. Vastly outnumbered, disadvantaged in virtually all practical respects in a foreign world, and
essentially cut off from their own cultural group, resources, and land, these colonists had little choice but to civilly engage with the local people, even though the natives represented the antithesis of Christian humanity (Map 3.2). Although treaties and alliances were struck between the colonists and particular chiefs (or sachems), like that between the Pilgrims and Massasoit of the Pokanokets in 1621, neither colonists nor Indians did so out of mutual friendship and trust. Rather these agreements acted as tenuous constraints meant to alleviate potential threats by other native groups or between the signees (Philbrick 2006:97-99). The peace such treaties were intended to secure proved fragile at best. Through a complex of power plays by various native tribes aggravated by the ever-increasing and subsuming presence of Anglo-European colonists, the region erupted into a series of Indian wars, the most destructive of which, known as King Philip’s War, occurring in 1675. Although many Indians attempted to remain neutral and peacefully outside the conflict, “by July 1675, the hysteria of war had taken hold of New England…[and] most English inhabitants had begun to view all Indians with racist contempt and fear” (Philbrick 2006:251). Even the Christianized ‘Praying Indians’ became suspect and found themselves incarcerated, enslaved, or worse. During the middle and late decades of the seventeenth century, numerous colonial residences and towns were destroyed and inhabitants slain in raids by local Indian war parties. In some instances, they abducted captives to either keep or sell to the Catholic French—either fate considered by the Anglo Protestant colonists as synonymous with being sold to the Devil (Demos 1994; Philbrick 2006). The ever-present anxiety and tension between the native peoples of New England and the Anglo-Europeans colonists would not subside until the native peoples were virtually displaced from the highly populated and cosmopolitan Eastern Shore by the beginning of the eighteenth century. At this point in time only in the more remote interior regions inhabited by native tribes, were Anglo
Colonists still fearful of Indian attack and abduction—a theme that would continue to accompany the relentless pushing back of the American frontier.

3.3.4 Colonial Society

Colonists had more to contend with than just the threat of Indian attack. Attack from within represented an equally dangerous peril to their mission. Far from realizing a utopian ideal, Puritan communities experienced internal strife from the beginning. For example, the Mayflower Compact was, in fact, a document drawn up and signed while the Mayflower was still in route to the New World to alleviate the social quarrels and “mutinous speeches” that broke out aboard ship (Demos 1970:5). It was not a matter of conflict over inequitable distribution of authority or resources, as Puritan social structure mirrored and endorsed their larger hierarchical English culture that espoused God’s natural division of humankind into those of greater and lesser virtue and rank (Rutman 1965; Morgan 1966; Lockridge 1981; Norton 1996; Main 2001).

Of particular account was the fact that not all the passengers shared the same religious vision or were even part of the original Pilgrim group that had commissioned the Mayflower voyage. Several ‘strangers’ had taken the places vacated by original group members due to various unfortunate circumstances (Philbrick 2006:26). Rather, as with any population of diverse people, personality clashes, disagreements, and other sundry tensions, conflicts would naturally find expression in these newly formed polities. In fact, their exceptional circumstances, which included having to establish an entire society with legal, governing, civic, economic, and religious institutions in relative isolation while contending with environmental hardships and fighting or otherwise negotiating with Native presence, no doubt heightened tensions normally associated with close community living.
Beyond the usual community conflicts can be added those particular to insular groups that strove to restrict membership to like-minded members while erecting barriers against outsiders—a difficult task when ‘strangers’ have been a part of the social matrix since the beginning. To both protect themselves from Indian attack and the supernatural dangers associated with forests and wilderness, and to establish tightly knit and exclusive communities, most towns followed the nucleated village model (Map 3.3 and Figure 3.11). These village plans provided roughly concentric zones of ever increasing danger radiating out from the village center, which was metaphorically and literally embodied in the meeting house that housed and represented both spiritual and sociopolitical authority; thus, the village center offered the greatest sense of security (both physical and spiritual) and the forest lying on the furthest periphery.
lodged the most dire dangers to body and soul. Lockridge provides an exemplar of such an
insular nucleated community when he cites the Dedham Covenant, a document set forth by the
founders of Dedham, Massachusetts in 1636 to explicitly pledge, “That we shall by all means
labor to keep off from us all such as are contrary minded, and receive only such unto us as may
be probably of one heart with us...” (1970:5). Such exclusionary policies were more the norm
than the exception for the original Puritan communities (Rutman 1965; Demos 1970, 2004a;
Labaree 1972; St. George 1998). However, as populations grew, subsequent generations moved
from town centered residences to isolated farmsteads, and participation in broader economic
systems gained precedence, sustaining insular communities became increasingly difficult if not
dissolution of these bounded communities generated even more tension between and among the
citizenry (Demos 1970, 2004a, 2004b; Koehler 1980; St. George 1998). Historians have often
associated a breakdown of traditional beliefs and values with this dissolution of nucleated
villages and expansion of commercial ventures, but Heyrman’s (1984:18) study of seventeenth-
century Marblehead and Gloucester, Massachusetts challenges this assessment:

…the conversion to a trading economy did not precipitate a sweeping, uniform
set of changes in provincial seaports. Instead of confirming the conventional view
that the Puritan communal order collapsed under the pressure of economic
expansion, the evolution of Gloucester and Marblehead illustrates the strength and
resilience of traditional patterns of association and inherited beliefs and values.

Included in these “inherited beliefs and values” were the shared worldviews concerning the
existence of witches and the power of supernatural forces. She notes that a review of the Essex
Court Records demonstrates that (Heyrman 1984:41):

the incidence of slander and allegations of witchcraft, its most extreme form,
was generally higher in colonial communities that were, like early Gloucester,
isolated and lacking in established social leadership and strong religious authority.
FIGURE 3.11. Concentric zones of security for nucleated village.

Though witchcraft allegations appear to peak during highly stressful times, as one would expect, the belief in such danger does not disappear until a major worldview paradigm shift occurs—a
shift much more profound than the acquisition of economic and political stability, as the late seventeenth-century Salem witchcraft crisis illustrates.

To sustain the Puritan quest for a Godly covenant and keep their towns unified, town leaders like those from Dedham, Massachusetts, were “empowered to inquire into private lives, ordering amendment where amendment was due…” (Lockridge 1970:15). This empowerment was predicated upon the belief that individual sin represented both group sin and potential for God’s punishment upon the whole community. Thus, it was the Puritan’s moral duty to watch and listen for and report breaches of covenant. Sin, far from being a private personal affair by Puritan understanding, required public acknowledgment and consequence for the good of all. To police and correct these breaches of covenant, a stringent legal system ensured a close managing of virtually every aspect of an individual’s life. Known as ‘Blue Laws,’ (Table 3.3) (Randal nd) these directives existed in every colony to maintain control and order in a world perceived as vast and chaotic.

William Bradford reflected in 1642 on the ‘wickedness’ that seemed to flourish in Plymouth Plantation by noting that the criminals “are here more discovered and seen and made public by due search, inquisition and due punishment; for the churches look narrowly to their members, and the magistrates over all, more strictly than in other places” (cited in Norton 1996:321). The diligent uncovering of ‘wickedness’ Bradford refers to seems to have more to do with criminalizing and punishing minor behavioral infractions than an unusually high occurrence of serious crimes. Nonetheless, under such vigilant systems, the transgression or violation of what may seem to twenty-first century reasoning as trivial behaviors, often carried serious, sometimes extreme punishments, including imprisonment, enslavement, whipping, mutilation, branding, torture, and various modes of execution. An individual found guilty of a range of
indiscretions from not attending church on Sunday to foul speech to fornication, theft, adultery, or witchcraft could be subjected to the swimming test (Figure 3.12); ducking stool (Figure 3.13); stocks or pillory; scold-caps; riding-the-wooden-horse with 50-pound weights tied to one’s feet; whipping; branding; cutting off, slitting or boring of ears, tongue or nose; having one’s tongue put in a cleft stick; or for capital offenses, hanging (Randal nd).

**FIGURE 3.12.** ‘Swimming test’ to determine guilt. In this illustration from 1612, Mary Sutton of Bedford, UK is being tested for witchery.

**FIGURE 3.13.** (below) Ducking stool to determine guilt and as a punishment for scoulds. Seventeenth-century English woodcut.

The Blue Laws (Table 3.3) constitute just a small percentage of the numerous regulations imposed upon New England colonists; other more serious legal infractions found explication
under separate statutes (Norton 1996). In addition to treason, murder, arson, and rape, several violations of social and religious order fell under the rubric of capital crimes, including witchcraft, adultery, sodomy, bestiality, denying God’s existence and authority, and defying one’s parents (Norton 1996:128). Under such scrutiny, people of seventeenth-century New England likely consciously tread on proverbial eggshells or at the very least experienced a general sense of anxiety in their daily behaviors and dealings.

**TABLE 3.3.** Seventeenth-Century New England Blue Laws and other Legal Statutes (Randall).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Massachusetts (1630-1760)</th>
<th>Plymouth</th>
<th>New Haven (1640-1660)</th>
<th>Connecticut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No wearing of silver, gold, silk lace or thread</td>
<td>Church attendance mandatory</td>
<td>No single young men to live alone</td>
<td>No wearing of silver, gold, silk lace or thread</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| No multiple slashed clothing, cutwork, embroidery, short sleeves, or wide sleeves for women | NOT on Sundays:  
- Conducting business  
- Sleeping or playing in meeting house during worship | No Quakers, Ranters, priests, or other religious persons contrary to Puritan beliefs allowed to live in New Haven | No multiple slashed clothing, cutwork, embroidery, short sleeves, or wide sleeves for women |
| No bad language | | No reading of Common Prayers, keeping Christmas or Saints’ Days (or anything Catholic) | No bad language |
| No possessing dice or cards | No making minced pies, dancing, cards, or playing instruments other than drum, trumpet, or Jew’s harp | No possessing dice or cards; no shuffleboard |
| No selling of cakes or buns | Married persons must live together | No selling of cakes or buns |
| No smoking in public | No crossing the river but with an authorized ferryman | No smoking in public, barn yards, or on militia training days in open places |
| No public drunkenness | No lying | No public drunkenness |
| No verbal confrontation of authority | No long hair for men | No verbal confrontation of authority |
| NOT on Sundays:  
- Shooting  
- Smoking tobacco  
- Swimming  
- Unnecessary and unreasonable walking in streets or fields  
- Opening shops (included the evening prior as well)  
- Business or labor  
- Games, sport, play or recreation  
- Music, dancing, or public diversion (including evening before)  
- traveling | NOT on Sundays:  
- running  
- walking in gardens or otherwise except to church  
- traveling  
- cooking  
- making beds or sweeping  
- haircutting or shaving  
- kissing (spouses or parents/children) | NOT on Sundays:  
- Shooting  
- Smoking tobacco  
- Swimming  
- Unnecessary and unreasonable walking in streets or fields  
- Opening shops (including evening before)  
- Business or labor  
- Games, sport, play or recreation  
- Music, dancing, or public diversion (including evening before)  
- traveling |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Massachusetts (1630-1760)</th>
<th>Plymouth</th>
<th>New Haven (1640-1660)</th>
<th>Connecticut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance mandatory</td>
<td>No food or lodging given to Quakers, Adamites, or other heretics</td>
<td>Church attendance mandatory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No wearing of gold, silver, or bone lace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No denying God’s power and jurisdiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No possessing dice or cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly, under such circumstances tensions and outright conflicts between and among community members flared. Evidence for the prevalence of these social strains fills court records, pamphlets, sermons, and diaries; often these strains seeded or eventually fueled witchcraft and other diabolical accusations like lithobolia attacks (a supernatural bombardment of stones) or the casting of the evil eye (Starkey 1963[1949]; Demos 1970, 1976, 2004a, 2004b; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974; Koehler 1980; Karlsen 1987; Godbeer 1992, 2005; Briggs 1996; Kamensky 1997; Reis 1997; Baker 2007). Scholars of English, European, and New England witchcraft concur that witchcraft accusations, while based upon undeniable belief in witches and their powers, can be interpreted as mediation strategies to address sociopolitical conflicts (Mather 1692; Drake 1869; Starkey 1963[1949]; Thomas 1971; Kittredge 1972; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974; Demos 1976, 2004a; Koehler 1980; Weisman 1984; Karlsen 1987; Norton 1987; Hall 1989, 1991; Godbeer 1992, 2005; Willis 1995; Briggs 1996; Kamensky 1997; Reis 1997; Burr 2002[1914]; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Baker 2007; Davies 2007; Bever 2008). In virtually every case, the accused demonstrated unseemly behavior spanning several years, being quarrelsome and uncivil; in effect, she or he failed to conform to the communal and gender expectations espoused by Puritan ideology. These individuals provided targets that communities could use to explain any of the various misfortunes they suffered from crop failure to accidents to sudden illness. As scapegoats, these individuals could atone for the providential wrath of God.
visited upon the community and serve as reminders to others the cost of deviation from the
dictates of the Puritan social and spiritual path.

Although witchcraft accusations and executions represent the most extreme and most
well-known manifestations of social stress, other supernatural events also served as outlets for
personal and social quarrels. Three known cases of one such phenomenon, called *lithobolia*,
occurred in New England in 1679, 1682, and 1692. “Lithobolia, or the stone-throwing devil,”
was reported in a pamphlet by Richard Chamberlain, printed in London in 1698, and describes
the poltergeist-type entity that engaged in prolonged barrages of stones against New England
residents and tavern owners. In Great Island, New Hampshire in 1682 “hundreds of flying stones
plagued the [Walton] tavern and its proprietors and guests for months on end, causing
considerable damage. Amazingly, no one ever saw anyone throwing the rocks” (Baker 2007:1).
In conjunction with the lithobolia attacks, people reported demonic noises, inexplicable moving
objects, and monstrous births.

Probably the most serious cause of internal strife for seventeenth-century Anglo-
European colonists concerned religion. Since Martin Luther nailed his ‘Ninety-five Theses’ of
reformation to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517, European Christianity became a
highly contested battlefield. Butler (1990:7) asserts that, “In the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries state-supported Christianity found itself beset by reformers from within and by
dissenters from without.” While virtually all the English immigrants were Protestants and shared
the same basic Christian worldviews, several distinctive sects (e.g., Anabaptists, Baptists,
Quakers, Antinomians, Presbyterians, Ranters) existed within Protestantism. Butler (1990:55)
observes that these “religious choices…though constrained by Calvinism, stimulated diversity
and heresy as often as they generated homogeneity and orthodoxy.” Each sect had its own
particular take on biblical interpretation, and as each group fervently believed its interpretations constituted the right and true message of God, conceding the rightness of another sect’s interpretation could be conceived of as blasphemous. In such cases as the Antinomian Controversy in which Anne Hutchinson dared overstep her gender boundaries by interpreting biblical doctrine and publicly preaching and then debating her right and ability to do so with the male religious authorities, more than just religious orthodoxy was being threatened. The hierarchical levels of authority and place were tersely captured in Hugh Peter’s admonishing words toward Anne Hutchinson in 1638: “You have stept out of your place, you have rather bine a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject” (cited in Norton 1996:357). The Hutchinson case provides the perfect scenario to illustrate that in each confrontation of dissenting sects with the hegemonic Puritan institution, the very foundation of hierarchical authority upon which all aspects of religious, political, and social constructs were based seemed liable to collapse if stern measures were not taken against the agitators (Figure 3.14).

3.4 Gender Constructs

Ample legal, civic, and private documentary sources provide evidence of magical belief and practice in seventeenth-century New England. What is not clear is the relationship between magic use and gender. Although seventeenth-century belief accepted, based upon woman’s connection with Eve’s original sin, the exceptional weakness and corruptibility of women’s natures, this explanation accounts more for the disproportionate number of women accused of witchcraft than it does for indicating a gendered recourse to countermagical practices.

Based upon the frequency of gender reference in court records and sermons, Puritan society placed significant emphasis upon gender distinctions and expressed great concern over gender violations as a threat to social order (Demos 1970, 2004a; Kittredge 1972; Koehler 1980; Karlsen 1987; Kamensky 1997; Norton 1996; Foster 1999; Crawford 2000). Effectively fulfilling one’s expected gender role required concerted effort that could constitute circumstances for both social friction and resorting to countermagical utilization. The rigidity of Puritan gender roles occasioned those who strained against such narrow restrictions to overstep the boundaries of socio-religious appropriateness, thereby publicly displaying attitudes and behaviors deemed sinful and potentially evil (Koehler 1980; Karlsen 1987; Norton 1987, 1996; Kamensky 1997). To protect oneself, one’s family, and one’s property from such potentially evil transgressors could prompt the use of countermagical charms against them, as is seen in 1680 when Rachel Fuller of Hampton, Massachusetts was prevented from entering the Godfrey family house due to the ‘sweet bays’ (bay laurel) that had been laid “under the threshold of the back door all the way, and half way of the breadth of the fore door” (deposition of Mary Godfrey, 1680, cited in Demos 2004a:331). However, the same recourse to countermagical charm use could be an indicator not of a direct response to a particular person, but as a general attempt to fulfill the prescribed
Puritan gender roles that emphasized the protection, well-being, and orderly management of one’s family and household. Thus, protective magic could be used against those who seriously violated gender roles and as an aide in bolstering one’s effectiveness in upholding those roles.

**FIGURE 3.15.** Title page from Gervaise Markem’s *The English Housewife*, 1675.

Idealized gender roles found explicit delineation in seventeenth-century sermons and publications. Gervase Markham’s popular book, *The English Housewife*, which painstakingly described all the skills and duties of a “Good Wife,” went through nine printings from 1615 to 1683 (Figure 3.15). In it Markham establishes the connection between a good wife and her domestic realm including activities that encompass childrearing, cooking, gardening, sewing, dairying, brewing, herb-lore, and healing. Her measure as a woman equated to her skilled execution of a *good wife’s* duties, delineated by Markham:

As her skill in physick, chirugery, cookery, extraction of oils, banqueting stuff, ordering of great feasts, preserving of all sorts of wides (*sic*), conceited secrets,
distillations, perfumes, ordering of wool, hemp, flax: making cloth and dying; The knowledge of dairies, office of malting, of oats; their excellent uses in families, of brewing, baking, and all other things belonging to an household. A work generally approved, and now the eight time augmented, purged, and made most profitable and necessary for all men, and the general good of this nation (First printing 1615; last edition (9th)1683).

While a woman’s ideal identity was thus explicitly outlined, it remained highly unstable and contradictory as both success and failure in conforming to these expectations was cause for witchcraft suspicion. Such skills as “physick, “chirugery,” and other herbal and medicinal knowledge and practice could be inverted and cited as proof of diabolical skills and knowledge and used as evidence to charge a woman with witchcraft.

He further explicated these required skills in another publication, The Well-Kept Kitchen, which unequivocally identifies women with the domestic sphere and men with the broader public realm (2011 [1615]:1):

Having already in a summary briefness passed through those outward parts of husbandry which belong unto the perfect husbandman, who is the father and master of the family, and whose office and employments are ever for the most part abroad, or removed from the house, as in the field or yard; it is now meet that we descend…to the office of our English housewife, who is the mother and mistress of the family, and hath her most general employments within the house…

Beyond skills and occupations, however, gendered behavior and demeanor were also explicitly defined by Puritan ideology. Morgan (1966[1949]:17) explains the Puritan adherence to the doctrine of subordination which posits that, “Subordination was indeed the very soul of order, and the Almighty as a God of order formed his earthly kingdom in a pattern of subordination.” Markem’s use of the word descend in the above quotation illustrates the accepted seventeenth-century relational scheme situating women as subordinate to men. In this system, the hierarchy of people and their relationships found clear definition. As Morgan
(1966[1949]:19) states, “The essence of the social order lay in the superiority of husband over wife, parents over children, and master over servants in the family, ministers and elders over congregation in the church, rulers over subjects in the state.” So while Ulrich (1991) demonstrates that women could and did assume the authority to act in public business matters as ‘deputy husbands,’ they were doing so with the acknowledgement that they occupied a subordinate place within the family structure.

Puritan codes defined appropriate women’s and men’s behavior and demeanor, including every aspect from their speech patterns to their sexual performance abilities (Earle 1898; Carr and Walsh 1977; Koehler 1980; Demos 1986; Hawke 1988; Kamensky 1996, 1997; Norton 1996; Foster 1999; Holliday 1999 [1922]; Crawford and Gowing 2000; Chapman 2004; Craun 2007). Deviation from these expectations often resulted in legal proceedings. A man’s inability to satisfactorily perform the sexual duties of a husband could result in the court granting a woman an annulment or divorce and the man a legal injunction against remarriage (Foster 1999). In the case of speech violations, sometimes they were a simply a matter of public apology and contrition with the promise to conform in the future. This was especially the case when men ‘misspoke’ or uttered insults against another, disrupting communal harmony and friendly cooperation. The procedure was to ‘unspeak’ the disparaging words as a humbling, public penance. Women, whose speech patterns required a more docile and submissive character, usually ‘unspoke’ their angry words in a private confession rather than a public forum. The difference in venues and vocalization expectations further distinguish the type of speech deemed appropriate for men and women: men’s voices were public and authoritative; women’s voices were private and subordinate. These codes attempted to define to whom one may speak, when, and in what manner. As Kamensky (1997:7) notes, “…women in New England possessed a lot
less verbal license than did their husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons.” While all ‘neighbors’, men and women, risked social or legal penalty for deviant speech, the injunction to “govern their tongues” was most frequently directed at women. “Evil speaking was a primordial feminine transgression” (Kamensky 1997:19) originating with the serpent’s tongue that seduced Eve, and in turn Eve’s tongue that seduced Adam into original sin. Women with ungoverned tongues who cursed, threatened, or railed against their neighbors found themselves not only embroiled in legal proceedings for slander, but potentially marked out for future witchcraft accusations. Men, whose unmanly use of speech, which could either be scolding like an improper woman’s or too submissive like a proper woman’s, also deviated from acceptable behavior and brought suspicion upon themselves (Kamensky 1996).

The import of speech in relationship to supernatural belief lies in the Puritan emphasis on divine scripture. Their correlation between word and deed stems from a literal acceptance of God’s Word. Thus, as “Anglican prelate George Webb supposed…,”“Halfe the sinnes of our life…are committed by the tongue” (cited in Kamensky 1997:18). To utter a curse or threat that illness would befall someone or that livestock would die equated to the actual deed being done. When women, often old, poor, and socially marginalized, would approach neighbors asking for charitable assistance, those community members took a serious risk in antagonizing her, as her curses carried the force of destruction. Men’s misspeaking also had the potential to destroy the workings of the social order, undermining the carefully constructed scaffolding upon which the Puritan world relied.

If the rules for communication limited the opportunities, modes, and venues for expression, especially for women, what consequence did this have on their ability to vocalize their fears and concerns? If disempowered through speech, did magical practice offer women
(and men) an alternative expressive avenue through which to wield some degree of authority over their circumstances? This implies, of course, that at least to some degree these people existed on the periphery of the social, political, and religious authority that ruled their communities. Restricted in their opportunities and latitude for verbal intercourse, women would likely have found alternative ways to express their fears and concerns and assert their identities as good wives who governed their tongues (Kamensky 1996, 1997). Through the use of hidden or hyperobstrusive protective countermagic, women may have conceived a way to manifest silent, but powerful boundaries defining and protecting their domestic spheres including house and family for which they were ultimately responsible and, consequently, themselves as impermeable to the vagaries of human and supernatural forces.

As both men and women’s successful conformation to Puritan social expectations determined their reputations and identities within their communities, fulfilling their duties as productive, providing, and protective husbands, wives, parents, and neighbors must in some cases have required the utilization of whatever means were available to them. Certainly, magic provided one powerful strategy.

Far from the paradisiacal land of plenty where a Puritan utopia would take root and flourish, the realities of colonial New England challenged, frightened, battered, and oftentimes defeated the immigrants to this new world. Cotton Mather (1692:62-63) delineates the tribulations colonists encountered in New England and captures the anxiety and disappointment they suffered:

I believe, there never was a poor Plantation, more pursued by the Wrath of the Devil, than our poor New-England;....First, The Indian Powawes, used all their Sorceries to molest the first Planters here;...Then, Seducing Spirits come to root in this Vineyard...After this, we have had a continual blast upon some of our principal Grain, annually diminishing a vast part of our ordinary Food. Herewithal, wasting Sicknesses, especially Burning and Mortal Agues, have Shot the Arrows
of Death in at our Windows. Next, we have had many Adversaries of our own Language, who have been perpetually assaying to deprive us of those English Liberties,...As if this had not been enough; The Tawnies among whom we came, have watered our Soil with the Blood of many Hundreds of our Inhabitants. Desolating Fires also have many times laid the chief Treasure of the whole Province in Ashes. As for Losses by Sea, they have been multiply’d upon us;… Besides all which, now at last the Devils are in Person come down upon us with such a Wrath, as is justly much, and will quickly be more, the Astonishment of the World.

Unquestionably, New England’s colonists existed in a time and place that enveloped them in dangerous hardships both physical and supernatural. They were challenged by environmental conditions beyond their expectation or experience; confronted with an alteric culture they envisioned as the antithesis of divine good; defied by their own citizenry in matters of religious, social, and political authority; and tested by the ubiquitous evil of witchcraft and demonism. In response they supplemented prayer and pragmatic safety measures with magical administrations to alleviate the anxieties commensurate with all the misfortune, illness, and sudden death that characterized daily life in the seventeenth century.
CHAPTER 4: Research Methods

4.1 Chapter Overview

Having established in the previous chapters a background for an understanding of the nature of magical belief, the current state of archaeological research concerning such beliefs, and the high stress circumstances of seventeenth-century New England colonialists and their magical mindset, this chapter now turns to the specifics of the research upon which this dissertation is based. As noted on several occasions above, the consideration of gendered magical use as risk management strategies has, until now, not been a topic for either historical or archaeological study. To undertake such an exploration with any hope of accruing sufficient and meaningful data from which viable conclusions can be extrapolated required a creative and multidisciplinary approach. Called ‘documentary archaeology’ (Beaudry 1988; Little 1992; Wilkie 2006), this approach “offer[s] perspectives and understandings of the past not possible through single lines of evidentiary analysis” that have the potential to “provide overlapping, conflicting, or entirely different insights into the past” (Wilkie 2006:13-14). In the current study no one disciplinary source provided adequate data to address the issue of gendered magic use; thus, references from a diverse spectrum of materials were synthesized to obtain an image of the stressing situations and magical responses of New England colonists, ca. 1620-1725. The range of data types and sources were in no way systematically inventoried or accessible, and the colossal task of reviewing and combing through every potentially relevant archaeological report in the region for evidence of household magic was not a viable option for this study; therefore, the accumulated historical, folkloristic, and archaeological data presented below were acquired through online digitized documents, hardcopy reports and published works, and phone and email

[163]
correspondence with both agencies and individuals. Each of these disciplinary fields and the data sources accessed particular to each field are specifically delineated in the following sections, along with evaluative commentary.

4.2 Historical Research Methods Overview

The preponderance of knowledge about the magical beliefs and practices of seventeenth-century Anglo-Europeans emerges from a variety of historical texts, each written by individuals with personal, professional, political, or religious viewpoints and agendas. Some of these works attempt to convey information the authors credit in an honest intention of sharing knowledge; others record magical practices as an illustration of general ignorance to challenge the veracity of these beliefs. The works specifically written to discuss magical applications, whether to praise or condemn such behaviors, usually take the form of scientific volumes on herbal medicine or monographs and sermons on metaphysical reality. Other sources, like court depositions, while not primarily concerned with the recordation of magical belief, do provide some first-hand accounts of actual beliefs and fears—some of which are not to be found in magical treatises. Most of the archaeological evidence attributed to magical practice, like concealed shoes and cats, entirely lacks written reference.

In this section, the historical sources consulted for this dissertation are divided into three categories: court records, letters and other firsthand accounts, and finally, other primary and secondary resources. Court records, letters, and other firsthand accounts are discussed prior to other primary and secondary sources, not because they represent the greatest number of magical references, but rather because they illustrate real individuals expressing their fears, beliefs, and practices, whereas the other historical documentation contains magical referents as more remote
from individual behaviors or implied. Confirmed practice naturally has primacy over instructional or implied data; this primacy is reflected in the order of consideration chosen here.

4.2.1 Court Records

The people of colonial seventeenth-century New England were a highly litigious group. Due to their exacting secular and religious approaches to social control, which resulted in numerous possibilities for legal action (see Table 3.3), and the directives for community members to report any infraction of these statutes (Lockridge 1970; Heyrman 1984:49-50; Norton 1996; Deetz and Deetz 2000:153), both secular and religious courts teemed with activity. Religious courts were primarily concerned with those issues that directly impacted or affronted religious authority, like blasphemy or heresy. The secular court system dealt with all other crimes and was based on a roughly three level system (two levels in Rhode Island) (Hall 1991). The lowest court was headed by the local town magistrate, who conducted examinations and handled minor disturbances; the second level comprised county or ‘particular’ courts conducted by a group of magistrates, who presided over trials, determined verdicts, and meted out punishments; the highest level court was the Court of Assistants, again composed of a group of magistrates, but with the addition of a grand jury. This high court was the only one that included a trial by jury; but, even in these cases, the magistrates had the power to accept or reject the jury’s verdict (Hall 1991:11). The employment of so many different courts spread across seventeenth-century New England resulted in abundant and widely dispersed court records.

For all their insights and usefulness, court records from this period necessarily lack comprehensiveness as a source for magical research. First, as often as people accused each other of some infraction, especially of witchcraft or related demonic behaviors, Thomas (1970:53) reminds researchers that:
Judicial cases of all kinds, however, represent only the tip of the iceberg…. the casebooks of the contemporary doctors and astrologers who were consulted by persons who believed themselves to have been bewitched… contain [sufficient evidence] to confirm that formal accusations of witchcraft represented only a small proportion of the suspicions and allegations made in everyday life.

Secondly, because magic use, whether wielded by witches to inflict harm or by victims as countermagical protection, was often considered by religious authorities to be one and the same (Mather 1692:80; Clark 2007:459) and, thus, prevented litigants from mentioning any magical use lest they, too, be suspected and accused of witchery.

Thirdly, such fragile documents have not survived in appreciable numbers or in any comprehensive way, nor are those surviving remnants systematically organized and readily accessible from archives or historical societies. John Barlett (1856: vii), editor of some Rhode Island records, makes an observation that surely holds a similar truth for documents from other colonies as well:

The records of the city of Providence and previous to the organization of the government in 1647 are very meager. It is supposed they were kept in greater detail and were destroyed in the year 1676, when the town was burned by the Indians, as those that remain bear the traces of fire and water.

Some collections of court documents have been compiled and published as books (e.g., see Taylor 1908 for Connecticut; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1972, 1977 for Salem; Barlett 1856, and Fiske1998 for Rhode Island; Drake 1869, Hall 1991, and Burr 2002[1914] for examples across New England). Other collections have been digitized and are available as individual documents or loosely connected collections through Cornell University Library’s Witchcraft Collection, the University of Connecticut’s Online Archive, and individual holdings accessible through a website research page entitled 17th Century Colonial New England, (http://www.17thc.us/index.php), which contains links to some primary documents including the
Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County (MA), the Salem Quarterly Court Records and Files, and the *Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes* [sic] *Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1648*. Most court documentation concerning witchcraft from New Hampshire and Maine exist as individual manuscripts subsumed within the published materials noted above. Rhode Island’s seventeenth-century court documents were compiled into two volumes by the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1920/1922 for the years 1647-1670, but only Volume Two survives today.

As a consequence of the random and piecemeal survival of these court documents, no quantification of data across colonies is possible. However, comparison of the extant examinations, depositions, and court actions does reveal a consistency of complaints, concerns, and expectations across all colonies. This consistency is exemplified in the most extensive court proceeding to occur in New England—the Salem witch trials—and for which the most complete set of records survives. Although the Salem situation was unusual in colonial America for its prolonged intensity and number of people accused, because the numerous accusations and deponents came from several villages and represented all social divisions it actually comprises an ideal sample population. Consideration of their consistency with other court records, the completeness of the depositions, and the broadly representative sample set they comprise, justified using the Salem documents as the primary analytical case study for this dissertation.

The perusal of the court examinations and depositions had three main objectives: 1) to abstract any explicit mentions of magical use; 2) to correlate gender with magical use; and 3) to extrapolate associated patterns of stress with boundary construction. The first two objectives were combined and relevant data from all available court records from the five New England colonies recorded in a Microsoft Access database divided into twenty-one categories that
included date, location, artifact classification (see Tables 5.9 and 5.10), artifact association and deposition, gender association, and purpose. In reviewing the entire range of court records, it became apparent that all the colony court records provide, as Heyrman (1984:37) describes, “an endless succession of disputes over land, debt, religion, militia elections, and seating in the meetinghouse,” to which can be added property loss, slander, and sexual misbehavior; each of these disputes can be understood as a breach or violation of a boundary. As an exemplar of boundary disputes, the Salem witchcraft trial records were analyzed for both physical and metaphoric boundary conflicts to determine any connections between these boundary constructs and gender, space, and magic (Table 5.5).

4.2.2 Letters and Other Firsthand Accounts

To supplement the data sought for in court records that directly related gender, magical practice, and boundary construction, I examined personal letters and accounts from the period. These modes of individual expression have their own particular limitations as data sources. First of all, very few letters ca. 1620-1725 survive from New England. Secondly, due to the fact that more men were literate than women, the preponderance of correspondence was authored by men. This accounts for the majority of such surviving communication focusing on political, military, or commercial events and ventures. However, some letters explicitly address the preternatural and fearful situations occasioned by providences, wonders, and witchcraft. Thirdly, the difficulty inherent in conveying letters in a time and place with limited and irregular transportation opportunities discouraged the writing of such documents. If court documents, for all their original abundance, exist in drastically reduced numbers and piecemeal collections, it is not surprising that the far less numerous letters and personal accounts of the period are even more elusive today. The few that do survive, for the most part, exist as individual monographs in
larger collections like the Samuel Wyllys papers, which are held at the Connecticut State Library, but available digitally online through the 17th Century New England website. Other individual letters have been digitally provided through specialized educational websites (http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/salem.htm) focusing specifically upon historical events like the Salem witch trials. For example, two letters available through this website are Gov. William Phips’ description to his superiors of the demonic state in which Salem was engulfed in 1692/1693. Only one collection of letters has been systematically compiled into a book (Emerson 1976), but this collection’s limited range encompasses only Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1629 to 1638.

Personal accounts like diaries, memoires, and instructions to children are even scarcer than letters. Similar to letters, they, too, were primarily penned by elite men (e.g., Salem magistrate Samuel Sewell). As only the most privileged of women would generally have acquired writing skills (although a broader section of female society could read) (Hall 1989:33; Urban 2006:36), the works authored by women also reflected this elite status. Two issues in particular affected the open referencing of magical practices in personal accounts: 1) the mundane nature of such information, and 2) the potential for such practices to be decried by religious authorities as witchcraft (Deetz and Deetz 2000:88-89). Some of these works are found, like letters, as components of the larger archival collections noted above. Unlike letters, often these works were destined for publication as instructional treatises on religious, moral, or social obligations (Mather 1692a, 1692b; Hall 1989; Urban 2006).

As with the court records, these randomly surviving letters and other personal accounts could not provide quantifiable datasets, but did present (although primarily through a male
perspective) a generalized substantiation of the palpable fear of preternatural power permeating the colonies.

4.2.3 Other Primary and Secondary Historical Resources

As the seventeenth century heralded the Age of Enlightenment, the demand for books on all manner of topics—especially cosmology, religion, and science—burgeoned. Many of these works went through several printings and enjoyed wide distribution on both sides of the Atlantic. Unlike handwritten, singular documents (e.g., court records, letters, and diaries), the sheer number of available copies for any given title predisposed that title to survive the ages. While the originals of these works belong to libraries, archives, or private collectors, virtually all the titles have either been digitally reproduced or rebound and republished by companies like Kessinger Publishing, Dover Publications, Early English Books Online (EEBO), Google Books, and Applewood Books, and made readily available to the general public. Through these and similar publishers, I was able to acquire copies of several works widely known in seventeenth-century New England addressing magical belief and practice (e.g., Scot 1584; Markham 1615, 1683; Culpeper 1652; Aubrey 1670, 1686; Blagrave 1671; Mather 1692b; Hale 1697).

In addition to these primary publications, secondary historical sources concerning magic include compilations of references from other publications similar to those noted above in addition to legal, personal, medicinal, and alchemical, and astrological primary documents. These sources draw together both data that are extremely difficult to find/access and data that may no longer be extant elsewhere. Some of these secondary sources date to a period less removed from the seventeenth century, which may suggest the compilers had access to material now unavailable. These works both corroborate and expand on the examples of magical belief and practice addressed in the seventeenth-century publications delineated above (e.g., Beard n.d.;

Using the court records, personal writings, and published treatises and compilations on magic, I identified and abstracted the historically recorded materials, forms, circumstances, uses, gender associations, and stressors concomitant to magical practice in New England. These data were analyzed according to twenty-one attributes as previously mentioned and coded to isolate three patterns of apotropaic use (crisis, gender, and physical). Data concerning crisis patterns allowed testing of the hypothesis that apotropaic use fluctuates and is most prevalent in times of increased social, political, or environmental instability. The gender pattern data provided insight into apotropaic use differentiation amongst women and men as well as across age, status, and familial standing. Finally, data related to physical patterns revealed concepts and issues of spatial control and boundary permeability. Of the three branches of data—historical, folkloristic, and archaeological—the historical data provided the clearest picture of the three patterns of apotropaic use. These patterns were then compared to the datasets provided by folklore and archaeological sources.

The final type of primary historical source spoke not through words, but through symbolic imagery. As discussed in Chapter 3, when establishing the implication of beliefs, ideas, and symbols across all domains of lived experience, particular symbolic images found reiteration on a range of material objects. To follow this thread of evidence and add these expressions to the practices described in written sources, I consulted every published study of New England gravestones and boundary stone imagery (Ludwig 1966; Deetz and Dethlefsen 1967; Forbes 1967[1927]; Wasserman 1972; Jacobs 1973; Kull 1975; Benes 1976, 1978; Duval and Rigby 1978; George and Nelson 1983; Bouchard 1991; Deetz 1996; Gage and Gage 2003)
and accessed the seventeenth-century furniture collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Pitt-Rivers Museum, The Ryedale Folk Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and The DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum at Colonial Williamsburg. Access to some of these collections is available online, others through personal communication, and others through formal application to the museum’s collections manager. Each of these museums holds a collection of seventeenth-century English and American made furniture or other carved wooden architectural features that, like the grave and boundary stones, include examples of symbols used as apotropaia.

4.3 Folklore Research Methods Overview

Any attempt at understanding the motivations and material expressions of past peoples necessitates a grounding in every aspect of their cultural milieu. One of the most fundamental components of cultural expression involves the range of beliefs, stories, customs, architectural forms, and material creations known collectively as a group’s folklore. Many practices based on these traditional modes of being go unremarked in historical sources; however, in some cases aspects usually relegated to folklore (by researchers, at least) do surface in historical accounts. The reality, power, and danger of fairies provide one such example. Belief in fairies fills volumes of folklore collections, but they also receive numerous mentions in witchcraft trials as the supernatural progenitors of the accused witches’ power (MacCulloch 1921; Wilby 2000). Many of the same devices noted in historical sources to bar a witch’s or demon’s entrance into a house find corresponding references in folklore for deterring fairies and their ilk (see Appendix B) (Hand 1981:142). But not all folkloric ideas translate neatly to archaeological materials; as Gazin-Schwartz and Holtorf (1999:4) assert, “when folklore is analysed...it sometimes does provide plausible interpretations for those [archaeological] materials, whether or not they can
prove unbroken continuity of transmission.” In other words, it is difficult to prove that particular folklore beliefs and practices from an earlier time continued forward or that those from a more recent past were in operation in a more distant past. This difficulty does not rule out the possibility of such continuities or the development of practices similar to those of an earlier time. So while the exact connections may not be traceable, folkloristic data can offer alternative archaeological interpretations. For this study, folklore provided another viable strand of inquiry to continue filling in the evidential gaps for beliefs that comprised the traditional life-ways of these Anglo-European colonists.

4.3.1 Folklore Collections

Folklore by nature expresses and comprises the localized beliefs and customs of a given community or society. My selection of folklore collections, guided by this localized aspect, centered on areas of the British Isles from which the New England colonists originated, for as nineteenth-century folklorist Samuel Adams Drake commented, “New England was the child of a superstitious mother” (cited in Botkin 1989:315). Although most colonists came from the eastern counties of England, some also hailed from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. To account for traditions pertinent to these areas, I included the relative regional folklore collections. In addition to works focused on traditional Anglo folklore, I also perused compilations of folklore collected in New England, of which Botkin’s (1989) A Treasury of New England Folklore remains a standard for the region because it is a synthesis of all the earlier collections and publications.

Folklorists, or antiquarians (which also included early anthropologists and archaeologists) as they were known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, vigorously sought and recorded the entire spectrum of folk traditions across the breadth of the British Isles. The antiquarian study of these beliefs contributed to the anthropological understanding of cultural evolution by
theorizing that folk beliefs constituted an evolutionary stage of primitive conceptualizations through which the lower classes passed on their way toward becoming civilized. To substantiate the universality of this evolutionary theory dictated that the collection of folklore be as comprehensive as possible (Dorson 1969). Some collectors focused on songs or tales, while others recorded proverbs, games, foodways, and beliefs (usually denigrated to ‘superstitions’). The collections from the early antiquarians have been compiled into every format from regional booklets to encyclopedic dictionaries including the most authoritative folklore reference in the field for many years, *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, in 2 volumes (1949), which was later complemented by *Larousse’s Dictionary of World Folklore* (Jones 1995). Virtually all the early collections of British and American antiquarians have been digitized and made available through organizations like The American Folklore Society and Google Books. While the plethora of folklore collections offer relatively organized presentation of information according to place and subject, some references prove more obscure and can only be found interspersed in texts on topics like gardening, weather, or cooking.

In company with historical sources, folklore also has its limitations. The greatest of these limitations concerns the virtually impossible correlation of a particular belief or tradition with an originating date or place. Folklore passes from generation to generation, transmitted orally and informally, slightly altered over the years and through the innumerable tellings by various individuals. It travels with people to wherever they move and can be solidly transplanted or dynamically intermixed with the lore of new neighbors. Some ideas obtain great import at particular times or under particular circumstances only to wane while other ideas take precedence. These ideas may lay dormant for many years only to reemerge at some later date; likewise the practices, symbols, or meanings of the lore may be lost altogether with only
shadowy vestiges remaining to hint at some bygone tradition. Lore always has a sense of deep, traditional time—a timelessness—that validates or naturalizes beliefs and behaviors. Antiquarian Edward Augustus Kendall, Esq., who collected folklore from New England between 1807 and 1808 found the people he interviewed always justified their traditional behaviors (cited in Botkin 1989:315):

…they do so because they have been taught that it is right to do it, or because their fathers did so before them; if they add anything to this, it is that they expect blessings from the observance of the practice, and evils from the neglect.

Folklore’s embeddedness along with its mercurial character makes it challenging to substantiate that any given belief, behavior, or manifestation recorded for a particular social group was or was not in observance by socioculturally related communities during any particular time.

Nevertheless, extrapolating details of supernatural beliefs and their correlated material expressions and gendered associations from folklore sources adds an important and distinctive informational piece that can be compared to extend or substantiate historical and archaeological evidence. The data extracted from the regional folklore sources received the same analytical coding and classification scheme as all the historical data sources, but were recorded in a separate Microsoft Access database to prevent any confusion of source attribution.

4.4 Archaeology Research Methods Overview

The archaeological component of this research’s data triad proved to be the most elusive, both in terms of accessibly and scope. As discussed in Chapter 2, little attention has been directed at the archaeology of ritual and magic in general, and even less specifically concentrated on colonial New England. Although I harbored no expectation of discovering large numbers of archaeological projects focused on New England domestic sites ca. 1620-1725 that had identified or even discussed concealed or otherwise enigmatic depositions potential pointing to magical
practice, I was astonished by their virtual non-existence. I was equally astounded by the unsystematic and non-standardized State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recordation requirements and accessibility policies for attaining archaeological site reports that I encountered through my correspondence with the five SHPOs relevant to this research (Table 4.1).

**TABLE 4.1.** State Archaeological Archives and Records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Nicholas Bellantoni, State Archaeologist</td>
<td>Office of State Archaeologist</td>
<td>CT State Museum of Natural History &amp; CT Archaeology Center, Univ. of CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>Arthur E. Spiess, Archaeologist</td>
<td>Maine Historic Preservation Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Brona Simon, State Archaeologist, Deputy SHPO</td>
<td>Massachusetts Historical Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Richard Boisvert, State Archaeologist</td>
<td>New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources</td>
<td>State of New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Paul Robinson, Principal State Archaeologist</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accessing and analyzing seventeenth-century archaeological projects addressed two goals. The first was to compare the historically documented range of magical material culture and traditional folkloristic beliefs with the archaeological record to determine what is potentially being overlooked or misunderstood in these contexts. The second goal technically represents an inverse of the first goal, looking to the archaeological record for evidence of behavior not documented in the written sources that would extend our knowledge and understanding of magical belief and practice.

To keep this research focused and manageable, the parameters set for the inclusion of a particular archaeological site were necessarily narrow. The site had to be an Anglo-European
residential/domestic one as opposed to a Native American, African American, or military or commercial site (that may have included living quarters). Its construction and habitation had to fall with the 1620-1725 year range, and it must have yielded an adequate artifactual assemblage verifying this temporal occupation. The five state SHPOs were contacted via phone and email requesting lists of all the archaeological projects undertaken in each state that dealt with domestic sites for the 1620-1725 era. The intent was then to access the site reports and artifact inventories for each relevant site to determine if they also met the third criterion. Unfortunately, even getting a response from the SHPOs proved difficult: Maine’s office never responded despite numerous phone calls, emails, and letters; New Hampshire’s archaeological records coordinator initially responded by saying such a request would be too much work for her and only complied with my request after I contacted her supervisor; the Massachusetts office responded with helpful enthusiasm, but it still took numerous follow-up calls and six months before the requested lists were actually sent; both the Connecticut and Rhode Island offices provided their information more readily and timely than the other states. Despite their close geographic proximity and historic commonality, there exists no similarity in the formatting, organization, storage, and accessibility of archaeological site reports across these New England states. These various discrepancies rendered acquisition of archaeological site reports challenging at best.

Rather than relying solely upon the SHPOs to provide me with the relevant reports, I also contacted individual archaeologists, historical societies, state archaeology societies, archaeology museums, and cultural resource management (CRM) firms for archaeological site reports and artifact inventories. The resulting sites are presented in section 4.4.1. As this section will make clear, other archaeology sources also needed to be consulted to compensate for the dearth of data
available through these site reports. Section 4.4.2 describes these sources and their usefulness in analyzing and interpreting the archaeological record.

4.4.1 Archaeological Site Reports

After compiling and synthesizing the disparate reports and information pertaining to seventeenth-century domestic sites in New England, some interesting patterns became apparent. The first pattern relates to the paucity of this particular site type. While archaeological work continues to be prolific throughout the region, seventeenth-century Anglo-European domestic sites comprise but a small fraction of the total projects (Starbuck 1980:379-381). This scarcity may be the result of any number of factors. The relatively ephemeral nature of early wooden structures probably accounts for the absence of much extant evidence. Fires (accidental or intentional) destroyed many homes, as did the destructive tactics employed in Indian wars occurring throughout the seventeenth century. Some were simply dismantled and their materials used in other constructions or entire houses were subsumed in expansive renovations that transformed small, simple structures into larger, more sophisticated ones as financial means allowed. Still others succumbed to the forces of nature and were obliterated through processes of decay, destroyed by storms, or washed out to sea as a result of erosion. Finally, as the population of the eastern seaboard expanded and urban centers and transportation routes covered the landscape, many of these sites disappeared under concrete and pavement.

The second pattern that emerged from the search for eligible sites for this dissertation was the emphasis on either indigenous sites (both pre- and post-European contact) or nineteenth-century sites. The preponderance of attention given to these later sites is understandable as they form the most recent and accessible layer of the palimpsest of Anglo-European occupation. It is possible that some seventeenth-century materials may be recovered in excavations of later
constructions built upon the early sites, but locating recordation of such artifacts would require
the scrutiny of thousands of site reports and artifact inventories and likely produce little
contextually relevant data. In the case of the former site types, it is also possible to find Anglo-
European artifacts within seventeenth-century indigenous sites, but in these contexts they could
not be assumed to reflect Anglo-European meanings and uses.

The twenty-nine listed in Table 4.2 and plotted on Map 4.1 (indicated by blue stars)
constituted all the ca. 1620-1725 domestic sites for which sufficient information was available
through both SHPOs and alternative correspondence. Given that this multistate area has a
Euroamerican population numbering in the tens of thousands over the 105 year period of interest,
the historical archaeology of Pilgrim experience must be considered a very limited sample of this
population. Only five of the twenty-nine either had magical material culture identified by the
excavators or had objects and their contexts described in such a way that suggests a potential
magical interpretation (indicated by red stars on Map 4.1). One additional site, the Josiah
Winslow Site (ca.1632) had a whistle speculated by Beaudry and George (2003:166) to be part
of child’s coral and bells (a magically empowered teething toy), but nothing directly related to
domestic boundaries, so it is not included in the current analysis. The location of the five
confirmed or potential sites provides cause for contemplation: three of these sites occur in the
two colonial regions with the least number of witchcraft prosecutions (i.e. Maine and Rhode
Island). Massachusetts and Connecticut, where the concentration of witchcraft was most acute,
only yielded similar material culture from two Massachusetts’ sites. This seeming discrepancy
may be due to several site formation factors as noted earlier. Other types of magical material
culture may also have existed at any or all of these sites within the physical fabric of the
buildings and have subsequently disappeared along with the structures. Likewise, such materials
may not have been recorded in a way that can support a magical interpretation or they may have simply been missed due to less extensive excavation and sampling.

**MAP 4.1.** Distribution of ca.1620-1725 New England domestic archaeological sites. Map by author.

The archaeological site reports for these twenty-nine sites vary greatly in detail. Some, like the reports provided by the New Hampshire SHPO, are short checklists with a maximum of three paragraphs of narrative describing the sites or their significance. Others, like that prepared by Craig Chartier on the Knoll House Site in Massachusetts, span multiple pages and include
minute detail about the artifacts recovered and their contexts. Unfortunately, this inconsistency of site reporting hampers comprehensive comparative studies on magic or any other subject. Each of the site investigations that do or potentially include magical material culture will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 under the section on archaeological data.

**TABLE 4.2.** Details for excavated ca. 1620-1725 New England domestic archaeological sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Site Name and Date</th>
<th>Excavated or Surveyed Years</th>
<th>PI(S)</th>
<th>Confirmed MMC</th>
<th>No MMC Noted</th>
<th>Potential MMC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Huntington Farm Site/c1720</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>Harold Juli</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilton</td>
<td>Lambert House Site/c1722</td>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>B.W. Powell</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>Solomon Goffe House/c1711</td>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>Albert Morgan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmington</td>
<td>Stanley-Whitman House/c1720</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Rebecca Vaughn</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Berwick</td>
<td>Humphrey Chadbourne/homestead/ c1643</td>
<td>1995-2007</td>
<td>Emerson Baker</td>
<td>Threshold horseshoe</td>
<td>Horseshoe in cellar; cock’s head hinges, lock with symbols, heart key; M or W on window</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Kittery</td>
<td>John Shepard/homestead/c1670</td>
<td>1985, 2002</td>
<td>Emerson Baker</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolwich</td>
<td>William Phips/homestead/c1640</td>
<td>1986-2001</td>
<td>Robert Bradley</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>Lewis Bean/homestead/c1670</td>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>Archaeological Research Consultants</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Charlestown</td>
<td>Garrett-Beadle/merchant captain’s urban house/ c1650</td>
<td>Harvard U Peabody Museum</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourne</td>
<td>Buttermilk Bay Site/house/c</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>James Deetz</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>Isaac Allerton Site/house/c1628</td>
<td>1940-43, 1949; 1971;1981</td>
<td>Henry Hornblower; James Deetz; Mary C. Beaudry, Donald D. Jones, Douglas C. George</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Whistle speculated by M. Beaudry and George (2003:166) to be part of child’s coral and bells</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshfield</td>
<td>Josiah Winslow Site/house/c1632</td>
<td>1937; 1960, 1970, 1998-9; 1981</td>
<td>Sidney Strickland; James Deetz; Mary C. Beaudry,</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Horseshoe, hoe, hinges, scythe by threshold; iron wedges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>John Howland Site/house lot/c1638</td>
<td>1940-43, 1949; 1971;1981</td>
<td>Henry Hornblower; James Deetz; Mary C. Beaudry,</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Site Name and Date</td>
<td>Excavated or Surveyed Years</td>
<td>PI(S)</td>
<td>Confirmed MMC</td>
<td>No MMC Noted</td>
<td>Potential MMC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>Willey House/c1640</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Craig Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Stratham</td>
<td>Wiggin Site/homestead/c1680</td>
<td>1992,1994; 2000, 2002</td>
<td>Gary Hume &amp; Deborah Duranceau; Neill DePaoli</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>South Kingston</td>
<td>Jireh Bull Garrison House/c1657</td>
<td>1918; 1981; 2011</td>
<td>Norman M. Isham; Stephen Mrozowski; Colin Porter</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Lock and key, scissors, cock’s head hinges near</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Additional Archaeological Artifact Data Sources

The greatest amount of magical material culture is recovered not through archaeological excavation or survey, but through historic preservation, house renovation, or structural demolition projects. As these projects deal with extant buildings, they naturally have the advantage in locating in situ the various types of intentionally concealed objects and markings utilized as apotropaic devices (Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Geisler 2003; Northampton Shoe Museum files 2010; Hoggard personal communication 2010; Evans 2011, personal communication 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Theoretically, there should be such evidence from seventeenth-century structures in New England; however, virtually all the existing buildings from this period have had relatively continuous occupation or have been converted to museums. In order to continue to be functional buildings, they will all have undergone modernization changes through the centuries, which may have destroyed or further concealed any evidence of magical material culture or created a palimpsest of magical practices that have obfuscated earlier evidence. Archaeological excavation can, and does take place at some of these properties (e.g., the Rebecca Nurse Homestead in Danvers, MA or the extant John Alden house in Duxbury, MA), but on a limited scale and generally not within the house itself. As Manning’s (2012a, 2012b) and Hoggard’s (personal communication 2010) research has shown, most of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Site Name and Date</th>
<th>Excavated or Surveyed Years</th>
<th>PI(S)</th>
<th>Confirmed MMC</th>
<th>No MMC Noted</th>
<th>Potential MMC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wickford</td>
<td>Smith’s Castle (Richard Smith Jr.) Site/c1678</td>
<td>1973-1992; 2007</td>
<td>Patricia Rubertone</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>thresholds; buckthorn shrubs at house corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>Greene Farm Archaeology Project (John Greene) house/c1640</td>
<td>2004-2009</td>
<td>Patricia Rubertone; Krysta Ryzewski</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Scissors along house wall; heart padlocks and key</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
apotropaia recovered in the United States, including that emerging from these seventeenth and eighteenth-century structures, dates to the nineteenth-century. Such data reveals a continuation of traditional popular beliefs that have been documented in great numbers in medieval and post-medieval Great Britain (Merrifield 1955, 1988; Easton 1988, 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Davies and Blecourt 2004; Hoggard 2004; Davies 2007, Manning 2012b), and provide examples of the behaviors that should also be visible in seventeenth-century American contexts. While these nineteenth-century data documenting such artifacts as witch bottles, concealed shoes, and dried cats cannot substitute directly for missing evidence from the seventeenth century, their connection to practices from earlier historic periods makes them valuable comparative cases from which important questions about absent evidence should arise.

The data collected on Anglo-European magical belief and use pertinent to the 1620-1725 timeframe from the three distinct disciplinary fields (history, folklore, and archaeology) were stored and organized in a Microsoft Access database program to facilitate classification, cross-referencing, and analysis of all amassed information. Additionally, data analyzed specifically for threshold correspondence were coded and tabulated in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The following chapter will present these dataset analyses.
CHAPTER 5: Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Chapter Overview

The multidisciplinary sources from which the data presented in this chapter derive proved enlightening and yet fragmentary, each offering up glimpses into past behaviors and beliefs. It became clear relatively early in the data collection process that a one-dimensional interpretive framework propounding gendered associations of activity areas or artifacts to the accumulated data would fail to completely illuminate the reality of seventeenth-century Anglo-Europeans in New England or thoroughly explain gendered aspects of magical belief and use. Only the multi-theoretical approach combining functionalism, fear theory, and agency discussed in Chapter 2 could adequately account for the general functionality of magic as well as any differentiation of motivational forces behind its practice by women and men and provide a bridging framework that ties ideas of functionality, risk (fear) management, and empowerment together as a cohesive system through which the data presented in this chapter are analyzed and interpreted.

This chapter is divided into three major sections prefaced with a Data Overview section that briefly defines the sampling procedures used for each of the datasets followed in turn by each of the historical, folkloristic, and archaeological datasets and their analysis.

5.2 Data Overview

Unlike the quantification of the ubiquitous aggregations of ceramic, glass, metal, architectural, and faunal materials that usually provide the basis for archaeological studies of historic sites, the data for this present study defy similar quantification. As Thomas (1970:54) states, “The quantification of beliefs, suspicions, and informal [witchcraft] allegations is an impossibility;” the same can be said of the quantification of countermagical use. The number of magical materials in use does not equate, as accumulations of other artifactual types may, to
socioeconomic status, class, or wealth. Nor can quantification of their stylistic elements or material compositions be used to construct interpretations related to market accessibility or prestige in the way ceramic patterns or types often are. Materials and objects utilized for magical purposes appear to be consistent across socioeconomic classifications (McKitrick 2009:68). Additionally, a tallying of the number of instances a particular object, material, or motif was noted in historical and folklore sources could never provide accurate counts and could quite feasibly produce skewed representations of actual usage; however, the data used here do allow consideration of relative frequencies although they are subject to a variety of biases. A tallying of objects, materials, and motifs reported to date from archaeological sites would likewise misrepresent the actual levels and varieties of magical material culture in use in historical contexts as many instances of magic have been overlooked (e.g., plants, symbols, and numerological associations), while others have received disproportionately concentrated attention (e.g., concealed shoes, cats, and witch bottles). Various site formation processes also influence the types of magical material culture that survive archaeologically (Schiffer 1972, 1987). Due to the unreliability of quantifying magical belief and practice, the data presented here emphasize the range rather than the number of magical manifestations documented in the three data sources; this was the most parsimonious way of establishing the links between magic, gender, and the archaeological record. The statistical notations used herein serve as relative comparative illustrations of particular datasets and do not claim to imply universal patterns. Rather, they offer a preliminary image of gendered behavior that has never before been considered as a launching point for further exploration.

The following three sections lay out the evidence from particular data sources for the variety of beliefs concerning magical material culture that were current and available to women
and men in seventeenth-century New England. The data are then collated into typologies and discussed in terms of gendered motivations and usage in the final chapter.

5.2.1 Historical Data

The compilation of magical materials, their functions, orientations, and uses from historical written sources resulted in a total of 117 codeable instances of seventeenth-century Anglo-European magical belief and practice; 67 instances derive from general historical sources, and 50 come from the Salem witchcraft trial depositions. These counts do not include magic symbols, as the exploration of magical symbolism defied any systematic or quantifiable analysis and would require extensive individualized research projects focused on either each material type (e.g., gravestones or furniture) or each symbol to measure their full extent. By using these 117 instances of magical material culture and a general contextual range of magical symbolism, and taking into account the explicit characterization of men’s and women’s roles in Puritan society, I analyzed the data to determine under what circumstances, for what motivations, and in what forms men and women respectively employed magical material culture to mitigate the environmental, culture contact, social, and gender dangers and tensions that threatened their lives.

From a close analysis of all the various historical sources, seven material categories of magical material cultured emerged (see Table 6.1 for complete description of categories). The magical materials referenced fell into seven major divisions: agriculture, architecture, domestic, flora/fauna, lithic, mortuary, and personal. Of particular importance here are the domestic and personal categories. The domestic division includes all food related objects as well as furnishings, sewing/needlework, and textiles. The personal category contains clothing, adornments, smoking, games, weaponry, grooming/health, and image magic (objects intended to
represent an individual) items. Analysis of New England witchcraft trial depositions reveals that women’s use of magical material culture appears to focus primarily on the harm or threat to domestic issues like childbirth and children, the home, cooking, illness, and personal safety, whereas men’s magical practice deals principally with livestock, crops, and business (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977; Willis 1995). Such a distinction suggests that one gendered dimension of magical practice divides along activity lines that are integrated with gender roles. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the material types used by women and men, while Figures 6.5 and 6.6 provide a correlation between material types and gendered areas of concern. This division finds further substantiation when particular magical forms or material expressions are considered. In addition to the self-professed arenas of concern for which men and women employed magical protection, certain activities—such as building construction, furniture making, metal working, and gravestone carving—fell solely to men, leaving no doubt that magical objects and symbols wrought or structurally integrated into these forms were done so by men. Some of these magical applications came from the professional craftsmen (e.g., carpenters, stone masons, furniture carvers) hired to undertake construction of buildings or other objects as Easton (1999a:534) and Evans (2011:82-84) have demonstrated. Some of these practices reveal male concerns, while others may have been undertaken at the request of women to address their own fears, and still other manifestations may represent mutual worries. Similarly, apotropaic embroidered household linens and clothing items were certainly crafted by women, but their use may not have exclusively reflected female fears.

**FIGURE 5.1.** Gendered magical material culture use represented in general historical sources (Scot 1584; Aubrey 1670, 1686; Blagrave 1671; Mather 1689, 1692a, 1692b; Calef 1693; Culpeper 1814[1652]; Bartlett 1856; Bouton 1867; Drake 1869; Brand 1888; Earle 1893; Burdick 1901; Anonymous 1909; Gardner 1942; Kittredge 1972; Bourne 1977[1725]; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; McLaren 1984; Calvert 1992; St. George 1998; Deetz and Deetz 2000; Burr
2002[1914]; Spencer 2003; Davies and Blécourt 2004; Bailey 2007; Baker 2007; Cheape 2008; Crawford-Mowday 2008; Beard nd).

**FIGURE 5.2.** Gendered magical material culture use as represented in Salem witchcraft trial papers (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977).
Comparing the general historical source data (Table 5.1) to the specific Salem witch trial data (Table 5.2) revealed similar patterns. Both datasets show that food related, flora/fauna, and personal materials far exceeded the other material types as preferred magical objects. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate these preferences and the specific forms within each category. It is interesting to note that while the domestic category showed similar numbers for both the general and Salem datasets, the numbers for the flora/fauna and personal categories in these two datasets are reversed. The most obvious difference between general historical sources and the Salem records was represented by discussion of image magic, or the use of poppets, (general sources n=1; Salem n=21). Although called poppets, dolls, or rag dolls, these objects ranged from actual anthropomorphic dolls of wax, straw, cloth, lead, or sticks to simply knotted cords and twisted handkerchiefs or rags. Both women and men used image magic as harmful and apotropaic magic to sympathetically inflict harm on a victim or suspected witch; and, as the dolls represented individuals, they served as powerful and immediate magical tools to deal directly with a perceived personal threat (Figure 5.3).

**FIGURE 5.3.** Devil distributing poppets for image magic. Seventeenth-century English woodcut.
TABLE 5.1. Magical material culture use represented in general historical sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Agricultural</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Flora/Fauna</th>
<th>Lithic</th>
<th>Mortuary</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=11</td>
<td>N=32</td>
<td>N=5</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=11</td>
<td>N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=67)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals Domestic</th>
<th>Food, preparation</th>
<th>Food, consumption</th>
<th>Food, storage</th>
<th>Furnishing &amp; Decorative</th>
<th>Heating &amp; Lighting</th>
<th>Sewing &amp; Needlecraft</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=2</td>
<td>N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=67)</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals Flora/Fauna</th>
<th>Flora, wild</th>
<th>Flora, cultivated</th>
<th>Fauna, wild</th>
<th>Fauna, domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=13</td>
<td>N=6</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=67)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals Personal</th>
<th>Accoutrements</th>
<th>Clothing/Textiles</th>
<th>Grooming/Health</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Reading/Writing</th>
<th>Smoking</th>
<th>Weapons</th>
<th>Toys</th>
<th>Religious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=67)</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5.2. Magical material culture use as represented in Salem witchcraft trial records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Agricultural</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Flora/Fauna</th>
<th>Lithic</th>
<th>Mortuary</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=11</td>
<td>N=8</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=26</td>
<td>N=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=50)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals Domestic</th>
<th>Food, preparation</th>
<th>Food, consumption</th>
<th>Food, storage</th>
<th>Furnishing &amp; Decorative</th>
<th>Heating &amp; Lighting</th>
<th>Sewing &amp; Needlecraft</th>
<th>Textiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=8</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=1</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=3</td>
<td>N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=50)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totals Flora/Fauna</th>
<th>Flora, wild</th>
<th>Flora, cultivated</th>
<th>Fauna, wild</th>
<th>Fauna, domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=4</td>
<td>N=0</td>
<td>N=4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Overall Count (N=50)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lack of wild flora in both datasets (Tables 5.1 and 5.2) and absence of wild fauna in the Salem depositions (Table 5.2) are also notable. The connotative difference between wild and cultivated plants will be addressed under the section on magical plants in the folklore section 5.2.2. As for the absence of wild fauna apotropaia in the Salem records, it may be connected with the virtually exclusive association of the ‘wild’ areas of forest and uncultivated land with devilish encounters and behaviors as cited in the depositions. Possibly to distance themselves from connection to such demonic interactions or because they were primarily concerned with their allegedly bewitched livestock, men did not reference the use of any animals except their own domestic stock in thwarting witches. Other historical accounts, on the other hand, noted the use of wolf heads, owl skins and talons, toads, and snakes and snakeskins to protect houses, stables, and livestock (Scot 1584:145, 150; Aubrey 1686:115; Kittredge 1972:95).

As noted previously, each of the datasets was coded for crisis, gender, and physical patterns. Of the 67 items abstracted from general historic records 40 (60%) indicated a direct response to an immediate concern (crisis) like illness, storms, or witchcraft; 60 (female n= 25 (37%); male n= 35 (52%)) had a gender association; and 53 (79%) concerned the protection of a physical domestic boundary (Table 5.3). The same coding for the Salem court records showed a significant difference in the crisis pattern as all 50 (100%) citations concerned magical use as a response to the Salem witchcraft crisis. The gendered pattern also reflected the heightened fear experienced by women in this situation as they were the most likely to be accused and punished as witches. The depositions included explicit instances of magical use by 30 (60%) women and
12 (24%) men. Reference to protecting physical boundaries was noted in only 23 or 40% of the testimonies (Table 5.3), but a more detailed analysis of thresholds (Table 5.5 and Figures 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7) illustrates the range and distribution of thresholds associated with fear and magic and shows that body, gender, and religious boundaries were significantly implicated with physical boundaries. This threshold analysis will be discussed in greater detail below.

Combining the counts from the general historical sources and the Salem witch trial records (Table 5.3) produced figures that suggest specific crisis related stresses generally account for about three-fourths (77%) of the use of magical material culture and two-thirds (65%) of magical devices guard the physical boundaries of house, outbuildings, yard, and property. Gendered attribution to magical practice based on these datasets shows only a slightly higher association with women; however, these numbers do not reflect those instances of magical material culture noted above related to gendered occupations.

**TABLE 5.3.** Pattern coding from court and other historical sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>General Historic Records N=67</th>
<th>Salem Trial Records N=50</th>
<th>Combined N=117</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>40 (60%)</td>
<td>50 (100%)</td>
<td>90 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>F 25 (33%) / M 35 (52%)</td>
<td>F 30 (60%) / M 12 (24%)</td>
<td>F 55 (47%) / M 47 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>53 (79%)</td>
<td>23 (40%)</td>
<td>76 (65%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical records offered only a few explicit first-hand accounts of using magical material to protect the physical boundaries of domestic space. The following examples illustrate two common admissions. The first comes from the 1680 deposition of Esther Willson at the trial of Elizabeth Morse of Newbury, Massachusetts (Drake 1869:275). In her deposition, Willson
recounts an episode between her mother, Goodwife Chandler, and Morse that occurred 14 years previously:

…mother…when she was ill…would often cry out and complain that Goodwife Morse was a witch, and had bewitched her…One [person], coming to the house, asked why we did not nail a horseshoe on the threshold (for that was an experiment to try witches). My mother, the next morning, with her staff made a shift to get to the door, and nailed on a horseshoe as well as she could. G. Morse, while the horseshoe was on, would never be persuaded to come into the house….

The second example is a first-hand account of Mary Hortado living near Barwick, Maine in 1683 and recorded by Increase Mather in his essay “Remarkable Providences” (cited in Burr 2002 [1914]:38). After suffering lithobolic and other demonic attacks, Goodwife Hortado was:

…advised to stick the House round with Bayes, as an effectual preservative against the power of Evil Spirits. This Counsel was followed. And as long as the Bayes continued green, she had quiet; but when they began to whither, they were all by an unseen hand carried away, and [she was] again tormented.

While these examples provide direct evidence of the belief in and use of particular materials and forms as apotropaia, their limited occurrence in historical records precludes a full comprehension of just how vulnerable to supernatural forces domestic boundaries were perceived to be. To gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between fear, boundaries, and magic required looking beyond these few examples of threshold apotropaic use and analyzing the threshold language used by those fearful of supernatural attack. Samuel Gray’s testimony against Bridget Bishop, sworn in Salem on May 30, 1692, offers a representative example of how people emphasized the permeability of particular threshold types in their descriptions of preternatural events by repeatedly referencing the threshold type and its locked state (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977:94):

…he awakened & looking up, saw the house light as if a candle or candles were lighted in it and the dore locked…he did then see a woman standing…and seemed to look upon him soe he did Rise up in his bed and it vanished or disappeared then he went to the door and found it locked and unlocking and Opening the
dore he went to the Entry dore and looked out, and then againe did see the same Woman he had a little before seen in the Rome...then he said to her in the name of God what doe you come for. Then she vanished away soe he Locked the dore againe & went to bed...[but] looked up & againe did see the same woman...

A careful reading of the Salem witch trial depositions for these threshold language cues uncovered three broad physical boundary and three metaphoric boundary categories whose violation caused people varying degrees of fear or anxiety (Figure 5.4). The physical boundary categories include domestic structures, domestic yards, and public spaces, while the metaphoric boundaries comprise notions of personal violation, sociopolitical contravention, and religious defiance. These categories were further subdivided into thirteen specific physical thresholds and eight metaphysical thresholds to gain a better understanding of how physical and metaphysical boundaries were perceived as a system (as discussed in Chapter 3) of nested and implicated concepts requiring threshold protection through supernatural means (Figure 5.4). For example, the metaphysical personal category labeled gender captures those instances when a woman or man was accused of witchery based on behaviors interpreted as violations of gender role boundaries including improper speaking behaviors, failure to accept or conform to hierarchical familial power structures, and overall failure to adequately perform tasks associated with one’s gender (as discussed in Chapter 3). To maintain social order and protect individual households, gender roles and expectations had to be enforced and guarded and were contributing elements in the protection of the more concrete domestic boundaries through which these gender-violating witches may pass.
FIGURE 5.4. Physical and metaphorical boundary violation fears by category from the Salem witchcraft trial papers.
FIGURE 5.5. (below) Physical and metaphorical boundary violation fears from the Salem witchcraft trial papers.

Similarly, the broader personal category contains a subcategory labeled body that notes particular instances of concern for the violation of one’s body through illness, physical attack, and possession. The layers of apotropaic protection applied to both external and internal
domestic thresholds to prevent the entry of supernatural forces were often intended to protect the household inhabitants from such bodily invasions.

The sociopolitical boundary transgression most represented in the Salem data involved theft or loss of property (e.g., crops, livestock, food goods, linens) attributed to the maleficium of witches or demons (Dailey 1992). Trust, honesty, and integrity were expected virtues in communal New England villages and their breach undermined important core values and prompted feelings of fear and mistrust in community members. Apotropaia use to guard the physical boundaries of barns, houses, and fields against preternaturally caused losses simultaneously guarded the concepts of personal rights, honesty, and trust that ideally structured colonial society.

It certainly could be argued that the divisions used here overlap or that particular categories, like gender, could just as well fit under the sociopolitical grouping as the personal grouping or that theft/loss could be seen as a personal violation as well as a sociopolitical concern. The distinctions made here do not deny or exclude such implications. Rather they were chosen as one analytical device to begin to deconstruct the types of threshold violation fears underlying the use of magic by men and women in seventeenth-century New England.

To better visualize and spatially situate these contested thresholds into a seventeenth-century New England landscape, photographs of Plymouth Plantation (Figure 5.6) and of the Samuel Pickman House, ca1664, Salem, Massachusetts (Figure 5.7) are overlain with colored orbs marking the thresholds as indicated in the witch trial depositions. The size of the orbs corresponds to the relative degree of concern cited in the depositions. The orb colors in Figure 5.6 correspond to the category colors on the pie chart in Figure 5.4, while the red orbs in Figure 5.7 represent the various ‘hot spots’ of preternatural boundary permeability in the domestic
setting. Using such illustrations provides a more dynamic and phenomenological perspective of seventeenth-century spaces as ranging from safe to perilous. Residents maneuvering through landscapes understood to possess preternaturally vulnerable zones, would have to make decisions about chosen travel corridors (e.g., avoiding fearful areas) or the use of strategies (like using protective magic) to confidently negotiate these landscapes.

**FIGURE 5.6.** Hotspots of boundary violation fear in combined domestic and public spheres. Salem witchcraft papers. Photo courtesy of Todd Atteberry (historyandhaunts.com), Plymouth Plantation, MA.
Further analysis of the fears associated with these thresholds substantiated that gender was an implicated variable of threshold control or violation. Table 5.5 provides a correlation between gender and threshold by noting the occurrence of a particular threshold type with the four possible gender scenarios presented in the trial depositions: male accuser/male accused; male accuser/female accused; female accuser/female accused; and female accuser/male accused. This breakdown provided a more distinct image of the gender relations involved in the perception of threshold permeability. The domestic realm accounted for 36% of the boundary violation fears, with 24% specifically noting a structural element. Of the ninety citations of domestic structural elements, both women and men cited doors (n= 68) with far greater
frequency than they did any other entrance point as potentially breachable by preternatural means. The accounts of spiritual middens and concealed shoes, cats, and written charms, found in and around hearths and roofs, in addition to magical symbols on ceilings and rafters (Swann 1996; Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2007; Geisler 2003; Hoggard 2004; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b) all indicate that the other domestic structural thresholds also required protection. Why these features, especially the roof, went virtually unremarked in the Salem testimonies is unclear.

Concern with the boundaries of domestic areas surrounding the house (n=45) were consistently represented with the exception of gates. As concerned as they were for the safety of their homes, people felt more vulnerable to attack when they ventured beyond the boundaries of their domestic realms and into public spaces (n=68), suggesting they had a sense of control over their domestic boundaries. Of all the public areas, forests were cited the most frequently (n=27) as a place of supernatural danger and activity against which they required protection. All the physical thresholds, both domestic and public, inside and outside, shared one common aspect: both women and men expressed significantly more fear of female witches than male witches crossing these boundaries.

A similar pattern of both women and men fearing the consequences of female violations of metaphoric thresholds clustered around gender behavioral expectations, bodily boundaries, theft, and adherence to Christian faith. A woman stepping outside rigid gender constructs signaled a dangerous threat to social and religious authority and order. Her unnatural behavior was credited to the Devil’s influence and power, which also gave her the ability to invade both the physical bodies of others through possession (what Demos (2004:199) refers to as the ultimate “failure of boundary-maintenance” for victims) or injury, and their physical space through theft and spoiling of their property. A woman not ruled and contained by appropriate
TABLE 5.4. Physical and metaphorical boundary violation fears according to gender from the Salem witchcraft trial papers. See Figures 5.5 and 5.6 for graphic illustration of the physical boundary violation fears.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boundary Violation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Male Accuser</th>
<th>Female Accused</th>
<th>Male Accuser</th>
<th>Female Accuser</th>
<th>Male Accuser</th>
<th>Female Accuser</th>
<th>Male Accuser</th>
<th>Female Accuser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Structure</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Cracks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Yard</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard/Garden</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Boundary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barns/Outbuildings</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Spaces</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other land/space</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociopolitical</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft/Loss</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunkenness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consorting with Devil</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

gender, social, and religious boundaries appeared to the deponents in the Salem trials as the most likely person to acquire and wield destructive supernatural power. Of the instances citing gender violation as a matter of concern in regards to preternatural power, 23 men and 14 women accused women of such a transgression. No men were cited by men or women of violating
gender roles in this way. A total of 38 (m=19, f=19) accusations were made against women as the supernatural force behind bodily attack, possession, illness, and death, whereas only five men were so credited. Theft or property loss (e.g., spoilage of crops, milk or beer soured, death of livestock) also were attributed solely to women by both male (n=18) and female (n=9) deponents. Transgressing religious bounds was recognized as a danger for both sexes. Of the 56 citations concerning crossing over to the Devil, 14 were charged against men (4 by other men and 10 by women); however, the majority of charges (n=42) were leveled at women (17 by men and 25 by other women). Each of these metaphoric boundary violations contributed to the implementation of domestic threshold apotropaia as protective strategies against the harmful intentions of the boundary violators.

This analysis of threshold spaces indicates that both men and women especially feared what they perceived to be the potential supernatural powers accessible to women and the subsequent ability to transgress boundaries. The men’s description of these dangers extended from the most intimate inner bedchambers to the furthest reaches of forest land, but emphasized outdoor spaces associated with work and transportation. Women’s descriptions tended to focus around the domestic sphere, primarily the house, but also included a significant concern for public gathering spaces like the meeting house and communal work or interaction areas for women where they were less in control of the space. As with the data cited in Tables 5.2 and 5.3, the Salem witch trial threshold analysis generally supports a gendered association of supernatural fears with occupation and activity areas. The actual forms of magical material culture employed in these contexts are not gender distinct but dictated by the fears they are intended to alleviate due to their sympathetic or inherently magical properties and relevance to the particular situation as is seen in women utilizing horseshoes or men employing poppets. This
connection of fears, magical material culture, and gender is presented at the end of this chapter (Tables 5.11 and 5.12) using data synthesized from historical, folkloristic, and archaeological sources.

The final historical dataset for this study concerns magical symbols. Renfrew and Zubrow (1994:8) observe that “the use of symbols in relation to the supernatural is often perfectly clear. It is the more complete analysis of their functioning which can be difficult.” This observation certainly holds true for magical symbols in seventeenth-century New England where mention of symbols as apotropaia is virtually absent from written magical treatises or first-hand accounts, yet they appear with frequency and consistency across wide material, spatial, and temporal ranges (Pettigrew 1844; Gramly 1981; Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Lloyd et al. 2001; Hoggard 2004; Evans 2011, personal communication 2012; Fontana personal communication 2012). A rare example noted in a personal journal comes from Samuel Sewell’s diary. Sewell, a prominent Boston merchant and magistrate, built an addition to his house in 1692, but it was beset by lightning and hail, events he interpreted as divine Providence. To protect his house and property from further harm, he records in his diary that he had stone cherubim heads affixed to his gates (Thomas 1973:287; Hall 1989:217; St. George 1998:190). Similar cherubim heads are carved on a Connecticut chest, ca. 1680-1720, painted on a rafter above the hearth in a house close to Little Compton, Rhode Island (St George 1998:190-191), and commonly carved on gravestone tympanums across New England (Ludwig 1966; Deetz and Dethlefsen 1967; Forbes 1967[1927]; Wasserman 1972; Jacobs 1973; Kull 1975; Benes 1976, 1978; Duval and Rigby 1978; Bouchard 1991; Deetz 1996; Gage and Gage 2003), but unlike Sewell’s gate cherubim, each of these cases lacks any explicit contemporary explanation of the symbol operating as apotropaia, although they certainly could have been viewed as protective devices.
Regardless of the absence of written documentation addressing magical symbols and marks, a variety of symbols have been recorded from seventeenth-century British domestic contexts and interpreted as ritual marks or motifs (Pettigrew 1844; Easton 1988, 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Lloyd et al. 2001; Hoggard 2004, personal communication 2012). Unfortunately, they have not been quantified or analyzed beyond a substantiation that they primarily occur at the same threshold points around houses and outbuildings guarded by other forms of magical material culture, nor have the motifs been compared to similar symbols used on other material objects to ascertain possible implications. Despite their British frequency, there has been little notation of these marks or symbols in North American contexts. The only discussions of apotropaic symbolism in seventeenth-century New England come from St. George (1998) and Gramly (1981). Gramly’s discovery in 1978 of ritual marks inscribed on a granite boulder at the margin of a forest outside Salem, Massachusetts is the only published article discovered devoted to the practice of magical symbols in New England, but it is exclusively focused on the symbols found on the boulder (e.g., a pentagram in a double circle flanked by a heart-topped caduceus on the left and an inverted astrological sign for Aries on the right). Easton (personal communication 2012) indicated he found some candle burn initials on attic beams in Williamsburg, Virginia, but could not determine any ritual connection without further analysis. Nonetheless, particular religious and magical symbolic motifs and their meanings have a long history in both Britain and North America as is demonstrated by the recurring devices found on a variety of objects. Regardless of their virtual absence in written sources and the lack of a systematic inventory of symbols, their material manifestations must be considered as another strand of potentially recoverable artifactual evidence of magical belief and practice.
The most common apotropaic symbols utilized by seventeenth-century Anglo-Europeans included hexafoils and rosettes, circles, triangles, hearts, spirals, and whorls; also used, but apparently with less frequency, were crosses, pentagrams, roosters, ‘V V’ overlapped, cherubim, assorted astrological symbols, and tear-drop burn marks. Some of the symbols had direct religious associations (e.g., overlapped double ‘V’ or inverted ‘M’ meaning Virgo Virginium for Virgin Mary, crosses, and cherubim heads); others drew their power through less direct, but still recognizable connections to the Christian worldview (e.g., hexafoils, triangles, circles, pentagrams, and roosters); and some have pre-Christian origins as solar symbols (e.g., spirals, whorls, hexafoils, rosettes, and circles) (Binder 1972; Matthews 1993; Gibson 2001; Paine 2004; O’Connell and Airey 2005). Easton (1999a:533) notes that “those used to evoke the protection of Christ and the Virgin Mary are…found scribed or painted on houses, agricultural buildings, cupboards and boxes” and are found throughout England, especially in East Anglia. He concedes that some of the marks found in buildings are simply carpentry marks, but others work as apotropaic protection drawing from religious and astrological symbolism (Figure 5.9).

**FIGURE 5.8.** Common marks found in English houses and outbuildings (Easton 1988:7).
Although numerous motifs existed in seventeenth-century New England, a detailed description and analysis of all possible variations is beyond the scope of this study. To gain a clearer sense of seventeenth-century magical symbols, their material manifestations, and possible gender associations, I have focused on the five symbol types that appear to have the greatest frequency of occurrence and the widest range of expression: hexafoils, circles, hearts, triangles, and overlapping ‘V’s. Each of these motifs is discussed in turn below.


Hexafoils occur in both domestic and sacred spaces (See Figures 5.9 and 5.10) and have been recorded in Britain (Easton 1999a, 1999b; Kemp 2010), Australia (Evans 2011), and Spanish Colonial Arizona and California (Fontana personal communication 2012). Fontana’s and Evan’s discovery of hexafoils in eighteenth and nineteenth-century structures in two disparate Christian settings illustrates their long standing and widespread importance as a powerful Christian symbol. In the seventeenth-century New England domestic realm, they appear on a
wide variety of objects including furniture pieces such as boxes for holding valuables (see Figures 3.6 and 5.11), chests, and chairs (Nutting 1971); architectural thresholds; and gravestones. Ludwig (1966:225) refers to the hexafoil as a ‘six-pointed rosette,’ which he includes in a category with all other multi-petalled and swirled images found on gravestones:

> Rosettes can be divided into a number of classes including the eight-, six-, and four-sided variants, their cousins the wedges and webs, and the more distinct but still related coils and whirls…[but] most common of all are the six-pointed rosettes…

Forbes (1967[1927], Ludwig (1966), and Slater and Tucker (1978) give more attention to a wider range of seventeenth-century New England gravestone symbols than do other scholars, but without connecting those symbols with their appearance on other types of material culture or to apotropaic magic.

According to British scholar, Ric Kemp (2010), hexafoils started appearing in English churches at the time of the Protestant Reformation (ca.1517-1648), while Easton’s (1999a:533) research indicates that hexafoils used as domestic apotropaia began during the post-Reformation period when the increased fear of “witches entering through the openings of the house must account in part for their position around the hearth, windows, and doors.” Although documented on Romano-British tombstones, hexafoils on Early Modern gravestone tympanums and finials did not begin to appear with regularity in England and New England until the end of the seventeenth century (See Figures 3.2 and 5.11) (Ludwig 1966; Forbes 1967[1927]; Duval and Rigby 1978; Slater and Tucker 1978; Deetz 1996; Gage and Gage 2003). Most hexafoils, whether on wood or stone, were precisely drawn with a carpenter’s or engraver’s compass, which suggest they were male creations. This does not, however, preclude females from scratching cruder examples upon hearth lintels or door and window sills or rendering them in embroidery on household linens. An apparently important attribute of the hexafoil design
regardless of its location or its precision—beyond the obvious fact that it is a triad multiple—is its placement within a circle, which occurs in virtually every recordation of hexafoil apotropaia (Easton 1999a:534; Evans 2011, personal communication 2012; Fontana personal communication 2012). Additionally, the apotropaic circles (Easton 1999a:534) or the hexafoils (Evans personal communication 2012) are often left incomplete, similar to the intentionally broken or ‘killed’ objects used in other magical contexts. This combination of attributes, each apparently amplifying the magical force of the whole, reiterates the point presented in Chapter 3.

that magical material culture operates as a system with integrated components, and may be more easily recognized and understood once these systemic elements and their associations are acknowledged.

Circles, like hexafoils, have been used as domestic threshold apotropaia in various ways. While they were used in conjunction with hexafoils, they also appear as singular, concentric, or overlapping circles on hearthstones, window sills, doors, and rafters (Easton 1999a, 1999b, 2011; Hoggard 2012) and on doorstones and gravestones (St. George 1998; Gage and Gage 2003). Their use on seventeenth-century gravestones predates that of hexafoils, as does their appearance on doorstones (St. George 1998; Gage and Gage 2003). Figure 5.12 provides some seventeenth-century examples of circles used as threshold apotropaia. According to symbologists, the circle represents unity and perfection, and thus the divine (Matthews 1978:40; Gibson 2001:81; O’Connell and Airey 2005:111). As a symbol of the ultimate divine power, it would naturally serve as a motif of protection from evil forces. Like many hexafoils, the exactness of circles engraved using a compass on stone or wood, indicates their production by men who would have had access to these tools; but, also like imperfect hexafoils, imprecise circles within and around the house could just have easily been rendered by women.

**FIGURE 5.11.** Examples of circle forms used as apotropaia (left to right): concentric circles on Dummer 1690 doorstone, Newbury, MA (Gage and Gage 2003:116); overlapping inscribed circles on sealed door in Harvington Hall, Worcestershire, England; circles imbedded in hearthstone, Fleece Inn, Bretforton, England. English photos courtesy of Brian Hoggard.
The heart motif appears on a similar range of material objects as hexafoils and circles as well as appearing in two unmistakably apotropaic forms. Not only do hearts repeatedly occur on furniture (frequently in triads) (Figure 5.13), gravestones, and key handles (Figure 5.19), but red cloth hearts are also a common element in witch bottles (Merrifield 1955, 1988; Kittredge 1972; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Hoggard 2004), just as real animal hearts were common apotropaia placed in hearths and chimneys and worn as amulets (Kittredge 1972:97). In Christian iconography, the heart is often symbolic of the soul or representative of the Virgin Mary (Paine 2004:172; O’Connell and Airey 2005:155). In addition, it represents the life force and is particularly associated with the hearth (i.e., the heart of the home) and by extension the well-being and strength of house and household (Matthews 1978:97; St. George 1998:174). The correlation of hearts with the Virgin Mary, hearths, and households imbues this motif with strongly feminine attributes and associations.

**FIGURE 5.12.** Triple heart motifs on seventeenth-century American chest and chair (Nutting 1971:31, 224).
The significance of triad forms for seventeenth-century Christians, explained in Chapter 3, cannot be disregarded. As symbolic motifs they occur both as geometric figures and as triplicate repetitions of other shapes (e.g., three hearts or circles). The triangle itself appears singularly, nested one inside another, in a zig-zag series, or overlapping to create a pentagram on witchposts, furniture, doorstones, gravestones, and bottles (see Figures 3.3 and 5.12). Similar to other incised markings, formal triangular carvings rendered on these objects were done by male craftsmen. Not all magical triangles required a craftsman’s hand, however; triangular arrangement of other apotropaic objects could be constructed by anyone to enhance or activate magical forces (Kittredge 1972:95).

The final symbol to be considered is the double ‘V’ that appears throughout domestic structures on hearth lintels, rafters, and door and window sills and jambs. Unlike the symbols described above, this marking often occurs not as a formal rendering on crafted surfaces, but as scratched or burned impressions done by unskilled individuals, male or female. Their more impromptu appearance suggests they may represent instances of an individual’s perception of an immediate threat to home and household. Like other motifs, the double ‘V’ frequently comprises one component of an associated set of symbols that includes circles, P’s, and crosshatched lines (Easton 1988, 1999a, 1999b; Hoggard 2004).

The evidence for apotropaic ritual markings in domestic structures and on furniture and gravestones indicates they were constructed by three groups of practitioners: craftsmen (e.g., carpenters, stonecutters, furniture makers); professional cunning folk; and individual laypersons (Easton 1988, 1999a, 1999b, 2011). Those created by craftsmen seem to operate as proactive devices to ensure a general sense of protection. They guarded the integrity of built structures, the contents of chests and boxes, and the occupants of houses, barns, and graves against
preternatural forces. The craftsmen’s incorporation of apotropaia into their designs was also to ensure the stability and quality of their constructs, which directly related to their own reputations and socioeconomic standing (Burdick 1901).

Whether employing professional cunning folk for the application of magical symbolism or applying such symbols oneself, both recourses appear to be responses to particular stressful situations. Professional male and female cunning folk were called upon for serious cases of illness, odd behavior, or misfortune that required greater expertise and supernatural knowledge than that available to the laypersons involved (Davies 2007; Easton 2011). The particular locations of ritual marks by professional cunning folk may indicate whether the practitioner was a man or woman, but this does not reveal the sex of the person or persons responsible for engaging the magic professional. Laypersons likely had a more limited repertoire of apotropaic symbols at their immediate command than did cunning folk and used those symbols in tackling the supernatural threats they believed they had power to thwart. Women’s access to the particularly hard-to-reach areas of rafters and ceilings was hampered by their clothing and their gender behavior expectations; thus, marks in these areas were likely manifested by men. On the other hand, the marks found along hearths, doors, windows, floors, and house corners could easily have been done by women. Understanding gender limitations that affected both spatial and behavioral access of seventeenth-century New Englanders provides another clue as to who would create particular apotropaic symbols as well as where, under what circumstance, and for what purpose.

5.3.2 Folklore Data

The information contained in folklore collections of tales, customs, proverbial wisdom, and traditional beliefs, naturally overlaps and reiterates much of the material cited in historical
works concerning witchcraft, medicine, and herbalism. If it were otherwise, the cultural elements characterized as a group’s folklore would be meaningless fictions with no actual relevance to the group’s everyday operation. Due to the ethnographical methodologies of observation and interview used in the documentation of folkloristic beliefs and practices, the folklore collections contain a wider range of magical materials than are spoken of or written about in historical documents. However, even these sources cannot be considered all-inclusive since not all magical behaviors are readily observable or are explicitly discussed. For these reasons, the coverage of traditional beliefs usually constitutes only a small percentage of the information contained in folklore collections and are often characterized and collated as superstitions.

For this study I used twenty-four British and New England folklore collections focusing on supernatural beliefs, superstitions, magic, and plants from which I abstracted 106 magical materials and/or applications germane to this study of domestic boundary control and protection. Coding these 106 objects to discern crisis, gender, and physical patterns indicated that 45 (42.4%) of the practices were associated with particular stressful circumstances like illness, livestock epidemic, perceived bewitchment, or destructive natural forces; 54 (50.9%) were directly linked to gender (28 female; 26 male); and 89 (83.9%) of the devices operated decidedly to guard permeable boundaries (Table 5.6). A further comparison of the overtly gender-associated materials with the crisis and physical patterns revealed that of the 28 female practices, 13 (46.4%) correlated with high stress situations and 21 (75%) dealt with boundary protection. This same comparison for the 26 male practices showed that 11 (42.3%) of the occurrences coincided with stressful events and 20 (76.9%) employed protective boundary elements. These numbers alone suggest little general difference between female and male apotropaic use. As was
the case with the historical data, the distinctions most clearly arise when the particular contexts of magical application are considered.

**TABLE 5.5.** Pattern coding for apotropaic magical use in folklore sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Combined N=106</th>
<th>Female N=28</th>
<th>Male N=26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>45(42.4%)</td>
<td>13 (46.4%)</td>
<td>11 (42.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>F 28(26.4%) / M 26 (25.2%)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>89(83.9%)</td>
<td>21 (75%)</td>
<td>20 (76.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two particular threads of magical belief and protection, although substantiated in historical sources, were discussed in more detail in folklore sources. The first provides a clearer understanding of the fearful supernatural beings addressed earlier under the section on fear theory, their orientation on the landscape, and their interaction with humans; the second expounds the range, virtues, and uses of magical flora. Both threads contribute significantly to an analysis of gendered fear and magic use that is suggested by, but not explored in historical or archaeological studies. These threads and their connection to gendered boundary controls are presented in the following two sections.

*Supernatural beings*

The greatest application of magical practice is as an intermediating agent between people and supernatural forces. Of the 106 folklore instances cited here, 100 were specifically intended to intercede with supernatural beings to either bring success through luck, prosperity, health, or productivity; or to ensure these positive states by blocking the destructive malice of supernatural beings. Both women and men feared the negative consequences occasioned by maleficent spirits, but the particulars of these consequences tend toward those areas or responsibilities
falling within each gender’s greatest purview (Figure 5.13). In agreement with the historical data, folklore sources suggest that women’s apotropaic use focused on protecting the house and household, including issues of food preparation and family health and well-being. Men’s magical use concentrated around livestock and crops, protecting the house, building construction, and protection against ghosts. As the data indicates, most magical practice lacked a gender attribution in the records. This does not necessarily mean that these practices can be attributed to both women and men, although that may be the case in some situations. Alternatively, some of these indeterminate instances may, in fact, be gendered.

Since almost 95% of folklore references to magical material culture involve supernatural beings, it is necessary to provide a brief background into such beings to understand how they relate to the gendered practice of magic. Generally, spirits are held to be of two types (Stein and Stein 2005:194):

1. Non-individualized, anonymous groups of beings (e.g., leprechauns, water spirits, forest spirits, angels, demons)
2. Individualized, guardian spirits (e.g., witches and witches’ familiars)

While some of these beings take a purely animal form, most are perceived as anthropomorphic or theriomorphic with shape-changing abilities. Spirits inhabit and permeate the human world, but in parallel and intersecting ways—their reality is not human reality (Beaumont 1707; Hazlett 1905; Carpenter 1920; Briggs 1957, 1976, 1978; Evans-Wentz 1994[1911]; Porteus 2002[1928]; Kirk 2008[1691]; Herva 2009). They interact with humans in a variety of manners—beneficently, maliciously, and mischievously. They can provide protection, success, and luck or they can mete out harm and destruction through loss of crops, infertility, illness, death, and mishap (Clark 1997; Walker 1995; Wilby 2000). They can be propitiated, but they are usually capricious and morally ambiguous (Russell 1984:78). Sometimes they are intermediaries or
messengers between humans and gods—angels are a prime example of this type of spirit being (Stein and Stein 2005).

**FIGURE 5.13.** Gender associated magical use against supernatural beings from folklore data.

Because they reside in the human world, they are believed to inhabit natural objects or places (e.g., trees, water, stones, mounds, etc.); places of particular beauty (e.g., mountain tops, waterfalls); unusual natural objects (e.g., holed stones or uniquely shaped plants); or can be induced to dwell within a shrine, household, or fetish object (Ellis 2002; Gilmore 2003; Purkiss 2003). While the spirits may be approached and venerated in these places, the spirits' abodes are simultaneously understood to be dangerous territories for humans. Men’s work in agricultural fields and pastures brought both themselves and, more frequently, their crops and livestock into closer proximity to the uncultivated areas associated with supernatural beings. Combining the data in Figure 5.13 that illustrate the virtually exclusive correlation between men and magic use intended to protect livestock and crops with the historical data from Figures 5.2 and 5.3 that
indicate a parallel correlation, suggests that men’s primary interaction with supernatural beings occurred in the agricultural zones of the domestic holding.

In the Anglo-European tradition, a loosely related collection of supernatural beings, referred to en masse as fairies, inhabit the landscape and variously interact with humans (see Appendix B) (Beaumont 1707; Hazlett 1905; Carpenter 1920; Briggs 1957, 1976, 1978; Walker 1990; Evans-Wentz 1994[1911]; Ellis 2002; Porteus 2002[1928]; Gilmore 2003; Purkiss 2003; Kirk 2008[1691]; Herva 2009). Many of these fairies were bound to particular places like hills, caves, forests, or bodies of water; others attached themselves to human domestic realms and were known by numerous names including brownie, Robin Goodfellow, hob, hobgoblin, fenoderee, pixie, and bwca (Briggs 1957, 1978; Kirk 2008[1691]). Briggs (1957:271) described these household spirits as “tutelary fairies” who served humans as either “omen-bearers or as helpers.” Despite their apparent congeniality, these fairies, like all their kind, were understood to be volatile, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous if offended (Cahill 1990:32-33; Walker 1990:36-42; Kirk 2008[1691:47; see Herva 2009 and Manning 2012b for extended discussions of household spirits).

At the extreme negative pole of spirits are demons that, through possession or other malevolent interaction, are often cited as the cause of illness, strange behavior, or deviance in their victims. These demons may be any of the numerous beings inhabiting the landscape, minions of the Devil, or witches’ familiars. The creatures known as witches’ familiars seemed to pose a particularly immediate threat due to their often common forms and their integration within everyday life. They could take a number of animal forms (e.g., cats, dogs, birds, pigs, lizards, toads, mice, bumblebees, hares), or on occasion be more grotesque monstrosities. Regardless of essential character, they were often credited with shape-shifting abilities as well as the power of
invisibility (Glanvill 1682; Mather 1692:69,110-11; Cahill 1990:17). They were thought to be either little demons in their own right provided by the Devil to the witch, or the witch him or herself in a transmogrified form (Briggs and Tongue 1965:62-63; Walker 1990:58-59; Pipe 1991:111-115). The existence of familiars played a critical role in identifying witchcraft in seventeenth-century New England as the first (1641) witchcraft legal codes indicate (Randal nd):

“If any man or woman be a witch, that is, hath consulted with a familiar spirit, he or she shall be put to death.” This legal description and injunction came directly from the Bible: Deuteronomy 18:10-12 states, “There shall not be found among you an Inchanter, or a Witch, or a Charmer, or a Consulter with Familiar Spirits, or a Wizzard, or a Necromancer; For all that do these things are an Abomination to the Lord.” Mather (1692) reiterated this essential connection in his review of seventeenth-century conditions for the identification of witchcraft that variously described an accused witch’s interaction with familiar spirits as proof of witchcraft. The witch and/or Devil used these demon creatures to work their mischief without being present or recognized in their own form. Mather’s (1692:110-111; see also Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977) following account of the accusation by John Louder against Bridget Bishop illustrates several of the then-current beliefs concerning familiars as noted above:

*John Louder* testify’d, That upon some little Controversy with *Bishop* about her Fowls, going well to Bed, he did awake in the Night by Moonlight, and did see clearly the likeness of this Woman grievously oppressing him; in which miserable condition she held him, unable to help himself, till near Day. He told *Bishop* of this; but she deny’d it, and threatened him very much. Quickly after this, being at home on a Lords day, with the doors shut about him, he saw a black Pig approach him; at which, he going to kick, it vanished away. Immediately after, sitting down, he saw a black Thing jump in a the Window, and come and stand before him. The Body was like that of a Monkey, the Feet like a Cocks, but the Face much like a Mans. He being so extremely affrighted, that he could not speak; this Monster spoke to him, and said, *I am a Messenger sent unto you, for I understand that you are in some Trouble of Mind, and if you will be ruled by me, you shall want for nothing in this World.* Whereupon he endeavoured to clap his Hand upon it; but he could feel no substance, and

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it jumped out of the Window again, but immediately came in by the Porch, tho’ the Doors were shut, and said, *You had better take my Counsel!*

This accusation ambiguously implies that Bishop transmogrified into the pig and Thing, while it explicitly notes the familiars’ powers of invisibility and their insubstantial, supernatural essences; the belief that familiars can take both common and monstrous forms; and the belief that witches and familiars can permeate locked barriers.

In Christian dogma of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, all supernatural beings came to be associated with Satan and were treated by the church as demonic incarnations (Glanvill 1682; Scott 1895; MacCulloch 1921; Thomas 1970; Russell 1984; Butler 1990; Clark 1997; Wilby 2000). Bartel (2000:27-28) provides an example of this official church appropriation of folkloristic creatures, including fairies, into its doctrine of demonology by observing that:

…accused witches often testified that they had been taught their magical arts by fairies, perhaps hoping to be judged less harshly than if they admitted to being students of the Devil. Nevertheless, the Church considered these spirit entities to be minor demons, providing further evidence that the witch and her familiars were in league with the Devil.

Although the Church made no distinction between fairies and witches, women appear to have been more concerned than men with the mischiefs usually attributed to fairies (and later equally equated with witches) that directly interfered with the well-being of children and the successful completion of daily chores (MacCulloch 1921; Briggs and Tongue 1965; Briggs 1976, 1978, 2003[1965]; Botkin 1989; Evans-Wentz 1994; Wilby 2000; Purkiss 2003). Fairies were credited with inhibiting butter churning, stealing infants and replacing them with fairy changelings, causing infant sickness and death, bringing bad luck and mishaps, and leading people astray into
dangerous places and situations. In all instances of magic use cited in the folklore data targeting
fairies, only one (the avoidance of the color green) was not directly associated with women.

Magical material culture guarded the house, yard, and field against not only fairies, witches, and witches’ familiars, but of all manner of demonic beings. Of particular interest for this study is the association of demons with nighttime attacks on sleeping victims. Known as incubi, succubae, mares or nightmares, these malevolent nocturnal visitors prompted the use of a variety of magical devices. Stein and Stein (2005:201) note:

Beliefs about demons were elaborated (in various texts and sermons) and had much social influence [in the seventeenth century]...during which time there was a particular interest in incubi and succubae. Incubi and succubae are, respectively, male and female demons that have sex with humans while they sleep. Sex with an incubus was said to be responsible for the birth of demons, witches, and deformed children.

Of the fifty devices for protection against evil forces entering the house identified in the folklore database, eight wield specific power against incubi and succubae (Bergen 1896; Reader’s Digest 1973; Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992; Jones 1995). Three of these devices were attributed specifically to women: peony, diamond, and corpse money; the other five lacked gender association. Folklore sources note the placement of shears and knives under a sleeper’s pillow (Bergen 1896:96); a knife at the end of the bed (Waring 1978:165), peonies hung on beds or worn around the sleeper’s neck (Whitlock 1992:113); stockings stuck with pins and hung on the bedstead (Waring 1978:165); a diamond worn by the sleeper (Jones 1995:141); the herbs St. John’s wort, vervain, or dill dried and hung in houses or planted under windows and near house doors (Reader’s Digest 1973:41; Jones 1995:237); and ‘corpse money’ (a coin held by a corpse) placed under the sleeper’s pillow to prevent conception by an incubus (Whitlock 1992:125).

Although the historical records did not reveal any magical devices used specifically by men to guard against succubae, they did yield testimonies from witch trials of men describing such
nightmare attacks (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1997); they also recorded the use of holed-stones, called hag-stones, “suspended at the bed’s head” to prevent nightmares (Pettigrew 1844:118), but without gender attribution for the practice. Since women perceived greater consequences from nightmares as the result of impregnation by an incubus, they may have been more motivated than men to employ magically protective elements to safeguard themselves against such demons.

Plants

Of the numerous devices and materials used as apotropaia, plants played an important role rarely recognized by archaeologists. A few of these plants are mentioned in court depositions (e.g., bay laurel, angelica) (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1997), and others appear in various herbals and magical books (e.g., holly, houseleek, rowan, rosemary) (Coles 1656; Aubrey 1670, 1686; Blagrave 1671; Pettigrew 1884; Brand 1888; Culpeper 1814 [1652]; Rohde 1922), including this proverb cited by Aubrey (1670:90), “Vervain and dill, hinders witches from their will.” The most extensive description of magical plants is found, however, in folklore sources (Burne 1913; Reader’s Digest 1973; Boland 1976; Waring 1978; McLaren 1984; Whitlock 1992; Jones 1995; Lipp 1996, 2006; Picton 2000). The plants believed to have inherent magical power may have been the easiest, safest, and surest way to protect one’s yard, outbuildings, and house without an overt effort, since they were, for the most part, the same herbs and flowers used for cooking and medicines, and included the trees that provided shade for the yard and wood for constructing buildings, furniture, and tools (Blagrave 1671; Josselyn 1672; Markham 1683, 2011[1615]; Culpeper 1814[1652]; Leighton 1970; Boland 1976; Parkinson 1976[1629]; Nagy 1988; Bown 1995; Patterson 1996; Gifford 2000; Picton 2000; Bishop 2007; McDowell nd). Each was believed to have particular qualities or associations that lent it to specific uses. Angelica, for example, whose name means ‘angelic,’ comes from the
Christian association of the herb with the Festival of the Annunciation and its blooming on the
day dedicated to Michael the Archangel. These biblical connections are what give the herb its
angelic powers of protection against evil (Bown 1995:84; Picton 2000:25)

As indicated in Tables 5.2 and 5.3, cultivated, as opposed to wild, flora seems to have
been favored as apotropaia, excepting only trees and plants that grow in close proximity to or
connection with cultivated areas. The association of uncultivated areas—like forests or
swamplands—with maleficent powers, would by extension implicate the wild plants growing in
such areas with those same negative forces; thus, their use as domestic apotropaia would be
counterproductive. As natural, living elements, plants were integrally bound to seasonal growing
cycles and were associated with grander cosmic schemes, which contributed to the rules and
beliefs about the right (effective) and wrong (dangerous) times particular plants could be
harvested, brought into houses, or used as apotropaia. Most plants were not to be cut with iron
(Wilde 1991[1885]:100) lest their power be destroyed by the iron’s own inherent powers; other
plants (e.g., hawthorn) were considered dangerous to harvest at all, but their naturally fallen
branches could be safely used as apotropaia on only the outside of houses and stables (Williams
1982:52; Jones 1995:221). Some had to be pulled by hand or by an animal (e.g. peony)
(Pettigrew 1844; Wilde 1991[1885]; Whitlock 1992). The efficacy of many magical plants
depended upon the faithful observance of their ritualistic harvesting. Pettigrew’s (1844:39)
observation that, “The virtues of herbs were considered to be according to the influence of the
planet under which they were sown or gathered,” summarizes centuries of Classical, medieval,
and early modern European belief concerning the implication of astrology, plants, and human
life. Blagrave (1671:12) delineates the correlation of plant potency with astrological governance:

All Herbs and Plants, which are under the dominion of the Sun are gathered on
Sundaye: and all those herbs and plants which are under the dominion of the Moon

[223]
are gathered on Mondayes: and all those under Mars on Tuesdayes: and all those under Mercury on Wednesdayes: and all those unde Jupiter on Thursdayes: and all those under Venus on Fridayes: and all those under Saturn on Saturdayes.

Not all herbalist astrologers, however, agreed on the actual plant/planet attributions; for example, Blagrave (1671:4) ascribed vervain to the sun, while Culpeper (1814[1652]:xiii) ascribed it to Venus. Both, however, stressed the importance of gathering plants at the most auspicious times to maximize their inherent properties. The following examples cited in Pettigrew (1844:39) and Wilde (1991[1885]:100) demonstrate that a complex ritualistic interplay of astrological bodies, time, right/left orientation, colors, numbers, and plant species could underlie the magical powers attributed to some plants:

Black hellebore was to be plucked, not cut, and this with the right hand, which was then to be covered with a portion of the robe, and secretly conveyed to the left hand. The person gathering it was also to be clad in white, to be barefooted, and to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine.

Verbena or vervain was to be gathered at the rising of the dog-star, when neither sun nor moon shone, an expiatory sacrifice of fruit and honey having been previously offered to the earth.

Additionally, each planet, and thus plant, was associated with particular numbers (B lagrave 1671:18-19): Sun—1, 3, 4, 10, 12; Moon—2, 6, 9; Mars—2, 4, 7, 8; Mercury—2, 5; Jupiter—1, 3, 8; Venus—2, 3, 6; Saturn—2, 7, 9. As already shown in Chapter 3 and above in the discussion of symbolism, cosmic numerical associations played an integral role in magical charms and apotropaia. This same numerical system was implicated in the magical properties of plants. Wilde (1991[1885]:100) notes:

There are seven herbs that nothing natural or supernatural can injure: they are vervain, John’s-wort, speedwell, eyebright, mallow, yarrow, and self-help. But they must be pulled at noon on a bright day, near the full moon, to have full power. (emphasis in the original)
In this example, seven herbs are profoundly powerful (relating to the ultimate, perfection of ‘seven’), and the zenith of their perfection is only realized at the zenith of the day (noon), which is 12 o’clock (the product of the divine three and the cardinal four, which when added once again give the number seven). Plants, numbers, celestial timing, and verticality combine in this example to reiterate the systemic relationships at work through magical flora.

As explained in Chapter 3, the Doctrine of Signatures also played a critical role in ascribing magical properties to particular plants. Coles (1656:85), while somewhat skeptical about astrological connections between plants and their properties, firmly espouses the Doctrine of Signatures:

…the mercy of God, which is over all his Workes Maketh Grasse to grow upon the Mountains and Herbs for the Use of Men and hath not onely stamped upon them, as upon every man a distinct form, but also given them particular signatures, whereby a Man may read even in legible Characters the use of them.

Many of these signatures indicated the medicinal use to which the plant may be put, while others like the rowan noted in Chapter 3 and others, like the mandrake, exhibited characteristics that were understood as sympathetic indicators of their magical powers.

Various plants’ apotropaic qualities may have gone relatively unremarked as they circumscribed domestic spheres and stood silent sentinel against supernatural forces. Figure 5.15 illustrates a typical early seventeenth-century New England house and yard planted with several of the most commonly cited magical plant species. A more detailed listing of apotropaic magical plants noted in folklore and historical sources is provided in Appendix C. Quantification of specific magical plants is not feasible; however, comparing the gendered references of plant usage in folklore and historical data sources suggest that women, more so than men, were connected to magical flora for domestic protection. Table 5.7 illustrates the breakdown of
gendered attributions to flora noted in the folklore and historical sources used for this dissertation. Historic sources mention 26 specific uses of apotropaic plants with 19.2% (n=5) explicitly attributed to female use, 11.5% (n=3) to male use, and 69.2% (n=18) with no gender association. The folklore sources present similar divisions with 27.9% (n=12) indicating female plant use, 13.9% (n=6) male use, and 58.1% (n=25) gender indeterminate. Considering that the house yard and garden constituted integrated components of a woman’s sphere of responsibility and authority (Markham 1683, 2011[1615]; Demos 1970; Ulrich 1991; Norton 1996), it would follow that she would both be concerned about the security of the space and would more readily utilize the plants under her cultivation to their fullest potential as magical boundary guardians.

TABLE 5.6. Gendered attribution of apotropaic plant usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Undetermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>n=5</td>
<td>n=3</td>
<td>n=18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=26)</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore</td>
<td>n=12</td>
<td>n=6</td>
<td>n=25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=43)</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>n=17</td>
<td>n=9</td>
<td>n=43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=69)</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides being grown around house, yard, and fence perimeters, apotropaic plants were grown or tossed on roofs; hung on inside and outside doors, over windows, and in rafters of houses and stables; and they were placed over and under beds as well as on manure piles. Additionally they were placed on and burnt in hearths, strewn in house corners, carried on one’s person, and attached to livestock, plows, and dairy vessels. Some types of trees and shrubs were used specifically for their apotropaic qualities to construct objects like thresholds (holly), butter churns (rowan), brooms (vervain), and coffins (elder). This ubiquitousness of magical flora in seventeenth-century Anglo-European domestic practices requires archaeologists to broaden their

KEY

A—Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)
B—Houseleek (*Sempervivum tectorum*)
C—Peony (*Paeonia officinalis*)
D—Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
E—Rowan/Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
F—Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
G—Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*)
H—Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
I—St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
interpretations of macrobotanical and palynological materials to include magical practices; likewise, it necessitates the inclusion of botanical materials in any archaeological study of magic and ritual.

5.3.4 Archaeological Data

Table 4.2 enumerated the ca. 1620 – 1725 domestic archaeological sites excavated to date in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island that fit the analytical unit criteria relevant for this study. Only five of these sites produced site reports that offered likely or potential magical artifacts: the Chadbourne Site, South Berwick, Maine; the John Alden Site, Duxbury, Massachusetts; the Jirah Bull House, South Kingston, Rhode Island; the Greene Farm Archaeology Project, Warwick, Rhode Island; and the John Howland House in Kingston, Massachusetts. Each of these sites is discussed below. Two additional types of apotropaia (witch bottles and concealed shoes) warrant inclusion in this discussion even though they are not represented in the archaeological samples of the sites discussed here. As they comprise the two most frequently documented forms of magical material culture found in Britain and elsewhere, including the United States, their obvious absence from seventeenth-century New England archaeological sites requires comment. Following the five site discussions, I will briefly present witch bottle and concealed shoe data to question their absence in seventeenth-century New England domestic contexts and consider their potential to reveal gendered protective boundaries.

Chadbourne Site, South Berwick, Maine

Emerson Baker has been directing archaeology summer field schools at the Chadbourne Site since 1995. As author of *The Devil of Great Island: Witchcraft & Conflict in Early New England*, which recounts the lithobolia attacks that occurred on Great Island, New Hampshire in 1682, Baker’s interest in and knowledge of seventeenth-century magical belief and practice
ensure that attention is given in his excavations to potential magical material culture. Two factors mark the Chadbourne site as an important one for magical material culture research: 1) its emphasis on constructed boundaries; and 2) the discovery of several potentially magical artifacts associated with those boundaries.

Discovered in August 1995 during an archaeology outreach program for public school teachers, the Humphrey and Lucy Chadbourne site has subsequently proven to be an important example of a seventeenth-century enclosed farmstead (Figure 5.16) (Baker 2001, 2009). Baker (2009:12) notes that, “Traditionally, early New England homesteads were believed to consist of a dwelling with a detached barn and outbuildings. Instead, the Chadbourne property was an enclosed compound, with a central courtyard.” Robert St. George (1998:20) described a few similar enclosed sites in Connecticut dating to the mid-seventeenth century. The precedent for this type of fenced farmstead may be the Irish bawn or the English West Country enclosed manor built for the gentry of that region. Baker suggests that since Lucy Chadbourne’s family originated in the West Country, this was the model used for the Chadbourne’s New England homestead. As Baker (2009:12) says, “Certainly the Chadbournes had enough wealth, power, and land to emulate the gentry, a fact that is clearly reflected in the artifacts from the site.”

The site, consisting of at least four structures, was built by Humphrey Chadbourne, Sr. after he purchased a tract of land at the confluence of two waterways in southern Maine from the local Native American tribe in 1643. The Chadbournes enjoyed a prestigious socioeconomic status through their kinship to the leading families in Maine and as one of the region’s founding families. Although their power and wealth afforded them a degree of security, the Chadbournes

**FIGURE 5.15.** Chadbourne site plan. Courtesy of Emerson Baker.
were still subject to the vagaries and misfortunes inherent in a seventeenth-century colonial situation. The fact that they had close social and familial interactions with Quakers and Antinomians (Baker 2009:2) implies their strict Puritanism may have been under question, which could have jeopardized their socio-political standing as well as their safety. The rural location of
their farmstead compound and the volatile relationship between colonials and Native Americans made the safety of property and household an immediate and constant concern for the Chadbournes. This concern became a reality when the farmstead was apparently destroyed during a combined Native and French raid in the course of King William’s War in 1690 in which friends and neighbors of the Chadbourne’s were either killed or taken captive (Baker 2009:3). Additionally, they were equally vulnerable to the ever-present reality of early death from accident, childbirth, or illness that threatened all and could drastically change a family’s fortunes or circumstances at any moment. In fact, Humphrey Chadbourne (1615–1667) died relatively young leaving his eldest son, 14-year old Humphrey Chadbourne, Jr., to inherit the entailed property, and a widow, Lucy, with seven minor children to provide for. Each of these events illustrate that the Chadbourne family experienced many of the uncertainties that precipitated the use of magical material culture to alleviate fear, and Baker’s (2001, 2009) excavations of the Chadbourne farmstead suggests that they did use such strategies to address those fears.

The Chadbourne site was abandoned and burned in 1690 with many of its contents in place. As a result, over 40,000 artifacts exemplifying seventeenth-century New England daily life have been recovered from its excavation. Among them were horseshoes (Figure 5.17), identified by Baker (2009:15) as magical material culture based on their association with thresholds (Figure 5.21), and door hardware:

Like spurs, horseshoes could be symbolic as well as utilitarian. One horseshoe was found near to the exterior door in the lean-to, not far from the hasp for the door. Another shoe was found in the cellar, near door hardware, and not far from the believed location of the front door. Horseshoes were often over or next to doorways, to ward off evil or witches. While some horse and ox shoes found on the site were purely utilitarian, these two shoes appear to have been used to ward off witchcraft.

Horseshoes constitute the most readily recognizable form of magical material culture as they are still commonly seen and understood today as a good luck charm. Their original power, however,
lay in the evil-averting quality of the iron from which they were constructed. Numerous sources cite the use of apotropaic horseshoes (Scot 1584; Aubrey 1670, 1686; Mather 1692b; Drake 1869; Anonymous 1909; Kittredge 1972; Chappell 1973; Scot (1584:151) provides a typical example of the belief that horseshoes prevent the passage of witches:

One principall waie is to nail a horse shoo at the inside of the outmost threshold of your house, and so you shall be sure no witch shall have power to enter thereinto.

FIGURE 5.16. Chadbourne Site horseshoe and stirrup. Photo courtesy of Emerson Baker.

In some cases, a horseshoe may be the only apotropaic device used, but that may not always be so as indicated by the Chadbourne site artifacts. Although he readily identified the horseshoes found as magical material culture, what Baker did not consider was the potential apotropaic symbolism applied to or included in the casting of the door hardware itself. The hardware discovered near the horseshoes included a door lock with inscribed circles and triangles on its latching mechanism (Figure 5.18), a door key with a heart-shaped bow end (Figure 5.19), and cock’s head door hinges (Figure 5.20). Each of these elements alone could have operated as apotropaia drawing upon the symbolic power associated with circles, triangles,
hearts, and chickens to avert or protect against preternatural forces; however, used in conjunction with horseshoes placed above or by the doorway, it appears the elements may have worked as a multilayered protective system.

**FIGURE 5.17.** (below) Door lock mechanism with inscribed circles and triangles. Chadbourne Site. Photos courtesy of Emerson Baker.

**FIGURE 5.18.** (below) Door key with heart-shaped bow end. Chadbourne Site. Photo courtesy of Emerson Baker.

Keys (usually house keys) featured in a variety of magical practices, most commonly associated with the Bible in a ritual to identify witches or thieves; as a good luck charm for the safety and success of sailors’ voyages; placed in groups of three in cradles for infant protection; and through stylistic symbolism in conjunction with their iron attributes to inhibit evil from entering through keyholes (Gerish 1893:391-392; Kittredge 1972:199-200; Jones 1995: 257-258;
Roud 2003:269). The symbolic association of those who possess keys with power and control over space and access extends to the keys themselves as powerful agents mediating threshold access (Jones 1995:258).

**FIGURE 5.19.** (below) Cock’s head hinge from Chadbourne Site. Photo courtesy of Emerson Baker.

The cock’s head hinge discovered at the Chadbourne site is similar to the hinges uncovered at the John Alden site (Figure 5.23) and the Jireh Bull site that will be discussed later. Nutting (1971:541) describes this hinge type as usually made of cast brass, ranging in size from three to eight inches in length, and “never found except on good woodwork.” While he asserts they are normally found on cupboard doors, he also cites a seventeenth-century house that used cock’s head hinges on every house door. Hume (1969:236-237) concurs with Nutting’s observations and adds that this hinge design became popular between 1650 and 1700 (Hume 1969:232). The cock motif had apotropaic associations whether used on weather vanes or on door hinges for both buildings and furniture. The hinge, with its characteristic outward facing,
beaked rooster head on each of the four finials, draws upon the belief that a rooster’s crowing at daybreak scares away the Devil and other evil forces abroad in the night (Hazlitt 1905:133; Hole 1961:108-111; Pickering 1995:68-69). In a similar vein, they were believed to crow in the presence or at the touch of a thief (Hole 1961:109) or in the presence of a fairy or witch in disguise (Whitlock 1992:123). Walker (1992:97) records the use of black cocks as foundation sacrifices in the construction of houses in Wiltshire, England and the ritualistic burial of a living cock at the confluence of three streams on Candlemas Day (February 2nd). Used as protective motifs or sacrifices to frighten away malevolent forces or protect property by alerting against perpetrators, the rooster design was a powerful deterrent to mischief. The use of rooster motifs as magical symbols provides yet another example of the widespread attribution of beliefs to particular forms as chickens, and particularly white or black roosters, are one of the most

FIGURE 5.20. Chadbourne house excavation, Structure 1, with triangles indicating location of horseshoe, door lock, key, and hinge finds. Photo courtesy of Emerson Baker.
common domestic animals used in magic in both Christian and non-Christian belief systems (Hole 1961; Campbell 1988; Jones 1995; Frazer 1996[1890]).

The final evidence from the Chadbourne site that may indicate magical practice comes from a shard of window glass. Unlike most northern New England homes of the mid-seventeenth century, the Chadbourne house contained numerous windows evinced by the amount of window lead and glass excavated from the site. Two different shards of window glass showed inscribed initials: “Tho” and “W” or “M.” As Baker (2009:13), observes, “such graffiti was not uncommon in colonial times. People would use diamonds and other sharp objects to scratch their names or names of loved ones into glass.” While ”Tho” was a common seventeenth-century abbreviation for the name Thomas, the “W” or “M” resemble the variations of the double “V” symbol documented by Easton (1988:7) that are scratched around windows, doors, and hearths. Baker speculates that the “Tho” could refer to Lucy Chadbourne’s second husband or her son-in-law, but there does not seem to be a similar family correlate for the letters “W” or “M,” which further suggests a symbolic possibility for these initials.

Construction of metal hardware like the door latch, cock’s head hinge, and heart-bow key can undoubtedly be credited to male craftsmen and likely reflect male concerns for the protection, both supernatural and natural, of their homes, families, and property. The placement of horseshoes at threshold points and the scratching of protective symbols on and around windows, however, could represent either male or female attempts to magically protect the home and household from preternatural invasion.

*John Alden Site, Duxbury, Massachusetts*

Originally excavated between 1960 and 1969 by Roland Wells Robbins, the John Alden site represents an early seventeenth-century (ca. 1627) expedient residential structure that may have later been dismantled, moved, and incorporated into a larger, more comfortable home (ca.
post-1672) on the same property or razed when the larger residence was built. The artifacts from this site were re-examined by Craig Chartier (2001), particularly the ceramics and pipe stems, to ascertain the accuracy of Robbins’ dating of the site (Beaudry et al. 2003). Robbins (1969:57) was primarily concerned with locating the original Alden house site, but noted at the conclusion of his report that, “It took outbuildings to sustain the homes of the pioneers and their self-sufficient living from the earth….Yet the sites of the Alden barns and outbuildings are unknown today.” His directive for future archaeological work on the Alden site encouraged the search for these outbuildings, a survey subsequently undertaken by Claire C. Carlson (1998) but with no significant results.

The John Alden site, located in Duxbury, Massachusetts on Cape Cod Bay represents the inevitable breaking of original nucleated villages as populations grew and settlers occupied lands further afield from the main village. Eventually, its occupants sought dismissal from Plymouth due to the difficulties inherent in the roadless ten-mile trek by land or across the bay by shallop weather permitting, especially for women and children, that precluded them from attending Sunday worship in Plymouth. Permission was granted, and the settlement of Duxbury (originally Duxborough) became an independent community in 1632 and incorporated in 1637. Unlike Plymouth, Duxbury was a relatively dispersed community, with farmsteads isolated from one another and spread across a coastal and watery landscape that included dunes, salt marshes, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, swamps, and cranberry bogs, as well as forests and fields.

Colonist John Alden (ca. 1599 – 1687), a twenty-two year-old cooper and ship carpenter, arrived in Plymouth aboard the Mayflower in 1620. Alden and his family differed in several respects from some of his fellow colonists. Firstly, he was not a religious separatist, but decided to join the Mayflower pilgrims for their voyage to the new colony possibly in search of more
lucrative opportunities. Secondly, unlike the more affluent Pilgrims in the company, the Aldens initially occupied a middling socioeconomic position. As a master craftsman, John Alden plied his trade building “cabinets, chests, and cupboards” for other colonists in addition to working his farm (Robbins 1969:9). Finally, he and his family were particularly fortunate not to lose innumerable children to early death, as he and his wife, Priscilla Mullins, another Mayflower passenger, ultimately produced ten children, all of whom survived to adulthood. Only two of the ten did not marry; the other eight married and had between six and fourteen children each.

Although the Aldens were spared the sorrows of infant mortality, they still had to contend throughout the years with all the other dangers and vicissitudes concomitant with life in seventeenth-century New England, including John Alden, Jr.’s incarceration for witchcraft during the Salem witchcraft trials (see Appendix A). Their lives were certainly impacted by supernatural beliefs, but whether or not the Alden women or men asserted personal control through magical material culture has not been a research question in the archaeological studies conducted on the Alden house sites. However, five objects and artifact assemblages from Robbins’ excavation of the earlier site are suggestive: two horseshoes, a cock’s head hinge, seven knife blades, a pair of scissors, and three pins (Figures 5.22-5.25) (Robbins 1969). Additionally, the site includes an unexplained feature (Figure 5.26) that puzzled Robbins, and has still not been accounted for by subsequent researchers. Even though the later house structure is still extant, has undergone numerous investigations and restorations, and now houses a museum owned and operated by the Alden Kindred of America, no reference has been made by researchers of the property to any magical marks, symbols, or concealed caches in the house, which means none exist, they have not been found, or they have been overlooked or misunderstood.
The Alden site map of the earlier structure (Figure 5.27) indicates the locations of the potentially magical artifacts considered here. As horseshoes associated with thresholds offer one of the least ambiguous forms of apotropaia, they will be discussed first. One horseshoe was found in the top layer of the cellar fill and one was located in grid F-24 between the possible hearth and the cellar (Figure 5.22). Robbins’ descriptions do not indicate whether either of these locations is in direct association or line with a threshold; however, two factors make their presence suggestive of a function alternative to protective horse-footwear. First of all, horses were rare in this area of New England; even at John Alden Sr.’s death in 1687, according to his probate, he only owned one horse (Deetz et al. 2011). The rarity of horses by extension results in a rarity of horseshoes, which indicates they were not items to be casually discarded. Secondly, that two of these rare objects should be found in a house context rather than associated with stables, barns, or farrier activity areas implies a non-agrarian use; although, even in stables and barns horseshoes were hung as apotropaic devices. Horseshoes did not have to be associated with doorways to function apotropaically (see Table 5.10); they were also embedded in walls, placed inside hearths, used in butter churns and kettles, and attached to stakes to impale witches’ hearts (Blagrave 1682; Cahill 1990:24; St. George 1998:191-193), so their appearance in areas associated with the house (around a hearth, cellar, or dairy) is suggestive of magical usage. As a ship carpenter, Alden would certainly have been aware of—and possibly a believer in—the many practices adhering to seafaring, including the use of horseshoes attached to masts as deterrents to witch or demon produced tempests (Lawrence 1898; Waring 1978; Rappoport 2007[1928]). His familiarity with seafaring beliefs in the protective power of magical devices, especially metal and sharp objects, and the common practice of builders to mark their constructions with protective
symbols, at least suggest that Alden was predisposed to incorporate such strategies into his own house.

**FIGURE 5.21.** John Alden site horseshoe (Robbins 1969:34).

The second artifact with potential magical meaning found at the original Alden site is a large cock’s head hinge (Figure 5.23), approximately twice the length of a horseshoe, and located in the middle of three excavated layers in the cellar. Although larger, it is similar in design to the those from the Chadbourne site discussed earlier. As a cabinet maker, Alden would have been particularly acquainted with hinge forms, materials, and quality as well as with the symbology of the cock’s head. Assuming Nutting’s (1971:541), Hume’s (1969:236-237), and Robbins’ (1969:34) assessment is accurate of the high quality and rarity of this hinge type, its deposition in a cabinet maker’s cellar raises numerous questions: Was it attached to the cellar door or a large cabinet in the cellar? Was it a broken hinge from elsewhere in the house and added to the other metal objects (horseshoe, scissors, knives, pike head, and tweezers) as an
element of a protective system in the cellar? As cellars are filled, do they still require apotropaic guardians? Do objects that serve apotropaic functions in other contexts cease to operate as such in fill depositions? These questions and many more have yet to be answered.

**FIGURE 5.22.** John Alden site cock’s head hinge (Robbins 1969:34).

Sharp, bladed artifacts were strongly represented at the Alden site. In total, seven knife blades and one knife handle, and a pair of open-bladed scissors were excavated at the Alden site (Figures 5.24 and 5.25). Four of the blades, the knife handle, and the scissors emerged from the bottom cellar level, while one knife blade was found in grid F-2, one blade in grid F-18, and one blade in location ‘69’ outside the perimeter of the house that Robbins’ doesn’t include on his site map. The 2 ½ foot square grids run the length and width of the interior of the house foundation walls, exclusive of the cellar at the western end of the house. Grid F-2 lies immediately adjacent
to the cellar area and grid F-18 is situated more centrally in the house in the general living space on the opposite side of the possible hearth from the cellar. Robbins’ descriptions of the blades’ proveniences and orientations lacked enough specificity to determine if the four blades from the cellar were grouped together or were situated in any particular pattern. His general explanation for the deposition of all the artifacts assumed they were remains of construction debris or were strewn about the area surrounding the house and “were used to bury the remains of the house foundation and grade the site after the house had been removed” (Robbins 1969:25) sometime in the mid to late seventeenth century. To assume several knife blades and scissors, among other large metal objects like the cock’s head hinge, would have been randomly lying around on the ground surrounding the house seems problematic. According to historical, folklore, and archaeological documentation, knives and scissors—especially open shears (Briggs 1957:275)—were placed or buried under or near thresholds, embedded in walls and around window and door jams and sills, and placed under cradles, beds, and chairs as apotropaic devices (Table 5.10). Merrifield (1969:103; 1987:162) cites an example of two iron knives covered in mortar and concealed in the fabric of a wall of the circa sixteenth/seventeenth-century Cade House in Kent, England, and Evans-Wentz (1911:144) describes the Welsh practice of placing scythe-blades sharp edge up in the chimney to prevent the traffic of fairies. If the knives found at the John Alden site had been lodged in the building’s structure, they certainly could have turned up in the building detritus that ultimately ended up as the house and cellar fill. As fill components, their proveniences within the excavated cellar and grid units may not indicate apotropaic practice, but that step in their depositional formation process does not exclude the possibility of them operating previously as magical material culture when the house was extant.

**FIGURE 5.23.** John Alden site knife blades (Robbins 1969:32).
The only artifacts within the house excavation that Robbins credits as coterminous with the Aldens’ residence in the house are three pins (Figure 5.25). He (Robbins 1969:25) states:

The only items found within the house site that could have fallen through the flooring when the house stood and was being lived in were 3 silver pins. They were found by Joan McAlear on the sand and at the bottom of the fill soils in grid box F-4. Possibly the Alden clothing was made or was patched above this site.

This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. First of all, it is not clear whether he believed the pins to be actual silver or was simply noting their color as silvery. During the seventeenth century, silver was a scarce metal; in fact, not even silver coins were actually silver, rather they were made of copper. Pins were virtually always of brass, sometimes of iron, and occasionally coated with tin, but were never made of silver. Needles, needing to be sharper than pins, were iron or steel (Hume 1969:254; Beaudry 2006). To appear silver in color, the pins recovered from the Alden excavation would have had to be tin-coated and in remarkable condition as the tinning usually does not survive in archaeological contexts (Beaudry 2006:26).

Secondly, pins do not necessarily or even primarily indicate sewing activities since they also functioned as clothing fasteners, veil and headdress holders, wig and hair fasteners, blanket closures, and as securers for shrouds and other wrappings (Beaudry 2006:22-26). They are also a common component in magical practice used with poppets, in witch bottles, and with cloth and
animal hearts, in which capacities they are frequently associated with hearth areas (see Table 5.10). Finally, for the only pins to have percolated through the floor to be a group of three and in close proximity to a potential hearth area, while possibly random or coincidental, is suggestive in light of the correspondence of the number three with apotropaic power and the preponderance of protective magic associated with the hearth.

**FIGURE 5.24.** John Alden site pins and scissors (Robbins 1969:32).

In addition to the artifacts discussed above, the Alden site also includes a feature that neither Robbins nor any subsequent researcher has been able to account for. Buried at a depth of about 10 ½,” the 17 1/2” by 12” stone slab, approximately 2 ½” thick, was partially surrounded by bricks (Figures 5.26 and 5.27). This buried feature was located three feet northwest of the house’s northwest corner. Robbins searched for similar features at corresponding locations at the other three corners, but did not locate any evidence for such features at these locations. As Robbins (1969:22) states, “The pier, or footing, or whatever it was intended for, was not in line with either the north or the west stonework of the foundation.” It does not appear to have been a
structural support component for the house. The bricks encircling the stone’s perimeter (some of which were piled two high) lacked any mortar or binding material and, thus, would not have been sufficiently stable to function as a support framework if the base stone was a pier or footing. Robbins speculated that the brick tiers could have originally been higher and totally encircled the base stone. He (Robbins 1969:22) also conjectured that the brickwork appears to have been constructed “to function below the ground level.” If this feature was not an architectural support element, its container-like attributes suggest it could have been a cache receptacle. The combination of its position three feet from the house corner, together with its situation on the left-hand side by Christian reckoning facing north or east, the Christian association of the Devil with the north and left (Wile 1934:339-340; Russell 1984:69, 71), and its dimensions approximating other multiples of three (Maxwell-Stuart 2005:90; Milne 2007:106), support the possibility of an apotropaic interpretation for this feature.

**FIGURE 5.25.** John Alden site unidentified stone and brick feature (Robbins 1969:58).

**FIGURE 5.26.** (below) John Alden site excavation plan with highlighted area indicating artifact locations: F-2-knife blade; F-4-pins; F-18-knife blade; F-24-horseshoe; Root cellar-scissors, knife blades, hinge, and horseshoe; NW corner-possible pier/unknown (Robbins 1969:46-47).
Interpreting some of the metal artifacts excavated at the John Alden site as magical material culture is more tentative than the threshold horseshoe and symbol incised lock latch recovered at the Chadbourne site. Nonetheless, these objects do provide the opportunity to question formation processes of magical material culture that become part of backfill matrices. They also offer, in the case of the three pins and the unidentified stone feature, occasion for re-evaluating and clarifying inaccuracies of artifact composition and use, and thereby allowing for alternative interpretations.

**Jireh Bull Garrison House**

The late seventeenth-century site known as the Jireh Bull Garrison House site, caught the attention of Norman Isham, who undertook a project in 1917 to locate the site based on the brief portrayal of the house by Captain Waite Winthrop written on July 9, 1675 during King Phillip’s War. Winthrop described it as a “larg stone house with a good ston wall yard before it which is a kind of small fortification to it” (Isham 1918:3). Foundations for the site showed as visible rectangles under the ground surface marked by old-growth buckthorns (a plant used around doors and windows to repel witchcraft and demonic forces (Cunningham 1985:67); see Appendix C). Ultimately, the site excavations revealed three house structures and remnants of
the curtain wall alluded to in Winthrop’s description (Figure 5.28). Isham determined the smallest structure (C) to be the earliest (pre-1663), followed by the largest (B) (ca.1663), which was burned down December 15, 1675. The third house (A) was built ca.1684 by either Jireh or his son upon returning to their property after King Phillip’s War.

Winthrop’s description of the property was occasioned by his troops moving into the area during the hostilities between colonists and Native Americans to quarter at the Bull house. He found “about 16 of the neibours” (Isham 1918:3) sheltering there due to its robust structure and location.Unfortunately, only two of those neighbors escaped when the house was attacked and burned to the ground.

Isham’s excavation, while producing nicely executed drawings of the site (Figure 5.28) and a good collection of artifacts, lacked the detailed records of artifact provenience expected of archaeological excavation projects of today. As a result, some of the artifacts (like a clipped pine tree six pence) have never been accounted for. According to Colin Porter (personal communication 2011), a doctoral candidate at Brown University currently re-evaluating the Jireh Bull Garrison House site, the clipped coin was not among the rest of the artifact collection given to the Rhode Island Historical Society for curation nor is its current location known. The other artifacts have no provenience data other than their general placement that Isham mentions in his preliminary report (Isham 1918).

When initially searching for potential magical material culture from seventeenth-century New England domestic sites, I contacted Colin Porter concerning his work on the Jireh Bull site. He felt the only potentially magical artifact associated with the site was the clipped coin. Porter, no doubt, is aware of perforated coins and disks and those with a cut extending from the outer perimeter to the center, as well as those bent and folded to be used as magical charms (Davidson
2004), and assumed that a clipped coin as described by Isham was such an altered piece. It is more likely, however, that Isham was noting a coin that had been cut around the perimeter as a way of fraudulently attempting to retain some of the silver from the currency while leaving enough of the original coin intact so as not to lose its spending value. This process entailed the clipping or shaving off of a thin margin of the coin’s outer perimeter. Isham’s (1918:5) description of the coin excavated as “a pine tree six pence in splendid preservation—except that, alas, it has been clipped!” seems to indicate this fraudulent activity rather than the defacing, piercing, and folding that characterize coins used as magical amulets and charms.

Although the coin appears not to be a magical artifact, several other artifacts excavated at the Jireh Bull site deserve consideration for potential magical interpretation. The artifacts as labeled and described by the Rhode Island Historical Society, where they are curated, include a pair of cock’s head hinges, a shovel blade, a crescent-shaped hoe blade, a house key with a “scrolled finger grip,” a horseshoe with six nail holes, a “small pair of scissors rusted in the open position,” a spear-shaped iron door strap hinge, and a large door lock and a key with a broken bow end.

The door lock and key garnered the most detailed attention in Isham’s report, probably because the key was still lodged in the locking mechanism; however, even this artifact’s provenience and attributes were vaguely stated in one sentence. When describing each of the buildings on the site, he begins with structure A and notes that “on the south there was apparently a large door, near which a lock and large key were found” (Isham 1918:5). This lock and key are the only artifacts Isham indicated on the site map (highlighted on Figure 5.8 with a red circle). Unfortunately, he did not sketch or photograph the lock and key to record any symbolic markings or characteristics like those of the Chadbourne lock and key. The Rhode
Island Historical Society has these items cataloged but not photographed and held in storage. Access to them is restricted to in-person research, so images of them were not available for this dissertation to determine if the lock was inscribed with any apotropaic symbols or if the key’s ‘scrolled finger grip’ was actually a heart bow end.

He (Isham 1918:7) remarks with some enthusiasm that “some very interesting and important fragments were found” along the southwestern wall of structure B (highlighted on Figure 5.28 with a blue circle). These ‘interesting and important fragments’ included the cock’s head hinges and a pair of ‘H’ hinges. His interpretation was that these hinges came from a window sash or shutter that had either fallen from the house or had been thrown onto this spot and burned. The shovel and hoe blades, other ironware, gun parts, knife handles, and a dripping pan were also recovered from this general area. Regardless of how interesting or important these artifacts seemed to Isham, he neglected to record the stratigraphic or plotted coordinates of the artifacts to provide a clearer picture of their associative contexts. Other artifacts that he apparently did not find as significant (e.g., the horseshoe, the scissors, or the bowless key) were not mentioned specifically in his report. They could possibly have been grouped with the “other hardware” noted above.

It is virtually impossible to interpret any of the artifacts from the Jireh Bull site as magical due to the absence of more detailed provenience data and access to the artifacts for visual inspection. The site does, however, provide other details that recommend it as a model for expanding awareness of the potentiality of encountering magical material culture in archaeological contexts. First, of course, is the critical issue of careful and thorough recordation
FIGURE 5.27. Jireh Bull Garrison House site plan, Rhode Island (Isham 1918:8).
of artifact provenience, association, and attributes. Although archaeological recordation standards have vastly improved since Isham’s time, they still lack the specificity of details necessary for recognizing magical associations. Secondly, the Jireh Bull site contains numerous boundary features (walled courtyards, curtain walls, doors, and gates) and fireplaces that offer more thresholds than the average site for the application of apotropaic devices. Thirdly, the presence of a known apotropaic plant, buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*) growing at the corners of structure A, provides a basis from which to consider the use of magical plants as protective boundary agents. Lastly, the fact that the site was situated in an isolated area during an extremely volatile crisis period that engendered high levels of fear increases the possibility that some form of magical recourse was used in protecting the house and household. It is recognizing these various characteristics in a site that would allow archaeologists to be more comprehensive in their collection and interpretation of site data.

*Greene Farm Archaeology Project*

The Greene Farm Archaeology Project, Warwick, Rhode Island, a joint venture of Brown University’s Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World and the Department of American Civilization and Wayne State University’s Department of Anthropology, spanned five years (2004–2009) under the direction of Krysta Ryzewski. The project’s goal was to locate, document, and interpret five centuries of “cultural and natural landscape transformation on one of the few remaining Providence Plantations” (Ryzewski 2007). Greene Farm, a 700+ acre tract, was purchased by surgeon John Greene from the local Narragansetts in 1642, and constituted the largest holding in the area. Evidence suggests there were two building phases: the original ‘Old House,’ destroyed during King Phillip’s War in 1676, and the rebuilt house ca. 1690. The property remained in the Greene family for five generations until it was sold out of the family in
1782. The focus of the 2006-2009 excavations has been on the ‘Old House’ and its adjacent midden.

The preceding brief description of Greene Farm’s extensive size and prominence in its local community gives the impression that the Greene family enjoyed a wealthy and influential lifestyle. Like many colonial settlers, however, they suffered the hardships and consequences integral to seventeenth-century colonial ventures regardless of their advantages. John Greene (ca. 1594-1658), his wife, Joane Tattersall Greene (ca. 1598-1636), and their six children (one child had died in infancy in England) set sail to Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. Some reports claim Joane died at sea, while others indicate she may have died shortly after arriving in New England. The family first settled in Salem, but within a short time John was at loggerheads with the Puritan authorities and faced fines and threat of imprisonment in 1637 and 1638 for speaking disdainfully against court magistrates. Greene’s response was to send the court a letter accusing them of appropriating Christ’s power over man and church. Being banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony, Greene moved his family to Rhode Island, a known haven for dissenters of the strict Puritanism of Salem. Greene and eleven others comprised the original proprietors of Providence, and co-founded the town of Warwick, Rhode Island. It was at Warwick in 1642 that he acquired the plantation that would become his family legacy. That same year he married his second wife, Alice Daniels. Unfortunately, in 1643 further legal conflicts arising from questionable land dealings with the local Native rulers and continued disputes with Massachusetts authorities, resulted in an armed force from Massachusetts Bay Colony deploying to Warwick to apprehend Greene and his associates. Greene and his older son escaped, and his wife along with other women evaded the soldiers by running off into the woods.
and taking refuge. Alice is reported to have died from shock due to fear and exposure during her brief exile (GENI My Heritage Project 2013).

After this incident, Greene returned to England where he married his third wife, the widow Phillipa (last name unknown) (ca. 1601-1687), in 1645. Not long afterwards, they made the voyage back to New England and settled at Greene Farm. During Greene’s tenure in Rhode Island he continued his profession as a surgeon, became prominent in the local government, and served as a magistrate of the General Court of Trials. He died in 1658, leaving the property to his eldest son, John, Jr. with provisions in his will for his wife (Rootsweb 2013):

    to his ’beloved wife PHILLIPPA GREENE yet part of buildings, being all new erected, and containg a large hall and chimni with a little chamber joing yet with a large garden wit ha little dary room which butts against ye olde house to enjoy during her life.

Following Greene’s death, life continued to be precarious for his descendants and the other Rhode Island colonists as hostilities continued to build between Anglo-American settlers, the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and the French, which ultimately erupted into King Phillip’s War. Like the Jireh Bull site, the original Greene farmstead fell victim to the aggressions of King Phillip (Metacomet) and was destroyed in 1676. John Greene, Jr. returned to the property and rebuilt the homestead around 1690.

The Greene’s elevated sociopolitical status in no way offered them immunity from the imminent dangers of seventeenth-century New England; but, did they use magical material culture to address those fears and dangers? The archaeological site reports for the excavations at Greene Farm make no mention of any artifacts among the 80,000 collected that suggested such beliefs and practices to the archaeologists working on this project. Out of these thousands of nails, ceramic sherds, pipe fragments, building material oddments, assorted clothing fasteners, metal fragments, and faunal refuse common on historic sites, the excavators specifically noted
about a dozen artifacts as ‘special finds’ and described them in greater detail. Among these were four that warrant more consideration as potentially magical: a small pair of scissors, two heart-shaped padlocks, and a key with a distinctive heart bow end.

Ryzewsky describes the location of two copper thimbles (one in Feature II (S68/E84) and one in Feature DD (S63/E81)) and a single, bent brass pin near the second and less-damaged of the thimbles (Feature BB S59.5/90.5). The deposition of these three items situates them within a single room. Ryzewsky then explains that the handle of a small pair of rusted open scissors was recovered from along a wall section of the Old House. She states (Ryzewsky 2007:30)

If this wall turns out to be the northeastern wall of the structure, as we suspect, then the scissors are situated across the room or in another room of the structure than the other sewing utensils (pin and thimbles).

The fact that these sewing scissors were distinctly separate from all the other sewing related artifacts found across the site increases the possibility that they had been used with another function in mind. Their deposition along a wall also opens the possibility of them having been associated with a window or other threshold point. As previously discussed, open shears embedded in the framework around windows and doors offered magical protection.

The key (Feature CC (S68/E84) was found a few feet from two heart-shaped padlocks (Feature II (S68/E84 and outside the feature (S66/E94) respectively) (Ryzewsky 2007:37-38). The padlocks’ corroded state precludes any matching of their locking mechanisms with the key, but their relative sizes indicate a possible association. The bow end of the key is a stylized heart created by the intertwining of three circular loops. Earlier discussion of heart, circle, and triune symbolism concerning the Chadbourne site’s lock and key artifacts illustrated how these apotropaic elements could be crafted into the structural design of the locking devices. Neither the scissors’ provenience nor the padlocks and key’s heart designs unequivocally substantiate their
operating as magical material culture; however, these characteristics do contribute to such a possible interpretation and must at least be considered as an equifinial alternative.

*John Howland House Site*

The only reference available to evaluate the potential presence of magical material culture at the John Howland farmstead, Kingston, Massachusetts was the field notebooks of Sidney Strickland’s month-long excavation in the fall of 1937. Even though the entire excavation only lasted from September 20 to October 16, 1937, the wealth of data gathered and inscribed in these notebooks resulted in the highest number of potential apotropaic materials out of all the sites discussed in this dissertation. Strickland did not interpret any of the artifacts as apotropaic, yet some of them leave little doubt.

There is nothing exceptional in John Howland’s life story or that of his family that would explain a greater use of magical material culture, with one concession—he seemed to have been exceedingly lucky. Howland came to Plymouth Colony as one of the original *Mayflower* passengers in 1620 as a fourteen-year-old indentured servant. Enroute to the New World, he was thrown overboard during a tempest, but was providentially saved and hauled back onboard. His indenture to John Carver, first governor of Plymouth Colony, ended soon after arrival in Plymouth upon Carver’s death in 1621. Even at such a young age, Howland was quickly making a name and position for himself. By 1626 he was one of the eight colonists who assumed the debt obligation to the pilgrims’ investors in exchange for the fur trade monopoly. Throughout his long life (1591-1673), Howland built a respectable reputation in the fur trade business, served in several political positions (selectman, surveyor of highways, and deputy to the General Court), and enjoyed a long and fruitful marriage with his wife and their ten children. Like the John Alden family, all the Howland children grew to adulthood, married, and each produced between
three and twelve children. Both John and his wife, Elizabeth Tilley Howland (1607-1687) were octogenarians at their deaths. The only major crisis for the Howland family occurred after John’s death when Elizabeth was living with their son, Jabez. Like many farmsteads, the Howland farm was burned during King Phillip’s War in 1675, but the property had been vacated prior to the attack and no one was injured.

Although John and Elizabeth remained staunch religious separatists, John’s two brothers and their families had become Quakers and had suffered the consequences for their perceived blasphemy. John and Elizabeth’s reputation apparently withstood any suggestion of guilt-by-association with these rebellious relations. The only real social conflict that directly embroiled the John Howland family concerned charges of improper behavior against their youngest daughter, Ruth and her fiancé, Thomas Cushman, in 1664. The couple was officially convicted of “carnal behavior before marriage, but after contract” for which they were merely fined and then allowed to marry (Heinsohn 2013). The punishment for such immoral conduct traditionally included public whipping, so Ruth and Thomas were leniently treated. Overall, the Howlands’ seem to have led fortunate lives.

The artifact depositions recorded by Strickland and his team at the Howland farmstead suggest, however, that at least some fear or anxiety needed assuaging by the implementation of apotropaic mechanisms. Noted among the finds are several objects directly associated with the main entrance and threshold of the structure on the south wall and iron objects embedded in the walls in close proximity to the hearth and chimney. Many references to the positioning of the artifacts locate them at points corresponding to multiples of three (e.g., 3, 6, or 12 feet; the intersection of 3 feet and 4 feet). These measurements may be purely coincidental and a result of various site formation processes through the centuries, but they must also be taken into
consideration as possibly intentional, at least in some instances (Maxwell-Stuart 2005; Milne 2007). To clarify the positioning of the numerous artifacts of interest, I created the site drawing and key below (Figure 5.29).

**FIGURE 5.28.** John Howland farmstead plan with artifact locations. Drawing by author.
Several ‘pap’ spoons—common fig-shaped table spoons of the seventeenth-century—were recovered from the site. The first was located “just inside the threshold… lying at the side of or just below the sill between the entrance step and the inside stones” (Strickland 1937:1), two were in the hearth, and two were located to the south of the structure’s southwest corner. The spoon in the threshold sill presents the likeliest magical positioning, but those associated with the hearth could also have been used magically. Evidence that such spoons were used apotropaically comes from the John Farrington House in Dedham, Massachusetts (ca. 1640) where one was discovered embedded in the chimney base in the cellar at the direction of Farrington “believing that the presence of a metal object in his foundation would give added strength to his house” (Figure 5.30) (St. George 1998:192).

Other depositions that strongly suggest apotropaic functions are two iron wedges “found inside the east wall of the house four feet north of the south wall” and “an iron hoe in front of the threshold” (Strickland 1937:3, 5). Strickland’s crew also recovered the ubiquitous horseshoe “inside the house 12″ from the south wall and three feet from the inside of the threshold stones” (Strickland 1937:4). Each of these items is located in a threshold or boundary area and is situated in a context not conducive to its formal function as an agricultural or building tool. These and other similar iron objects have several precedents as magical protection for house and household (Merrifield 1987:162; St George 1998:191-192). St. George (1998:192) provides a comparative example from the Zerubabel Endicott House (ca. 1681) in Danvers, Massachusetts where an eel spear trident was found “over a door on top of a first-floor girt near the front chimney post.” Also found in the Endicott House was a horseshoe attached to the structure underneath the original weatherboarding. The Endicott and Farrington discoveries are not credited to formal archaeological excavations, so they are included here as historical, but not archaeological support for the practice of embedding metal objections within structural frames as apotropaic material.

Additionally, several bladed artifacts were found, including three knife blades and a scythe. One knife was by the outer chimney wall, one in front of the hearth, and one at the threshold entrance—all common areas for the placement of apotropaic blades. The scythe’s coordinates make its deposition especially interesting: Strickland (Strickland 1937:6) recorded that it was located “9’ south and 6’6” west of the southeast corner between 4 and 6” below the ground surface,” which generally places it in front of the main entrance threshold. Whether or not the tertiary measurements reflect intentional and original placement coordinates cannot be determined from Strickland’s report, but like the horseshoe’s location “inside the house 12″ from
the south wall and three feet from the inside of the threshold.” The repetition of tertiary measurements does require reflection.

The site also yielded two wrought iron hooks, a mouth harp, three hinges, two copper pins, and base sherds of a pottery vessel. Like the above artifacts, these are plotted on Figure 5.30 and tend to cluster around the main entrance threshold and the area immediately in front of the house. One of the hooks is associated with the hearth and likely represents hearth hardware as a large chain link, probably from a fireplace crane, was also recovered in that area. The hinges were not described in any detail to indicate whether or not they were cock’s head hinges or included any other symbolic characteristics. Likewise, Strickland neglected to describe the pottery vessel sherds found at the threshold, so speculation about them belonging to a single vessel and that vessel being a Bellarmine and/or possible witch bottle is impossible.

Comprehensively, the John Howland site offers numerous potential and three almost certain instances of apotropaic practice associated with the residential structure. The embedded iron wedges and buried hoe indicate male agency, while the horseshoe, spoons, and knives may involve female choices, although any of them could have been implemented by men. Strickland’s short excavation also tentatively identified a storage shed and a barn, but he and his crew did not have enough time to thoroughly document them, so it is not known whether or not similar patterns of potential magical material use extended to these outbuildings.

**Archaeological Evidence**

Virtually all the magical material culture evidence from the five sites discussed above comprises metal objects. These, along with the few non-metal artifacts, are delineated in Table 5.7 and are coded as possible evidence, likely evidence, or strong evidence for apotropaia. As the table illustrates, most of the evidence from these sites cannot be conclusively interpreted as
apotropaic magical material culture. However, their characteristics, symbolic associations, and depositions do at least offer the possibility of a magical interpretation as one among viable others.

**TABLE 5.7.** Analysis of potential apotropaic artifacts from New England archaeological sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Possible</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chadbourne</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Door latch with inscribed lines and circles</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heart bow key</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cock’s head hinge</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“W” or “M” on window</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Alden</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cock’s head hinge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knives</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scissors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pins</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stone and brick feature</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jireh Bull Garrison House</td>
<td>Cock’s head hinges</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Door lock and key</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key with scrolled bow</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shovel and Hoe blades</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buckthorn plant</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene Farm</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heart-shaped padlocks</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key with heart bow end fashioned from three circles</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Howland House</td>
<td>Pap spoons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iron wedges</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iron hoe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scythe</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knife blades</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pottery sherds</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Witch Bottles**

Witch bottles reckon among the most frequently found apotropaic objects in England, with approximately 200 recovered to date (Costello 2011b; Merrifield 1955, 1987; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Hoggard 2004); however, only nine have come to light in the United States (Map 5.2 and Table 5.8). These bottles usually contained a bewitched victim’s urine, hair and fingernail clippings, iron pins and/or needles, and sometimes a red cloth heart and were buried under thresholds, hearth stones, floors, and along house and field walls. Various vessel forms have been used as witch bottles, but the most commonly utilized vessel type in seventeenth-century Britain for this purpose was the bulbous, Rhenish stoneware jug known as a Bellarmine or Bartmann produced mainly in and around Freshen, Germany, ca. 1550 to 1725 (Fig. 5.31) (Hume 1969:55-57). Bellarmine sherds are relatively common on colonial American sites, yet only one of the currently known American witch bottles was constructed from Rhenish stoneware. Of the nine American bottles, three date to the 1620-1725 period, but these come from Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. The only one located in New England comes from Providence, Rhode Island and has a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century date (Becker 2005).

**FIGURE 5.30.** Stoneware Bellarmine bottles; the bottle on the right was used as a witch bottle containing a pin-pierced felt heart and iron nails. (Merrifield 1987).
MAP 5.1. The only reported U.S. witch bottles to date. Map by author.

TABLE 5.8. Details of U.S. witch bottle finds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Bottle Date/Type</th>
<th>Deposition</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patuxent Point Site</td>
<td>Calvert Co., Maryland</td>
<td>1658-1680 Glass case bottles</td>
<td>Pit feature near domestic structure; inverted</td>
<td>Bottle shards, 3 iron nails, pig’s pelvic bone, raccoon or opossum mandible, oyster shell, chert flake</td>
<td>Witch bottle status debated because of missing standard contents</td>
<td>King (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Neck Witch Bottle</td>
<td>Virginia Beach, Virginia</td>
<td>1690-1750 Light green medicinal vial</td>
<td>Edge of cliff near site of 17th c structure; buried inverted</td>
<td>Approx. 25 brass pins; 3 oxidized iron nails, brownish film in bottom</td>
<td>Brownish film interpreted as urine but not tested</td>
<td>Becker (2005); Painter (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes Bottle</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>1700-1750 Glass bottle</td>
<td>Assoc. with farmhouse door</td>
<td>Pins</td>
<td>No other details recorded in site report</td>
<td>Becker (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essington Witch Bottle</td>
<td>Tinicum Island, Delaware Co., Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1740-1750 Dark olive green, long-necked, square sided squat wine bottle</td>
<td>Buried inverted in small hole near a chimney foundation in a 17th c house</td>
<td>6 brass pins inside and possibly residue of urine and felt; also in pit 1 sherd of black-glazed redware and 1 bird long bone, possibly partridge</td>
<td>House inhabited by English family all through the 18th century</td>
<td>Becker (1978, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Point Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield</td>
<td>Hopewell, Virginia</td>
<td>Bellarmine bottle; no date determined</td>
<td>Chimney foundation in a pre-1763 house</td>
<td>Bellarmine sherds and 2 corroded nail fragments in same context</td>
<td>Not officially noted at time of excavation as a witch bottle</td>
<td>Costello (2011b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Bottle Date/Type</td>
<td>Deposition</td>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cove Lands Charm</td>
<td>Providence, Rhode Island</td>
<td>1780-1820 Small, hand-blown colorless glass medicinal vial</td>
<td>On site of a 19th building but probably associated with an earlier structure</td>
<td>6 straight pins</td>
<td>No other details recorded in site report</td>
<td>Becker (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horn Point Witch Bottle</td>
<td>Dorchester, Co., Maryland</td>
<td>Mid 18th c Broken neck of olive green wine bottle</td>
<td>No details</td>
<td>Part of stopper still in bottle with 17 nickel-plated copper pins, straight and bent stuck in cork</td>
<td>Also found on site 10 pins at entrance to another structure; a pin bent into a circle, a pierced coin, and a Catholic medallion. No other details.</td>
<td>Becker (2005); Morehouse (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Street Witch Bottle</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1st half 19th c Free-blown aquamarine glass bottle</td>
<td>At bottom of a brick-lined cistern</td>
<td>Cork stoppered; ‘Murky fluid’, 2 fabric insole patterns wrapped inside a triangular or heart-shaped scrap of felt pierced with 9 brass pins and 3 needles</td>
<td>‘Murky fluid’ interpreted as urine, but not tested</td>
<td>Alexandrowicz (1986); Becker (2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although no witch bottles have been reported for sites in New Hampshire or Massachusetts, historical accounts verify that they were used in these colonies (Godbeer 1992:44-46). Richard Chamberlain, Secretary of the Province of New Hampshire recorded the use of a witch bottle in 1682 by the Quaker household of George Walton in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with whom Chamberlain was residing at the time. A description of a “successful” witch bottle remedy in un-witching Michael Smith of Boston in 1681 is cited in the Suffolk County Court files, vol. 24; and Cotton Mather records a similar account of witch bottle countermagic in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1689.

As previously noted, certain types of magical material culture have received concentrated attention from researchers, often overshadowing less obvious forms. Concealed apotropaia—cats and shoes, in particular—have been the focus of several studies beginning with the work of British folklorist Edward Lovett in the late nineteenth century; John Lea Nevinson of the Albert and Victoria Museum in the 1930s; and in the mid-1950s, Devizes Museum curator Frederick K.
Annable, and John Thornton along with June Swann of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. In the late 1950s Swann created the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery’s card index of concealed shoes, which recorded pertinent provenance and provenience data for each shoe including any associated materials found with the footwear like cats, chickens, garments, or other artifacts, as well as the gendered attribution of the footwear (Table 5.9). Unfortunately, this data has yet to be digitized and has not been analyzed to ascertain patterns correlating time period, gender, and depositional locations. Evans’ (2011) study of concealed apotropaia in nineteenth and twentieth-century Australia also does not analyze male and female footwear for depositional patterns. These studies have touched on the correlation of gender to concealed apotropaic objects in two basic ways: 1) comparing the percentage of female to male shoes found, and 2) connecting some deposits (especially of men’s work boots) with the building trades. These brief allusions to gender were not enlarged into explicit discussions of possible gendered dimensions to magical material culture. While not recognized as a possible gender aspect at the time, Manning’s (2012a, 2012b) recordation of left and right shoe percentages, may also suggest a gender correlation. Since concealed shoes and cats have been thoroughly discussed in other regards elsewhere (Merrifield 1987; Swann 1996; Geisler 2003; Hoggard 2004; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b), for this current study, I will only be concerned here with possible gendered attributes and their threshold associations.

As Evans (2011:136) notes, concealed shoes from the fourteenth to twentieth centuries have surfaced across Britain, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, and Australia. Likewise, shoe concealment seems to have been a common apotropaic practice in the United States from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries (Geisler 2003; Manning 2012a, 2012b). Only Geisler (2003) and Manning (2012a, 2012b) have concentrated on concealed shoes in North America; Geisler’s
work focuses on Massachusetts, while Manning considers finds across the United States. Their studies refer to approximately 450 individual pieces of concealed footwear recovered in the U.S. to date, the majority of which derive from northeastern sites.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers from ca. 1600-1730</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gender Association</th>
<th>Associated Finds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1600-1610 N=16</td>
<td>Chimney/hearth (n=233/26.2%) ca. 1540-1910</td>
<td>Child (n=609) Male (n=132) Female (n=65) Unspecified (n=412)</td>
<td>(n=59) Other garments-hats, jackets, vests, dresses, aprons, gloves, belts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620s N=1</td>
<td>Under floor/Above ceiling (n=210/22.86%) ca. 1555-1940s</td>
<td>Adult Female (n=405)</td>
<td>(n=22) Faunal-cats, chickens,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640s N=2</td>
<td>Walls (n=169/18.8%) ca. 1500-1920s</td>
<td>Adult Male (n=330)</td>
<td>(n=13) Flora-flower bouquet, seeds, nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650s N=25</td>
<td>Roof (n=168/18.7%) ca. 1400-1910</td>
<td>Adult Unspecified (n=175)</td>
<td>(n=21) Fire associated-tobacco pipes, candlesticks and snuffers, coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660s N=16</td>
<td>Under stairs (n=48/5.42%) ca. 1550-1920s</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=13) Bottles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690s N=65</td>
<td>Door (n=13/1.5%) ca. 1550-1890</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2) Lithic—pebbles, holed stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-1710 N=46</td>
<td>Foundation (n=13/1.5%) ca. 1670-1910</td>
<td>(Unspecified count) Paper-Bible, prayer, and hymn book pages, notes, news clippings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720s N=26</td>
<td>Window (n=9/1.0%) ca. 1690-1910</td>
<td>(Unspecified count) Assorted Miscellaneous—toys, sharp items, horse tack, personal items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Magical shoe concealment may have been a broadly European practice, but the preferential choice of female or male shoes appears to have varied from place to place. These differences may also be the result of formation processes, non-standardized recordation
procedures, and representational sample bias. The only significant commonality across all
temporal and cultural ranges is the overwhelming preference for children’s shoes. However, the
usual division of shoes into adult female, adult male, and child can obscure actual counts of
female or male shoes. This count is further masked due to the fact that historically many
children’s shoes were unisex styles and so gender indeterminate. Swann separately counted
identifiably gendered children’s shoes; however, other concealed shoe studies have not made this
distinction.

Manning’s (2012a, 2012b) analysis of 190 concealed shoes divides them into adult
female, adult male, and child categories. Considering only the adult shoes, her research revealed
a slight preference for female shoes (19%) over male shoes (16%). Of the total adult shoes, 5%
were gender indeterminate. Similar to other studies, children’s shoes were overwhelmingly
represented (41%) but not gender identified in Manning’s analysis. A group of unidentifiable
shoe fragments (19%) was uncategorized. Of the shoes that were recognizable, over three-
quarters (77%) were left and (23%) were right. These observations may hold clues to a better
understanding of the logic and meaning behind shoe concealment and warrant further gender
analysis. The examples in Manning’s study span the seventeenth through twentieth centuries
with most examples dated to the nineteenth century. Of the total sample, the evidence for the
seventeenth century is the scarcest and most problematic. First, as archaeological lab specialist at
the Northeast Museum Services Center for the National Parks Service, Jessica Costello, (2011a)
states in her online article discussing historical shoe identification, “Early shoes were made
straight (with no differentiation between the right and left foot). Right/left differentiation is seen
in men’s shoes from the 1790s on, and in women’s shoes from the 1820s on.” So it appears the

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right/left-male/female correspondence cannot be applied to seventeenth-century apotropaic shoes, although it may have relevance for later time periods.

Having analyzed the historical, folkloristic, and archaeological data on magical material culture for types, applications, and gendered associations, it now requires discussion of what this compilation of information can reveal about boundary construction, gender, agency, and risk-management, and ultimately what such revelations mean for the practice of the archaeology of magic and ritual. In the following and final chapter, the issues of gendered boundary construction and control through the use of magical material culture based on the data presented in this chapter will be discussed, along with an assessment of how well this dissertation has accomplished the research goals set forth at its beginning. Finally, I will offer suggestions for the integration and implementation of this dissertation research into the broader field of archaeology.
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion and Future Directions

6.1 Chapter Overview

Numerous strands of data have been presented in the preceding chapters to substantiate this dissertation’s general hypothesis that seventeenth-century New England Anglo colonists employed magical beliefs as part of a greater belief system to empower themselves in averting or mediating perceived personal, social, spiritual, and environmental dangers. Additionally, the data have supported the premise that gender constructs play a role in the motivation and use of apotropaic magic. These data illuminate the complex and entrenched nature of magical belief and offer a foundation from which to approach a more nuanced study of gender, magical use, and the control of space through protective boundary construction. The first part of this chapter will revisit the overarching goals and questions presented in the introduction to discuss how the above mentioned data strands have supported and answered these goals and questions respectively.

As an incipient and germinal archaeological study of gendered Anglo-European apotropaic magical material culture, this dissertation is by no means comprehensive or conclusive. The research and work entailed here have revealed a multiplicity of issues concerning the broader field of archaeology of magic and ritual that have yet to be explored or synthesized. Recommendations for future research will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

6.2 Dissertation Goals

Five inter-related core concepts guided the research for this current study: boundaries, gender, magic, risk-management, and archaeology. The idea was to determine how, why, and if women and men differentially resorted to magical devices to construct and control the boundaries of their worlds in various dangerous situations, what material manifestations those devices took, and finally what kind of archaeological footprint such devices or practice would
leave. This multi-faceted idea was broken down into three particular questions and presented in the introduction. They will be reiterated here with the answers and tabulated products that resulted from those answers.

**Question 1:** What constitutes apotropaic magical material culture in seventeenth-century contexts and how is it recognizable in the archaeological record?

6.2.1. Magical Material Culture Typology Construction

One of the goals of this dissertation was to synthesize the historical, folkloristic, and archaeological data pertaining to seventeenth-century Anglo-European magical material culture into a usable typology for historical archaeologists. To construct a useful typology of any type requires a great deal of consideration. Patricia Gibble (2005:34) succinctly captures the inherent weakness in typology construction when she states:

Typological classification systems used in archaeological analysis are artificially contrived organizational schemes that allow researchers to describe and place material culture into manageable units for analysis.

These artificial categories may be narrowly chosen to answer specific research questions but lack the scope to address future questions. The best typology would be both focused enough to generate meaningful interpretations for the constructor’s immediate research agenda, and comprehensive enough to prove useful for future applications.

To begin the classification process required a determination of categorical type. Robert Friedel (1993:42) espouses the belief that the first step in the process of analyzing material culture should be a consideration of the material used; however, the reasons he identifies for the choice of materials and their values extend only to the generally pragmatic and extrinsic, neglecting any mythological or magical associations ascribed to certain materials. Friedel (1993:44) cites function, availability, economy, style, and tradition as the most important considerations in choosing a particular material from which to construct specific objects. These
factors, he continues, will be affected by a number of variables, namely: geography, technology, science, fashion, and competition. To these factors Friedel stresses that values adhering to particular material types often ultimately determine the choice of material. He notes scarcity, aesthetics, functionality, and associative meanings (like richness with gold) as the crucial values influencing material selection. Friedel’s approach to material culture falls within the ‘form and function’ school of analysis that emphasizes raw material, morphological attributes, primary functions, and socioeconomic values based upon utilitarian classification schemes irrespective of symbolic or spiritual uses and meanings. While he is correct in asserting, along with other scholars of material culture (South 1977; Lubar and Kingery 1993; Kingery 1996; Miller 1998; Glassie 1999), that objects contain no inherent value or meaning only culturally ascribed ones, in analyzing the material culture of magic, the culturally relative beliefs about the inherency of power, meaning, and association of particular objects must guide interpretation.

When analyzing and interpreting artifacts, archaeologists generally scrutinize individual objects to determine their attributes and classifications. This attention to detail, while necessary, should not exclude or preclude consideration of associated artifacts and contextual information. Part of this potential disassociation may arise as a result of excavation methodologies that use arbitrary 10 centimeter levels instead of following the natural stratigraphic layers created by cultural and natural events (Walker 2002). As Hodder (1993:9) explains:

The meaning of an object resides not merely in its contrast to others within a set. Meaning also derives from the associations and use of an object, which itself becomes, through the associations, the node of a network of references and implications.

Taking into account the pitfalls of constructing too limited a classification scheme or of privileging an individual object over its place within a system of associations, I constructed two complementary typologies for identifying Anglo-European apotropaic magical material culture.
(Tables 6.1 and 6.2) to provide archaeologists a broad sense of the material domains from which magical objects originate and more detailed information on the specific forms and depositional contexts of these objects. The contents of these two typologies are derived from combining all the magical materials noted in the historic, folkloristic, and archaeological data sources available for Anglo-European popular magic. Some of these materials, while too ephemeral to directly survive in the archaeological record (e.g., salt or chalk circle symbols) may appear in other manifestations that do endure (e.g., salt-fired chimney bricks and incised or burned circles on woodwork).

The first table (Table 6.1) divides magical material culture into seven broad functional categories: agricultural, architecture, domestic, flora/fauna, lithic, mortuary, and personal. Each category was then refined into more specific artifact class groups. Rather than forming the initial framework into which the artifacts had to be manipulated, these functional groups and artifact classes developed inductively from the actual objects and materials cited in data sources. The final column of this typology provides numerous examples of the objects that have historically been used in Anglo-European protective magical practice. The complementary typology, here called ‘apotropaic magical material culture manifestations and locations’ (Table 6.2) begins with fourteen artifact classes—similar to the artifact classes in Table 6.1—and subdivides each into the very specific forms and materials documented in the range of data sources. Then to situate these objects into the spatial context of their use, a description is provided of the locations in which they operated as protective magical material culture. While these two typologies present extensive lists that incorporate the range of objects reflected in the available data sources, it would be presumptuous to claim they are exhaustive. People may have used variations or
substitutions for particular objects or materials that have not been encountered or recorded in written or archaeological sources, and thus are not accounted for here.

The resulting Magical Material Culture Typologies (Tables 6.1 and 6.2) and the plant glossary (Appendix C) all provide descriptions of the specific objects and manifestations of Anglo-European apotropaia uncovered in these three source groups. Beyond the specifics of forms, materials, and locations, these typologies indicate that magic was theoretically available to anyone since the objects and materials used and the places they were implemented all comprised typical, everyday settings. The ubiquitousness and multifunctionality of all these magical materials also suggest that their hyperobstrusiveness may have minimized the possible repercussions from legal or religious authorities or fellow community members who connected magical ‘tricks’ with practicing malevolent witchcraft and, thus, influenced their use as apotropaia.

**TABLE 6.1.** Anglo-European apotropaic magical material culture typology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Group</th>
<th>Artifact Class</th>
<th>Representative Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>Animal hardware</td>
<td>Horseshoes, Horseshoe nails, Horse-brasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farming equipment</td>
<td>Hoes, Plows, Axes, Sickles/Scythes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>General hardware and features</td>
<td>Nails, Carpenter tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residential hardware and features</td>
<td>Windows, Rafters, Door knockers, Locks, Keys, Hinges, Hearths, Doors, Doorsteps, Cellars, Support posts, Ceilings, Walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outbuilding features</td>
<td>Doors, Doorsteps, Cellars, Rafters, Beams, Support posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outbuilding features, agricultural</td>
<td>Stables, Barns, Cow sheds, Animal pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outbuilding features, workshops</td>
<td>Doors, Doorsteps, Cellars, Rafters, Support posts, Hearths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boundary features</td>
<td>Boundary stones, Stone walls, Fences, Gates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious/Sacred building features</td>
<td>Doors, Doorsteps, Walls, Rafters, Support posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food, preparation</td>
<td>Cauldrons, Kettles, Knives, Sieves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food, consumption</td>
<td>Plates, Bowls, Utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food, storage</td>
<td>Barrels, Stoneware jugs, Glass bottles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furnishings/Decorative</td>
<td>Chairs, Chests, Beds, Cradles, Mirrors, Patterns &amp; Symbols, Artistic work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heating/Lighting</td>
<td>Candles, Lamps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sewing/Needlecraft</td>
<td>Needles, Pins, Knitting needles, Scissors, Thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>Household linens, Rags, Felt hearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora/Fauna</td>
<td>Flora, wild</td>
<td>Herbs, Shrubs, Trees (see Appendix C for specific botanicals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora, cultivated</td>
<td>Herbs, Shrubs, Trees (see Appendix C for specific botanicals), straw plaits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fauna, wild</td>
<td>Rats, Shrews, Wolf heads, Owl skins and talons, Bird bones, Toads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fauna, domestic</td>
<td>Cats, Chicks, Horse and cow skulls, Goose quills, Pig tails and ears, Dogs, Mutton bones, Hearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithic</td>
<td>Worked, tools</td>
<td>Lithic points/hammers/scrapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural, unaltered</td>
<td>Holed stones, Shiny stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural, decorated</td>
<td>Boulders incised with symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortuary</td>
<td>Grave markers</td>
<td>Headstones, Stone markers, Wooden markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave goods</td>
<td>Plates, Coins, Scythes, Beads, Crosses, Salt, Ashes, Stakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial hardware/equipment</td>
<td>Coffin studs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial orientation/placement</td>
<td>At crossroads, isolated areas; Skeleton prone or dismembered; Animal skeletons feet up, not butchered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 6.2. Anglo-European apotropaic magical material culture manifestations and locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Form and/or Material</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bottles</strong></td>
<td>Glass phials, Bellarmine (Bartmann) stoneware jugs, globular wine bottles, beer and soda bottles. Usually, but not always, containing pins, needles, iron nails, thorns, felt hearts, hair, fingernail clippings, urine, 'holy' water, bones</td>
<td>In or under hearths; under door sills; buried along boundary lines and walls; under floors; in cellar or foundation walls; usually buried inverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothing/Textile</strong></td>
<td>Shoes, gloves, jackets, vests, hats, cloth scraps, ribbons, swaddling clothes</td>
<td>In secret compartments in hearth and chimney, roof, walls, around doors, under floors; swaddling clothes, cloth scraps and ribbons tied to trees and shrubs usually near spring or well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colors</strong></td>
<td>Red, white, black, blue—paint, ribbons, cloth, thread</td>
<td>In stables, around windows and doors, porch ceilings; woven into or attached to livestock manes and tails; stitched into linens and clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fauna</strong></td>
<td>Cats, chickens, rats, horse and cow skulls, goose quills, pig tails and ears, wolf heads, owl talons and skins, mutton bones, dogs, shrews, coral</td>
<td>In secret compartments in hearth and chimney, roof, walls, around doors, under floors; buried in ground near a threshold; also skulls under lime kilns; wolf head nailed to horse door; black dogs buried on north side of churches; cock buried at confluence of three streams; owls nailed to barn door; plug up shrew in ash tree; coral used as a teething toy, usually with bells attached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flora</strong></td>
<td>Herbs, shrubs, trees (see Appendix C for specific botanicals), straw plaits</td>
<td>Planted at house corners; hung over house doors and windows, and over beds; hung over stable doors and inside stables; laid across thresholds; grown or laid on roofs; in hearths; lining garden and field boundaries; straw plaits woven into horse manes and tails, hung on doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Related</strong></td>
<td>Sieves, spirit barrels, salt</td>
<td>Sieves used with shears/scissors –kitchen or domestic work areas; spirit barrels in sealed off rooms; salt in corners, around house perimeter, in hearth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Body Elements</strong></td>
<td>Hair, nail clippings, urine, bones (usually hand/finger), hearts, cauls, blood</td>
<td>Hair, nail clippings, urine in witch bottles; bones under door sills; hearts in chimney; hair hung in attics/roofs; caules in containers in houses, on boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Images</strong></td>
<td>Dolls (cloth, straw, clay, wax, wood, lead); drawn/carved figures; knotted cords or cloth</td>
<td>In cellar walls; hearths; under floors; secret compartments in roofs and walls; on boundary and foundation stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lithics</strong></td>
<td>Holed stones, carved stones</td>
<td>Holed stones were hung on the hearth and over stables, on interior and exterior doors, on bedposts and gateposts, hung around horses' necks, concealed inside walls, placed in graves, and attached to boats; boulders carved with magical symbols along property boundaries or to protect specific locale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metal</strong></td>
<td>Iron horseshoes, keys, knives, scissors, pins, needles, bells or pans, perforated coins, hoes, silver bullets made of melted sixpence, horse brass, fire irons, melted lead, lead images, axes, hoes, sickles/seythes, hammers, fish spears, spoons, pikes</td>
<td>Horseshoes over house and stable doors (interior and exterior); in hearth, butter churns, walls, cellars; at crossroads; attached to impaling stakes; knives and scissors under door sills/ across threshold or embedded around windows, also areas under beds and cradles; pins and needles in witch bottles; coins under thresholds, in burials, in butter churns; usually bent or broken and thrown into water; horse brass attached to horse tack or hung in stables; fire irons placed in a cross configuration across cradles; fish spears, spoons, pikes in walls, cellars, rafters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Patterns & Symbols**  | Daisy wheels (hexafoils), crosses, pentagrams, triangles, hearts, circles, rosettes, astrological and occult figures, numeric patterns—particularly 3, 5, 7 | On house door and window jambs, on door hardware, in stables, on hearth support posts, stairways, beams and rafters, ceilings, floors, and walls; boundary and foundation stones; cave and mine walls; coffins, }
The quotidian nature of the apotropaic devices does not, however, denote that these objects were simplistic in their meanings or their applications. Researching the cosmological underpinnings of seventeenth-century Protestant worldviews revealed an intricate network of concepts, symbols, and associations that imbue magical material culture with a greater complexity than is first apparent. Many are implicated with Biblical numerology, symbols, and personages, and work as a multifaceted system that includes consideration of material, form, function, deposition, and attending ritual.

Further analysis of the items included in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 suggests that the range of apotropaic devices, while broad in variation, is relatively limited in materials and applications. The categories used in these tables represent a finer distinction to demonstrate particular variations, but generally the objects used as apotropaia can be categorized into seven broad compositional groups (flora, fauna, metals, household objects, colors, abstract symbols, and words) and four functions (repelling, trapping, reversing, or neutralizing the supernatural threat). Often multiple attributes are combined giving the magical object manifold layers of power. An object’s composition and function are further enhanced (or possibly determined) by its deposition, which may be an external application so as to be readily visible; buried underground; or concealed above ground; and, influenced by cosmological ideas of numerology and...
directionality. Finally, the rituals or ritualistic behaviors that attend the deposition of the protective devices may have provided the catalyst to engage their powers. Composition, function, deposition, and ritual operate as a system with each aspect dependent upon the others for meaning, potency, and agency.

There appear to be general rules for the use and deposition of the different apotropaic categories. Flora was usually planted around and on houses, hung over doors and windows, strewn across thresholds and into corners, burnt in hearths, or used in the construction of thresholds, windowsills, doorjambs, doors, lintels, brooms, and butter churns. The seasonality of plants determined when they could be gathered and used. This type of apotropaia is the most elusive to document as historical archaeologists either do not widely employ macro- and microbotanical analysis to identify flora species or they do not consider the significance of accounting for magical flora use. This issue will be addressed in greater detail below.

Animals or animal parts seldom appear displayed except when their likenesses are wrought in some other material like iron (e.g., cock’s head hinges and lion doorknockers). There are rare references to nailing a wolf’s head or owl skin to a door to cure bewitchment, but most animals, either whole or part, emerge from concealed spaces—either buried under thresholds, hearths, gates, and house foundations or found in chimneys, walls, and roofs. Chickens, cats, rats, horse and cow skulls, and livestock hearts comprise the most commonly used fauna as guardians or sacrifices to ensure household safety. Other animal parts, including pig ears and tails, were also burnt in the hearth. These animals represent common and easily accessible specimens as well as, in the case of cats and rats, those most often associated with witches’ familiars. As such, they illustrate the complexity inherent in apotropaic belief and the difficulty of accurately interpreting the specific function of such beliefs. The inclusion of a cat in a spiritual midden could
simultaneously indicate it was intended as a sympathetic magic element, a foundation sacrificial object, or a distracting object to divert the witch’s attention. To further complicate the understanding of particular apotropaia, it is possible the cat could be used in each of these ways without any overt clues indicating the shift from one function to another. Then, too, there are the accompanying objects found with the cat and the arrangement and orientation of the whole plus any information about the attending rituals that must be considered before a more precise conclusion can be drawn about the function or functions of the animal in particular and the spiritual midden in general.

Metal objects were often hung around doors and windows, or placed under or in thresholds, beds, walls, and cellars. Metal was not subject to seasonality as were plants and animals. The most commonly used apotropaic metal, iron, was from its beginnings considered “numinous and taboo” as it fell from the sky as meteorites. Ewart Evans (1966:56) suggests, “It’s superiority over stone and bronze and the superstitious awe surrounding iron smiths likely added to the magical associations of iron and iron objects.” This may account for iron being considered the most powerful of all apotropaic materials. Metal’s apotropaic function varied depending upon its use and context. Placed on or above doors (e.g., horseshoes), or concealed under thresholds, in walls, and under beds (e.g., knives, hoes, scissors), these metal objects repelled evil. Used as sharp objects (e.g., pins and nails) in witch bottles and stuck in hearts (cloth or real), the metal was instrumental in sympathetically reversing the pain or injury back upon the bewitcher.

The category of household items used as apotropaia includes a wide variety of objects ranging from brooms to bottles to thread to shoes. As noted in Chapter 5, worn out shoes, and most especially children’s shoes, constitute the most frequently used object in spiritual middens found in chimneys, walls, roofs, windowsills, and under thresholds. Close to a thousand such
items have been found across the world and are theorized to act as witch traps. Other household objects, like brooms, repel evil, whereas witch bottles reverse bewitchment, embroidered designs trap the malicious force, and coins in the butter churn neutralize the bewitchment.

In conjunction with household items, plants, and symbols, the color red most often appears as both a powerful amulet in itself and as a power-enhancing agent for other objects to avert preternatural forces. Painting doors and windowsills red, tying red cloth or thread over doors or to trees by gates, surrounding a dwelling with red berried trees and shrubs, or painting red symbols on doorsteps all illustrate utilizing red’s ability to protect houses and their inhabitants from evil.

Apotropaic symbols appear as abstract designs like spirals, circles and other geometric shapes, and hearts carved into, painted onto, or applied as mosaics on exterior walls, doorframes, doorsteps, furniture, and hearth supports and as objects fashioned from wood or iron as doorknockers. Complex symbols function as traps to confuse and ‘catch’ the attention of witches and fairies, while others seem to either repel or neutralize the harmful forces through cosmic or divine power associations.

The final apotropaic category, words, most often consist of nonsense words, coded abbreviations, divine names, sigils, and repeated letters. Examples discovered in spiritual middens, buried under thresholds and hearths, burned on ceilings, and carved onto hearth supports and lintels seem to operate similarly to abstract symbols as wards and neutralizers. Like symbols, these word-based apotropaic devices have cosmological implications expressed through numerology or associations with divine personages.

Gleaning the magical material culture typological categories, their general depositional attributes, associated functions, and specific formal examples from the three data sources allowed the application of these observations to a consideration of their recognizability in the
archaeological record. Although a perusal of the objects charted in Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 gives the impression that many of these artifacts should be, and likely are, present in archaeological sites, the evidence from the five sites discussed in this dissertation paint a different picture. Metal objects like horseshoes, knives, and scissors accounted for virtually all the potential apotropaia noted at the archaeological sites discussed in Chapter 5. The survivability of metal in archaeological contexts partially explains this overrepresentation, but it cannot account for the absence of other apotropaic evidence that can similarly survive (e.g., ceramic, flora, fauna, lithics, and symbols).

The dearth of witch bottles in seventeenth-century New England provides one case in point to question why more have not been noted from these contexts, especially since this apotropaic device has been more publicized than any other form of magical material culture and is, therefore, more generally known and recognized (Costello 2011b; Merrifield 1955, 1987; Becker 1978, 1980, 2005; Hoggard 2004). It is possible that many ceramic or glass vessels used as witch bottles did not survive intact, and consequently were excavated and cataloged as fragments of utilitarian vessel counts and been subsumed in socioeconomic or manufacturing interpretations (South 1977; Beaudry 1986:39-40). Some are probably found intact and sent to archaeology laboratories where technicians ultimately clean and catalogue them simply as bottles. It is also likely that areas where witch bottles would have been buried (e.g., under hearth or chimney stones) are not excavated as no artifacts would be expected under such features. Regardless of the relatively common knowledge amongst historical archaeologists concerning witch bottles, it seems the knowledge still has not sufficiently impacted the excavation plans and artifact analyses of historical sites.

Faunal remains represent another area of magical material culture that should provide a wider spectrum of magical material than the concealed cats, rats, and chickens that have received
the greatest attention (Merrifield 1987; Evans 2011; Manning 2012a, 2012b). The burial of

diseased or ‘bewitched’ animals, including oxen, horses, pigs, cattle, and sheep unbutchered and

feet up or burned at threshold and boundary points around barns and fields certainly require
differential categorization and interpretation than skeletal remains representing consumption
patterns. Animals not generally considered food animals, like dogs, reptiles, and owls, were also
buried, hung, or burnt as apotropaia. Their remains require greater interpretative consideration than
simple acknowledgement of their presence in non-food faunal counts, or speculation of their
possible addition to foodways of the people under study. Faunal analysis must be open to
interpretations beyond the animals’ consumption or production values that include possible
magical and ritual functions.

Without a doubt, flora comprises the most neglected magical material recoverable from
archaeological contexts. Whether an overt hold-over planting from the site’s habitation that
literally marks the boundaries of houses, outbuildings, or fields; or a less overt specimen surviving
macrobotanically or microbotanically, plant remains have high recoverability potential (Pearson
1988; McWeeney 1991; Miller and Gleason 1994; Dudek et al. 1998; Gazin-Schwartz 1999;
Gorham et al. 2001; Gremillion 2002; Mrozowski et al. 2008; Mecuri et al. 2010). Archaeobotany
has become an integral research component of many archaeological projects, but its application in
historical archaeology has mainly focused on two major topics: foodways (see Noël Hume 1974;
Dudek et al. 1998; Miller and Gleason 1998; Gremillion 2002; Mrozowski et al. 2008) and
landscape evolution (see Pearson 1988; Miller and Gleason 1994; Mecuri et al. 2010). A limited
number of studies have demonstrated that microbotanicals can actually be used to interpret a wider
range of information. Gorham et al.’s (2001:282) look at pollen, phyloliths, and other
microbotanicals in underwater archaeological contexts indicate:
…organic remains…can contain microscopic plant remains that become botanical fingerprints used to identify cargoes, ship’s food, onshore vegetation, location of ship’s home port, and plants used to make rope, basketry, and matting.

They espouse the belief that plants were used for more than just food products, so their recovery from archaeological contexts should extend beyond such a narrow focus to include consideration of the multiple ways plants contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of the past.

Mrozowski et al. (2008:649) also acknowledge that plants were used for more than dietary elements and undertook their archaeobotanical analysis of an African American enslaved quarter at the eighteenth-century Virginia Rich Neck Plantation to develop comprehensive knowledge of African American plant use at the site. Their goal was a holistic approach to understanding how plants are used for overall well-being that includes aspects of diet, medicine, recreation, ornamentation, sensory stimulus, and symbolic and spiritual importance. Unfortunately, other than citing brief examples of medicinal plant use, the article almost exclusively concerned foodways and offered no discourse on magico-religious plant use.

Gorham et al. (2001) stress that underwater contexts—whether oceans or terrestrial submerged areas—often provide environments conducive to organic preservation. Archaeobotanical remains can survive in several environments, but their survivability and interpretive value depend on various factors. Dudek et al.’s (1998:63) analysis of plant remains from a seventeenth-century privy led them to conclude:

…differences in the way in which the remains initially enter the site, differences in resistance to physical and chemical destruction, differences in recovery, and inadvertent human bias during recovery and analysis, all have potential for introducing error into the results.
Realizing the potential for macro- and microbotanical survival in the archaeological record and striving to minimize the occurrence of human collection and interpretation biases, should increase the evidence of magical flora at historical archaeological sites.

Like all archaeobotanists, Pearson (1988:74) sees flora as a valuable category of ecofactual evidence. Unlike those who focus on plants as merely landscape evolution or subsistence indicators, she believes the recognition of plant growth presence and behavior can be used by archaeologists methodologically as less-expensive and noninvasive archaeological site locators. Although she does not specifically mention the practice of planting apotropaic flora at building corners or along perimeters, she does believe structural footprints may be more easily recognized if archaeologists paid attention to the plants and the plant patterns growing in particular areas. This methodology (as already noted by Gazin-Schwartz 1999) is particularly relevant to the recognition of magical plants demarcating architectural, yard, and property boundaries. People did not cultivate random plants inadvertently, but rather chose and planted those species that served particular needs in particularly chosen areas. Mecuri et al. (2010:861) understand that there exists a complex, dynamic, and “interactive” relationship between people and plants that exceeds “the sum of the various parts involved.” Part of this anthropogenic complexity includes the belief in and use of particular plants to create an interactive landscape that protects its inhabitants from a range of natural and supernatural threats.

The final category of apotropaia that must be considered as archaeological evidence is not itself material, but rather manifests through the various types of magical material culture. That cosmological and, hence, religiously associated numbers permeate written, performative, and material magical practices lies beyond a doubt. Numerous studies (e.g., Lawlor 1982; Leone and Shackel 1990; Leone and Hurry 1998; Morley and Renfrew 2010) demonstrate the
intentional incorporation of sacred measurements into architecture, urban plans, and gardens. Folklore and historical sources also provide examples of the use of measurements in magical practice, including the nine foot diameter of a magical circle (Maxwell-Stuart 2005:90) and the “twelve-inch hole pierced through [an oak tree] six feet off the ground” (Milne 2007:106) through which sick infants were passed three times. The question archaeologists must consider is: Can these numerical patterns be used as a guide for locating or recognizing magical material culture? In some instances of magical practice, an attendant verbal or performative element might have been the component in which the three, five, or seven manifested, and, therefore, would not leave a visible marker. However, it seems plausible that given the ubiquitousness of these numeric elements in all forms of magical work, they would also be materially expressed in various ways; for example:

1. Items found in triad, quintet, or heptad groupings
2. Marks or symbols comprising three, five, or seven repetitions or elements
3. Depositions located at numerically corresponding architectural features or measurements (at the third, fifth, or seventh floor board or rafter or at three, five, or seven feet, yards, etc.)
4. Three, five, or seven occurrences of either similar objects or objects with similar roles in magical practice.

Artifacts occurring in such patterns may at least suggest a magical purpose rather than random loss or intentional discard. When combined with additional evidence, like deposition associated with threshold spaces like doors, windows, walls, roofs, and other boundaries, the cumulative data more readily supports a magical interpretation.

[283]
To conclude, many types of apotropaic magical material culture should both leave a footprint and be recognizable as such in the archaeological record—some, of course, more unambiguously than others. Most will be directly associated with a physical threshold or boundary area, both internal and external to a building/property or related to metaphorical boundaries (e.g., around bed/cradle areas as the symbolic representation of the boundary between wakefulness and sleep or health and sickness). Artifacts associated with natural boundaries like water courses and features may indicate these as supernaturally charged portals and barriers. Many magical artifacts will either be a symbol or include one or more symbolic elements (e.g., shapes, number associations, colors, designs, or directions). As delineated in Table 6.4. “Criteria for Identifying Magic in Archaeological Contexts,” magical material culture, while not always unambiguous, does generally exhibit recognizable patterns and attributes.

When reviewing the magical material typologies (Tables 6.1 and 6.2), the utilitarian and ordinary nature of Anglo-European popular apotropaia becomes plainly clear. If popular magical form and use had to be characterized by one word, that word would be non-specialized. This essential characteristic is virtually antithetic to the ritual identification criteria delineated by Renfrew and Bahn (Table 6.3) in which almost every description stresses the specialness of form, place, or function. It is the focus on the separation from the mundane of ritualized space and objects that prevents this criterion model from more universally applying to quotidian magical material culture. This criticism does not negate the validity of Renfrew and Bahn’s model, as their observations do accurately describe the various elements of more formalized rituals. Based on the data and sources researched in this dissertation, it was obvious a criterion model specifically addressing magic—in contrast to ritual—was needed, not to replace Renfrew and Bahn’s model, but to complement it. This model (Table 6.4), “Criteria for Identifying Magic
in Archaeological Contexts,” stresses the utilization of mundane objects as magical devices and their integration into, rather than separation from, commonplace contexts. Used in consort, the this model and the Renfrew and Bahn model provide archaeologists a more comprehensive toolset for identifying and interpreting artifacts and features expressing belief systems. As these models and the preceding typologies indicate, the appropriate recovery and interpretation of magical material culture from archaeological contexts, while not always simple, nevertheless are both possible and necessary for more accurate constructions of the past.

**TABLE 6.3. Renfrew and Bahn’s Criteria for Identifying Ritual in Archaeological Contexts**

*Focusing of attention:*
1. Ritual may take place in a spot with special, natural associations (cave, grove of trees, spring, mountaintop)
2. Alternatively, ritual may take place in a special building set apart for sacred functions
3. The structure and equipment used for the ritual may employ attention-focusing devices, reflected in the architecture, special fixtures (e.g. altars, benches, hearths), and movable equipment (e.g. lamps, gongs and bells, ritual vessels, censers, altar cloths, and all the paraphernalia of ritual).
4. The sacred area is likely to be rich in repeated symbols (this is known as “redundancy”).

*Boundary zone between this world and the next:*
5. Ritual may involve both conspicuous public display (and expenditure), and hidden exclusive mysteries, whose practice will be reflected in the architecture
6. Concepts of cleanliness and pollution may be reflected in the facilities (e.g. pools or basins of water) and maintenance of the sacred area

*Presence of the deity:*
7. The association with a deity or deities may be reflected in the use of a cult image, or a representation of the deity in abstract form (e.g. the Christian Chi-Rho symbol).
8. The ritualistic symbols will often relate iconographically to the deities worshipped and to their associated myth. Animal symbolism (of real or mythical animals) may often be used, with particular animals relating to specific deities or powers.
9. The ritualistic symbols may relate to those seen also in funerary ritual and in other rites of passage.

*Participation and offering:*
10. Worship will involve prayer and special movements--gestures of adoration--and these may be reflected in the art or iconography of decorations or images.
11. The ritual may employ various devices for inducing religious experience (e.g., dance, music, drugs, and the infliction of pain).
12. The sacrifice of animals or humans may be practiced.
13. Food and drink may be brought and possibly consumed as offerings or burned/poured away.
14. Other material objects may be brought and offered (votives). The act of offering may entail breakage and hiding or discard.
15. Great investment of wealth may be reflected both in the equipment used and in the offerings made.
16. Great investment of wealth and resources may be reflected in the structure itself and its facilities.


**TABLE 6.4.** Criteria for Identifying Magic in Archaeological Contexts

**Spatial Orientation**
1. Objects or symbols often occur at boundaries perceived as permeable to danger or evil forces (e.g., doors, windows, hearths, roofs, corners, cellars, walls, fences, property boundaries, crossroads).
2. Objects or symbols may occur in areas of close proximity to potential victims (e.g., near beds, cradles, stables/barns).
3. Placement of magical objects or symbols may correspond to the right/up/forward/male/sacred or left/down/behind/female/profane constructs or similar cultural associations.
4. Objects may be intentionally concealed (e.g., buried, walled-in, in hidden niches) or deliberately overt (e.g., attached to doors/windows, carved or painted on architectural features).
5. Objects or symbols are often situated in household or personal space, occurring in mundane settings amidst everyday activities.
6. Orientation often corresponds with cosmologically associated directions or contains symbols to represent this directionality.
7. Elements of the landscape may work together as an integrated magical setting (e.g., plants, water, cardinal directions).
8. Concentrations of symbols and specially assembled and/or oriented materials in a particular structure may indicate the presence of a specialized practitioner.

**Materiality**
9. Objects are usually utilitarian, possibly worn beyond use or intentionally ‘killed’ (e.g., bent, broken, folded, pierced, cut, etc.) to act in or upon the spirit world.
10. Objects may be of natural materials deemed extraordinary (e.g., holed stones) or cosmically powerful (e.g., iron, particular plants).
11. Written charms or symbols may combine verifiable religious names, words, and images with invented ones.
12. Objects or symbols may include colors as correlates to natural features (e.g., blue=water), substances (e.g., red=blood), states (e.g., black=death, spirit realm), or directions (e.g., black=left/down, white=right/up).
13. Objects and symbols may be combined into assemblages that include numerical and symbolic components with human/animal elements and natural inanimate materials.
14. Objects may include human or animal elements (e.g., fingernails, hair, urine, tails, ears, talons, skulls, carcasses).

**Ideological Concepts**
15. The objects or symbols may express a sympathetic correlation with the dangers/harm they are meant to affect or the people, animals, or property they are meant to protect or harm.

16. Symbol imagery and the number of objects will likely relate to cosmological number associations.

17. Images, symbols, orientation, and numerology will likely be repeated across several domains (e.g., architectural, funerary, sartorial, decorative, and landscape).

**Question 2:** What signifies gender specific apotropaic magical practices and what can these differences relate about gender roles, identity, and social relationships?

As useful as the preceding typologies and criterion model may be for assisting in the identification of apotropaic magical belief and practice in the archaeological record of Anglo-European sites, any association of gender with such practices cannot be construed from either of them. To link gender with magical material culture requires using these typologies as a foundation, a palette of options, if you will, to which must be added consideration of the particular fears that motivated women and men to use magic, the context in which that fear occurred, the range of appropriate materials they had access to, and the placement of the magic that would best address their concerns. Tables 6.5 and 6.6 provide such a breakdown based on the fears identified for women and men in seventeenth-century New England (Table 5.1). This more detailed breakdown illustrates that while both women and men were concerned with and even frightened by the circumstances that befell their respective spouses, those fears were not personal or related to the individual’s performances, and thus were not specifically addressed by magic from that individual.

**TABLE 6.5.** Correlation of women’s stressful situations and the overarching fears they represent with the associated placements, forms, and functions of apotropaic strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Fear/Stressor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butter making</td>
<td>1)in churn or attached to churn bottom 2)attribute of churn</td>
<td>1)pierced or crooked coin; horseshoe; needles and pins 2)churn made of rowan wood</td>
<td>1&amp;2)prevent butter from bewitchment</td>
<td>Gender competency Inability to provide for family Inability to protect house, yard, &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Fear/Stressor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer brewing</td>
<td>1) across top of beer barrel</td>
<td>1) metal bar</td>
<td>1) prevent thunder from spoiling beer</td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to provide for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to protect house, yard, &amp; foodstuffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childbirth/Pregnancy</td>
<td>1) under bed</td>
<td>1) knife or scissors</td>
<td>1) cut pain and ease labor</td>
<td>Death in childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) hung over doors, windows, and beds</td>
<td>2) flora, holed stones</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) worn around neck</td>
<td>3) diamond</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) under pillow, on window sill</td>
<td>4) knife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) on threshold</td>
<td>5) knife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household endangered</td>
<td>1) placed on roof</td>
<td>1-2) flora</td>
<td>1) protect house from storms and fire</td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) planted around house and yard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to protect house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness and family members afflicted</td>
<td>1) buried under thresholds, in/around hearths</td>
<td>1) jugs, bottles containing pins, hair and other objects</td>
<td>1) to un-bewitch victim or protect from bewitchment</td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) in walls and roof, under floors,</td>
<td>2) poppets, knotted cloths</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to provide for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap making</td>
<td>1) in soap vat</td>
<td>1) black-handled knife; applewood stirring stick</td>
<td>1) to drive witches out of soap during processing and cutting of soap</td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inability to provide for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Fear/Stressor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Vulnerability of Infants  | 1) under or in cradle 2) attached to clothing 3) used by infants 4) worn around neck of infants | 1) knife, fireiron, or scissors; salt; Bible 2) red thread 3) coral teether with bells 4) anodyne necklace | 1 & 2) protect infants from evil spirits, the evil eye; bewitchment and fairy changlings 3 & 4) protect infants from evil spirits and harm | Infant mortality  
Gender competency |

**FIGURE 6.1.** Three major foci of women’s fears: butter-making, childbirth, and infant mortality. Photo courtesy of Todd Atteberry (historyandhaunts.com), Plymouth Plantation, MA.

**TABLE 6.6.** Correlation of men’s stressful situations and the overarching fears they represent with the associated placements, forms, and functions of apotropaic strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Fear/Stressor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Building construction | 1) built into chimney/hearth 2) marked on hearths, window/door sills, ceilings, furniture 3) built into walls, | 1) salt-glazed bricks; clay; niche for apotropaia; geometric shapes 2) symbols, geometric shapes, words | 1 - 3) prevent witches and other evil spirits/beings from entering the house and undermining its integrity | Sociopolitical failure, lack of public authority and respect  
Gender competency  
Financial failure |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Fear/Stressor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>roofs, or foundations</td>
<td>3) witch bottles, worn shoes, dead cats, animal skulls, metal objects-horseshoes, spoons, knives, fish spears, pikes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members afflicted</td>
<td>1) buried under thresholds, in/around hearths 2) in walls and roof, under floors, 3) incised on stone fences/boundary stones</td>
<td>1) jugs, bottles containing pins, hair and other objects 2) poppets, knotted cloths</td>
<td>1) to un-bewitch victim or protect from bewitchment 2) to identify and harm suspected witch</td>
<td>Inability to provide for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Crops endangered</td>
<td>1) concealed in/under stone fences/walls; concealed in plow handles 2) buried at field corners or along boundaries 3) incised on stone fences/boundary stones</td>
<td>1) flora; metal; fauna 2) symbols, geometric shapes 3) triangular burial of 3 live puppies</td>
<td>1-2) prevent bewitchment and harm to fields and crops 3) Clear field of weeds</td>
<td>Crop failure/loss of livestock Financial failure Inability to provide for family Inability to protect property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impotence</td>
<td>1) hung over bed</td>
<td>1) flora</td>
<td>1) prevent or cure impotence or infertility</td>
<td>Gender competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock endangered</td>
<td>1) hung over stable/barn doors 2) burned/incised over stable/barn doors 3) attached to animals or tack</td>
<td>1) lana; metal; fauna; holed stones 2) symbols, words, geometric shapes 3) red thread/textile; brass</td>
<td>1-3) prevent bewitchment and hag-riding</td>
<td>Crop failure/loss of livestock Financial failure Inability to provide for family Inability to protect property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock sick</td>
<td>1) burned in hearth 2) buried, whole, feet up away from other livestock 3) buried under threshold of barn/stable 4) burned whole, live animals away from house</td>
<td>1) tails, ears, hearts 2) whole animal carcass 3) horses, cows, sheep, chickens, swine</td>
<td>1) to un-bewitch animal 2-3) prevent bewitchment/illness from transferring to other animals 4) To stop bewitchment</td>
<td>Crop failure/loss of livestock Financial failure Inability to provide for family Inability to protect property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property/house endangered</td>
<td>1) built into chimney/hearth 2) marked on hearths, window/door sills, ceilings, furniture 3) built into walls, roofs, or foundations</td>
<td>1) salt-glazed bricks; clay; niche for apotropaia; geometric shapes 2) symbols, geometric shapes, words 3) witch bottles, worn shoes, dead cats, animal skulls, metal objects-horseshoes, spoons, knives, fish spears, pikes</td>
<td>1-3) prevent witches, fairies, and evil spirits from entering house and doing harm; to identify any who could not cross these barriers as a witch</td>
<td>Financial failure Inability to provide for family Inability to protect property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the situations in which women and men used apotropaic magic to prevent the harmful infiltration and influence of supernatural forces represent concern over the successful enactment of gender roles and related social expectations. For women this meant protecting the house and its inhabitants as their primary female roles were those of wives and mothers whose principal responsibilities focused on the production of children and the well-being of the family. To ensure the health and welfare of her children and husband, the colonial woman had to competently and confidently undertake the growing and preparation of foodstuffs, the processing of dairy and brewing products, the fabrication of textiles, and the administration of medicinal remedies all within the confines of her domestic sphere. The successful completion of each of these duties could be jeopardized by the insinuation of maleficent powers into every crack and crevice of this sphere.

Concerns about women’s appropriate sexual behaviors and reputations also prompted the use of apotropaic magic as protection against demonic conception by incubi or rape associated with Indian attack and abduction. Their expected fecundity and ability to birth numerous healthy children were also perceived to be vulnerable to demonic interference through the infiltration of such forces into the house and bedchamber. As a woman’s social and political identity and reputation in seventeenth-century New England was inextricably bound to her fulfillment (or not) of prescribed female gender expectations, especially reproductive expectations, it was critical that she be able to protect herself sexually so that she could produce and raise normal, healthy children.

Men also resorted to apotropaic magic to bolster their abilities to successfully fulfill their gender role expectations. As primary providers for their families, their responsibilities focused on the larger concerns of financial stability or success, which entailed the production of crops,
the raising of livestock, and/or the participation in other capital producing businesses like fishing, merchandising, milling, construction, or other craft occupations. Failure in these ventures not only meant an immediate inability to provide for their families, but endangered their capability to accrue estates sufficient enough for their offspring’s inheritance. A man’s social and political identity and reputation were implicated primarily with his business success and secondarily with his role as a head-of-household. Both these primary and secondary roles emphasized a man’s obligation to provide for the welfare of his subordinate dependents by cultivating and demonstrating his authority and reliability. Thus, when aspects of his livelihood were subject to preternatural threat, his reputation as a competent man, husband, and father was imperiled.

Women and men of seventeenth-century Anglo New England ideally had respective roles and positions within social and familial hierarchies that complemented each other. When misfortune or perceived danger upset any of the elements of these gender rubrics, they could potentially upset the entire structure and adversely affect the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and neighbors, and men and women. The use of apotropaic magic appears to correlate with the fears women and men experienced in their daily lives as they continuously strove to satisfy social and familial obligations and maintain the various relationships characteristic of small, interdependent communities while existing in a world filled with unpredictable natural and preternatural forces.

Archaeologically the distinction between male implemented and female implemented apotropaia primarily involves gendered activities or occupations. Table 6.7 lists the particular occurrence of protective magical devices that have a predominately male or female connection as well as those that were unilaterally used by both men and women. That more apotropaic
elements fall under the male category than the other two categories reflects the reality that men were solely responsible for the construction of buildings and thus, consequently had the opportunities and access to embed objects and symbols into the structural fabric of those buildings. Occupations like carpentry, coopering, metalworking, and stonemasonry were also exclusively male domains, so only men could create the professionally manifested magical designs worked into wood, metal and stone. The female implemented apotropaia lists only one object exclusively made by women (embroidered symbols) and one element (domestic flora) that usually fell under the purview of women’s work, while the other examples listed represent objects not made by women, but appropriated to use in female activities and would only be gendered by their association with those particular tasks. As the last column indicates neither the construction nor the placement of some apotropaic materials offer a definitive gender interpretation.

**TABLE 6.7. Seventeenth-Century Anglo-European Gendered Apotropaia.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Implemented Apotropaia</th>
<th>Female Implemented Apotropaia</th>
<th>Gender Indeterminate Apotropaia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inscribed carpentry or stonemason symbols</td>
<td>Horseshoe, coins, fireirons associated with dairying or brewing activities</td>
<td>Horseshoes hung near house thresholds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal objects embedded in building fabric</td>
<td>Domestic flora in and around house</td>
<td>Knives and scissors near/around door and window jambs and sills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols integral to building construction</td>
<td>Symbols embroidered on clothing and linens</td>
<td>Symbols roughly burned, painted, or inscribed in easily accessed areas of buildings or on furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols burned, painted, or inscribed in difficult to access areas of buildings</td>
<td>Knives and applewood sticks associated with soap making activities</td>
<td>Spiritual middens of fauna, shoes, garments in hearths or easily accessed caches in houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauna buried or concealed in building fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td>Witch bottles buried outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large fauna buried feet up and unbutchered at thresholds</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poppets concealed in walls niches or caches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects, fauna, or symbols associated with field boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects or symbols associated with crops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects, flora, or symbols associated with livestock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical wood used to construct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Implemented Apotropaia</td>
<td>Female Implemented Apotropaia</td>
<td>Gender Indeterminate Apotropaia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thresholds, butter churns, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witch bottles buried under hearth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical substances integrated with building materials like salt-glazed bricks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cast metal objects with integrated magic symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both women and men of seventeenth-century Anglo New England actively engaged in magical practice to minimize the misfortunes of life in a turbulent world as one strategy in the process of personal and social identity validation. The evidence from this dissertation does not indicate that women believed in or used magic more or less than men, although witch trial data does suggest there did exist at the time a perception that women were more susceptible than men to involvement with magic both beneficial and maleficent. Coupling the understanding that a magical mindset was the commonly held worldview of seventeenth-century women and men with the evidence that both sexes engaged in magical practice for individual as well as shared purposes, should encourage researchers to give greater consideration to the circumstances and motivations that prompted magical use.

**Question 3:** In what way and to what degree is the recourse to traditional beliefs significant in coping or risk management contexts?

6.2.2 **Risk Management and Boundary Construction**

Risk management contexts inherently involve the constitution of boundaries or conceptual distinctions between states of safety/control/order and danger/powerlessness/chaos. Where and how people orient themselves in relationship to these distinctions reveals not only their relative degrees of agency and empowerment but also the traditional beliefs that inform their options. Novelist A.S. Byatt (1990:467) captures the significance of this revelation when
she states, “We are defined by the lines we choose to cross or be confined by.” The fundamental truth of Byatt’s observation provides an essential departure point for archaeologists striving to understand how past people exerted control through boundary construction and maintenance to define, orient, and protect themselves and their worlds. The current study stands as one illustration of the importance of integrating culturally relative traditional beliefs governing boundaries and their associated material culture into historical archaeological studies to reveal when, where, how, and why people erect boundaries, how these lines constrain personal, social, and supernatural movement, and when, why, and to what extent these lines are permeable. Studying the many guises of gendered magical material culture permits archaeologists to understand how the use of apotropaia affects what and where those lines, or thresholds, are and how, when, and why they may shift.

The first step toward this understanding requires an explication of the study group’s conceptualized categories. It is by constructing defining categories that groups distinguish themselves from others and establish validations for their place within the cosmos and the rightfulness of their way of being. Therefore, establishing and maintaining boundaries at all levels natural and supernatural, social and political becomes an essential prerogative of all groups. Examples of some of these categories and the complexity of their implications have been explored throughout this dissertation. These boundaries, while they may be physically concrete (clothing, food, fenced territories, architectural styles, art, etc.), or more abstract (language, non-verbal communication, proxemics, knowledge of taboos and appropriate behaviors, spiritual beliefs), all are expressed symbolically through material culture.

All boundary constructs have the potential to be violated as a result of ambiguity or through direct challenges that manifest as anomalies or deviations of accepted cosmological and
social norms. Managing the risks associated with boundary violations includes accounting for
the anomaly or deviation and acting to resolve the conflict. As discussed earlier, one of these
accounting mechanisms is the conceptualization of supernatural/preternatural forces and beings
and the formulation of effective behaviors and devices to counter those threats. The belief in
witches and sorcerers illustrates one such example. Regardless of the culture in which these
supernatural beings exist, they serve three functions that Evans-Pritchard (1937) delineates as:

- providing an explanation for unexplainable events, misfortunes, illnesses, and deaths;
- providing a set a cultural behaviors for dealing with misfortune; and
- serving to define morality and the parameters of socially acceptable behavior and
  interaction

In other words, this belief both provides an explanation of misfortune in all its manifestations
and a scapegoat upon whom to apportion blame and enact punishment, thus reducing social
stress and re-establishing a sense of equilibrium; hence, the risks are managed and the
boundaries are maintained. Each of these processes is evident in the use of apotropaic magic in

The options available within a cultural schema to frame and address deviations from
culturally conceived boundaries are necessarily finite as they, too, are governed by the
worldview of the group in question. Douglas (1966:40-41) sees seven possible responses to
anomalous situations occasioned by such boundary violations, which are variously available to
specific groups and may overlap in different ways: 1) redefine the anomaly; 2) eliminate the
anomaly through physical control; 3) avoid the anomaly; 4) label the anomalous
events/individuals as dangerous; 5) elevate the anomalies through ritual; 6) use the anomalies as
a source of humor or ridicule; or 7) aestheticize the anomalies and interpret them as an art form.
The men and women in seventeenth-century New England seem to have implemented all but the last two of these response choices in dealing with the threatening elements of life in such a place and time. No doubt these men and women had senses of humor, but the threats against which they used apotropaic magic were serious matters of life, death, and salvation, and not likely to be ridiculed or laughed off. They may have used artistic symbolism like hexafoils and cherubim heads as apotropaia, but these expressive devices were not aestheticizing the actual threats they were protecting against. Virtually all extreme events, including weather and geographic conditions; birth defects; sudden, unrecognized, or epidemic human and livestock illness; and the failure of common processes (e.g., butter churning, beer brewing) were redefined as the infiltration and actions of malicious forces. To address these forces required labeling them as dangerous. Having redefined and labeled them, men and women could now make choices as to how to respond to these anomalies. Depending upon how directly the threat triggered fear in an individual, and whether that fear was a gendered fear or a non-gendered one, determined whether or not and how the individual would attempt to physically eliminate the menace or choose to avoid it.

The synthesis of data from the various historical, folklore, and archaeological sources indicate that during episodes of crisis or perceived endangerment, women and men relied on a rich matrix of traditional beliefs to actively engage with the threat. The options available to address the risks included magical tools employed by individuals that would most likely come from the objects and materials associated with that person’s occupation or gender-role activities and spatial domains. Thus, these women and men could effectively control those boundaries (both physical and ideological) that represented their competencies and reputations, which were
essential components to their gender and social identities and the measurements of their social and religious worth.

Traditional beliefs underlie all the various boundary constructions and the options for dealing with their violations. As magical belief and practice were integral factors influencing daily decision-making regarding personal safety, identity, and interrelationships in many past societies not just seventeenth-century Britain and Anglo-America, it is essential that archaeologists gain a better understanding of the forms and functions of such beliefs to help explain how and why past peoples negotiated and constructed particular spheres of authority and security. As cited in Trigger (1989:13), the anti-positivist Frankfurt School scholars Jürgen Habermas and Herbert Marcuse “stress that social conditions influence both what data are regarded as important and how they are interpreted” by individuals. Related to Bourdieu’s (1972) idea of habitus and educational psychology’s schema, together these theories posit that people’s interpretation of any given circumstance and their subsequent decisions and actions stem from or are filtered through culturally and individually acquired worldviews and beliefs. Because these worldviews and beliefs are usually not directly articulated in written sources, historical archaeologists are specially poised to discover the expression of these concepts through artifactual, architectural, and landscape feature evidence. As Calvert (1992:4) observes:

The link between artifacts and cultural constructs makes the study of material culture an important method for gaining access to cultural beliefs and assumptions so basic that they are rarely verbalized, and to social fears too emotionally laden for direct discussion.

To this end then, archaeologists can utilize magically associated material culture in the quest for understanding the multivalent nature of traditional belief systems and their importance in constituting, challenging, maintaining, or altering bounded personal and social conceptualizations. In fact, historical archaeological research that postulate past peoples were
first and foremost pragmatic in their daily behaviors and only secondarily (if at all) concerned with or influenced by their belief systems can only hope to create a superficial and partial picture of the past. Armed with knowledge of traditional beliefs and their manifestation in material culture, historical archaeologists will be better able to interpret the archaeological record to show how these concepts were foundational in people’s behaviors. Knowledge of the underlying belief systems that precipitated the magical material culture found in the archaeological record will particularly allow archaeologists to formulate meaningful interpretations of crisis or risk situations.

6.3 Future Directions

This dissertation has enhanced the historical and archaeological understanding of apotropaic magical belief and use among Anglo colonists of seventeenth-century New England, but it has also highlighted just how poorly studied this aspect of human experience actually is both historically and archaeologically. Certainly much more attention needs to be given to seventeenth-century New England, although the same is true for all historic times and places. At the conclusion of this project, I will continue to address this documentation issue by developing a field manual for the historic archaeology of magic and ritual as a practical aid for archaeologists, historic preservationists, and anyone else likely to encounter magical deposits in the course of his or her work on historic sites. This guide will provide detailed documentation forms for the recordation of artifacts including sections for numerological, directional, and symbolic attributes and patterns. Additionally, it will offer informational sections on particular magical artifact types with descriptions, illustrations, typology charts, and references for further reading. Finally, it will include contact information for discoverers to submit their documentation to a centralized database maintained by me, but posted through the Society of Historic Archaeology’s forum on
magical material culture. The field manual and the database should ultimately provide researchers with a tool to assist in better recognizing, documenting, and understanding the archaeological footprints of magic and ritual as well as a comparative dataset from which they may draw for interpretation or further research. Increasing documentation of magical material culture, as important as it is, is only one of many necessary components of the broader field of magic and ritual. The burgeoning field offers numerous other opportunities for researchers to pursue that would significantly contribute to the greater understanding of magic and ritual.

6.3.1 Archaeological Research Recommendations

This dissertation has limited its focus to apotropaic magic at seventeenth-century New England domestic sites, but people carried their belief in and need for magic with them wherever they went, so extending the study of apotropaic magic into non-domestic sites for this same period and region is needed to illustrate the similar and differential uses of magic in various contexts including commercial, military, and religious settings. This study has focused on the little-studied Anglo-American New England colonist, a group that still requires more in-depth attention that focuses on variations in practice due to their interactions with other ethnic and cultural groups that resulted in hybrid and more culturally complex settings. Additionally, a great deal more research must be done to account for apotropaic magic use amongst Anglo-Americans across geographic areas and historical time periods. Although this dissertation captures the range of forms and materials apotropaic magic assumed in the past, specialized study of each of these forms and/or materials could add depth to the known breadth of knowledge. Studies focused on flora, fauna, metal objects (horseshoes, blades), reflective objects (mirrors, glass), and image magic among others could reveal patterns or connections not understood with only cursory information.
As briefly alluded to earlier, builders and sailors were known to hold magical beliefs related to their occupations. Zusne and Jones’ (1989:15) research substantiates these occupational correlations, and they observe that:

Superstitions and magical rituals are more prevalent in occupations where chance plays a large role and the outcomes of one’s actions are less predictable, as among gamblers, soldiers, sailors, and actors. Lesser uncertainties in practical affairs similarly invite magical rituals: games, examinations, and the weather are prime examples.

Other than Easton (1998, 1999a, 1999b) and Evans (2011), researchers have not considered the connection between occupation and magical practice. This is an area requiring concerted inquiry and one that, because of correlations between traditional gender roles and occupations, could offer important insights into gendered practice and identity.

As indicated by the data in this dissertation, crisis situations generally spawn an increase in apotropaic magical use. More concentrated work needs to be done on each type of crisis that people encounter, including extreme weather and environmental events like storms, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions; periods of extreme economic and political instability; and situations of imminent physical danger like riots, criminal attacks, warfare, isolation, and endemic disease to understand better the correlation between magical use and crisis events. Related to both occupation and crisis, warfare/battlefield magic offers a specialized area of research that has recently been inaugurated by historians and material culture researchers. Saunders (2003) and Saunders and Dennis (2003), material culture scholars, have published two works on ‘trench art’ (modified objects from battlefield contexts) that include discussion of amulets; Kimball’s (2004) Trench Art: An Illustrated History provides an in-depth visual treatment of these objects; and Chambers’ (2007) doctoral dissertation at the University of London concentrates specifically on British soldiers’ protective mascots and charms from World
War I and World War II. As yet, no archaeological study of war/battlefield magic has been undertaken; however, the expansion of battlefield archaeology in recent years could provide initial artifactual data for an archaeological study of battlefield magic. Conversely, the study of war-related magic could move battlefield archaeology beyond the recovery of military movements and stratagems to include a more humanistic understanding of the phenomenology of emotions and beliefs associated with life and death conflict situations.

Reiterated throughout this dissertation is the assertion that cosmological elements are integrally implicated with magical material culture. In fact, as Fogelin (2007:66) states:

In the past few decades archaeologists have made great strides in deciphering cosmological principles. Now archaeologists must develop methods for identifying how cosmological or religious concepts are materially enacted or communicated through ritual.

Nevertheless, applying these cosmological principles to the magical material culture of Anglo-Europeans has not been argued until this dissertation. Some of these cosmological ideas, like notions of right/left and up/down associations with gender and good/evil forces were briefly discussed earlier; however, these directional concepts require a great deal more consideration in archaeological analysis. DeBoer (2005) explains that directionality can also be symbolically associated with and by other attributes like color, which in turn relates to gender and positive/negative supernatural powers. Clearly the archaeological study of magic must approach each of these constructs from a plurality of symbolic perspectives. Part of the cosmological understanding and phenomenological experience of spatial placement and orientation involves sensory stimuli including sounds, visualizations, and smells—all elements that play prominently in the choice and use of apotropaic magic. Sensory studies in historical archaeology are currently in their infancy and refer mostly to landscape studies with an emphasis on view shed and visual perspective as power and surveillance devices (e.g., Leone and Hurry 1998; Delle
1999; Leone et al. 2005), but similar to war/battlefield archaeology, the expansion of sensory studies to specifically consider the implications of cosmology, directionality, symbolism, sensory elements, and gender with magical material culture benefit both sensory and magical research.

Finally, the emphasis here has been on magic specifically intended to protect people and property from preternatural dangers, so the wider spectrum of magic (e.g., divination, healing, funerary) has yet to be analyzed either for seventeenth-century New England or for any other historical time and area. Documentation and analysis of each type of magical practice is necessary to eventually build a more comprehensive picture of historical magical belief and practice.

In order to recognize potential magical material culture requires that archaeologists are well-versed in the range and application of such materials. Analysis of magical and/or ritualistic materials needs to be a standard unit in artifact analysis training to ensure that this elemental aspect of human behavior is neither ignored nor misinterpreted. The fact that much Anglo-European domestic apotropaia is not obvious, either in its form or location, makes a standard knowledge of its characteristics essential for two reasons: first, to account for equifinial interpretations of various artifacts and formation processes; and secondly and most importantly, to provide a methodological approach for distinguishing magical/ritual usage from other functions. Ultimately, the inclusion of magical/ritualistic artifacts in artifact analysis courses prompts consideration of the human circumstances and agency connected to the material record.

6.4 Conclusion

The results of this dissertation not only provide a broader understanding of the gendered components of magical belief systems that motivated and informed the behaviors of early Euro-Americans in negotiating personal, social, spiritual, political, and environmental conflicts, but
they should motivate researchers to consider the implications of including traditional beliefs systems in their own research studies. Additionally, the demonstration that only through the synthesizing of numerous evidentiary strands can a more accurate picture of any past people be drawn, should enlighten archaeologists as to the importance of considering a wider range of documentation, including a culture’s folklore and artistic works, before analyzing or interpreting the archaeological record of any context (Walker 1998; Walker and Lucerno 2000; Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Becker 2005). This dissertation has highlighted the complexity inherent in interpreting the motivations, choices, and magical material manifestations associated with risk management in historical contexts. Nevertheless, regardless of time or place, people’s capacities to effectively cope with the both the challenges intrinsic to human life and those relative to specific times, places, and cultures are what make the study of humanity interesting, worthwhile, and rewarding. The strategies they devise to face life’s struggles emerge from their worldviews, and it is these worldviews, these belief systems, that underwrite the entire spectrum of material culture. It is our challenge and responsibility as archaeologists to perceptively read the material clues and give voice to the very real human emotions, motivations, and experiences they were used to express.
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Tarlow, Sarah


Taylor, John Metcalf


Urban, Marsha

VanPool, Christine S.

Viegas, Jennifer

Villiers, Elizabeth

Vyse, Stuart A.

Waldbauer, Richard C.

Walker, Barbara (editor)

Walker, Peter N.

Walker, William H.


Walker, William H., and Lisa J. Lucero

Walton, James
Waring, Philippa

Wasserman, Emily

Weisman, Richard

Welters, Linda (editor)

Whelan, Mary K.

Whitehouse, Harvey, and James Laidlaw (editors)

Whitley, David S., and Kelley Hays-Gilpin (editors)
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Wilby, Emma

Wilde, Lady

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Wurst, LouAnn

Wylie, Alison

Yentsch, Anne E.


Yentsch, Anne, and Mary C. Beaudry

Zuckerman, Michael

Zusne, Leonard, and Warren H. Jones
### Appendix A: Witchcraft Accusations by Colony

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<th>Punishment</th>
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<td>Portsmouth</td>
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<td>New Haven</td>
<td>1654</td>
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<td>Aquiday</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>(m) Hales</td>
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<td>Newport</td>
<td>1672</td>
<td>Katherine Palmer</td>
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</table>

*Now belonging to New York, was then under Connecticut Colony

*Now belonging to New Hampshire, was then part of Massachusetts Bay Colony

*Now belonging to Maine, was then part of Massachusetts Bay Colony

(--) =no action known or recorded  (m) or (f) = male or female name unknown  (?) =probable but not confirmed

### Appendix B: Supernatural Creatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creature</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Country/Region of Belief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billy Blind (also called Billy Blin, Belly Blin, Blind Barlow)</td>
<td>Benevolent household spirit; protects house and family; offers advice and practical assistance</td>
<td>England; Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Annis</td>
<td>A witch-like creature that inhabits isolated hills who scratches to death and devours children then dries their skins in her cave</td>
<td>Leicestershire, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Shuck (also called Old Shuck)</td>
<td>‘Shuck’ from scucca, Anglo-Saxon for ‘demon’; demonic black dog inhabiting river banks, lonely roads, and graveyards; associated with the night; in some areas akin to a werewolf, in others protects travelers</td>
<td>East Anglia, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodach</td>
<td>Lives in chimney during the day; comes out at night to terrorize children; putting salt in the hearth prevents the bodach from crossing into the house</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogey (also called bogeyman)</td>
<td>Associated with the night, powerless during the day; terrorizes children</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boggart</td>
<td>Troublesome household spirit akin to a poltergeist; shape-shifter</td>
<td>Northwestern England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogle</td>
<td>Mischievous spirit akin to a boggart; inhabits both buildings and outlying lands</td>
<td>Lincolnshire, England; Scottish borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brag</td>
<td>Shape-shifting goblin normally taking horse shape; lures humans to mount it then after a terrorizing ride, dumps them in the middle of a pond</td>
<td>Northern England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownie</td>
<td>Household spirit; appears at night to undertake some chore in house or barn until offended by gifts of recompense</td>
<td>Northern, Eastern, and Midlands areas of England; Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucca (also called Knocker, Tommy Knocker)</td>
<td>Hobgoblin that inhabits mines and ships; foretells shipwrecks; volatile but controllable through offerings of food, fish, and drops of ale spilled intentionally</td>
<td>Cornwall, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bugbear</td>
<td>Hobgoblin taking bear shape to scare children</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buggane</td>
<td>Dangerous shape-shifting spirit associated with waterfalls usually assuming shape of horse, calf, black bull, or ram; also haunted old chapels</td>
<td>Isle of Man, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwbachod (also called Bwca)</td>
<td>Household spirit akin to brownie; particularly mischievous towards teetotalers</td>
<td>Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabbyl Ushtey</td>
<td>Water horse that would carry its victims into the sea or a river; hooves were reversed back to front</td>
<td>Isle of Man, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coblynau</td>
<td>Inhabit mines, guide miners to ore veins, but throw stones at them if offended</td>
<td>Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creature</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Country/Region of Belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evil eye (known as ‘overlooking’)</td>
<td>While not an embodied creature, it is an evil force that emanates from the eyes of witches and others possessed of maleficent supernatural power</td>
<td>England; Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy</td>
<td>A race of beings that inhabit particular landscape features like mounds, trees, glens, etc.; often attempt to change their offspring for human babies; waylay, mislead, confound, and otherwise pose danger to humans, especially at night, in the woods, or in isolated areas</td>
<td>England; Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fendoree</td>
<td>A human-sized brownie household spirit; has great supernatural power; temperamental</td>
<td>Isle of Man, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fetch (also called doppleganger; shadow soul, wraith)</td>
<td>A spirit-double, ghost, or apparition usually of a living person usually seen by family members at the moment of the person’s death; a fetch-candle or fetch-light is a ghostly light seen in the night that presages a death</td>
<td>England; Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glashan</td>
<td>Naked human-like creatures inhabiting the hillsides; for food payments would work for farmers</td>
<td>Isle of Man, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>The ephemeral apparition of a deceased person</td>
<td>England; Scotland; Wales; Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwyllion</td>
<td>Mischievous spirits that waylay and mislead unwary night travelers</td>
<td>Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gytrash</td>
<td>Spirit appearing as silent horse or large dog on lonely roads to help or hinder night travelers</td>
<td>Northern England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hedley kow</td>
<td>Trickster spirits associated with agricultural and wool spinning mishaps</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henkie</td>
<td>Dancing, limping trolls that live by the sea in caves or sand dunes</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobyah</td>
<td>Anthropophagic hobgoblins that terrorize children</td>
<td>New England; Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imp</td>
<td>Little demons often considered witches’ familiars or helpers</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incubus</td>
<td>Male demon that seduces sleeping women; the offspring of such liaisons thought to be witches, or are evidenced by birth defects, mental defects, or twin births</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelpie</td>
<td>Water horse spirit that lures travelers to mount it then dives into water where it drowns and eats its victim. To see a kelpie is an omen of ill fortune or death</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mermaid</td>
<td>Half fish, half human sea creatures that lure sailors to their death</td>
<td>England; Scotland; Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redcap</td>
<td>Goblin that inhabits dark places and ruins where atrocities have occurred; their caps are red from soaking them in human blood</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creature</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Country/Region of Belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roane and Selkie</td>
<td>Seals that shed their skins on land and assume human shape; can marry and procreate with humans</td>
<td>Scotland; Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sluagh</td>
<td>Fairy race; a host of unforgiven souls that haunt the places of their crimes; dangerous and feared as they can capture living humans</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Succubus</td>
<td>Female counterpart of the incubus; offspring of incubi or succubae believed to be witches, or are evidenced by birth defects, mental defects, or twin births</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangie</td>
<td>Mischievous water spirits appearing as old men or seaweed covered horses that can carry their victims into the sea, but do not kill or devour them as kelpies do</td>
<td>Orkney Islands, Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taroo-Ushtey (also called Theroo Ushta)</td>
<td>A water bull that comes out of the sea to feed and mate with cattle; plagues local inhabitants; destroys cropfields</td>
<td>Isle of Man, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trow</td>
<td>Dwarfish trolls inhabiting seaside caves and sand dunes; dangerous and malicious</td>
<td>Orkney and Shetland Islands, Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werewolf</td>
<td>Shape-shifting cannibalistic creature; either human bewitched into wolffish form or has supernatural power to transform at will</td>
<td>England</td>
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[362]
Appendix C: Common Seventeenth-Century Magical Flora for Domestic Boundary Protection and Their Apotropaic Locations

This appendix is divided into two parts, A and B. Part A provides a visual glossary, including both a color photograph and a line drawing, for each of the most commonly cited plants in seventeenth-century Anglo-European sources to magically protect domestic boundaries. This glossary is intended as a model identification aid for archaeologists surveying sites to bring to their attention potentially magical plant use.

The second section of this appendix features a table delineating the discrepancies between the historic and folkloristic list of apotropaic plants and the plants specifically noted as growing, either as native or introduced, in New England in the seventeenth century. This cross comparison list can be used in future research to test which of these plants were actually present and cultivated in New England during this time period.

Part A: Visual Glossary

Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*): grown in house garden; burnt in hearth, on bricks, and in chafing pans

Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*): bushes planted around house perimeter; attached to doors
Birch (*Betula pendula*): crosses cut from birch placed above front door; planted in front of houses; branches hung on barn/stable doors and placed on manure piles

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*): planted along fence lines

Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*): planted near doors and windows

Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*): grown in house garden; placed under bed of pregnant women

Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*): garlands hung over doors and windows
Dill (*Anethum graveolens*): grown in house garden, near doors; mixed with trefoil, St. John’s wort, and vervain and placed at house entrance

Elder (*Sambucus nigra*): planted around house and yard perimeters; planted on and placed in graves; coffins made of elder wood

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*): wreaths hung over doors and windows; seeds stuffed in keyholes; grown in house garden

Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*): grown in house garden
Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacartha*): hung over windows, on doors, and in rafters; hung outside cowsheds; grown in house garden

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*): planted along house edges, under windows, and as hedges along property lines and roads; used to construct thresholds

Houseleek (*Sempervivum tectorum*): planted on roofs

Ivy (*Hedera helix*): grown on exterior walls of house

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*): hung over doors; grown in house gardens
Peony (*Paeonia officinalis*): grown in house gardens; around beds

Pine cones (any variety of pine; pictured here White pine (*Pinus strobi*)): affixed to garden gate posts

Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*): grown in house garden

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*): strewn on doorsteps; grown in house garden and near house door; placed under beds

Rowan/Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*): planted at house corners; butter churns made from rowan wood; rowan twigs attached to butter churns and milk buckets
Rue (*Ruta graveolens*): grown in house garden and planted in window boxes or under windows; rubbed on house floors

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*): grown in house garden; hung in windows

St. John’s Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*): wreaths thrown on roofs; flowers hung over doors; grown in house garden

Sow Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*): grown in house garden
Valerian (*Valerianan officinalis*): hung on door; grown in house garden

Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*): planted in house gardens and around doors; carved on amulets; made into brooms

Wormwood (*Artemisia pontica*): spread around the inside perimeter of the house

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*): grown in house garden; strewn on doorstep; suspended over cradles; hung in houses; nailed to doorways
Part B: Table of Apotropaic Plants and Their Noted Presence in New England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apotropaic Plants Noted in Anglo Folklore and Historical Sources</th>
<th>Apotropaic Plants Native to New England (noted by Josselyn 1672)</th>
<th>Apotropaic Plants Imported by Colonists (noted by Josselyn (1672) and in letters (Emerson 1976))</th>
<th>Apotropaic Plants in the Seventeenth-Century Herb Garden at the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site (McDowell nd)</th>
<th>Apotropaic Plants in 17th Century Privy at Cross Street Back Lot Site, Boston, MA (Dudek et al. 1998:66)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>Angelica</td>
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<td>Birch</td>
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<td>Beans</td>
<td>Hyssop</td>
<td>Elder</td>
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<td>Clover</td>
<td>Mugwort</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
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<td>Oak</td>
<td>Dill</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
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<td>Apotropaic Plants Noted in Anglo Folklore and Historical Sources</td>
<td>Apotropaic Plants Native to New England (noted by Josselyn 1672)</td>
<td>Apotropaic Plants Imported by Colonists (noted by Josselyn (1672) and in letters (Emerson 1976))</td>
<td>Apotropaic Plants in the Seventeenth-Century Herb Garden at the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site (McDowell nd)</td>
<td>Apotropaic Plants in 17th Century Privy at Cross Street Back Lot Site, Boston, MA (Dudek et al. 1998:66)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yew</td>
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Sources:
(Coles 1656; Blagrave 1671; Markham 1683, 2011[1615]; Aubrey 1670, 1686; Mather 1689; Culpeper 1814[1652]; Gregor 1881; Pettigrew 1884; Brand 1888; Burne 1913; Leach 1949; Leighton 1970; Kittredge 1972; Reader’s Digest 1973; Boland 1976; Parkinson 1976[1629]; Erichsen-Brown 1979; Williams 1982; McLaren 1984; Cunningham 1985; Botkin 1989; Wilde 1991[1885]; Whitlock 1992; Turner 1993; Jones 1995; Lipp 1996; Patterson 1996; Boyer and Nissenbaum 1997; Picton 2000; Gifford 2000; Gazin-Schwartz 2001; Burr 2002[1914]; Lipp 2006; Bishop 2007; McDowell nd)
This appendix is divided into two parts, A and B. Part A, Historic Sources, provides the raw data tables converted from the Microsoft Access and Excel spreadsheets for the general historic sources and the Salem witch trial transcripts. Part B, Folklore Sources, provides the similarly converted Microsoft Access spreadsheet of the folkloristic raw data used in this dissertation. These tables have been condensed and reformatted from their original forms to fit the scale and layout of the dissertation format.

**PART A- HISTORIC SOURCES**

### General Historic Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code*</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Bells</td>
<td>Church or handheld bells</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>In belfries or handheld</td>
<td>Repel evil forces, storms, and disease. Carved in a belfry in Cornwall, Eng., “By which are scar’d the fiends of hell, and all by virtue of a Bell.”</td>
<td>St. Thomas Aquinas &quot;The atmosphere is a battlefield between angels and devils…the tones of the consecrated metal repel demons and arrest storms and lightning.”</td>
<td>Spencer (2003:44-48); Aubrey (1670:91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>Scarlet cloth</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Laid on infant’s head when it is carried upstairs in house</td>
<td>Protect newborn from evil spirits</td>
<td>Accompanied by silver and gold in baby's hand and carried upstairs as a ritual &quot;to bring him wealth and cause him always to rise in the world.”</td>
<td>Judge Sewell 1694 in Earle (1893:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>Anodyne necklace</td>
<td>Anodyne</td>
<td>Worn around infant’s neck</td>
<td>Ease child’s teething pain and vulnerability to evil forces</td>
<td></td>
<td>Earle (1893:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Bricks</td>
<td>Salt-glazed bricks</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Built into chimney</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witches/evil through hearth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deetz and Deetz (2000:91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Baby rattle</td>
<td>Baby rattle; “coral and bells” coral shaft set in silver handle surrounded</td>
<td>Silver and red coral</td>
<td></td>
<td>Protect infant from evil eye</td>
<td>Multifunctional object-teether, toy, status marker, magical amulet.</td>
<td>Calvert (1992:6); Gardner (1942:98);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>by tiny silver bells</td>
<td>“Coral…considered to possess the power of keeping off evil spirits and averting…the Evil Eye.” (Pettigrew 1844:82)</td>
<td>Pettigrew (1844:82)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Necklace or pendant</td>
<td>Lodestone pendant</td>
<td>Magnetic oxide; magnetite</td>
<td>Worn or hung by bed</td>
<td>Promote fertility</td>
<td>N. Culpeper 1656, Directory for Midwives, in McLaren (1984)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Dried quail heart made into a hanging amulet</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Worn or hung by bed</td>
<td>Promote fertility</td>
<td>N. Culpeper 1656, Directory for Midwives, in McLaren (1984)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Knotted ligature or knotted cord</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Placed under bed</td>
<td>Prevent conception</td>
<td>Bride/wife could create one which would counter any made by illwishers; she could then untie and release the spell at her leisure.</td>
<td>McLaren (1984)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Squill (a lily-type plant with blue star shaped flowers)</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung over bed</td>
<td>Promote fertility and cure impotence</td>
<td>N. Culpeper 1656, Directory for Midwives, in McLaren (1984)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Unbutchered, buried alive</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Near property or stable boundaries</td>
<td>Stop cattle plague caused by witches</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Undetermined &quot;creature&quot;, buried feet up</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Under threshold of stable or cowshed</td>
<td>Save herd from bewitchment and illness</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td>Unbutchered, buried alive</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Cure insanity (a demonic affliction)</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td>Black cock along with patient’s hair and fingernail clippings</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Cure epilepsy (a demonic affliction)</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Toads</td>
<td>Nine living toads on a string</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Buried along property line</td>
<td>Reflect bewitchment onto suspected bewitcher</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Puppies</td>
<td>Three live puppies arranged in a triangle</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Buried in field corner</td>
<td>Clear the field of weeds</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Horse, hog, sheep, or chicken</td>
<td>Burned alive, or just the hearts, ears or tails burned</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Along property boundaries or in hearth</td>
<td>Save animals from bewitchment and illness and to deflect</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:96-97)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Hen</td>
<td>Burned alive</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Save animals from bewitchment and illness</td>
<td>Timothy Crowther was the Yorkshire parish priest</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m</td>
<td>Stuffed</td>
<td>Cloth ball filled with horse or cow hair, hoof parings, and horn parings, with pins and 3 needles</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, textile, metal</td>
<td>Burned in hearth</td>
<td>Save animals from bewitchment and illness and to deflect bewitchment onto suspected bewitcher</td>
<td>T. Crowther, 1694-1760 in Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Pierced animal heart</td>
<td>Animal heart stuck with pins, needles, or thorns</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Hung up inside chimney to roast/parch</td>
<td>Deflect bewitchment onto suspected bewitcher</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Pierced pigeon heart</td>
<td>Pigeon heart stuck with pins</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Hung in chimney</td>
<td>Against bad luck in fishing</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Pierced bacon</td>
<td>Bacon stuck with pins</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Hung in chimney</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witches/evil through hearth</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Pierced animal heart</td>
<td>Heart stuck with pins and needles</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Buried in the ground around house perimeter, under foundation or in house fabric</td>
<td>Protect house from witches; heart may be extracted from live animal; pins and needles often multiples of three</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Pierced red cloth</td>
<td>Red cloth pierced with 60 needles and half penny’s worth of pins</td>
<td>Composite: textile, metal</td>
<td>Burned in hearth</td>
<td>Identify and turn bewitchment onto bewitcher; to unbewitch ill person</td>
<td>Red cloth often heart-shaped</td>
<td>Joan Bayly, 1610 in Kittredge (1972:97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x b x</td>
<td>Witch bottle</td>
<td>Stoneware Bellarmine jugs or glass bottles containing urine, pins, needles, nails, thorns, fingernail pairings, hair, cloth hearts</td>
<td>Composite: ceramic, metal, human bodily elements, textile</td>
<td>Buried under thresholds, foundations, hearth stones, and placed in hearths</td>
<td>Protect house from witches; to identify and turn bewitchment onto bewitcher; to unbewitch ill person</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:102)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Butter churn</td>
<td>Butter churn and/or the stirring sticks made out of rowan wood</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td></td>
<td>Protect the cream from bewitchment</td>
<td>Giffard’s Dialogue, 1593 in Kittredge (1972:167)</td>
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<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Coin</td>
<td>Crooked, pierced, or folded shining or sixpence</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed in butter churn</td>
<td>Protect cream from bewitchment</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:167)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Fire poker</td>
<td>Iron fire poker or fireiron</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>House corners</td>
<td>Protect house from witches; Touch each corner of the house with the red-hot poker—</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:167)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Code*</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed in butter churn</td>
<td>Protect the cream from bewitchment</td>
<td>Placed in churn red-hot, also use fire irons, spits, or pokers. These should leave burn marks inside butter churns</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Needles and pins</td>
<td>Seven needles and nine pins</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed in butter churn</td>
<td>Protect the cream from bewitchment</td>
<td>Should be located around dairying areas or with butter churns</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Sod</td>
<td>Four sections of cut sod</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Cut from corners of fields</td>
<td>Protect the field and crops from evil forces</td>
<td>Sod was blessed and replaced in field</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Plow handle</td>
<td>Bored out plow handle filled with herbs and salt</td>
<td>Composite: flora, mineral</td>
<td>Used to plow fields and protect the field, crops and farmer from bewitchment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:171)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x m</td>
<td>Sieve and scissors</td>
<td>Round wooden sieve with metal meshing, iron scissors</td>
<td>Composite: wood, metal</td>
<td>Detect witches</td>
<td>Similar to using the Bible and Key; also used in divination</td>
<td>Kittredge (1972:198-199)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Spoon</td>
<td>Lateen spoon with fig-shaped bowl</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Embedded in chimney foundation</td>
<td>Protect house from evil</td>
<td>John Farrington’s house, Dedham, MA</td>
<td>St. George (1998:194)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Holed stone</td>
<td>Stone with a natural hole through it, preferably flint</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Hung over stables and managers</td>
<td>Prevent horses from being ‘hag ridden’ by witches</td>
<td>Aubrey (1670:90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m</td>
<td>Witch bottle</td>
<td>Stoneware or glass bottle containing horse hair, hoof clippings, horseshoe nails</td>
<td>Composite: ceramic, fauna, metal</td>
<td>Buried by barn or stable thresholds</td>
<td>Unbewitch horses</td>
<td>Aubrey (1670:90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>metal</td>
<td>Hung on doors</td>
<td>Prevent witches from entering</td>
<td>Aubrey (1670:91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Iron bar</td>
<td>Iron bar or fire iron</td>
<td>metal</td>
<td>Laid across beer barrels</td>
<td>Prevent beer from souring due to the evil forces in thunder</td>
<td>Aubrey (1670:90)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Children’s teeth</td>
<td>Children’s shed teeth wrapped in a cloth with salt</td>
<td>Composite: human body elements, textile, mineral</td>
<td>Hidden in dark corners in the house or thrown into hearth</td>
<td>Protect children from witches</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Twisted plants</td>
<td>Bittersweet and holly twisted together</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in barns and stables; attached to horses</td>
<td>Prevent horses from being ‘hag ridden’ by witches</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Wolf fang teether</td>
<td>Wolf fang set in silver</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Protect children from witches</td>
<td>Used as a combination teether and amulet like the coral and bells</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:115)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Houseleek</td>
<td>Houseleek plants</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted on roofs</td>
<td>Protect house from thunder and</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:167)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Location</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Twisted plants</td>
<td>Twisted wheat/barley “corn dolly”</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in chimney</td>
<td>Protect house and ensure abundance for next year’s crop</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:172)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>Holly trees</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted around and near house</td>
<td>Protect house from evil forces</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:189)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Hypericon</td>
<td>Herb hypericon</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Placed under pillows and bed</td>
<td>Keep ghosts out of bedroom</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:231)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>Rowan trees</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted at corners of house and used in agricultural tools</td>
<td>Protect house, crops, and livestock</td>
<td>Pins for oxen yokes made of rowan</td>
<td>Aubrey (1686:247)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Written charms</td>
<td>Symbols and/or words written on paper or scratched onto beams</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>In corners of house</td>
<td>Drive away haunting spirits</td>
<td>Scot (1584:140)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Snake</td>
<td>Snake or snake skin</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Buried under threshold or attached to exterior doors</td>
<td>Protect house against bewitchment</td>
<td>Scot (1584:145)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Poppets</td>
<td>Image magic objects shaped like humans</td>
<td>Composite: textile, wax, flora, metal</td>
<td>Buried under and around house, also concealed in niches and walls</td>
<td>Reverse bewitchment back onto bewitcher</td>
<td>Scot (1584:146)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Pebbled</td>
<td>Pebbled ‘fired’ or burnt</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Buried under threshold</td>
<td>Identify thieves</td>
<td>Scot (1584:149)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Sieve and Scissors</td>
<td>Round wooden sieve with metal meshing, iron scissors</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Identify thieves</td>
<td>Similar to using the Bible and Key; also used in divination</td>
<td>Scot (1584:149)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Wolf head</td>
<td>Wolf head</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Nailed to house door</td>
<td>Protect house against bewitchment</td>
<td>Scot (1584:152)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Garlic and Alicium</td>
<td>Garlic and alicium plants</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in roof rafters</td>
<td>Keep witches and evil spirits away</td>
<td>Scot (1584:152)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Dog blood and gall</td>
<td>Blood and gall of black dog</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Spread on house walls and posts</td>
<td>Drive out witches and devils</td>
<td>Scot (1584:152)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Betony</td>
<td>Betony herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted around house</td>
<td>Protect house from all evil mischief</td>
<td>Scot (1584:152)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Wax</td>
<td>Melted wax from candles dripped in a cross-shape</td>
<td>Wax</td>
<td>Dripped on the threshold and smeared above doors of barns and stalls</td>
<td>Protect cattle from bewitchment</td>
<td>This should be done at Easter.</td>
<td>Scot (1584:160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Roof tile</td>
<td>Burnt roof tile or roof thatching sprinkled with salt and urine</td>
<td>Composite: clay or flora, mineral, human body elements</td>
<td>Buried under a trivet or gridiron then the ashes buried by threshold of</td>
<td>Reverse bewitchment back onto bewitcher</td>
<td>The tile or thatch comes from above the door of the suspected witch.</td>
<td>Blagrave (1671:154)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td>Engraved characters/symbols</td>
<td>Engraved on the front of houses</td>
<td>Protect the house from all manner of evil</td>
<td>Pettigrew (1844:65)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Stone cherub head</td>
<td>Stone cherub head gate post topper</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Affixed to gate post tops</td>
<td>Protect house and property from evil</td>
<td>S. Sewell’s Diary, 1692, in Hall (1989:217)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x b x</td>
<td>Rag ball</td>
<td>Rags wrapped around human fingernails and toenails</td>
<td>Composite: textile, human body elements</td>
<td>Buried in secret places</td>
<td>Drive out consumption</td>
<td>Rags are from victim’s own clothing. Consumption thought to have supernatural causes.</td>
<td>Pettigrew (1844:98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b x</td>
<td>Holed stone and key</td>
<td>Stone with a natural hole through it tied to a door key</td>
<td>Composite: mineral, metal, textile</td>
<td>Hung in stables and on bedsteads</td>
<td>Prevent horses from being “hag ridden” by witches and humans from having ‘nightmares’ (attack by incubi and succubae)</td>
<td>Pettigrew (1844:118)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x b</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>Herb rosemary</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Placed in graves</td>
<td>Protect the soul from evil</td>
<td>Brand (1888:451)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x b</td>
<td>Colored rags</td>
<td>Clothing rags of various colors</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Placed on trees and bushes around supernaturally powerful water sources</td>
<td>Unbewitch victims and cure ailments including madness</td>
<td>Brand (1888:522-523)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Hooks and shears</td>
<td>Iron hooks and shears</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Hung in stables and barns</td>
<td>Prevent horses from being “hag ridden” by witches</td>
<td>Brand (1888:733-734)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Eel trident</td>
<td>Iron tri-pointed eel spear</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Embedded above house door near chimney</td>
<td>Protect house from power of evil spirits</td>
<td>St. George (1998:92)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Hung over house door</td>
<td>Prevent witch from entering house</td>
<td>Deposition of Esther Wilson against Elizabeth Morse, 1680, Newbury, MA</td>
<td>Drake (1869:275)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Bay Laurel</td>
<td>Herb Bay Laurel</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Around the perimeter of house</td>
<td>Protect house from power of evil spirits</td>
<td>Undertaken by Goodwife Mary Hortado against lithobolic attack, 1683, Barwick, ME</td>
<td>I. Mather, Remarkable Providences, in Burr (2002[1914]:38)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Code***
C=Crisis
G=Gender (f-female, m-male, b-both female and male)
P=Physical boundary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code*</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Above door</td>
<td>Prevent witch’s entry</td>
<td></td>
<td>I. Mather, Illustrious Providences, in Burr (2002[1914]:31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Bay Laurel</td>
<td>Bay Laurel herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>&quot;stick the house round with Bayes&quot;</td>
<td>Protect against evil spirits</td>
<td></td>
<td>I. Mather, Illustrious Providences, in Burr (2002[1914]:38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Pot and pins</td>
<td>&quot;pot with urin, and crooked pin in it&quot;</td>
<td>Unknown pot material; metal pins</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Reverse bewitchment back onto bewitcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>R. Chamberlain in Burr (2002[1914]:74)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rag dolls</td>
<td>Small ragdolls made of rags and stuffed with goat hair “and other such ingredients”</td>
<td>Composite: textile, fauna</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Reverse bewitchment back onto bewitcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Mather, Memorial Providences in Burr (2002[1914]:104)</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Nailed on door</td>
<td>Prevent witch’s entry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drake (1869:275-276)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Bay Laurel</td>
<td>Bay Laurel herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Prevent witch’s entry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Court Records, Hampton, MA in Drake (1869:275-276)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch victim</td>
<td>Male user only described using a counterwitchcraft 'trick'</td>
<td>C. Mather, Memorial Providences in Burr (2002[1914]:128-129)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Poppet dolls shaped out of wax</td>
<td>Wax</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deodat Lawson, A Brief and True Narrative in Burr (2002[1914]:163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Poppet and thorns</td>
<td>Composite: unknown material for poppet, flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tryal of G. Burroughs in Burr (2002[1914]:219)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Ragdolls made of rags and “hogs Brussels, with headless pins in them, the points being outward”</td>
<td>Composite: textile, fauna, metal</td>
<td>Stuffed in holes in cellar walls</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Mather, Wonders of the Invisible World in Burr (2002[1914]:223)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Pig tail and ear</td>
<td>Severed pig tail and ear</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Burned in hearth</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch swine</td>
<td>Records of the Colony of New Haven in Burr (2002[1914]:239)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Pig ear</td>
<td>Severed pig ear</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Burned in hearth</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch swine</td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Mather, Wonders of the Invisible World in Burr (2002[1914]:239)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witch</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Life of His Excellency, Sir Wm. Phips in Boyer and</td>
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[378]
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<th>Code* C/G/P</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Sieve and keys</td>
<td>Round wooden sieve and metal keys</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Identify ill-doers</td>
<td>The Life of His Excellency, Sir Wm. Phips in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Nails</td>
<td>Iron nails</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>The Life of His Excellency, Sir Wm. Phips in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>The Life of His Excellency, Sir Wm. Phips in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Cake</td>
<td>&quot;Witch&quot; cake composed of rye meal and urine of afflicted victims</td>
<td>Composite: flora, human body elements</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Determine if illness was bewitchment</td>
<td>Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Knotted rags</td>
<td>Rags tied in knots</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Used as poppets to inflict harm on victim</td>
<td>Thomas Hutchinson, History of MA Bay, p. 26 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>&quot;Venus glass&quot; and egg</td>
<td>Composite: glass, fauna</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Identify ill-doers or future husbands</td>
<td>Suffolk Co. Records Case No. 2712, p. 49 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Glass bottle filled with urine</td>
<td>Composite: glass, human body elements</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Reverse bewitchment back onto bewitcher</td>
<td>Suffolk Co. Records Case No. 2708, p. 31 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>x f</td>
<td>Knotted rag</td>
<td>Rag tied in knot</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Used as poppets to inflict harm on victim</td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 2, p. 22 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>Sieve and scissors</td>
<td>Round wooden sieve and iron scissors (&quot;sive and sissers&quot;)</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Identify ill-doers</td>
<td>Essex Institute MMS Collection in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>Material</td>
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<td>x m x</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Book of Palmistry</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
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<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 1, p. 80 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>x f x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Wooden dolls</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 1, p. 50 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>x m</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 1, p. 51 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Poppet and pins</td>
<td>Composite: unknown material for poppet, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 2, p. 49 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Horse flesh</td>
<td>Burned horse flesh</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Around barn</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch horse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 1, p. 148 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>x f</td>
<td>Rag poppets and pins</td>
<td>Poppets described as “rags of stripes of clothe” stuck with pins</td>
<td>Composite: textile, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>MA Archives, Vol. 135, No. 34 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<td>x f</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Wooden doll made of “birch Rhine”</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>MA Archives, Vol. 135, No. 34 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Sieve</td>
<td>Round wooden sieve</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Identify ill-doers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suffolk Court Records No. 2707, p. 30 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Rags</td>
<td>Rolled rags</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Used as poppets to inflict harm on victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 2, p. 24 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Spindle</td>
<td>Iron spindle</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co.</td>
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<td>Code* C/G/P</td>
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<td>Description</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco pipe</td>
<td>Tobacco pipe</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 2, p. 24 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rags and quills</td>
<td>Rags and quills tied up together and described as “persal of rags” and a “persal of quils tied up”</td>
<td>Composite: textile, fauna</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Used as poppet to inflict harm on victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston Public Library, Dept. of Rare Books and Manuscripts in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppets and pins</td>
<td>Poppets stuck with pins and knitting needle</td>
<td>Composite: unknown material for poppet, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Institute MSS Collection in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Handkerchief</td>
<td>Rolled up handkerchief</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Institute MSS Collection in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppet and needle</td>
<td>Poppet stuck with needle</td>
<td>Composite: unknown material for poppet, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>MA Historical Society in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Skillet and human hair</td>
<td>Iron skillet with human victim’s hair boiled in it</td>
<td>Composite: Metal, human body elements</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Co. Archives, Salem, Witchcraft Vol. 2, p. 31 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rag and pins</td>
<td>Rag with pins stuck in it</td>
<td>Composite: textile, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suffolk Co. Records Case No. 2705, p. 28 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Poppet</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suffolk Co. Records Case No. 2706, p. 26 in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Sword</td>
<td>Iron sword</td>
<td>Sword</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Determine if someone is bewitched</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tomlinson (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Pig tail</td>
<td>Severed pig (sow) tail</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>In hearth</td>
<td>Identify witch and unbewitch swine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tomlinson (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Angelica root herb</td>
<td>Angelica root herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Protect house from witches and evil forces</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tomlinson (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Poppets and thorns</td>
<td>Poppets stuck with thorns</td>
<td>Composite: unknown material for poppet, flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Inflict harm upon victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977)</td>
</tr>
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Threshold Associations: Salem Witchcraft Trials, 1692-1693 (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1977)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Garcia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
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[383]
### PART B- FOLKLORE SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code*</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Function</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>In/around cradles; sprinkled on doorsteps; on breast of corpse in a dish or w/candle</td>
<td>Repel fairies; protect corpse from demons; repel witches and evil forces</td>
<td>Mother’s carried in pockets to protect unbaptized infants; carry a pinch in the hand at night to protect oneself in/from the dark</td>
<td>Tongue 1965; Reader’s Digest 1973; Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992; Purkiss 2003; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Swaddling clothes</td>
<td>Linen cloth for wrapping infants</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Hung on trees/bushes in woods, near water; at liminal thresholds-rivers, crossroads, hills</td>
<td>Transfer fairy changing essence or illness imprinted in cloth to bushes</td>
<td>Swaddling clothes applied at birth, worn about 6-9 months and believed to keep baby healthy, protected, and necessary for their limbs to grow straight</td>
<td>Schmitt 1983; Purkiss 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Color green</td>
<td>Textile color</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Worn as clothing or used as household linens</td>
<td>Avoid using green to ward off fairies</td>
<td>Never dress unbaptized infant in green</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Purkiss 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water in a container</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>In bucket or pan brought into house at night</td>
<td>Quench fairy thirst so they don’t vampirize household</td>
<td></td>
<td>Campbell 1885; Purkiss 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Finger</td>
<td>Finger of dead thief</td>
<td>Human body element</td>
<td>Buried under the house threshold</td>
<td>Protect house and residents against theft</td>
<td>Evans 1906</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Pea pod</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Attached over house or bedroom door</td>
<td>Divine future husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burne 1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thread</td>
<td>Red thread</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>Worn on person, attached to animals, sewn into domestic linens</td>
<td>Repel witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gregor 1881; Burne 1913; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rowan tree</td>
<td>Rowan tree</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted in yards, around houses; tied to buckets, made into crosses over house and stable doors, butter churns and churn staffs</td>
<td>Repel witches and protect against Evil Eye</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gregor 1881; Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992; Jones 1995; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Mutton blade bone</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Sympathetic device to harm or control victim</td>
<td>Burne 1913</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Coin</td>
<td>Silver coin</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed in butter churn; placed in water basin</td>
<td>Guard cream from bewitchment; lift Evil Eye curse</td>
<td>Burne 1913; Waring 1978; Roud 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Glass shards</td>
<td>Broken glass shards</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Strewn into intended victim’s footprints</td>
<td>Identify and inflict harm upon enemy</td>
<td>Burne 1913</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>Holy shadow</td>
<td>Placed within fabric of building at the time of construction</td>
<td>Supernaturally protect and insure architectural stability</td>
<td>Also done by measuring someone’s footprint or shadow and including the measurement within the structure</td>
<td>Burne 1913</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Bells</td>
<td>Church bells or hand-held bells</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>In church belfries and in houses</td>
<td>Drive away evil spirits; bring fair winds, expel witches; purify air of disease causing demons</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Spencer 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Barrel</td>
<td>Large wooden barrel with metal bands</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Placed in little-used rooms which are then sealed off</td>
<td>Seal up ghost and prevent it from haunting</td>
<td>All windows and doors to room blocked so ghost cannot escape; called “Vanished Rooms”</td>
<td>Turner 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Chalk circles</td>
<td>“Witch Marks” 3 drawn chalk circles</td>
<td>Chalk</td>
<td>Drawn on hearths</td>
<td>Prevent witches from entering through hearth</td>
<td>Turner 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Stone pile</td>
<td>Pile of stones on grave</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Placed on burial spot of criminal</td>
<td>Prevent ghost from rising from hanged victim’s grave</td>
<td>Turner 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Chips of stone</td>
<td>Chips of stone broken off standing stones</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Placed on person or kept in house</td>
<td>Ward off Devil and bring good luck</td>
<td>Turner 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Coins</td>
<td>Holed or bent; specially minted with image of defeated Devil</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Tucked into standing stone crevices or carried on person</td>
<td>Ward off evil and bring good luck</td>
<td>Coins with Devil image called “touch pieces”</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Turner 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Broom</td>
<td>Wood and straw broom</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Placed behind house door or across house threshold</td>
<td>Ward off witches and prevent them from entry</td>
<td>Bergen 1896; Roud 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Shears or knife</td>
<td>Shears or sharp knife</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed under pillow or bed</td>
<td>Ward off nightmares</td>
<td>Bergen 1896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Thorn stick</td>
<td>Thorn stick</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Placed on person or kept in house</td>
<td>Identify witch and reverse bewitchment</td>
<td>Turner 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Forked stones</td>
<td>Forked/split stones</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Found naturally on landscape</td>
<td>Cure illness</td>
<td>Natural holed or forked openings in stones/trees</td>
<td>Burne 1913; Hunt 1988; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[385]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code*</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Material</th>
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<th>Function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Black dog</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Buried under new building doorposts or walls</td>
<td>Guard houses or other buildings from misfortune; repel the Devil; protect against ghosts and demons</td>
<td>Buried on north side of churches where Devil’s door is located</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bullet</td>
<td>Silver bullet made out of a melted sixpence</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Attached to horse tack or hung in stables</td>
<td>Protect horses from the Evil Eye</td>
<td>Most efficacious if adorned with symbols—acorns, birds, beasts, flowers, hearts, and swastikas</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horse brass</td>
<td>Horse brass</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Plaited into horse’s mane and tail; hung in stables</td>
<td>Protect horses from bewitchment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Straw plait</td>
<td>Straw plait tied with or interwoven with red wool cloth or thread</td>
<td>Composite: flora, textile</td>
<td>Protections</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pig</td>
<td>Dried pig tails and bladders; unbutchered pig</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Pig tail and bladder worn on person; unbutchered diseased pig buried feet up near property boundary</td>
<td>Protect from disease and plague; protect swine herd from bewitchment and disease</td>
<td>Pigs believed able to see the wind; eating pig brains forces eater to tell the truth</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Yew in paper</td>
<td>Clipped yew in paper packaging</td>
<td>Composite: flora, paper</td>
<td>Hidden under carter’s bed</td>
<td>Insure horse’s good health</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marchwort</td>
<td>Marchwort herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Mixed with horses’ water</td>
<td>Insure horse’s good health</td>
<td>Picked with left hand, without looking back, then mixed with horses’ drinking water</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Red Thistle</td>
<td>Red Thistle</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>On an area by stable, place at each corner of compass with a stone in the middle</td>
<td>Cure sores on horse’s back</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td>Cock</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Buried under foundation of house; as symbol on weather vanes and on hinges</td>
<td>Protect house against evil spirits</td>
<td>Cock enemy of ghosts and demons because one heralded Christ’s birth</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ash tree</td>
<td>Split ash tree</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Found naturally on landscape</td>
<td>Cure hernia, rickets, and other ailments</td>
<td>Must be a sapling from a seedling and one that has never been cut</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Neutralize bewitchment</td>
<td>Ghosts and spirits live in bean fields; girls were not supposed to go into bean fields alone</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Birch tree and rags</td>
<td>Birch tree tied with red and white rags</td>
<td>Composite: flora, textile</td>
<td>Propped against stable door</td>
<td>Protect horses from bewitchment</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Giant</td>
<td>Clover</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never have in house, particularly dangerous to burn in house; avoid after dark or falling asleep under one; witches turn into elder trees</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Elder tree</td>
<td>Elder tree</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Found naturally on landscape</td>
<td>Associated with witches, so could identify witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Groundsel</td>
<td>Groundsel</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Found naturally on landscape or growing on thatched roofs</td>
<td>Associated with witches, so could identify witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Twigs hung from house rafters or outside cowsheds</td>
<td>Protect against witches and lightning; insure good milk yield</td>
<td>Maypoles and brooms made of hawthorn</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
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<td>x</td>
<td>Hemp</td>
<td>Hemp</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Grown in fields</td>
<td>Causes barrenness</td>
<td>Women not supposed to work in hemp fields because of its power;</td>
<td>McLaren 1984; Whitlock 1992</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Thresholds made of holly; grown as hedges around yards/fields; placed in cowsheds; walking sticks made of holly for magical protection</td>
<td>Protects against witches; prevents entry of witches; Protection against lightning and preternatural afflictions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Hyssop</td>
<td>Hyssop</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Carried on person</td>
<td>Protects against the Evil Eye</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Grown or hung on house exterior</td>
<td>Protect house and inhabitants from misfortune and evil; brings good luck; cures wide range of ailments</td>
<td>Cups made of ivy had curative powers; unlucky to bring ivy plant into house</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code* C/G/P</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Juniper</td>
<td>Juniper</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Grown around house; burnt in hearth and around cattle; placed in cow’s tail</td>
<td>Repels witches and devil; protect house from lightning; prevents spousal quarreling; allows maidens to divine husband</td>
<td>Juniper smoke drives away evil</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Mistletoe</td>
<td>Mistletoe</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung on house wall; carried on person</td>
<td>Protects house from lightning; charm against witchcraft and injury in battle</td>
<td>Thought that leaves always turn toward the north</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Mugwort</td>
<td>Mugwort herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung over house door; laid under threshold; roots placed under pillow</td>
<td>Repel witches and devil; protect house from lightning; prevent spousal quarreling; allows maidens to divine husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Oak tree</td>
<td>Oak tree</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Doors made of oak</td>
<td>Protect house from lightning; cures toothache</td>
<td>Nail driven into an oak tree is cure for toothache</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Onion and pins</td>
<td>Onion stuck with pins</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Hung in chimney; set in rows along window sill and doorways of cowsheds</td>
<td>Protect livestock from evil and disease; divine husband</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973; Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Peony</td>
<td>Peony</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted in house garden; dried roots hung about neck</td>
<td>Protect house from witches and evil spirits; charm against nightmares</td>
<td>Roots can only be dug up by dog</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>Rosemary herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Dried and hung in house; burnt in hearth; grown near house door</td>
<td>Expel witches and evil spirits from house</td>
<td>Burned with rue, hemlock, and blackthorn to smoke out witches and spirits; believed to flourish only where wife rules the household</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>St. John’s Wort</td>
<td>St. John’s Wort herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung over house doors</td>
<td>Repel witches and evil spirits; protect house against tempests and thunder; protection against incubi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973; Whitlock 1992; Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Vervain</td>
<td>Vervain herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Grown around house; made into brooms</td>
<td>Protect against bewitchment and banish evil spirits</td>
<td>Vervain brooms ‘swept’ house clean of evil</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Wormwood</td>
<td>Wormwood</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Spread around house perimeter</td>
<td>Repel witches and fleas sent by witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Fireirons</td>
<td>Iron fire tool</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed in a cross over</td>
<td>Protect newborns</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Function</td>
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<td>Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>Any iron object</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed on, under, or around cradle</td>
<td>Ward against witches and fairies</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x c x</td>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Placed in, on, or under cradle</td>
<td>Protect against evil, witches, and fairies</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Placenta</td>
<td>Dried placenta</td>
<td>Human body element</td>
<td>Kept locked in chest; carried on person</td>
<td>Bring good luck; protect travelers, especially at sea</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Coin</td>
<td>Corpse money</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Placed under pillow or bed</td>
<td>Prevent conception, especially from incubi</td>
<td>Corpse money was coin that had been held in dead person’s hand for 2 or more minutes</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Holed flint</td>
<td>Naturally holed stone</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Hung over house and stable doors; kept under bed</td>
<td>Protect against witches; ward off witch-born ailments like cramp</td>
<td>Whitlock 1992; Roud 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Laurel tree</td>
<td>Laurel tree</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted around houses and fields</td>
<td>Protect house and field from lightning</td>
<td>Boland 1976</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Witch bridle</td>
<td>Horse tail hair</td>
<td>Composite: fauna</td>
<td>Concealed between lathing and outside boarding of house</td>
<td>Used by witches to hag-ride victims</td>
<td>Botkin 1989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Around houses and naturally occurring in landscape</td>
<td>Prevent witches from entering house</td>
<td>Believed witches could not cross water, especially running water</td>
<td>Botkin 1989; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f</td>
<td>Darning needle</td>
<td>Darning needle</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Paralyze witches</td>
<td>Botkin 1989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Door latch</td>
<td>Door latch</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>On house door</td>
<td>Prevent witches from entering house</td>
<td>Botkin 1989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Apple tree stick</td>
<td>Apple tree stick</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Bring good luck in soap making</td>
<td>Botkin 1989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Butcher knife</td>
<td>Black-handled butcher knife</td>
<td>Composite: flora, metal</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Drive witches out of soap</td>
<td>Stabbed into the soap</td>
<td>Botkin 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Made out of rowan, iron, silver</td>
<td>Composite: Metal, Flora</td>
<td>Hung on or above doors and stables; drawn or incised on heaths and doors</td>
<td>Protection against all forms of evil</td>
<td>Works against witches, the Devil, vampires, werewolves, fairies, etc.</td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Nails</td>
<td>Iron nails</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Pounded into door frames and on doors, particular the kitchen door lintel</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witches, fairies, and evil, especially if in cross-shape</td>
<td>A found rusty nail is more powerful than a new nail; same idea applies to horseshoes</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Coral</td>
<td>Coral</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Worn on person</td>
<td>Protect against bewitchment</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Jones 1995; Roud 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Diamond</td>
<td>Diamond</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Worn on person</td>
<td>Ward off incubi</td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Iron horseshoe</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Plunged into</td>
<td>Unbewitch or</td>
<td>Must be red-hot</td>
<td>Waring 1978;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code*</td>
<td>Artifact</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Function</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Corn dolly</td>
<td>Dolly made from last sheaf of harvested grain</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in house and barn</td>
<td>Unenchant butter</td>
<td>When plunged into butter</td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>Dove symbol</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Carved on gravestones and embroidered on textiles</td>
<td>Ward off evil</td>
<td>Ultimate symbol of purity and goodness; believed to be the only form the Devil cannot assume</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Hand of Glory”</td>
<td>Preserved human hand</td>
<td>Human body element</td>
<td>Carried on person</td>
<td>Render possessor invisible or stupefies all around</td>
<td>Preserved hand of a hanged criminal</td>
<td>Jones 1995; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quartz</td>
<td>Quartz crystal</td>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Curative powers to overcome bewitchment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Rue</td>
<td>Bunch of fresh rue herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Used to sprinkle holy water in bedroom to avert evil and promote fertility of marriage bed</td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Silver nails</td>
<td>Silver coffin nails</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>On coffins</td>
<td>Seal coffin lids and prevent dead from rising as ghost or vampire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Wren feathers</td>
<td>Feathers bunched and tied</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Ward against witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jones 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Primroses</td>
<td>Bowl of primroses</td>
<td>Composite: ceramic, flora</td>
<td>Placed under cradle or child’s bed</td>
<td>Protect against witches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Sheep or bullock heart with nails and pins</td>
<td>Heart of sheep or bullock studded with pins and nails</td>
<td>Composite: fauna, metal</td>
<td>Hung in chimney</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witches into house through hearth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Drawn on hearth</td>
<td>Protect house from demons and witches</td>
<td>Must be drawn with an iron poker</td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Iron bars</td>
<td>Iron bar</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Laid across beer barrel</td>
<td>Prevent demons or thunder from souring beer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reader’s Digest 1973; Waring 1978; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Acorns</td>
<td>Acorn</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Carried on person; symbol on horsebrasses</td>
<td>Promote health and longevity</td>
<td>Sympathetically associated with oak as a long-lived tree</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Adder skin</td>
<td>Dried snake skin</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Hung by chimney, in hearth, or in rafters</td>
<td>Bring good luck and protect house from fire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Ashes</td>
<td>Ashes from hearth</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Spread on doorsteps and around house perimeter</td>
<td>Protect against witches and evil</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Axe</td>
<td>Iron axe head with</td>
<td>Composite:</td>
<td>Hung in barn;</td>
<td>Protect cattle</td>
<td>Cattle step over axe</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[390]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code* C/G/P</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
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<th>Material</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wooden handle</td>
<td>metal, flora</td>
<td>laid across barn door threshold</td>
<td>from evil</td>
<td>on their way to pasture for first time in spring; bad luck to bring axe into house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Knife</td>
<td>Any sharp bladed knife</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Laid on doorstep; placed under pillow; under window sill; at end of bedstead</td>
<td>Prevent entry of witch or evil spirit; prevent fairies from carrying off sleepers; ward off nightmares</td>
<td>Placed on threshold at birth of child to protect from witches or fairies</td>
<td>Waring 1978; Roud 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Calf</td>
<td>Unbutchered, burned calf carcass</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Burned alive and buried near barn</td>
<td>Repels witches and cattle plague</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x m x</td>
<td>Calf tongue</td>
<td>Severed and dried tip of calf’s tongue</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Carried on person; in safe place in house</td>
<td>Protect against danger; insure financial stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Candle</td>
<td>Candle’s tongue</td>
<td>Wax</td>
<td>Placed in window sills or by bedsteads</td>
<td>Keep evil at bay; attract lover</td>
<td>Candles lit at liminal transition times: marriage, birth, death</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Primroses</td>
<td>Primroses</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Scatter on stable and barn floors</td>
<td>Protect cattle from bewitchment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Chicory</td>
<td>Chicory</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Carried on person; hung in house</td>
<td>Bring good luck; open locks and remove obstacles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Dung</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Placed around house perimeter</td>
<td>Bring good luck; ward off evil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Poppet with pins</td>
<td>Clay poppet stuck with pins</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Uns specified</td>
<td>Lift spell of Evil Eye</td>
<td>Used similarly for curse and countercurse</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f x</td>
<td>Ferns</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Protect house from thunder and lightning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m x</td>
<td>Horns/antlers</td>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Ward off the Devil and the Evil Eye</td>
<td>Ox horn potent against the Devil; stag’s antler against the Evil Eye</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Hotcross buns</td>
<td>Dried buns with a cross cut into their tops</td>
<td>Hung in houses and ships</td>
<td>Protect house from evil and fire; and protect ships from shipwreck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x x</td>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>Glass mirror shards</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>Broken shards thrown into fast running water</td>
<td>Avert bad luck</td>
<td>Remedy for removing curse of bad luck from breaking mirror</td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x f x</td>
<td>Myrtle</td>
<td>Myrtle bush</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Planted on either side of house entrance</td>
<td>Bring good luck, happiness, and peacefulness to household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Stocking and Pins</td>
<td>Textile stocking stuck with pins</td>
<td>Composite: textile, metal</td>
<td>Hung over bedstead</td>
<td>Ward off nightmares</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Deadly Nightshade</td>
<td>Deadly Nightshade vines</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Garlands placed about house or stable</td>
<td>Ward off evil spirits</td>
<td></td>
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[391]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code*</th>
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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seaweed</td>
<td>Dried seaweed</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Hung in house</td>
<td>Ward off evil spirits and prevent fire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sow thistle</td>
<td>Sow thistle herb</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Worn on person or hung in house</td>
<td>Protect against witchcraft</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waring 1978</td>
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</table>