

# America's Multifaceted Folk Medicines

## Session 4

### Appalachian and Ozark Regions, Hoodoo

# OLLI at University of Illinois

Spring 2022 Semester

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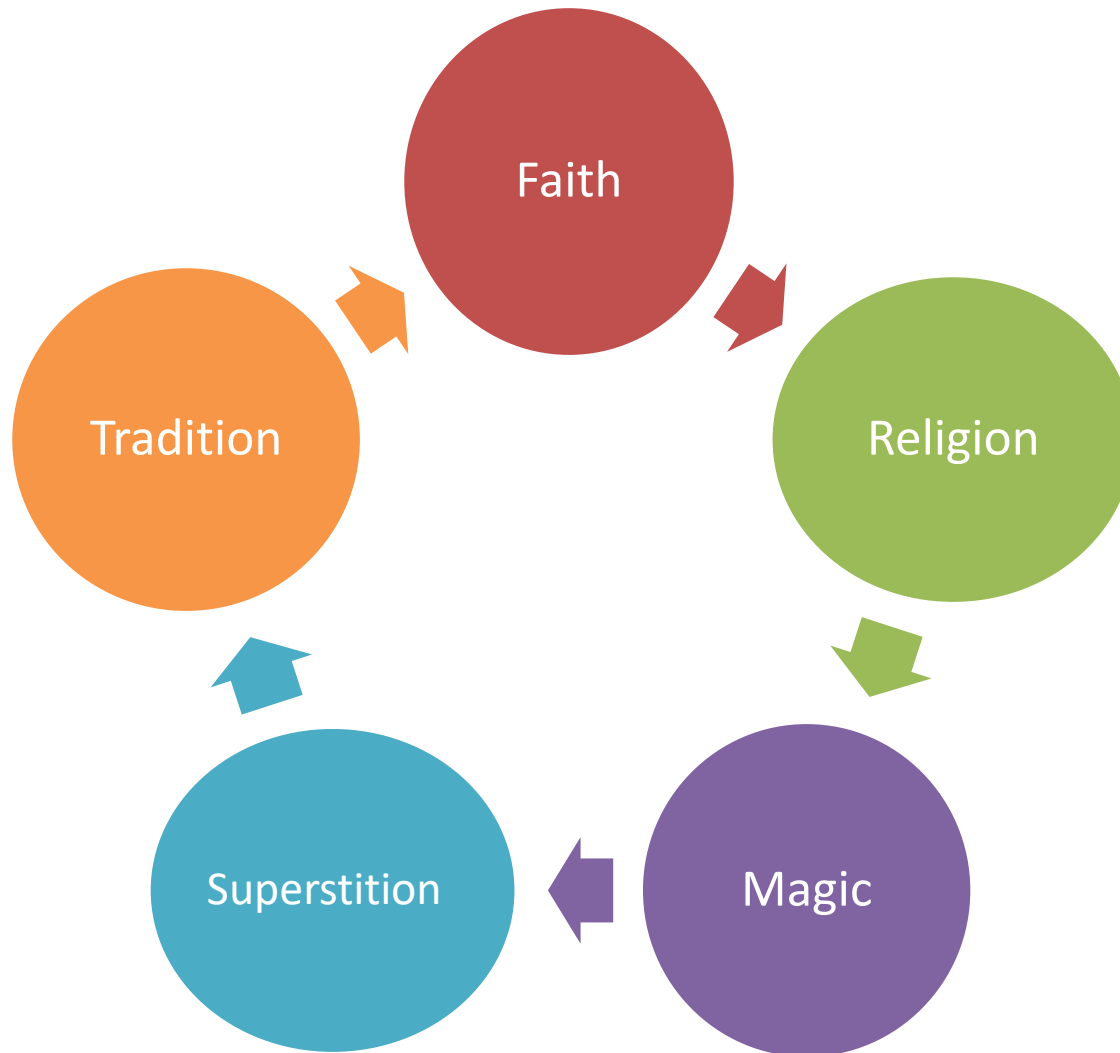
# Plan for the Course

- Session 1. Definitions, Immigration, ethnic areas.
- Session 2. American Indians, NW, SW, Alaska.
- Session 3. The First 13 Colonies region.
- Session 4. Appalachia, Ozarks, Hoodoo.
- Session 5. Great Lakes Region
- Session 5. Wheat & corn-belt states, Heartland.
- Session 7. NE Atlantic & NW Pacific seaboards.
- Session 8. Florida-Louisiana Gulf region.

# Plan for Session 4

- Recap relationship between magic, religion and folk medicine.
- Review Definitions of Religion and Magic.
- Ozarks area.
- Appalachian region.
- Hoodoo.

# Belief Interactions



# Magic, Religion & Folk Medicine

Diverse traditions of folk healing.

Religion, magic & healing intricately linked.

Ethnic and regional variations.

Persistence of old habits and beliefs.

Common structural elements.

Use of sympathetic magic.

Apotropaic magic.

# RELIGION

- Set of beliefs about life and death, disease and health, the nature of existence and a way of seeing and understanding the world around us.
- Implies faith in and worship of one or a hierarchy of superior beings, usually intangible, invisible, powerful, capable of punishment but also of forgiveness.
- Originates in the culture and the environment of the believers, and is modified and adapted by their life circumstances.

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# Magic

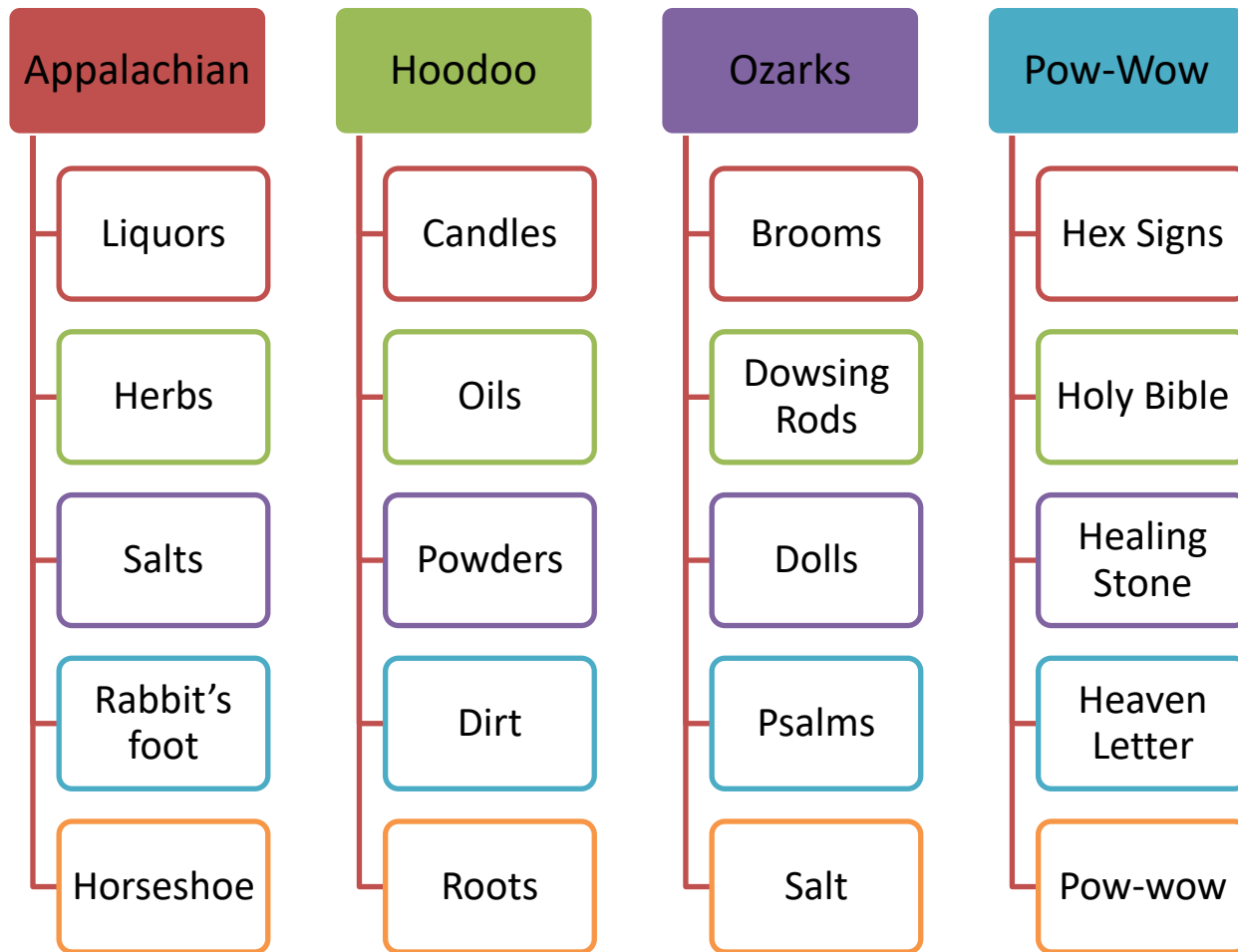
- The use of charms, spells, rites or incantations believed to have supernatural power over natural forces.
- The power of invoking such effects through religion, superstition, trickery or acts of faith to evoke beneficial or malevolent results.
- Can be used for healing illness or modifying life circumstances like love, luck, success, revenge or wealth.

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# American Folk Magic

## Magical Items



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# American Magic & Healing

## Ozarks

- Scots, Irish, Indian, German
- Household objects
- Bible
- Rituals, prayers
- Healing and Magic

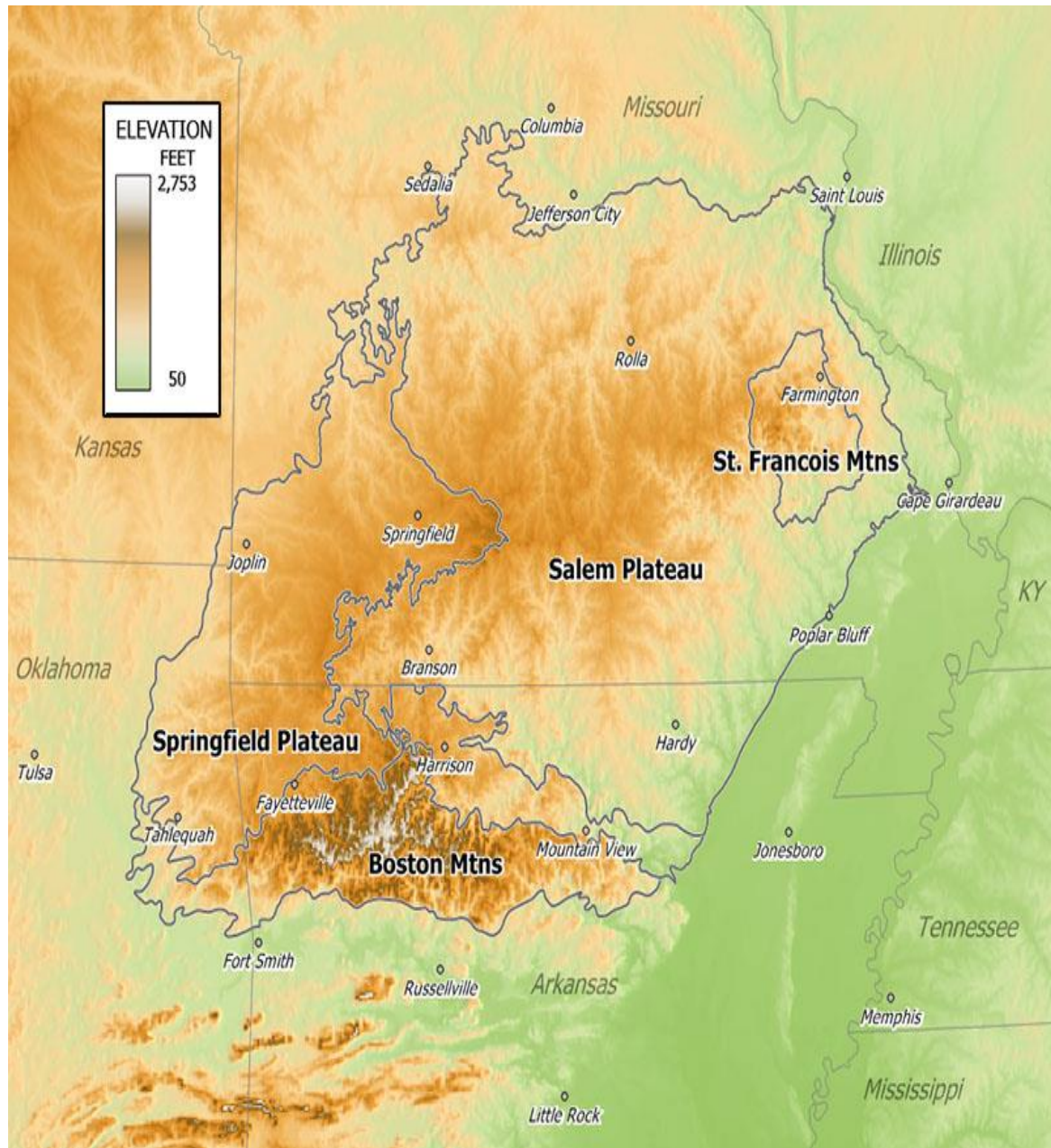
## Appalachian

- Scots, Irish, Indian, African, Spanish, German
- Granny healers & midwives
- Herbs, alcohol, prayer

## Hoodoo

- African origin
- Superstition, magic
- Roots & herbs
- Mojo bags
- Saints

# THE OZARKS



# Ozarks

- The Ozarks is a physiographic region in northern Arkansas and Southern Missouri.
- There are two mountain ranges in the Ozarks: the Boston Mountains of Arkansas and the St. Francois Mountains of Missouri.
- Ozarks is believed to be derived as an English adaptation of the French abbreviation *aux Arcs* (short for *aux Arcansas*, meaning "of/at/to the Arcansas").

# Ozarks

- Ozark people are descendants of Scots-Irish and German settlers from the Southern Appalachians.
- Similarity with peoples and traditions of England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany and Northern Europe.

# The Ozarks Folk Medical Practices (1)

## Types of Medicines

Natural medicines incorporate plants and minerals:

Salves, ointments & liniments.

Tonics and elixirs.

Tinctures, drops & draughts.

Powders.

Non-plant derived, *magico-religious* medicines:

Traditional prayers.

Verbal charms.

Rituals.

Fashioning of talismans or amulets.

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# The Ozarks Folk Medical Practices (2)

## The *power doctors* and their specialties:

- Blood stoppers.
- Burn healers.
- Wart charmers.
- Local preacher (often).
- Seventh sons.

## The *goomer doctor* heals or takes off a malignant witchcraft hex.

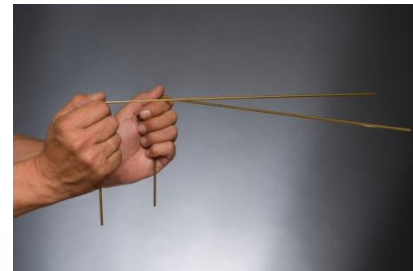
- Helps persons who have been *goomered*, and undoes a curse.
- Uses verbal charms to recover a stolen soul.

## Opposing forces of good vs. evil:

- *Doctor's* gift comes directly from God and foils witch's work.
- *Witch's* supernatural powers are gained from malignant sources.

# Ozark Magic

- Magic charms never passed man to man or woman to woman.
- It's Taboo to record or write lore.
- Repurpose household items:
  - Scissors, knives and axes to “cut” off sickness
  - String or rope to “tie off” or “knot” illness
- Use of magic brooms/besoms, spite dolls and dowsing rods.





# Brooms and Folk Magic/Medicine

Besom = birch twigs tied to a round hazelwood handle.

A besom placed bristles-up over or near a doorway protects the house from evil spirits or negative energies.

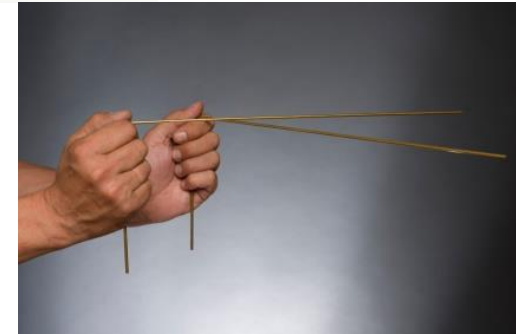
A besom placed under a bed or a pillow protects the sleeper.

New Year's Day: with a new broom, a friendly stranger sweeps house from front to back to clean away the year's accumulated evil spirits; the broom should then be burned.



# Dowsing

(Rhabdomancy/Doodlebugging)



- Can be single “Y” shaped tree branch or two separate copper rods.
- For seeking water, treasure, oil, or anything else.
- In the US, witch-hazel twigs or branches from willow or peach trees.
- Dowsers have the ability to find underground water.

# Ozark Magic: Charm Bags

Made of  
stitched  
white cloth.

Nails: evil would be stuck outside the house.

String: tie up sickness before it enters home.

Mustard seeds: witch must count before harming.

Five-finger grass: so that family will prosper.

Piece of buzzard feather: ward off sickness.

Rose oil: brings sweetness/happiness/love.

Hung at entrance to house: for home protection.

Sewn into clothes, in close contact with body for personal protection.

# Ozark Magic Charm Bag



# Pendulum

- When used on the body:
  - It can unblock and balance body's life forces.
  - Identifies location of dis-ease, pain, or dis-comfort.
  - Narrows down possible cause of the dis-order by correlating it to the location of the pain.
- Pendulum dowsing often used to survey maps prior to visiting the site.
- Can be used to clear negative energy from any space, even a vehicle.

# Pendulums



Dowsing,  
Chakra-balancing,  
pyramid, bonded stone,  
healing, Reiki Pendulum



Taurine



Topaz



Tigers Eye



Malachite



Agate



Rose Quartz



Moonstone



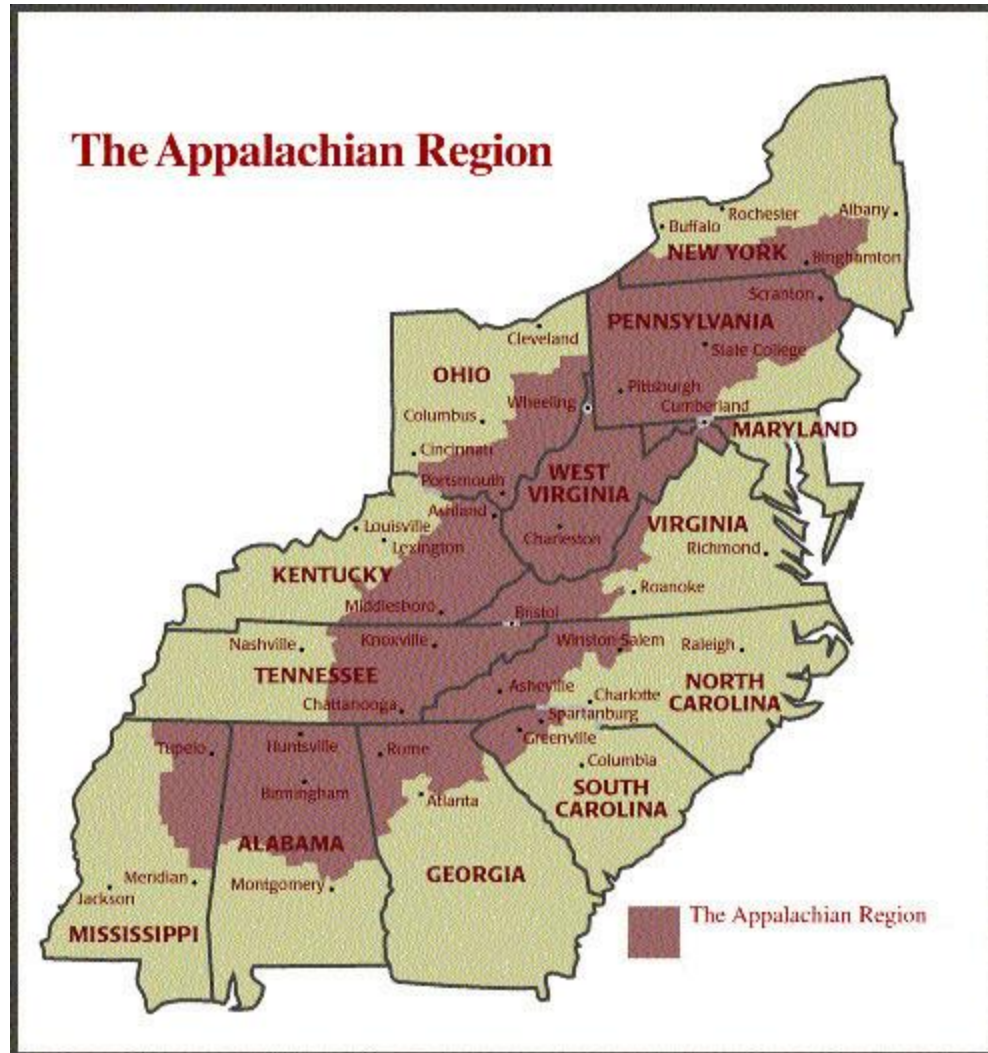
Red Onyx

# APPALACHIAN REGION





## The Appalachian Region



# Appalachia

- North American colonial history, and the American herbal tradition, started long before the British arrived.
- By the time the English landed at Plymouth Rock, Spanish colonials and their African slaves had been living in the southern section of North America for almost 100 years.
- Southern Folk Medicine is a mix of Indian, Spanish, African and British medical folklore.

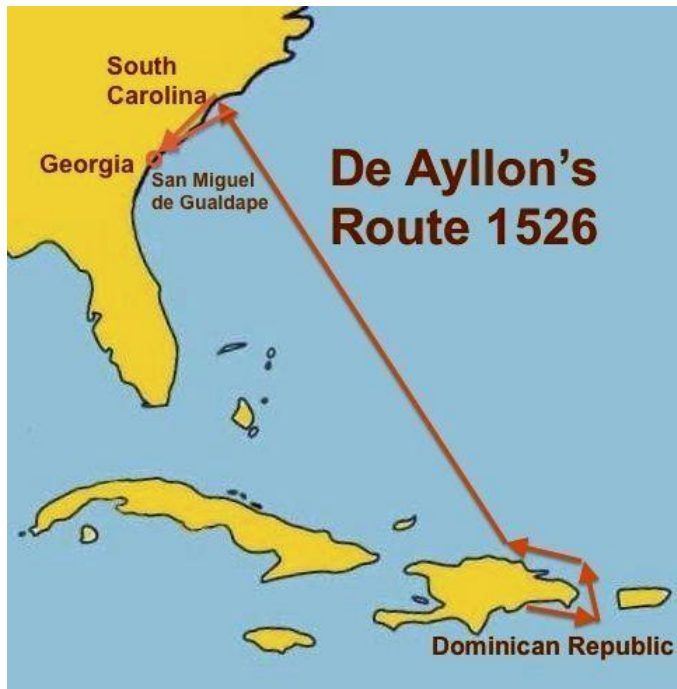
# Appalachia

## Spanish Colonization

- Spanish expeditions included healers and physicians who practiced humoral medicine and were knowledgeable about combat and its wounds.
- In Europe, intense Christian religious beliefs were entwined with humoral medicine to form a medical system that dominated the *Old World*.
- In the *New World*, these doctrines joined with Indian herbal practices and formed the base of Southern Folk Medicine.

# Appalachia

## Spanish Colonization



- In 1523 Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón was authorized by the Holy Roman emperor Charles V (King Charles I of Spain) to explore the Southeast coastal area.
- In 1526 Ayllón sailed from Hispaniola with 600 Spanish colonists and their African slaves to found a settlement in South Carolina.
- Settlement started in South Carolina then moved to Georgia coast.
- By 1526, Hispaniola, Panama and Cuba had already been conquered by Spain.

# Appalachia

## Spanish Colonization

- San Miguel de Gualdape lasted for only 3 months.
- Disease, hunger, Indian hostility and a slave uprising sapped the vitality and strength of the Spanish colonists.
- Their African slaves fled into surrounding Indian lands.
- Only about 150 survived to leave.



# Appalachia

## Spanish Colonization

- San Miguel de Gualdape was the 1<sup>st</sup> European colony in the continental United States.
- It preceded:
  - Pensacola, FL, by 33 years (failed).
  - St. Augustine, FL, (1<sup>st</sup> successful) by 39 years.
  - Roanoke Colony, VA, by 61 years.
  - Jamestown, VA, by 81 years.

# Appalachia

## Spanish Conquerors

- The Narváez Entrada, the overland group, made its way through Florida and into Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana,
- This expedition started a conjunction of native healing methods with European religious rituals and enslaved Africans' practices.

# Appalachia

## Spanish Conquerors

- Cabeza de Vaca recorded the first documented cases of faith healing in the *New World*: the Spanish's use of healing prayer grew and spread, drawing people from miles away to seek their healing hands.
- This healing practice is still embraced throughout the South and in much of North America.
- His journal documents the foods and plants eaten and used during their trips, and the events that led to their widespread reputation among American Indians as physicians and surgeons.



# Appalachia

- Europeans would bring over enslaved Africans, some of whom escaped servitude and settled with neighboring American Indians.
- To the Africans, the American tribal way of life possessed many similarities to their former lives in Africa.
- The two groups shared two other important commonalities: they were neither European nor Christian.

# Appalachia

## Acclimation

- Living in this frontier was dangerous: 1 out of every 3 settlers moving from the northeast to the South died.
- Newcomers struggled through acclimation, a crucial and perilous process through which their bodies would become adjusted to a new climate and topography.
- *Seasoning diseases*, with unknown symptoms and consequences were considered the price people had to pay to come to terms with their new locations.

# Appalachia

## Acclimation

- Settlers simplified life to retain what was useful, discarding what was not and adjusting to improve their chances of enduring.
- The challenges of living in the wilderness of southern North America, unified the varied cultures of the settlers into a common focus on the necessities of survival.

# British Colonization

- By the time Britain started colonizing, other Western European countries had already joined the Spanish and French in establishing settlements in the “New World”
- Britain’s expeditions were hurt by internal religious strife, social turmoil, and the country’s extreme poverty.
- British colonies were financed by joint-stock capitalist companies which sold stock in the colonies to investors.
- The results of early British colonization were financially disastrous, including the total loss of a colony at Roanoke in 1585.

# Appalachia

## Irish Presence in South

- Thousands of Irish indentured servants and convicts were brought to work in the tobacco fields.
- This added more elements to the developing Southern traditional medicine.
- Celts from Ireland arrived in the South escaping the poverty and despair of Ireland, where the Tudors had crushed rebellion, slaughtering and exiling the Irish, with their lands being forfeited to English planters.

# Appalachia

## Irish Presence in South

- A large segment of the clan-based Irish population, migrated with their chieftains into exile, either to the Europe or to the *New World*.
- Healers were attached to an Irish Laird's house, and since each healer owed fealty to Laird and clan, they followed the Laird to a new home.

# Appalachia

## Irish Presence in South

- The Irish, like most of Europe, had already integrated Christianity and the humoral system into their own local healing systems before their arrival in the *New World*.
- The Bible, folk magic, and herbs worked side-by-side to help keep the Irish healthy.
- Irish and Scots-Irish magic folk healing practices in the South are evident in the beliefs that moon signs, astrological influences, superstitions, and spiritual actions could sway health and illness.

# Appalachia

- Sharp disagreements about medical knowledge, science, herb use, religion, and conjuring caused conflict in treatments of the sick on plantations.
- African slaves believed that physical illness could be caused by curses, conjuring or spiritual degradation, and often viewed the medical help offered by white doctors as worthless.
- White doctors considered the idea that illness was linked to spirits or to relationships to be superstitious nonsense.



# Appalachia

- Folk medicine beliefs crossed social boundaries in ways that many other specific beliefs and rituals did not.
- American Indian and African medicinal methods were incorporated into the white methodology and vice versa.
- Protestant whites condemned African and American Indian religious practices that did not conform to the Christian norm.

# Appalachia

- European immigrants learned from American Indians and African Blacks which plants had medicinal value and how they could be applied to specific cases.
- All 3 of these groups held both similar and opposing views of the supernatural and how those unseen forces were both cause and cure for many illnesses and maladies.

# Appalachia

- Slaves mixed African beliefs with Old Testament stories to form a new type of Christianity where both Moses and Jesus had the power to lead the downtrodden to a new and better home.
- West Africans believed that family and ancestors were spiritually connected to places, and this tied many freed slaves to the land where they had been enslaved because they thought that the land itself held *power-spirit force*.
- The spirits of the land influenced and controlled the lives that were led upon it.

# Appalachia

- Natural elements, such as blood, urine, and herbs, were used for their inherent healing power or in amulets for magical protection.
- Many of these healing and magical beliefs mixed with those of the Irish and other poor southern whites.
- On plantations and in small southern towns, the exchange of herbal information occurred across social lines.

# Appalachia

- The wives of plantation owners often cared for sick or injured slaves, delivered all the babies, and prepared bodies for burial.
- Sometimes, slave healers treated the illness of the plantation owners as well as slaves, while delivering the mistress' babies, caring for the family in the big house, and getting the bodies of the deceased ready for burial.
- Regardless of color, all of these tasks were considered woman's work.

# Appalachia

- In most of the major towns of the South, druggists made medicines from their stocks of roots, herbs, barks, or tinctures and other preparations of medicinal plants.
- Medicinal supplies like bottles and corks were in short supply; corn cobs for bottle stoppers were soon selling for the same price as cork.
- By necessity, southern druggists used moonshine to soak tincture herbs like mandrake, Virginia snake-root, yellow root, Sampson's snake-root, peach leaves & black pepper.

# Appalachia

- During the Civil War, herbal remedies used on the plantations and mountains of Appalachia were used by military physicians.
- Adults' colds were doctored with tea made from horsemint (*Monarda punctata*) and the roots of broom sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*).
- For eruptions and impure blood, spice-wood (*Lindera benzoin*) was given.

# Appalachia

- Wine was made from the berries of the elder bush (*Sambucus*).
- For diarrhea, doctors used roots of blackberry and blackberry cordial, or a tea made from the leaves of the rose geranium (*Pelargonium roseum*).
- Red pepper (*capsicum*) mixed with gum resin from either the wild cherry or white pine was used to treat intestinal disorders.
- Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and wild cherry barks were chopped fine, soaked in whiskey and taken as a digestive aid at mealtimes.



# Appalachia

- After the Civil War, thousands of Africans and poor whites were left landless and homeless; they roamed the roads of a devastated land.
- These people were forced to refine their knowledge of herbal remedies and the local medicinal plants.
- In this process, healing and herbal information went beyond racial, economic, or political boundaries.
- Healthcare information easily spread among all kinds of folk medicine practitioners, regardless of race or social class.

# Appalachia

## Folk Medicine

- Appalachian Folk Medicine centers on mind, body and spirit in nature, functions and treatments.
- Disease can be *self-induced* or *brought on*, or originate from a combination of cold, damp, heat, dirt, body invaders, wrongful actions and attitudes as well as spiritual transgressions or magic.
- Healing protocols include herbs and foods, as well as *ways, to undo what has been done* with prayer, an apology or other actions.

# Appalachia

## Blood

- Blood is the most important part of the body, it is the river of life, carrying nutrients around the body, and in blood resides the inherited capability for good or ill.
- To be healthy, one must have good clean blood, which comes from inheritance, personal factors (age, diet, gender, nerves) and personal actions.
- It may also be influenced by natural phenomena like the weather, seasons, and the moon and stars.

# Appalachia

## Water

- If you dream of crossing water there will be an illness in your family; if your dream includes muddy water, then back luck is on the way.
- Water is a feminine energy, highly connected with many aspects of the Mother Earth.
- Used for healing, cleansing, and purification, water is related to the West and associated with passion and emotion.

# Appalachia

- Colic in infants could be treated by a *magical cure*: Passing an infant around a table leg from mother to father three times, was used to treat it.
- One could staunch (*cut*) bleeding from a nosebleed by having a few drops of the blood fall on the blade of a knife.

# Appalachian Granny Magic



To cure a headache, place a bit of salt on your head.

To numb a baby's mouth during teething: sugar-titty.

To cure scurvy: sassafras root tea (American Indian origin).

To treat stomach/liver ailments: shrub yellowroot.

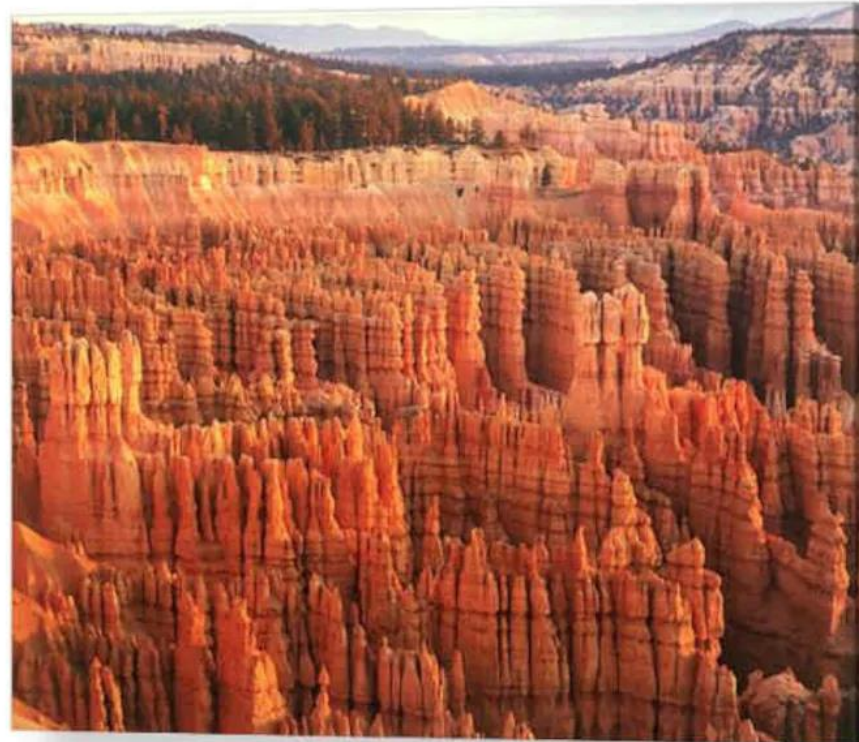
To "cut the pain" of childbirth: knife under woman's bed.

"Old wives tales" originate in Appalachian granny magic.

# HOODOO

# Hoodoos (Geology)

- Tent rock, fairy chimney, or earth pyramid: tall, thin spire of rock that protrudes from the bottom of an arid drainage basin or badland.
- Relatively soft rock topped by harder stone, shaped by the erosional patterns of alternating hard and soft layers.
- Minerals deposited within the rock types cause different colors along their height, (about 5 ft. to more than a 10-story building).





# Credence Clearwater Revival

## "Born on the Bayou"

Now when I was just a little boy,

Standin' to my Daddy's knee,

My poppa said, "Son, don't let  
the man get you,

Do what he done to me,

'Cause he'll get you 'cause he'll  
get you now, now.

And I can remember the fourth of  
July,

Runnin' through the backwood,  
bare,

And I can still hear my old hound  
dog barkin',

Chasin' down a **hoodoo** there,

Chasin' down a **hoodoo** there.

Hoodoo is a magical, mystical, spiritual, non-defined apparition, like a ghost or a shadow, not necessarily evil, but certainly otherworldly.

# Hoodoo

- The American folk magic practice of Hoodoo has its roots in the Deep South of the U.S. - from Louisiana to Alabama, from Mississippi to Georgia.
- The *mojo bag* is originally a hoodoo practice of adding contents to a bag for a purpose, then the practitioner *feeds* the spirits in the bag with oils, liquor, herbs, etc. to increase the power of the spell.
- Hoodoo was used by African slaves and others in the Deep South for survival and to gain power over a bad situation.

# Hoodoo

## South Carolina

- Settled by the English in 1670, South Carolina had a wealthy, aristocratic, and influential colonial society based on a plantation agriculture that relied on a labor force of Black slaves.
- By 1730, people of African ancestry had come to represent some two-thirds of the colony's total population.
- The plantation system spread from the coastal lowlands into the rolling inland region in the early 19th century, and the new state became part of the Cotton Belt.

# Hoodoo

## Gullahs

- Practice a unique blend of Christianity, herbalism and folk magic, white and black.
- Came from Angola, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal.
- In the South Carolina Gullah Low country, Hoodoo is also misnamed *Low country Voodoo (voduon)*
- Different from voodoo (*vodou*) from the Caribbean , Haiti, and New Orleans, or from *Santería* (Cuba).

# Hoodoo

- Set of spiritual practices, traditions, and beliefs evolved from various African religions and tribes.
- It was created by enslaved Africans in North America and was concealed from slave-owners
- In the American South, it incorporated various elements of indigenous knowledge of herbs and roots.
- In the South Carolina Gullah region, Hoodoo is also known as “Lowcountry Voodoo”.

# Hoodoo vs. Voodoo

## Hoodoo

- Arose in Africa.
- Not a religion.
- A form of African folk magic.
- No organizational structure.
- Practiced by individuals.
- Root doctors/root healers who claim magical powers.
- Catholic saints or biblical characters used in casting their spells.

## Voodoo

- Arose in Haiti.
- Actual Religion.
- Has own rituals, leaders, teachers & services.
- 2 distinct branches:
  - *Vodou* of NO & Louisiana).
  - *Vodue* of Haiti.
- Believe in a Supreme Creator named *Bondye*.
- *Loa* are spirits who work for *Bondye* and are responsible for various aspects of human life.

# Hoodoo

## Practitioners

- It is important to understand that hoodoo is NOT a religion.
- Hoodoo practitioners follow the tenets of the Protestant religion and combine magic rituals with psalms and verses from the Bible.
- They rely more on their faith in God and other beings to direct their spiritual paths and intervene on their behalf.
- Rootworkers and conjurers are much more likely to work with ancestors and other spirits of the dead.

# Hoodoo

- It is the product of people who faced daily oppression and terrible suffering, yet refused to relinquish their power and identity.
- In addition to being a body of botanical and esoteric knowledge, is also a rebellion against absolute mental and spiritual domination by Europeans.



# Hoodoo

## Practitioners

- The goal of hoodoo rootworkers is to create change by casting spells and rituals with specific intended goals.
- Professional rootworkers undertake spiritual spell-craft jobs to help the lives of those they are working with.
- Rootworkers often form deep connections with the people who call upon them.

# Hoodoo

- After the Great African-American Migration, Hoodoo spread throughout the US.
- Practitioners are called rootworkers, conjure doctors, conjure man, conjure woman, or Hoodoo doctors.
- Conjure or rootwork are regional synonyms for hoodoo.

# Hoodoo

- A man or woman becomes a hoodoo doctor in one of three ways:
  - By heredity,
  - By an apprenticeship under a formal practitioner,
  - By the “call”.
- The most influential doctors seem to be those born to the cult.

# Hoodoo

- Hoodoo doctors who have non-conjure cases, prescribe folk medicine *roots*, and are called *two headed doctors*.
- Most of the prescriptions have to do with birth and *social diseases*.
- There is no formal training for this, either men or women may take it up.

# Hoodoo

## Verbain

### Common names

Verbena

Yerba de Santa Ana

Enchanter's plant

Juno's / Isis tears

Pigeon's grass (pigeonweed)

Herb of the cross

### Used for

Lactation, dysmenorrhea

Jaundice, gout

Kidney stones, diuretic

Digestive tonic

Astringent, headache

Depression, anxiety, insomnia

# Hoodoo

## Verbain

- Anti-Inflammatory.
- Anti-anxiety, relaxant,
- Boosts gum health.
- Antimicrobial and antibacterial.
- Cardioprotective for circulatory issues.
- Fever,
- Diuretic,
- Headaches, insomnia.

# Hoodoo

## Verbain

- Vervain refers to verbena used for medicinal purposes:
  - *V. officinalis* (common verbena).
  - *V. hastata* (blue vervain).
  - *V. urticifolia* (white vervain).
- *Verbena officinalis* is a perennial plant with delicate, jagged leaves and small, five-petaled blossoms.



# Hoodoo

## Verbain

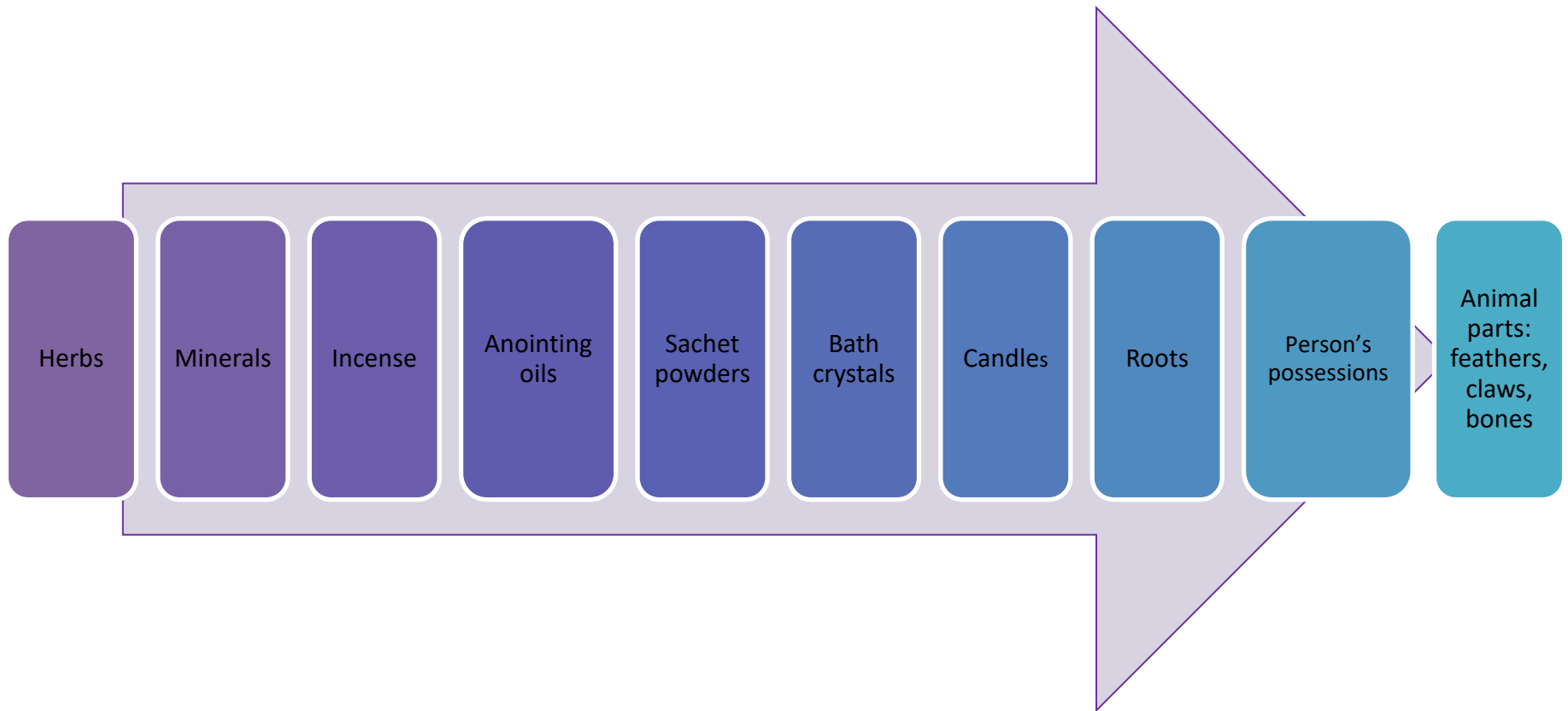


In Hoodoo, vervain is used to make Van-Van oil, a blend of vervain, lemongrass root, quartz crystals and a base oil, simmered and cooled to provide magical protection and clear away evil energies.



# Hoodoo

## Charms Created with:



Readings from Scripture or Psalms can be recited during the ritual.

# Reasons to Perform a Ritual

- Improve health
- Bring Love
- Attract good luck
- Repel bad luck
- Ensure Fortune & Money
- Get revenge

# Hoodoo

- West Africans believed that people, as creations of God, had an extended longevity that, if allowed to proceed unimpeded, would never end.
- Death interrupted their lifespan because of the interference of either other humans or spirits.
- Unhealthy relationships with emotional upset and strong emotions could cause illness by making the blood rise or fall and trouble the heart.

# Hoodoo

- Hoodoo relies on natural resources, such as herbs, to connect with the spiritual world and achieve balance in a person's life.
- Hoodoo is connected to modern medicine in the practice of mental and physical healing.
- Hoodoo arose in the southern parts of the United States in the early 1800's in areas heavily populated by black slaves, who "sought to manipulate invisible forces and influence the human condition".<sup>1</sup>
- Blacks turned to their own hoodoo healer doctors for many health-related concerns, because it was too expensive to seek professional medical care.

1. Towers & Mitchem, 2008

# Hoodoo

## Rootwork

- *Rootwork* became a legitimate form of medicine; the *root doctor* heals the sick and injured with natural elements combined with the roots of different plants.
- Spiritual Illness is seen as a combination of both *tricking* and physical affliction; it is treated through both verbal blessing by spiritual healers and natural medicinal remedies.
- Occult Illness is believed to be caused by the *hexing, tricking* or *crossing* of one person by another and may manifest itself in bad luck, loss of a job, poor health or the end of a relationship.
- Occult Illness is remedied by the removal of a hex or spell by a Hoodoo Conjuror.

# Hoodoo

## Christianity

- In Europe, the Old Religion was seen as a rival to the Christian march toward world domination, so the pagans were accused of devil-worship.
- Satan was a Christian creation and the history books are full of examples of the "winner-take-all" philosophy of the Christians.
- Throughout history the Gods of the defeated become the devils of the victors, and so it was in the case of Africa and America.

# Hoodoo

## Healers

- Hoodoo believers value their healer's insight and their trust in the healer will make the patient feel better.
- The actual treatment plays a role, but so does the patient's willingness to accept the healer's word.
- If their practitioner healer tells them that a particular natural remedy or a spiritual healing method will heal them, their faith causes, or at least contributes to, their feeling better.

# Hoodoo

## Mojo & Hoodoo

- *Mojo*: a magic spell, hex, or charm, or a magical power possessed by a person.
- *Juju*: a fetish, charm, or amulet of West African peoples; and the good or bad magic attributed to or associated with those objects.



# Hoodoo

## Possession

- When a possession takes place in hoodoo, it is believed that the host of the spirit is *receiving the Holy Ghost*, which, as a part of the Trinity, is a symbol of Catholicism.
- Contrary to the demonic connotation and negative perception in Catholicism, Hoodoo practitioners regard possession as an *uplifting spiritual experience*.

# Hoodoo

## Knots

- A method used in hoodoo medicine involves various types of string used to tie *sacred healing knots*.
- Depending on the number of knots tied, and the location of the string, the procedure could be used to treat various symptoms and, overall, is considered a powerful protective device.

# Hoodoo Physicians

- Society and regular medicine doubt the effectiveness of natural remedies because they are not in pill-form.
- The difference between hoodoo healers and physicians may be that hoodoo healers do not perform their medicine in a white coat.

# Hoodoo

## Health Care

- Hoodoo is a spiritually-centered practice which relies on natural resources, such as herbs, to connect with the spiritual world and achieve balance in a person's life.
- Hoodoo arose in the southern parts of the United States in the early 1800's in areas heavily populated by black slaves, who sought to manipulate invisible forces to influence the human condition.
- African Blacks turned to their own doctors and healers for many health-related concerns because it was too expensive to seek professional medical care.

# Hoodoo

## Rootwork

- Root work, which emerged during the period of slavery, became a highly legitimate form of medicine; the “root doctor” heals the sick and injured with natural elements combined with the roots of different types of plants.
- In the medicinal aspect of Hoodoo Conjure, bodily illness is seen as a spiritual affliction and must be remedied as such.
- Spiritual Illness is seen as a combination of both “tricking” and physical affliction; it is treated through both verbal blessing by spiritual healers and medicinal remedies.

- Occult Illness is believed to be caused by the “hexing,” “tricking” or “crossing” of one person by another and may manifest itself in bad luck, such as the loss of a job or the end of a relationship.
- Occult Illness is remedied by the removal of a hex or spell by a Conjuror.

- Native health philosophy centered around the importance of relationships: relationship to Spirit, to tribe, to family, and to self.
- Lack of relationship or conflict within relationships could cause illness.