

Abigail (Platt?) West

1764 – 5/11/1811

Plot 2 Lot 23

Abigail was born about 1764 and died on or about 5/11/1811 in Queensbury, NY. She married William Barber West around 1783.

Folklore says that on May 11, 1811, Abigail West was struck and killed by lightning while near what is now Butler Pond on West Mountain and her remains were not found for weeks after. She crawled more than a mile looking for help before eventually dying. While she was not found for many days she was buried in the West Cemetery on West Mountain as soon as she was found. Since that time she has been searching all of West Mountain, trying to find her children. She would find herself in the cemetery up on the mountain near the old weeping willow. If you look at her grave stone, you'll see a weeping willow engraved on the top. After 40 years of sitting there and watching, waiting, hoping for answers the locals decided to dig up and move her body down to the Bay Street Cemetery in Glens Falls. To the horror of the diggers she wasn't there. It was then that people started calling Abigail a witch and also when she started haunting the Mountain. It is said that she burned down her old house and lights fires in the chimney every night. If you go up West Mountain on John Clendon Road and you find the brick chimney just wait, she just might start up a fire for you and then chase you right off the mountain.

Some say she was burned at the stake for being a witch or that she perished in a fire on her prom night waiting for her date.... but neither is true. She was 45 when she died, too old to be going to prom; and she didn't become a witch until she was dead, as the story is told.

Now some of the facts. Abigail West didn't come to the area until she got married in 1783. Abigail started out as Abigail Platte; born in the year 1764 in New Milford, Connecticut. She married a Rhode Island man named William Barber West in 1783. Abigail and William then moved to Queensbury to find their fortune and they started raising their six children. Abiline, George, John, William Jr, Thomas and Mary. The children were young when Abigail died, so that is part of why she stayed here on Earth, to take care of her children, but, she wandered and wandered and never found them. Some Psychics say that the West children moved out west, except, William. Abigail's grave stone is in this cemetery while her body was never moved here from the West family cemetery. Her son, William and his son named William and his wife, Susan, and their son, Harry are all buried in the Bay street Cemetery next to Abigail's stone. Abigail's grandson, William, lived to be 60 and worked for many years as a Street Sprinkler for the Village of Glens Falls. His son, Harry, worked as a printer at the Glens Falls Lime Company.

None of the West Stones were brought down from the mountain, except Abigail's. No one knows why that is. People have tried to pry her stone apart and have defaced it as well before it was brought to this

cemetery. Abigail's story has had worldwide exposure in books and story. She was just a simple farm wife with many children, when she was struck by the lightning. She has been roaming the woods on West Mountain ever since. She didn't start out a witch, she didn't hurt anyone, she just wanted to know where to find her family.

It is said that if you encounter Abigail, you'll feel heat then cold no matter what time of year. Sometimes she'd make it so you trip and fall down the mountain, not to hurt you but to get your attention so she can ask you if you have seen her family or her body. She just wants to join her husband and her children.

Prepared by Charys Wright from theatrical script written by William Woodward for the Chapman Historical Museum fall Glens Falls Cemetery tour in 2011 and with information from the biographical file of the GF City Historians Office.



Abigail West's Grave Stone

Questions and comments should be directed to the Glens Falls City Historian at: City Hall 42 Ridge St. Glens Falls, NY historian@cityofglensfalls.com 518-761-3871.