

# Covens and Convents

by [Walt Garlington](#) (March 2023)



*Witches Flight*, Francisco Goya, 1797–98

What a gloomy garden grows  
In New England ground,  
Yankees trudging  
Haltingly along,  
Cultivated  
By a curious cast  
Of women—Anne Hutchinson  
The headstrong heretic;  
Ann Lee, the Shaker queen;  
Beth Stanton, suffragette;  
Mary Baker Eddy,  
Modern Gnostic.

The Son, shaded  
By their wild demeanor,  
Can only bring forth  
A yield of souls  
Stunted and deformed.

Darkness! Darkness!  
Witches and the devil  
Prowling round the land!

Waken! Waken!  
The memory  
Of Mother Ethelburga,  
Barking's first abbess  
At your ancient home  
In Essex county.

What a host of saints  
And wonders sprouted there—  
Heavenly Light brighter  
Than the sun's rays;  
A woman's sight restored

Through prayer before the relics  
Of the holy ascetics  
Buried in the soil;  
St. Ethelburga's shining soul  
Itself seen in Tortgith's vision  
Ascending into Heaven,  
Drawn thither by the golden  
Cords of her many virtues.

Has your legacy  
As a witch's land  
Clung to you long enough?  
Mother Ethelburga  
Will gladly guide you  
Into the Christian Faith,  
And change your dour and dismal coven  
To a bright and cheerful convent.

## [Table of Contents](#)

Walt Garlington was born and raised in that part of Dixieland called Louisiana. A chemical engineer by training, he has spent the last several years writing full-time. He has written essays and poems for *The Hayride*, *New English Review*, *The Tenth Amendment Center*, *The Abbeville Institute*, *Reckonin'*, *Katehon*, *Geopolitica*, and *USA Really*. He writes regularly at his own web site, [Confiteri: A Southern Perspective](#).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)