

Gloria Jean Thomas
Malad, Idaho
March 17, 2007

"Seven on the Mountain"
Superstition/Folk Belief

Informant: Gloria Jean Thomas is a resident of Malad, Idaho. She grew up here and her ancestors were some of the first Welshman to settle the valley. Boyd Thomas, her father, is of Welsh ancestry and was born and raised in Malad. She is currently the president of the Malad Valley Welsh Society. She is a professor at Idaho State University and has done extensive research on Welsh folklore.

Context: I was in Malad, Idaho, my hometown, visiting for the weekend. Malad was founded in 1865 by Welsh immigrants and currently has the largest per capita concentration of people of Welsh ancestry outside Wales itself (hence, a perfect location to collect Welsh American folklore). One Saturday afternoon, Jean came over to my house in Malad to talk to my mom about some church business. I had been wanting to talk to her about some Welsh folklore, since I knew she has studied it and grew up here in Malad, so I just asked her about it. She immediately started telling all kinds of Malad Welsh folklore. She was sitting relaxed in our recliner and just seemed so eager to share all the information she could. I asked her about some specific items, but a lot of the information she volunteered that I had not known about. Because of her knowledge and study of Welsh culture, she often described the scholarly reasoning behind many of the items she shared. She told me that the Welsh were extremely superstitious people. This superstition refers to the Samaria Mountains near Malad. Samaria was the first settlement in the Malad Valley, followed closely by Malad itself.

Text: You don't plant seeds until you see the 7 on the mountain. If you plant before that, they'll freeze.

Texture: This was told in a matter-of-fact way. She told it as though it were truth and there was no question about it. She said it is something her father believes and has always lived by. Even though she knows it as a superstition, there was an air about her that alluded to the fact that she believes it despite her extended knowledge of the Welsh having strong superstitions.

Mary Anne Jones
Utah State University
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