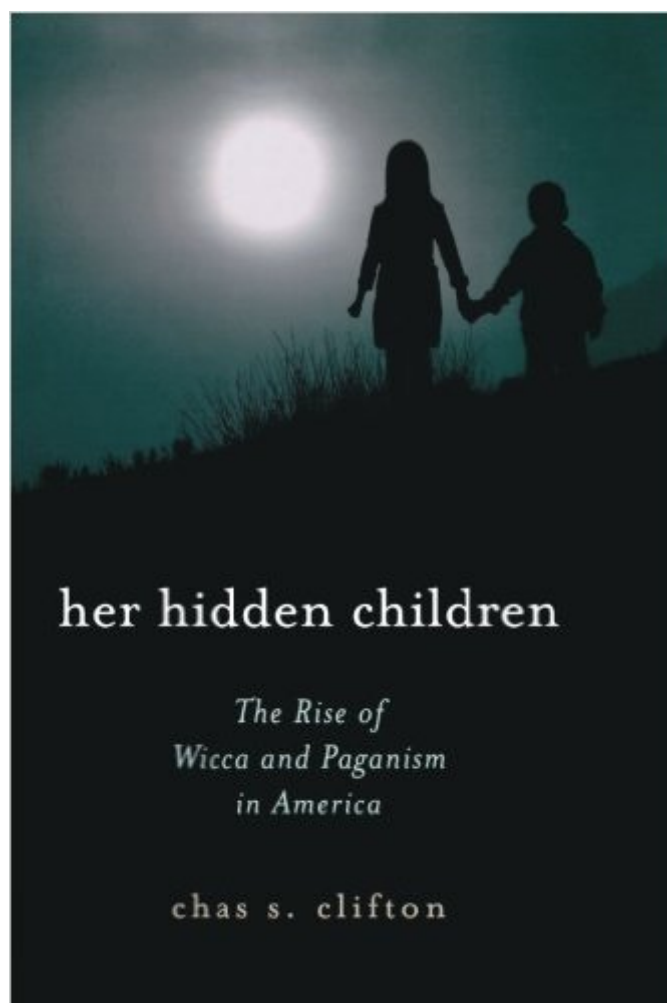


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Her Hidden Children: The Rise Of Wicca And Paganism In America



Synopsis

The history of any religious movement can get murky. But the history of American Paganism—with so many invented lineages, so many solitary practitioners, so much resistance to staid definition, so much hiddenness—is especially hard to decipher. But here in *Her Hidden Children* Chas Clifton tells many never-before-told stories of the origins of Paganism and Wicca in the United States. The people, publications, and organizations that allowed Paganism and Wicca to set roots down in American soil and become "nature religion" are revealed in delicious detail. With a timeline, glossary, and photos of important figures, *Her Hidden Children* is compelling and important for any student of Paganism or American Religion.

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Customer Reviews

I found this book among many in my local bookstore and purchased it on the fact that the cover was eerily close to a vision in a dream I had over a year ago. I have never been happier to have had such a dream! This book, I found, was completely amazing. While many books on Paganism focus on practice, perhaps a few focusing on philosophy, very few focus on any actual scholarship. This specific book focuses on the history of contemporary Paganism, from Gerald Gardner to more modern influential groups, such as the Church of All Worlds. The depths the author, Mr. Chas S. Clifton, provides for anyone interested in history and Pagan academia runs deep. The author begins with examining Gerald Gardner and the beginning of British Wicca, looking at both Gardner's claims of a long-line of witches and historical evidence to this claim. Following this, the author

discusses how Wicca came to America and how it spread. The second chapter focuses on the change of Wicca from a Mystery Religion to a "nature" religion. The author brings to use the idea that Wicca combined a triple-form of nature, ranging from the Cosmic, Natural (Earthly), and Erotic. He shows us how Wicca became changed through the changing social changes affecting America during this time. Throughout the rest of the book, Mr. Clifton shows his readers the struggles and effects Wicca has had in America (such as, for example, the effort to change the image of the popular "Witch"), the influence Paganism has had in Popular Culture (and vice versa), and a look at other Pagan groups that have influenced Paganism on a whole (which may, or may not, have started before Wicca). If one is interested in the history of Paganism, specifically Wicca, this is a great book to sate that interest.

Since the release of Ronald Hutton's "Triumph of The Moon" back in 2000, I have yearned for a book that would take an in-depth look at the history of modern Paganism in America. So I was more than a little excited and hopeful when I heard that Pagan academic Chas Clifton was rising to the task in his new book "Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America". Finally a book that would take a look at how modern Paganism and Wicca took root in American soil and became one of the fastest growing faiths in the country. Clifton - knowing that he could in no way cover everything that has happened from the 1930s to the present - has chosen with this book to lay down some basic parameters for talking about modern Pagan history in America. First he concentrates on Wicca: it being the largest and most influential modern Pagan religion in America. Secondly, when moving out from Wicca he generally stays with groups that claim to follow "nature" or "earth" religions. Not getting much attention in this history are the "reconstructionist" Pagan faiths and feminist Wicca. "...the story of contemporary Paganism in America has too many strands to enumerate. Because of my wish to focus on many Pagans' claim to follow "nature religion," I have for the most part set aside those groups that pay more attention to ethnic roots, such as reconstructed Greek, Roman, or Norse religions. Their history remains to be written. Even these, however, may yet welcome the label of nature religion or earth religion as it becomes more widely accepted in the larger society.

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