

Stokes Nature Center
History & Lore of Logan Canyon Podcast Series
Witch's Castle

Located about 900 feet from the canyon floor, the Wind Caves represent thousands of years of weathering by wind and water. The result is a beautiful cave-like formation with three delicate arches.

This limestone formation bears the local name “The Witch's Castle.” The resident witch is known as Hecate, the name of an ancient Greek goddess associated with witchcraft and the underworld. According to legend, if you venture into Spring Hollow, just across the highway, and chant the name of the witch, she will appear. Sometimes she appears with her son, and sometimes with her dogs. She often appears with long white hair, wearing a long pale dress. It is said that she has the ability to kill car engines.

Some believe the legend dates back to the 1920s when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints built a girls' lodge at a nearby location. Or it could have come about simply as a result of imagination and inspiration spurred by the unique natural architecture.

Whatever the origin, the legend has been preserved in the many so-called documented sightings of Hecate over the years. In one sighting, a man named Clyde was driving his pickup through Logan Canyon. His truck unexpectedly died near Third Dam, and there was a woman standing in the middle of the road. The woman was wearing a long gray coat. Clyde frantically tried to restart the engine as the woman walked around the truck, looking into the window. When she walked behind the truck, it started up again, and Clyde drove off, watching in his rear-view mirror as the woman slowly followed him. Only as he exited the canyon did she disappear.

If you are up there at night, you may hear Hecate's dogs howl. The sound is real. As the night canyon wind blows through the caves, it could easily be mistaken for the howling of a supernatural dog with a witch companion.

Sources:

Sweeney, Michael S. *Last Unspoiled Place: Utah's Logan Canyon*. National Geographic Society, 2008.

Logan Canyon National Scenic Byway website: <http://www.logancanyon.com>.