

Memphis Minnie

"Dirt Dauber Blues"

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Everybody worrying me, want to know why I'm so crazy
about dirt dauber tea¹
Everybody worrying me, want to know why I'm so crazy
about dirt dauber tea
Because when I was young, they built their nest on me²

Now everybody tells me I need a doctor, I need
someone to stay here with me
But I don't need nothing but that dirt dauber tea
Because when I was young, they built their nest on me

Hmmmmm, hmmm
Hmmmmm, hmmm
Hmmmmm, hmmm

And out of all that I crave, all that I seen
I don't want nothing but that dirt dauber tea
Because when I was young, they built their nest on me

When I was down sick in my bed, blind, couldn't hardly
see
That dirt dauber flew down in my bed and built his nest
on me
That's why I say, "I'm crazy about that dirt dauber tea"

Ahw, dirt dauber's a builder
Ahw, dirt dauber's a builder
Dirt dauber is a builder, he built his nest on me
That why I say, "I'm crazy about the dirt dauber tea"

Note 1: dirt dauber (or mud dauber), any of various wasps that construct mud cells in which the female places an egg with spiders or insects paralyzed by a sting to serve as food for the larva (jummy!). Dirt daubers figure in a number of (folk medicine) beliefs throughout the South. In Arkansas, the clay from the nests of these wasps was worn to cure sprains, while in Mississippi it was believed that when the wasps built their nests close to the ground, it was going to be a dry year. Most significant are the beliefs,

found in Mississippi and elsewhere, that a tea made from the nests will relieve or hasten labor (giving birth to a child) and help expel afterbirth, and that powdered dirt dauber nests will cure a baby's navel that isn't healing properly;

Note 2: "built their nest on me" points specifically to the navel and birth.

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