THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

Today's Objectives:

- articulate the basic tenets of Puritanism;
- explain the events leading up to the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692;
- synthesize and evaluate facts to speculate the underlying causes of the witch hysteria;
- draw connections between the events of 1692 and the modern world.
How it all started....

A witch craze swept the small Puritan community of Salem Village, Massachusetts in 1692. It began when a group of girls gathered in the evenings in the home of Reverend Parris to listen to stories told by one of his slaves, Tituba. They also played fortune-telling games, which were strictly forbidden by the Puritans. One night, while trying to see the faces of their future husbands in an egg white dropped in a glass of water, one girl believed she saw the shape of a coffin.

Soon after, the girls began acting strangely, leading the Puritan community to suspect that the girls were victims of witchcraft. The girls named three townswomen, including Tituba, as the witches who were torturing them.
The three women were put on trial for practicing witchcraft. **Tituba confessed to having seen the devil** and also stated that there was a coven, or group, of witches in the Salem Village area. The other two women, **Sarah Good and Sarah Osbourne, insisted they were innocent**. The court didn’t believe them, and found them guilty of practicing witchcraft.

As the weeks passed, the affected girls accused other townspeople of torturing them. Some townspeople accused others as witches. Witches were not the only ones believed to be witches—men and even some children were accused. By the end of the trials in 1693, **24 people had died**. Some were sentenced to hanging. Some of the accused had confessed as being witches, but none of them were hanged.
The Puritan way of life was very strict, and even small differences in behavior could make people suspicious. Religious leaders instilled a fear of the devil and preached that those who did not conform to the Puritan way of life would be used by the devil to carry out his wishes. No one is really sure why the witch craze spread the way it did, but it did bring lasting changes to the legal system and the way testimony and witnesses were treated, and the Salem Village hangings were the last executions of accused witches in America.

The Salem Witch Trials ended in 1693. Chronology:

1629: Salem is settled.
1641: English law makes witchcraft a capital crime.

1684: England declares that the colonies may not self-govern.

1688: Following an argument with laundress Goody Glover, Martha Goodwin, 13, begins exhibiting bizarre behavior. Days later her younger brother and two sisters exhibit similar behavior. Glover is arrested and tried for bewitching the Goodwin children. Reverend Cotton Mather meets twice with Glover following her arrest in an attempt to persuade her to repent her witchcraft. Glover is hanged. Mather takes Martha Goodwin into his house. Her bizarre behavior continues and worsens.

1688: Mather publishes Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions

November, 1689: Samuel Parris is named the new minister of Salem. Parris moves to Salem from Boston, where Memorable Providence was published.

October 16, 1691: Villagers vow to drive Parris out of Salem and stop contributing to his salary.

January 20, 1692: Eleven year old Abigail Williams and nine-year-old Elizabeth Parris begin behaving much as the Goodwin children acted four years earlier. Soon Ann Putnam Jr. and other Salem girls begin acting similarly.

Mid-February, 1692: Doctor Griggs, who attends to the "afflicted" girls, suggests that witchcraft may be the cause of their strange behavior.
February 25, 1692: Tituba, at the request of neighbor Mary Sibley, bakes a "witch cake" and feeds it to a dog. According to an English folk remedy, feeding a dog this kind of cake, which contained the urine of the afflicted, would counteract the spell put on Elizabeth and Abigail. The reason the cake is fed to a dog is because the dog is believed a "familiar" of the Devil.

Late-February, 1692: Pressured by ministers and townspeople to say who caused her odd behavior, Elizabeth identifies Tituba. The girls later accuse Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne of witchcraft.

February 29, 1692: Arrest warrants are issued for Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne.

March 1, 1692: Magistrates John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin examine Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne for "witches teats." Tituba confesses to practicing witchcraft and confirms Good and Osborne are her co-conspirators.

March 11, 1692: Ann Putnam Jr. shows symptoms of affliction by witchcraft. Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, and Mary Warren later allege affliction as well.


March 19, 1692: Abigail Williams denounces Rebecca Nurse as a witch.

March 21, 1692: Magistrates Hathorne and Conwin examine Martha Cory.

March 23, 1692: Salem Marshal Deputy Samuel Brabrook arrests four-year-old Dorcas Good.

March 24, 1692: Corwin and Hathorne examine Rebecca Nurse.

March 26, 1692: Hathorne and Conwin interrogate Dorcas.

March 28, 1692: Elizabeth Proctor is accused of witchcraft.

April 3, 1692: Sarah Cloyce, after defending her sister, Rebecca Nurse, is accused of witchcraft.

April 11, 1692: Hathorne and Conwin examine Sarah Cloyce and Elizabeth Proctor. On the same day Elizabeth’s husband, John, who protested the examination of his wife, becomes the first man accused of witchcraft and is incarcerated.

Early April, 1692: The Proctors’ servant and accuser, Mary Warren, admits lying and accuses the other accusing girls of lying.

April 13, 1692: Ann Putnam Jr. accuses Giles Cory of witchcraft and alleges that a man who died at Cory’s house also haunts her.

April 19, 1692: Abigail Hobbs, Bridget Bishop, Giles Cory and Mary Warren are examined. Deliverance Hobbs confesses to practicing witchcraft. Mary Warren reverts her statement made in early April and rejoiners the accusers.

April 22, 1692: Mary Easty, another of Rebecca Nurse’s sisters who defended her, is examined by Hathorne and Conwin. Hathorne and Conwin also examine Nehemiah Abbott, William and Deliverance Hobbs, Edward and Sarah Bishop, Mary Black, Sarah Wildes, and Mary English.

April 30, 1692: Several girls accuse former Salem minister George Burroughs of witchcraft.
May 2, 1692: Hathorne and Corwin examine Sarah Morey, Lyndia Dustin, Susannah Martin and Dorcas Hoar.

May 4, 1692: George Burroughs is arrested in Maine.

May 7, 1692: George Burroughs is returned to Salem and placed in jail.

May 9, 1692: Corwin and Hathorne examine Burroughs and Sarah Churchill. Burroughs is returned to Salem and placed in jail.

May 10, 1692: Corwin and Hathorne examine George Jacobs, Sr. and his granddaughter Margaret Jacobs. Sarah Osborne dies in prison.

May 14, 1692: Increase Mather and Sir William Phipps, the newly elected governor of the colony, arrive in Boston. They bring with them a charter ending the 1684 prohibition of self-governance within the colony.

May 16, 1692: Mary Easty is released from prison. Following protest by her accusers, she is again arrested. Roger Toothaker is also arrested on charges of witchcraft.


May 31, 1692: Hathorne, Corwin and Gednew examine Martha Carrier, John Alden, Wilmott Redd, Elizabeth Howe and Phillipp English. English and Alden later escape prison and do not return to Salem until after the trials end.

June 2, 1692: Bridget Bishop is the first to be tried and convicted of witchcraft. She is sentenced to die.

June 8, 1692: Eighteen year old Elizabeth Booth shows symptoms of affliction by witchcraft.

June 10, 1692: Bridget Bishop is hanged at Gallows Hill. Following the hanging Nathaniel Saltonstall resigns from the court and is replaced by Corwin.

June 15, 1692: Cotton Mather writes a letter requesting the court not use spectral evidence as a standard and urging that the trials be speedy. The Court of Oyer and Terminer pays more attention to the request for speed and less attention to the criticism of spectral evidence.

June 16, 1692: Roger Toothaker dies in prison.

June 29-30, 1692: Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes, Sarah Good, and Elizabeth Howe are tried, pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang.

July 19, 1692: Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Howe, Sarah Good and Sarah Wildes are hanged at Gallows Hill.

August 5, 1692: George Jacobs Sr., Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John Willard and John Proctor are pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang.

August 19, 1692: George Jacobs Sr., Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John Willard and John Proctor are hanged on Gallows Hill. Elizabeth Proctor is not hanged because she is pregnant.

August 20, 1692: Wilmott Redd reveals the testimony that led to the execution of George Jacobs Sr. and LeonardIGO.

September 1, 1692: Martha Corey, Mary Corey, Alice Park, Ann Pudeator, Dorcas Hoar and Mary Wilden are pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang.

Mid-September, 1692: Giles Corey is indicted.

September 17, 1692: Margaret Scott, Wilmott Redd, Samuel Wardwell, Mary Parker, Abigail Faulkner, Abigail Gometry, Mary Lacy, Ann Foster and Sarah Enticott are tried and sentenced to hang.

September 19, 1692: Cotton Mather requests that the King's Commissioners not use spectral evidence in future trials.

September 20, 1692: Phipps issues a commission for a Court of Oyer and Terminer. The court rules that spectral evidence is not admissible.

September 22, 1692: Martha Cory, Margaret Scott, Mary Corey, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Wilmott Redd, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker are hanged. Hoar escapes execution by confessing.

October 2, 1692: The Reverend Increase Mather, President of Harvard College and father to Cotton Mather, denounces the use of spectral evidence.

October 6, 1692: Governor Phipps orders that no person be hanged on spectral evidence.

October 29, 1692: Phipps issues a commission for a Court of Oyer and Terminer.

November 3, 1692: Judge Stoughton orders the execution of all suspected witches and orders the Court of Oyer and Terminer to proceed.

November 10, 1692: The General Court establishes a Superior Court to try remaining witnesses.

December 16, 1692: Governor Phipps orders the execution of all suspected witches who were exempted by their pregnancy. Phipps denies the validity of any accusations against any suspects.

January 10, 1694: Governor Phipps orders the execution of all suspected witches who were exempted by their pregnancy. Phipps denies the validity of any accusations against any suspects.

January 1697: The Eederal Court decides the 1692 trials unlawful.

January 14, 1697: The General Court orders a day of fasting and self-examination for the tragedy of Salem. Moved. Samuel Sewall publicly confesses error and guilt.

1697: Minister Samuel Park is excommunicated from Salem and replaced by Joseph Green.

1698: The Governor orders the Salem witch trials to be disbanded.

1699: The Salem Village is renamed Danvers.

1702: The General Court declares the 1692 trials unlawful.

1707: Massachusetts for body apologies for the events of 1692.

1752: Salem Village is renamed Danvers.

1957: Massachusetts for body apologizes for the events of 1692.

1992: On the 300th anniversary of the trials, a witchcraft memorial designed by James Castor is dedicated in Salem.
IN MEMORY OF THOSE INNOCENTS WHO DIED DURING THE SALEM VILLAGE WITCHCRAFT HYSTERIA OF 1692