

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS



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Today's Objectives:

articulate the basic tenets of Puritanism;

explain the events leading up to the Salem
witchcraft trials of 1692;

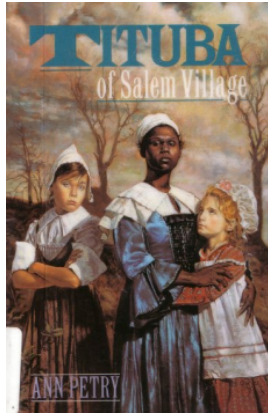
synthesize and evaluate facts to speculate the
underlying causes of the witch hysteria;

draw connections between the events of 1692
and the modern world

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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.



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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.



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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.

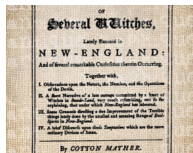


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As the weeks passed, the affected girls accused other townspeople of torturing them on trial also named others as witches. Women were not the only ones believed to be witches—men and even some children were accused. By the end of the trials in 1693, 24 people had died, some in jail but most by hanging. Some of the accused had confessed as being witches, but none of them were hanged.



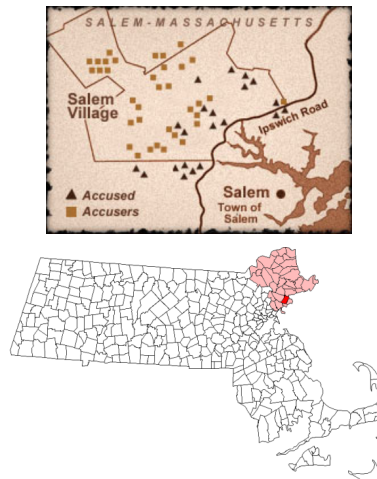
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The Puritan way of life was very strict, and even small differences in behavior could make people suspicious. Religious leaders instilled a fear of the devil and preached that those who did not conform to the Puritan way of life would be used by the 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 TRYALS of several WITCHES lately Executed in *New-England*, and of feveral remarkable Curioſities therein Occurring. By *Cotton Mather*. Published by the Special Command of the Governour.



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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.

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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 12, 1692: Ann Putnam Jr. accuses Martha Cory of witchcraft.

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

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

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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 Corwin 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 Corwin 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 reverses her statement made in early April and rejoins the accusers.

April 22, 1692: Mary Easty, another of Rebecca Nurse's sisters who defended her, is examined by Hathorne and Corwin. Hathorne and Corwin 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.

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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 moved to a Boston 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 18, 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 27, 1692: Phipps issues a commission for a Court of Oyer and Terminer and appoints as judges John Hathorne, Nathaniel Saltonstall, Bartholomew Gedney, Peter Sergeant, Samuel Sewall, Wait Still Winthrop, and Lieutenant Governor William Stoughton.

May 31, 1692: Hathorne, Corwin and Gedney examine Martha Carrier, John Alden, Wilmott Redd, Elizabeth Howe and Phillip 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

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August 5, 1692: George Jacobs Sr., Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John Willard and John and Elizabeth 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: Margaret Jacobs recants the testimony that led to the execution of her grandfather George Jacobs Sr. and Burroughs.

September 9, 1692: Martha Corey, Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Dorcas Hoar and Mary Bradbury are pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang.

Mid-September, 1692: Giles Cory is indicted.

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

September 19, 1692: Sheriffs administer Peine Forte Et Dure (pressing) to Giles Cory after he refuses to enter a plea to the charges of witchcraft against him. After two days under the weight, Cory dies.

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

October 3, 1692: The Reverend Increase Mather, President of Harvard College and father to Cotton Mather, denounces the use of spectral evidence.

October 8, 1692: Governor Phipps orders that spectral evidence no longer be admitted in witchcraft trials.

October 29, 1692: Phipps prohibits further arrests, releases many accused witches, and dissolves the Court of Oyer and Terminer.

November 25, 1692: The General Court establishes a Superior Court to try remaining witches.

January 3, 1693: Judge Stoughton orders execution of all suspected witches who were exempted by their pregnancy. Phipps denied enforcement of the order causing Stoughton to leave the bench.

January 1693: 49 of the 52 surviving people brought into court on witchcraft charges are released because their arrests were based on spectral evidence.

1693: Tituba is released from jail and sold to a new master.

May 1693: Phipps pardons those still in prison on witchcraft charges.

January 14, 1697: The General Court orders a day of fasting and soul-searching for the tragedy at Salem. Mather, Samuel Sewall publicly confesses error and guilt.

1697: Minister Samuel Parris is ousted as minister in Salem and replaced by Joseph Green.

1702: The General Court declares the 1692 trials unlawful.

1706: Ann Putnam Jr., one of the leading accusers, publicly apologizes for her actions in 1692.

1711: The colony passes a legislative bill restoring the rights and good names of those accused of witchcraft and grants 600 pounds in restitution to their heirs.

1752: Salem Village is renamed Danvers.

1957: Massachusetts formally apologizes for the events of 1692.

1992: On the 300th anniversary of the trials, a witchcraft memorial designed by James Cutler is dedicated in Salem.

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