

Salem witch trials and religion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Salem Witchcraft Trials was in Massachusetts and occurred between the years of 1692 and 1693. During this time more than 200 people were accused of practicing witchcraft, otherwise known as the Devil's magic. Out of those 200 people only 20 were executed.

The Witchcraft trials is something that I have always been interested in, yet I never really dug into what it really was. We always seem to shed a dim light upon the trials yet every single year we see young girls and women dress up as a witch and call it ? cute when there is so much history behind those ? costumes. It was the spring of 1692 when the first accusation started. After a wave of hysteria spread all over Massachusetts there was a special court that came together to hear the case, which then lead to the first convicted ? witch Sara Osburn. Osburn was the first of many who were accused. The people of Massachusetts were known as Puritans, who lived their lives centered around the church. Their government leaders were strong Christians that devoted themselves to Puritanism they believed in god and the devil, but most importantly it was common to be afraid of witchcraft and magic. With all this, they were ? extremely rigid and the members of society were expected to follow a strict moral code. The wrath of God was something that also scared them deeply and they would do anything to prevent themselves from receiving it.

To me, they are the people who are the ? by the book. If I was to be living in those times I feel as if I would absolutely hate it. Yes, I know hate is a strong word but if those people were there around every day, watching every step I take, I will go crazy. If one person even thought about not going to church, they would go crazy and would probably think of them as a witch. Knowing

this information, it was easy to see why when the first woman, Osburn, was considered a threat to the Puritans. You see Sara has been previously scandalized by the community for having premarital sexual relations and not regularly attending church. Ms. Osburn had defined what not to do as a Puritan. The fact that this woman was considered sinners played a huge role in her accusation and conviction. Furthermore, some long-term effects of the Witch Trials can include that there are still witch hunts to this day. Years after the trials ended there were still people living in fear in not only America but also in Europe because that is where it started primarily.

Also, the end of the Salem Witch Trials started the steady decline of the Puritanism in the colonies. Puritan groups began to separate into different Protestants sections and other people on the outside began to realize the faults of the Puritanism after the Salem Witch Trails of 1692. The trials made people realize that ministers were only there to provide religious services and not govern his colony. The Salem Witch Trials discouraged the connection between religion and government thus bringing us to the statement we all know and love separation of church and state, which can also be found in our Constitution. Short-term effects of the trials can include how many people were affected. Men, women and children were either imprisoned or killed which ultimately left them with a lower population. Many families were torn apart. People who survived, were compensated and those that did not their families received no aid, and no closure. Yet in October 1711 local court officials repealed most of those who were convicted and compensated them. It took them many years and centuries later, on October 31, 2001 all who were ever or had been accused were officially claimed

innocent by the Governor of Massachusetts, Jane Swift. There were many people affected by this event. Most victims were women but men were accused and executed too. When the trials first started, it was only poor social outcast who were being hanged, yet as time went on people from all different types of backgrounds were being accused.

According to the book, *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials*, the accused witches were considered dangerous prisoners and were kept in dungeons underneath the jails away from regular prisoners. When looking at how the women of Salem, Massachusetts were treated it is very sad that they were going through that. Why were they treated like this? Well, people thought that they were doing the right thing by putting these poor girls in cages and basements like that. The people thought that they were being ? precautions by keeping them there but I think they did this just to not be bothered by them. It is like that famous saying we all know and love, Out of sight, out of mind. History was changed by this event because people are now very cautious of how they show their religious point of views. With that in place, we are sure to make sure that we are not showing what we believe in. Yet without this event happening in the past, we would probably be in this situation right now. If this event were to have a different outcome, I think the way we do things would be totally different. I am a firm believer of history does repeat itself. We are very fortunate to be living in a time that we are all past those very tough times. In conclusion, the Salem Witch trials played a very important role when it comes to the effects on religion. It, in a crazy way, shaped religion to what it is today. With these unjust deaths that

happened shows us that we cannot judge a person or religion based off first impressions.