

Bridget county courts
after two such
incidents.



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Bridget Bishop was the first woman to be put on trial in the historical Salem witch hunts in the year of 1692.

She was subsequently found to be guilty of being a witch and was hanged on June 10, 1692. Bridget was born in England in 1640. When she was twenty years old, she married a man by the name of George Wasselbe. They moved to Salem, Massachusetts. But, six years later, Bridget became a widow. Soon afterwards, she married a nother man by the name of Thomas Oliver.

They had a daughter who they named, ironically, Christian. Their marriage was stormy at times, and they sometimes quarreled in public. Being that the community was a Puritan one, this act was looked upon with scorn.

Bridget and her husband were taken to the county courts after two such incidents. Once, after they had had a violent argument, they had to stand together in the town square, bound together back-to-back, and gagged as punishment for their sinfulness. When Oliver died in 1679, his death was thought to be suspicious, and Bridget was accused of practicing witchcraft. The case was eventually dismissed. She went on to marry a third man by the name of Edward Bishop. Bishop was a well-respected man in Salem. He not only owned a sawmill, but he also helped to found the Beverly Church.

Their marriage was no different from her first two marriages, as she and Bishop quarreled and bickered often. Bridget Bishop was certainly not a typically submissive Puritan wife. On top of the fact that she had three husbands in her lifetime, Bridget was looked upon as being flamboyant and exotic because she wore a black cap, black hat, and a red bodice which was bordered and looped with different colors. Her “ showy” dress was also used

against her at her trial. Nathaniel Saltonstall, who resigned from the court stated: " little more than wearing scarlet, countenancing shovel board, and getting herself talked about, all offenses, but hardly capital offenses."

(Starkey, p. 156)Bridget opened a tavern at their house.

This caused quite a stir among the townspeople. She was then accused of entertaining guests and of drinking apple cider all night, among other things. Things came to a climax, when, finally, on April 18, 1692, Bridget Bishop was arrested and charged with being a witch.

This time the charge was initiated by some girls who claimed they had been " afflicted by witchcraft." The girls threw fits throughout the entire trial. Bridget was not alone this time, though, as being sought out, as three women by the names of Merry Warren, Giles Corey, and Abigail Hobbs were also put on trial for being witches. The evidence against Bridget Bishop, besides her marital disputes, her having three husbands, her flashy way of dressing, and her tavern ownership, was provided by members of the Puritan community. A man named Richard Coman said that Bridget Bishop and three woman kept appearing to him at night.

Because of this, Coman decided to sleep with a sword in order to protect himself. He also had a friend stay with him. That night, Coman fought with the witches as they tried to take the sword away from him. His friend couldn't see the women, but he could see Coman struggling with the sword.

.. Another man by the name of John Louder said that he had told Bridget to keep her chickens out of his master's orchard.

Louder testified, that, that night, her vision appeared to him and it choked his neck all night long. Another man by the name of William Stacy told a story about how he had worked for Bridget Bishop. Stacy was the last to testify.

He admitted that he had admired Bridget when he was 22 because she had visited him when he had smallpox. Later he had doubts of her character and began to listen to and engage in the gossip about her. After Bridget expressed her resentment of this he began to have some “unnerving experiences.” (Starky, p. 153) Once Bridget got him to do some work for her for which she paid him a threepence.

Later he looked into his pocket where