

The execution of salem witches



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Natasha Lacroix Mrs Walker EAE2D April 22 2013 The Execution of Salem Witches In Salem during the year 1692, nineteen people were executed due to witchcraft. During this period, 188 people were accused of practicing witchcraft. Out of these 188 people, 59 were tried, 31 of them were convicted and nineteen of the 31 that were convicted were then all hung at Gallows Hill.

In the seventeenth century it was normal procedures to have people corrected or even execute people who were a threat to the town of Salem because everyone thought it was okay to have people corrected for their wrong behaviour and to a point that their punishment could have been an execution. Were the ways to prove that the accused witches were innocent really accurate? They had five different ways to prove they were innocent. They had to recite a prayer, get checked for any marks on their bodies and the last three ways were to get a testimony of the accused witches, a confession or any evidence.

The first way to prove they were not witches was to recite the Lord's Prayer. If they were unable to recite the prayer it was thought that the Devil was among them and had taken their tongue so they could not speak the Lord's words. During these trials, George Burroughs was the only minister to be executed during his trial he was told to recite the Lord's Prayer. He was unable to recite it but moments before he about to be hung in front of everyone he was able to recite the prayer.

Everyone had been convinced that he was not guilty until the minister Cotton Mather told everyone that it must have been the Devil helping him to make George Burroughs look innocent when he was really not. Unfortunately, he

was still hung not too long after. This incident made it look like everyone who was able to recite it after this incident look guilty as well. What they were trying to show everyone is that they were guilty either way. If they were able to recite it they were guilty and also if they were unable to recite it.

The second way to prove their innocence was to look on their body for evidence for example having birthmarks, warts or even moles because it was evidence that the Devil had sucked on them to get more power from them. If they ever needed more proof that it was really a " Devil's Mark" and that they were witches they would take a sharp object usually a knife and the would prick the mark on their body if it wouldn't hurt or bleed at all they were definitely witches.

The last three ways that the witches were able to prove their innocence was to get a testimony of the accused against the witches, evidence or a confession from them. Most of the time they only get a confession from the accused witch was to torture them for example, one way they would torture them for a confession was to tie them to a chair and dunk them in the water repeatedly till they almost drowned and usually after that they would confess to the witchcraft they had been practicing.

Many times they hadn't confessed and they had drowned either way from having to much water in their lungs. To answer the main question, were these five ways to prove their innocence of these accused witches really accurate? No, it was not because most of the time they used these methods and the accused ended up being killed anyway. For example, if they were not able to recite the Lord's Prayer they were guilty and if they were able to recite the prayer it was said that they were getting help from the Devil.

They would also torture them by sinking them into the water many times the accused drowned either way. The only accurate way to prove that someone was really a witch was to look on their body for evidence and prick them. But then again no everyone had evidence on his or her bodies. Some words they had taken almost religiously was that everyone was guilty until proven innocent. Lambert, Tim. " The Salem Witch Trials. " Local Histories. N. p. , n. d. Web. 20 April 2013. . Linder, Douglas. The Witchcraft Trials in Salem. N. p. , n. d. Web. 17 April 2013. http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SAL_ACCT.HTM Hansen, Chadwick. Witchcraft at Salem. 9 ed. New York, NY: George Braziller, Inc, 2003. Print. Cawthorne, Nigel. Witch Hunt History of a Persecution. Toronto, ON: Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2004. Print. Thomas, Ryan. Listverse. N. p. , 27 July 2012. Web. 14 May 2013.