

Salem witch trials essay example

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The Salem witch trials took place in colonial Massachusetts from 1692 to 1693. The two year trials was very complex with more than 200 people being accused of practicing witchcraft of whom 20 were executed. More than 300 years after the trial, the paranoia and the injustices that surrounded the Salem witch trials made the colony to admit that it was a mistake convicting the accused and they compensated the family back then. Indeed these memories still leave on yet it's very long time since the trials took place. Between June 1692 and 1693, nineteen men and women who had been convicted for witch craft were hanged at Glasgow, and another man over 80 years of age was pressed to death because he failed to submit to the trials as was requested by the colony. Among the accused were Bridget Bishop who was born around 1632 and 1637 and was the first to be hanged and Glasgow. George Burroughs, another accused was born in 1650, Sarah Good was born in 1655, Rebecca Nurse was 71 at the time of the trial, Phillip was 41 at the time of trial, and Deliverance Hobbs was 50 at the time of the trial, Giles Corey, John Proctor, and Mary English.

The history behind these trials date back many years in history, and it was known that a number of Christians believed that the devil rewarded people who were loyal to its wants and evil practice by making them witches. It was also believed that the witches were very powerful and were endowed with supernatural powers which they could use to harm others. In the 1300s and 1600s the wave of witchcraft raged Europe and more than 10 000 people were executed. The wave spread to Massachusetts where 19 men and women were hanged.

Witch hunt started with Osborne, who accepted the court charges claiming

that she was possessed by witchcraft and elaborated images of a black dog that she was seeing. However, she claimed that this was just for the good of the community and thereby claimed innocence but she was still jailed with the other two women whom they were accused with. After these proceedings of March 1st 1692, several accusations followed in the subsequent months. However, the lead accusations followed after jailing of Martha Corey who was believed to be a strong church member in Salem village, thus no way could she be related with the devil. In fact many agreed that if she can be charged for witchcraft then no one could escape being a witch. After her jailing, many people were accused and even people within the Salem neighborhood were questioned.

On 27th May 1692, the supreme leader, governor Phillip Williams gave an order for the initiation of special court of Oyer and Terminer to hear the sway of the accused and if possible make the decision whether they are to be charged guilty or not. The first victim to be brought to the special court was Bridget Bishop, who was fond of gossiping as well as being promiscuous. Bishop Bridget when asked why she decided to be loyal to the devil and accepted the evil powers of witch crafty, she told the court that she is very innocent. ' I am as innocent as the child unborn'. However, even after proving her innocence, the court found the defense guilty and she became the first victim hanged on the Gallows Hill on 10th June 1692 (Aronson, 125).

Work Cited

Aronson, M. Witch-Hunt: Mysteries of the Salem Witch Trials. 2003. P. 123-231. Athenaeum: New York.