

Salem witch trials assignment

[History](#)



The town was a very prosperous port, engaging in commerce, hobbling and other activities. Salem was mainly occupied by European immigrants who came looking for a new beginning on American land. Many of those immigrants settled in New England, but later fled to Salem due to the two wars between the English and the Indians which raged for fourteen years. They were Puritans, an English religious group hoping to live a simple life and to create Heaven on Earth (Scanner 13).

When they arrived to American lands, they wanted nothing less than to found a religious society in which the citizens would strive to live in godly ways, dedicating themselves in God's reverer, and attempting to live in peace and harmony with their fellow Christians. The reason why they left New England was the whole question of religion. Most people didn't take religion as seriously as they did (Collier 13-19). In the 1600s, many people wanted religious freedom for themselves, the Puritans happened to find it in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 (Capstone Press 24). The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praises and thanks to God; we should neither eat nor sleep, but eat to God and sleep to God and work to God and talk to God, do all to His glory and praise. ?? Richard Gibes (Puritan Minister) The Puritans beliefs were based on two completely different worlds, the Natural World; consisting of human beings and everything else we can see, touch or feel, and the Invisible World swarming with weird apparitions and ghostly phantoms in the air. The Puritans also believed that God did everything for a reason, so they took note of everything that happened around them.

They were also more partial to the teachings of the Old Testament (Scanner, 13-19). The most basic beliefs consists of: Total Depravity, Unconditional

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Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the perseverance of the Saints. Total Depravity is the belief that every person is born sinful, or the concept of Original Sin. Unconditional Election is the belief that God saves only those whom he wishes. The Puritans were strict Calvinists, followers of the reformer John Calvin. Calvin taught that God was all-powerful and completely sovereign. Human beings were depraved sinners.

God had chosen a few people, "the elect," for salvation. The rest of humanity was condemned to eternal damnation. Puritans lived in a constant state of spiritual anxiety, searching for signs of God's favor or anger (People & Ideas). Limited Atonement is the belief that Jesus died for the only chosen, not for everyone. Irresistible Grace is the belief that God's grace is freely given, not earned or denied. Perseverance of the Saints is the belief that those elected by God have full power to interpret the will of God (Reuben). The Puritan lifestyle was restrained and rigid.

People were expected to work hard and repress their emotions or opinions. Individual differences were frowned upon. Even the dark, somber Puritan dress was dictated by the church (Salem Witch Trials). All of these beliefs had a connection with the Salem Witch Trials. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries almost everybody in Europe and America believed in witches (Burglar 4). Witches were mentioned in the Bible, which was enough reason to believe in them (Collier 68-69). Witches were men and women said to make deals with Satan and work for him.

In return, Satan would give them special powers, such as being able to fly, cast harmful spells on their enemies, make others sick, or make cows lose

their milk. Witchcraft was a crime in Massachusetts and in most European countries (Burglar 4), and it could be punishable by death (Taylor 433). Judges remitted the use of " spectral evidence" in court, which means that anyone could say anything about anyone else and it would be used as evidence (Collier 68-69). People were also tried based on their positions in society. In total, nineteen men and women were hung as witches, and many others were accused. Capstone Press 37) The first so-called witch to hang was a healer from Charleston, Massachusetts. Her name was Margaret Jones. She was tried and hanged in 1648 during an epidemic of fits. Most cases similar to hers were thrown out of court due to lack of evidence. The rash of mysterious events never separated completely. People were frightened half to death, and it got worse when a popular father-and-son team of Boston ministers named Increase and Cotton Matter wrote several books and essays about settlers who were possessed by demons or plagued by witches (Scanner 14).

Because Puritans believed that God made everything happen for a reason, the inhabitants took note when there were earthquakes, droughts, fires, a plague of flies, hurricanes, comets and shooting stars, eclipses, and the lights of the Aurora Borealis. Also some diseases, such as small pox, malaria, yellow fever and measles. All of these things seemed to trouble Reverend Samuel Paris, the Puritan minister of Salem Village. Before moving to Salem Village in 1689, Paris was a merchant in Barbados (Wilson 19). Paris had a nine-year-old daughter, Betty Paris, and an eleven-year-old niece whom he adopted, named Abigail Williams.

Reverend Paris had two family slaves named John Indian and an Native-American slave named Tuba, who told voodoo-like stories to Betty and Abigail. They soon began to invite their friends to share the entertainment. Shortly after, Reverend Paris became extremely upset, when he realized that something was terribly wrong with Betty and Abigail. According to Paris, they would twitch, choke and contort their bodies into strange abnormal shapes, and speak in words that made no sense (Scanner 15-19). The girls began to complain of physical maladies, report visions, and would tremble and speak without restraint.

Then, an elderly physician and doctor named William Gripe, examined Betty and Abigail and declared that they were most certainly “under an Evil Hand”. This was the worst of all possible news for Paris. He consulted with doctors and tried dosing the girls with every elixir he could find, from parsnip seeds in wine, to smelling salts made from blood, ashes, and deer antlers, but nothing seemed to work. Dr. Gripe had good reason to think that the girls were under a witch’s spell. As early as the 1630s, settlers in New England had begun to suffer from violent, life-threatening fits.

Many seemed healthy one day, but could wind up dead the next. Doctors couldn’t find any rational explanation for the victims’ bizarre contortions. Before long, the Puritans began to look for answers in the Invisible World. They questioned if it was truly some new disease or could the symptoms have been caused by witches. Days passed, but the girls’ symptoms only intensified. Reverend Paris thought that maybe God was sending him a sign. He received not one, but two signs. One week after the girls’ odd behavior

began, a mere 75 miles north, in York, Maine the Beanie Indians and their French allies attacked, leaving the town in flames.

Even babies, mothers, and farm animals were killed. Puritans have always believed that Indians were devils and that their shamans were witches. The second sign he received was when a homeless woman named Sarah Good came to Paris' door in early February asking for food for her baby and her four-year-old daughter, Doctors. As Sarah Good turned to go, she muttered something under her breath. The t-van. Or girls soon seemed to get much worse. Paris thought some more and began to wonder if he himself had been the sinner. The day after Dry. Grips presented his diagnosis to the Paris family, Reverend and Mrs..

Paris rode off to a lecture. While they were there, they hoped to invite some ministers to their home for a solemn day of prayer. While they were gone, the two family slaves used folk magic to try to cure the girls. They knew that this was forbidden by Puritan ministers. Tuba ND John Indian planned to make a black magic witch cake. They mixed rye flour with the afflicted girls' urine, patted it into the shape of a cake, and baked it in the ashes of the fireplace. Then, they had to feed it to a dog. But then Reverend Paris and his wife came home to find the witch cake and they were furious.

The two slaves were only trying to help, but black magic was not to be tolerated. Betty and Abigail were terrified, and their fits and gibbering grew worse. Paris and the ministers prayed together, his family fasted again and again, and he made sure everyone in his family had doubled their racers, but nothing seemed to work. Paris, other ministers and certain townsfolk pressed

Betty and Abigail had to reveal the witches' name. The girls had to come up with someone to blame, someone their family didn't like or respect. Tuba seemed to be a logical choice. Besides making the witch cake, she was a slave, and an Indian slave at that.

Betty and Abigail declared that Tuba was a witch and that her spirit, which was invisible to everybody else but themselves, had been pinching them, picking them and chasing them around rooms. Tuba said she Ovid Betty and would never hurt her, but Paris did not believe anything Tuba said. Paris planned to implicate Tuba as a witch and force her into naming others. When Tuba confessed her own connection with the devil, she implicated the other accused witches. Before long, Betty and Abigail claimed that two other women's spirits had tortured them as well.

They remembered Sarah Good, and an old farm woman by the name of Sarah Osborn. On February 29, 1692, the first official complaints were filed by two Salem Town magistrates. On March 7th, the three accused witches were arrested. As the arrests were taking place, more people began to say they were tormented by fits. The first of these accusers was a 12-year-old friend of Abigail and Betty, named Ann Putnam Jr.. Ann was having dreadful fits, they were all because the spirit of Sarah Good was pinching her and trying to make her sign the Devil's evil book.

Then, a 17-year-old girl named Elizabeth Hubbard claimed she had been chased by a wolf that turned into Sarah Good and attacked by the bedridden old lady, Sarah Osborn. Elizabeth happened to be the niece of Dr. Gripe, not only did she live in his house, but was friends with Abigail and Betty (Scanner

21-41). Paris landed to implicate Tuba as a witch and force her into naming others. When Tuba confessed her own connection with the devil, she implicated the other accused witches. Most Salem Village inhabitants @believed the girls when they accused Tuba and two other village woman of practicing witchcraft on them.

Two assistants of the Massachusetts General Court, John Hawthorne and Jonathan Corning were called upon to conduct a legal examination of the accused women. They found a statement in the Scriptures that witches must not be allowed to live, so then their duty became clear. One method of identification as a search on the accused body for physical signs left behind the devil. These bodily searches were performed on the accused women. The first six women to be identified as witches through this method were executed.

Tuba later said that Paris beat her into a confession, claiming that her accusations of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, as well as two other women, were the result of his abuse. Although many of the villagers were skeptical, they supported Paris. The panic began to spread, not only in Salem, but in the surrounding towns. The witchcraft fever continued to spread, but the accused were confident that the judges represented some of the best minds in the colony and would deal fairly with the witchcraft problem. But the court heard new evidence, and a jury decided the prisoners fate.

By the summer of 1692, dozens of innocent people were in jail and facing trial for witchcraft. Nineteen people were convicted of being witches, all were executed by hanging. Many more people would have been killed, but people

began to doubt that so many people could be witches. Soon the Essex County and ministers from outside the immediate area began taking a stand against intriguing the trials. On October 29, Governor Phips marked the end of the witch hunt. While some people were disappointed to see the trials end, most were relieved to return to their long-neglected work.

He later pardoned several people who were accused of witchcraft. Historians believe that convicted people were not actually witches, but it was fear that caused the panic in Salem and made the townspeople accuse innocent people of being witches (Burglar 9). People blamed Paris for allowing the death of innocent relatives and friends. In 1709 and 1711 the Massachusetts General Court emended those who had been accused of being witches, as well as the children of the executed victims. Those families were awarded compensation for financial losses. The names of some, however were never cleared (Taylor 465).

The main factors that started and fueled the Salem Witch Trials were politics, religion, economics, and the imaginations and fears of the people. The 600 plus residents of Salem were separated into two main parts: those who wanted to separate from Salem Town, and those who did not. Those who wanted to separate from Salem Town were farming families located in the western part of Salem Village. On the other hand those who wanted to remain part of Salem Town were located on the eastern side of Salem Village, closest to Salem Town. The residents who wished to remain part of Salem Town were economically tied to its thriving, rich harbors.

Reasons for being convicted of being a witch ranged from being female to having a low social position. More women than men have been accused, for example: Doctors Good, the four-year-old daughter of Sarah Good, and Bridget Bishop, a tavern keeper. Most women had a way of helping others with medicine and delivered babies. These things men did not understand, thus they demonized it. Due to the fact that women could help nurse wounded soldiers and because of their “power” to heal, they were thought to have special powers that were unnatural.

Beautiful women who attracted the attention of married men were also accused by the wives of these men of being witches (Matthews). A more common reason was that a person was related or very closely associated with a known suspect. Such was the case of Rebecca Nurse, a 71-year-old grandmother, and her two well-respected sisters, Sarah Close and Mary East. In one case, Martha Cord was accused along with her 80-year-old husband Silly Cord of witchcraft simply because they had an illegitimate son (Roach). Other reasons were more religious.

Anything that was believed to go against the strict moral code was considered a sin and deserved to be punished. The act of not attending church was punishable. People felt that if a “crime” was not punished, God would become angry. Witchcraft was considered a sin because it denied God’s superiority, and a crime because the witch could call up the Devil in his or her shape to perform cruel acts against others. Therefore, in any case when witchcraft was suspected, it was important that it was investigated thoroughly and the tormentor identified and judged (Shaw).