

Salem witch trials essay sample



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In the United States, up until the lethal injection was introduced in 1980, execution by hanging was the most popular legal and some times unlawful form of putting criminals to death. In some cases, innocent people were irrationally hung or lynched with no evidence of criminality. This occurred in a more recent historical event, The Duluth lynching's. The 1920 Duluth lynching occurred on June 15, 1920 when three black circus workers were attacked and illegally lynched by a mob in Duluth, Minnesota. Those innocent deaths led by false accusations supported with no evidence, fear and motives can relate to those wrongfully and legally hung in The Salem Witch trials. Even though the trials took place three centuries ago, similar unjustified deaths and persecution of people based on fear and social instability continued on to the 20th century. In the year 1920, America was in the midst of a violent period of racial discrimination and conflicts.

One summer night June 14, 1920, Irene Tusken, age nineteen, and James Sullivan, eighteen, went to the circus in Duluth. Sullivan's father, James Sullivan, called the Duluth Police Chief John Murphy the next morning saying six black circus workers had held the pair at gunpoint and then raped Irene Tusken. The news of the alleged rape spread very quickly and six blacks were immediately arrested and held at the Duluth city jail. That evening a white mob, estimated to be around 1, 000 and 10, 00 gathered around Superior Street outside the police station. The police didn't resist the mob since they were ordered not to use guns; this made it easier for the mobs to break in and capture the accused black men.

The three men were beaten and then lynched, first Isaac McGhee, then Elmer Jackson, and lastly Elias Clayton ("Duluth Lynching's Online"). From

the Minneapolis Journal, July 30, 1920 it was said, " Little evidence would be found to corroborate these claims. An examination by a family doctor reported no evidence of assault or rape." (" Journal") Even with no physical evidence of assault or rape after being examined by a doctor the men were arrested with " alleged rape" against the 19 year old, Irene Tusken, and some were horribly lynched and beaten. The fact that Irene was examined by a family doctor and reported no sign of assault or rape was never used to bring up in the trials of Duluth Lynching's.

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From the Minneapolis Journal, July 30, 1920 it was said, "Little evidence would be found to corroborate these claims. An examination by a family doctor reported no evidence of assault or rape." ("Journal") Even with no physical evidence of assault or rape after being examined by a doctor the men were arrested with "alleged rape" against the 19 year old, Irene Tusken, and some were horribly lynched and beaten. The fact that Irene was examined by a family doctor and reported no sign of assault or rape was never used to bring up in the trials of Duluth Lynching's. Irene unjustly accused these men which resulted in their brutal death.

This was very similar case in The Salem Witch Trials, were 17 Year old Abigail William accused many people of witchcraft with lies and manipulation. She convinced the government she was saw many people associating with the devil without any evidence but her word and threatened the girls if they spoke against her." Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you (The Crucible). This threat demonstrates that Abby will go to any length, even abuse or

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murder to ensure that she alone is safe. She won't let her friends tell the truth lest she get caught for what they did. She accused 62 people in just two years. Since Salem was a very Puritan village, practicing witchcraft is a very serious crime and death was the penalty. Abigail's accusations resulted in the legal hanging of more than 20 people. Fear took a big toll on the lives of those African Americans living in Duluth after the tragic brutal lynching that occurred where they lived.

They were a minority and faced a lot of hate and discrimination. " Now, when this lynching happened [local African Americans] were really afraid. Now, I can remember this, that they were so afraid, a lot of them from Duluth went over to Superior side, left their homes. They were so afraid to stay in their homes." (Fredd). In an interview with Fredd Ball in 1939 about the tragic historical lynching in Duluth, Minnesota, Fredd Stated that African Americans were so afraid and traumatized by the unjust lynching's of their fellow friends that they stay hidden in there houses and some even left Duluth, Minnesota. The people of Salem also lived in fear because all misfortunes were attributed to the work of the devil; when things like infant death, crop failures or friction among the congregation occurred, the supernatural was blamed.

They did not want to be unjustly accused because of natural misfortunes. When things like owning a puppet could draw suspicion, the village became very alert and careful of the things they did. Motive also plays a big role in these accusations the led to the numerous unnecessary and unjustified deaths. " One motive for lynching's, particularly in the South, was the enforcement of social conventions - punishing perceived violations of

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customs, mandating segregation of whites and blacks" (Lynching's). The mob took the law into their own hands in order to the kill the men accused of wrongdoings. They all illegally served the parts in being a judge, prosecutor and executioner to lynch and kill the accused resulted in their brutal death.

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They all illegally served the parts in being a judge, prosecutor and executioner to lynch and kill the accused men of rape with little to no evidence. This was, however, different from The Salem Witch Trials, were the government was the one to trial, convict and execute the accused people of witchcraft. This was legal yet lacked any sense of justice. Abigail, the initial accuser in the Salem Witch Trials, also had motives against most of the people she accused. She accused the wife of the man she had an affair with due to jealousy and vengeance against John Proctor for his rejection towards her and to clear her name of devil worship. False accusations, no evidence, fear and motives were all a leading factors in the tragic historical events of <https://assignbuster.com/salem-witch-trials-essay-sample/>

the Salem Witch Trials and the Lynching's of Duluth Minnesota. Though the Salem Witch Trials took place in the 1690's, it's unfortunate we did not learn from our mistakes to quickly judge and convict innocent people; therefor repeating history again in the 20th century. Although there were many differences in the two events, like the motive, profile of accused people and form of execution; both events can very much relate to each other.

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