

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS: NARRATIVE

High School Version

It is a hot May afternoon in 1692 in a crowded meeting hall in Salem, Massachusetts. You're watching your friend and neighbor Rebecca being accused in court of witchcraft, making a pact with the Devil by signing his book in her blood. The accusers roll on the floor convulsing and screaming that Rebecca is pinching and hurting them. The accusers claim the birthmark on her shoulder is a mark of the Devil. Rebecca is sitting still across the room with her hands on her lap with a worried look on her face. The community worries that "if anyone lets Satan in even a little, the whole community will be destroyed."¹ The Magistrate has been grilling Rebecca for hours, "Why are you hurting these girls? Are you a witch?" By the end of the hearing, the jury comes back with a not guilty verdict after listening to Rebecca denying all charges. The judge sends them back to reconsider, and they convict her of being a witch and sentence her to death by hanging. This is but one of many hearings you have witnessed, and many more will come.

Unit Question: What led the Puritans in Salem to accuse, convict, and execute so many individuals for witchcraft?

Puritan Culture

In order to understand the events of this time period, one must examine daily life in Puritan New England in the late 17th century. The Puritans came to the colonies looking for religious freedom. Their faith was based on constant self-reflection related to their relationship with God and **predestination**. They believed that God had already determined if you were going to heaven or hell. God's decision was a mystery, but you could look for signs pointing toward one direction or the other. Earth was a "scene of cosmic struggle between God and Satan. Puritan New Englanders accepted the devil's presence in the physical world and believed he could convince victims to sign his book or covenant, and enlist sinners in his war against God."² Puritans believed everything could be explained by this supernatural struggle.

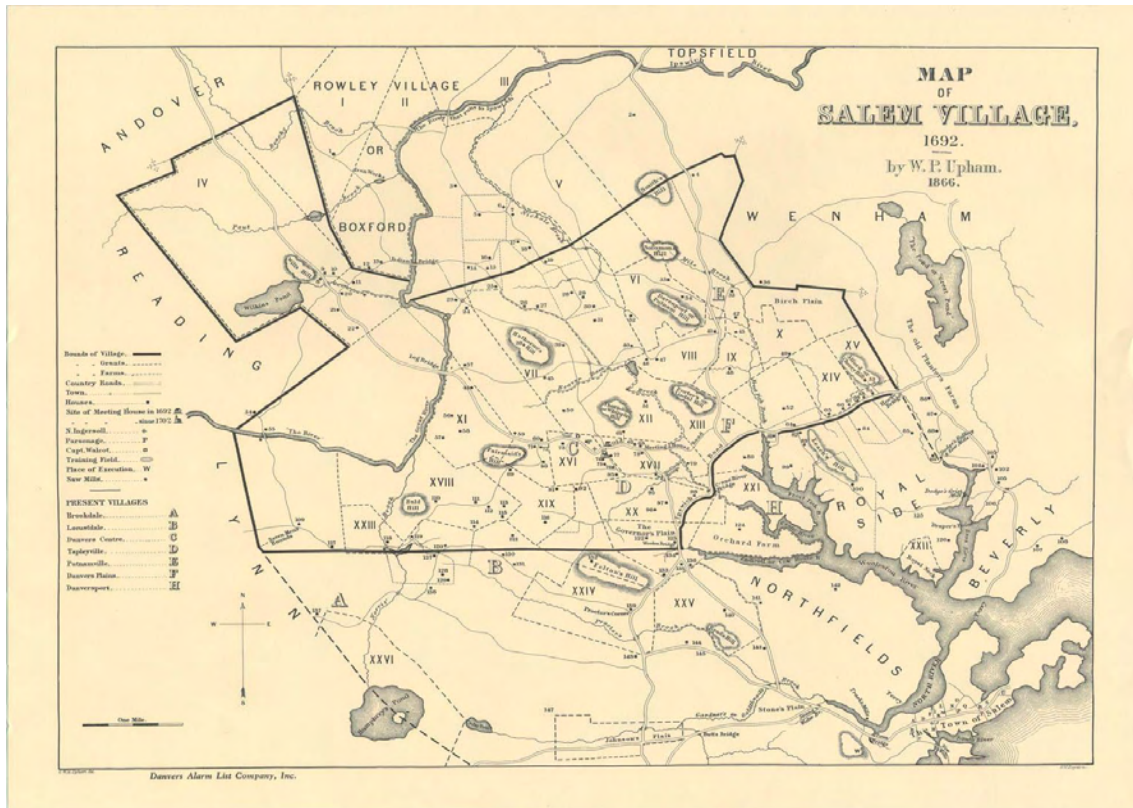
Contrary to what popular culture would have us believe, a witch was not a green faced, warty woman riding around on a broom casting spells. In Puritan New England, the definition of a witch was a person who signed the devil's book in blood, giving the devil permission to use their form to do the devil's work and win souls for him. Therefore, a witch could be either a man or a woman, young or old, married or unmarried. A witch would be a huge threat to the community because he or she could bring down the whole community and help the devil in his spiritual conflict against God.

Puritans also believed that the village and community were small outposts for God's will, and the forests and the unknown were places of chaos where Satan might lurk. Puritans believed order and constant awareness protected the community from the devil. Due to these beliefs, witch trials happened every few years before 1692, such as the hanging of Goody Glover in 1688. But these trials were never as numerous as they were in Salem.

In Puritan society, men were the head of the household and owned most property. They were expected to rule their families but also to provide for them and treat them well. Women were considered spiritually inferior to men based on biblical interpretations of Eve's role in the original sin. They were expected to be submissive, and those who did not follow this ideal were more likely to be accused of witchcraft. Children were expected to obey both parents and follow their wishes.

Salem Geography

Salem Village Map of 1692³



Salem itself was seemingly a typical village in Massachusetts before this event. It was located less than 20 miles from Boston and had a population of 550, and 29 in Salem itself would be accused of witchcraft.⁴ The western part of Salem, known as Salem Village, was the older, farming side of town that was struggling economically. The eastern side, known as Salem Town, was located closer to the port of Salem and was more economically successful with artisan shops, mills, taverns, and other generally non-farming businesses.⁵ Even in this small community there was a disparity in property, wealth, and status.

The Trials

Painting: “Trial of George Jacobs”⁶



In February 1692, the trials began with the accusation of Tituba, a Native American slave in the household of the church leader Reverend Samuel Parris. She was accused of teaching the Reverend's daughters magic, but little historic evidence exists to prove or disprove these accusations.⁷ However, Tituba confessed and accused others of making pacts with the devil. She, like other **confessors**, would escape execution and remain in jail until the trials ended. People imprisoned also had to pay their costs for imprisonment before they were released. Later Tituba recanted her confession claiming that Parris had beaten her until she admitted being a witch.⁸

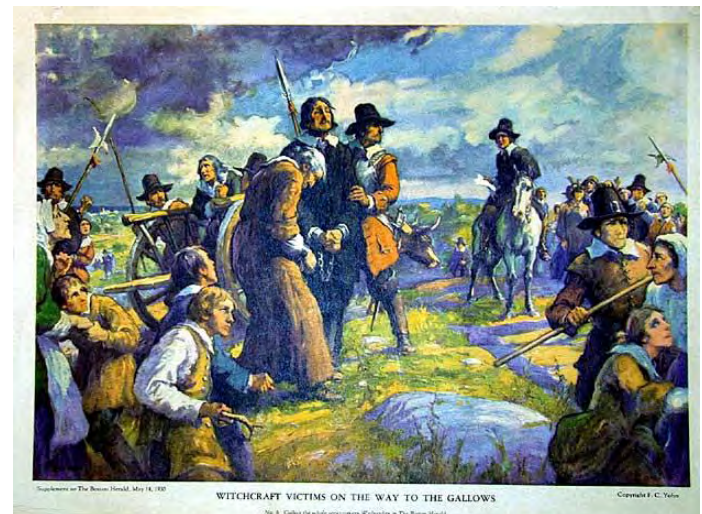
Accused witches were questioned for multiple hours without lawyers, and typically the **accusers** were neighbors who had personal disagreements or younger teenage girls who claimed that the accused witch was pinching or biting them even as they sat across the courtroom. Evidence such as pinching or torturing from across the room was called **spectral evidence** because of the spiritual and intangible nature of it. Many lawyers in surrounding communities such as Boston criticized the use of spectral evidence and questioned the convictions it produced. Some cases were dropped due to lack of evidence, but frequently the accused would confess and go to jail or continue denying until the case went to trial by jury. Confessed witches were jailed and never executed, but they were pressured to reveal the names of other "witches." As confessed witches became accusers themselves, the trials and accusations rapidly increased by May of 1692. These trials spread to neighboring towns such as Topsfield and Andover. By October when the colonial governor stopped the trials, nearly 200 people had been accused, roughly 75% of them women. Based on the fear of execution or as a confession of perceived sinful thoughts or actions, 55 people confessed at the accusation stage, which helped them avoid a trial.⁹ Four confessors and one infant born in prison died in jail of natural causes, and the other confessors were released shortly after the trials ended.

Painting: "Witchcraft Victims on the Way to the Gallows"¹⁰

Accused witches who continued to deny that they were witches eventually went to a jury trial. The **Court of Oyer and Terminer** was temporarily created for these trials. Nineteen **deniers** were convicted, including Rebecca Nurse after the jury initially found her not guilty, but the judge told them to reconsider.¹¹ George Burroughs, a former church minister for the town, was convicted despite perfectly reciting the Lord's Prayer, which was believed to be impossible for a witch to do.¹²

Convicted witches who continued to maintain their innocence were hung, usually in groups of several at a time. A 20th person, Giles Corey, was killed because he entered a "not guilty" plea but refused to answer questions in his trial and was pressed to death by adding stones on top of him for many hours until he died.¹³

During September, community support for the trials began to wane. Increase Mather, a representative of local ministers in the area, claimed that it was better for ten witches to go free than an innocent person to be convicted and killed. With pious church-going neighbors, former ministers, and people who were reciting the Lord's Prayer being convicted, the public began to question the trials too. Eventually the Governor, Sir William Phips, banned the use of spectral evidence in October and closed the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29th, ending the Salem Witch Trials.



Middle School Version

It is a hot May afternoon in 1692 in crowded meeting hall in Salem, Massachusetts. You're watching the trial of your friend and neighbor Rebecca being accused of witchcraft. She has been accused of making a pact with the Devil by signing his book in her blood. The accusers roll on the floor screaming and twitching that Rebecca is pinching and hurting them. Rebecca is sitting still across the room with her hands on her lap with a thoughtful look on her face. The accusers claim the birthmark on her shoulder is a mark of the Devil. The community worries that "if anyone lets Satan in even a little, the whole community will be destroyed."¹ The judge has been questioning Rebecca for hours, "Why are you hurting these girls? Are you a witch?" The jury convicts her of being a witch and sentences her to hanging. This is but one of many hearings you have seen, and many more will come.

Unit Question: What led the Puritans in Salem to accuse, convict, and execute so many individuals for witchcraft?

Puritan Culture

In order to understand the events of this time period, one must look at life in Puritan New England. The Puritans came to the colonies looking for religious freedom. They believed that people should always try to improve their relationship with God. This meant doing everything possible to avoid bad actions or having wicked thoughts. They believed God and Satan were competing to win people's inner souls. To get more souls, the devil would convince some people to make a deal with him and follow his commands.² Puritans believed everything in the world, good or bad, could be explained by this struggle between God and Satan.

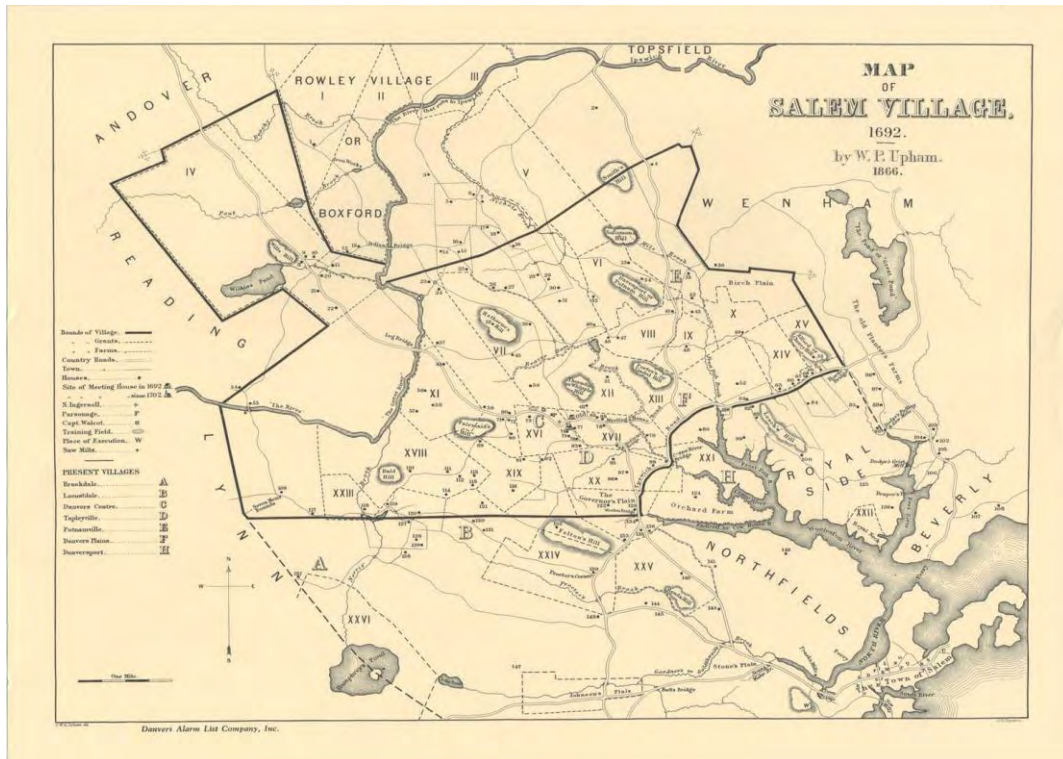
Despite what movies would have us think, a witch was not a green-faced woman on a broom casting spells. According to Puritans, a witch was anyone who made a deal with the devil. So a witch could be either a man or a woman, young or old, married or not. A witch was a huge threat to the community because they could bring down the whole community and help the devil in his spiritual conflict against God.

Puritans also believed that their cities were places for God, and the forests were unknown places where Satan might hide. Puritans believed religious rules were required to protect themselves and other people against the devil. It was also important to make sure EVERYONE in the town followed the rules. Due to these beliefs, witch trials happened every few years before 1692, such as the hanging of Goody Glover four years earlier, but the Salem Witch Trials were much bigger.

In Puritan families, men were in charge and owned the land. They were expected to rule their families but also to provide for them and treat them well. Women were considered less pure than men based on the Biblical belief that Eve caused the first sin. They were expected to listen to their husbands, and those who did not do this were more likely to be accused of witchcraft. Children were also expected to obey both parents and follow their rules. Children had little control over their lives.

Salem Geography

Salem Village Map of 1692³



Salem was a normal village in Massachusetts before this event. It was located less than 20 miles from Boston and had a population of 550. Twenty-nine people in Salem itself would be accused of witchcraft.⁴ The western part of Salem was the older, farming side of town that made less money. The eastern side was located closer to the port of Salem and was more successful with shops, craft makers, inns, and other non-farming businesses.⁵ Even in this small town there was a gap in wealth.

The Trials

Painting: “Trial of George Jacobs”⁶

In February 1692, the trials began with the accusation of Tituba. She was a Native American slave in the household of the church leader Reverend Samuel Parris. According to his young daughters, she had been teaching them magic. However, little evidence remains to prove if this was true or not.⁷ Later, Tituba confessed and accused others of making pacts with the devil. She, like other **confessors** (people who admitted to being witches), would remain in jail until the trials ended. Later Tituba took back her confession claiming that Parris had beaten her until she admitted she was a witch.⁸



When accused witches were being questioned for hours at a time, they did not have a lawyer to help them. Many **accusers** (people who blamed someone else of being a witch) were neighbors who had previous fights or younger teenage girls. In the courtroom the accusers could use so called **spectral evidence (when a person claimed the witch was magically harming them)**. They would say the accused witch was pinching or biting them even though they sat all the way on the other side of the courtroom. Although this was convincing to jury members who were worried about witches in their community, many lawyers in other cities believed that this evidence was unfair to use.

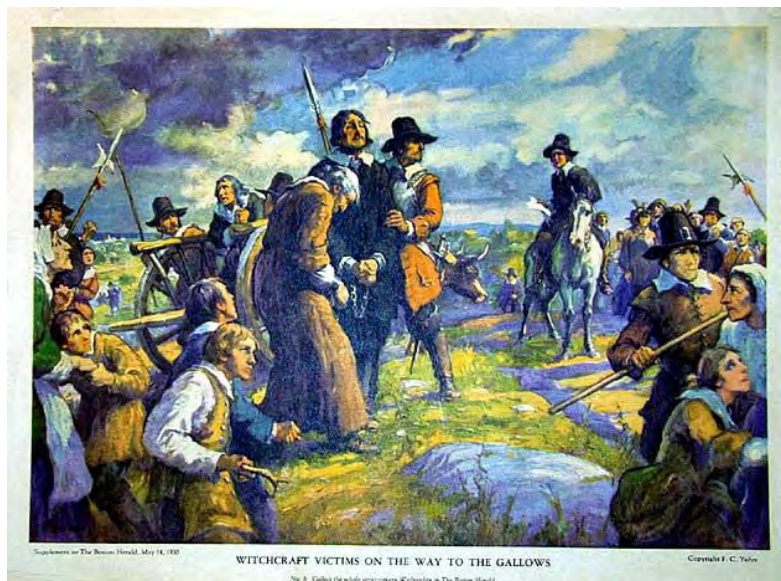
Some people confessed to witchcraft, and some continued to deny that they were witches. Confessed witches were jailed and never hung. This trend made some people believe that “witches” confessed in order to avoid worse punishments, like being killed. While in jail, they were asked to tell the names of other witches. As confessed witches started to accuse other people, the witch crisis exploded. These trials also spread to towns next door like Topsfield and Andover.

By October the governor stopped the trials. By then, nearly 200 people had been accused, roughly 75% of them women. Fifty-five quickly confessed before trial, which helped them avoid a trial where they could face a punishment of hanging.⁹ Four confessed witches died in jail, and one baby born of a confessed witch died there too. When the trials ended, all of the prisoners were set free.

Painting: “Witchcraft Victims on the Way to the Gallows”¹⁰

Accused witches who refused to confess had official jury trials. Nineteen **deniers** (people who said they were not witches) were convicted. Convicted witches would usually be hung in front of everyone in the town. This included Rebecca Nurse that you read about in the beginning. The jury first found her innocent, but the judge told them to go back and think about it again, and then they found her guilty.¹¹ George Burroughs, a former church minister for the town, was found guilty even though he perfectly recited the Lord’s Prayer. The people of Salem previously thought that would be impossible for a witch to do.¹²

At this point, many people began to question whether these people really were witches. A 20th person, Giles Corey, was killed because he said he was not guilty but refused to answer questions. By law, they were allowed to put heavy rocks on him until he agreed to speak at the trial. He refused to talk until he was crushed to death.¹³



During September, community support for the trials began to fall. Some local ministers in the area spoke up and said it was better for ten witches to go free than an innocent person to be convicted and killed. Eventually the Governor Sir William Phips closed the special courts on October 29th, ending the Salem Witch Trials.

Timeline of the Salem Witch Trials:¹⁴

January, 1692: Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Parris start exhibiting “bewitched” behavior. Soon Ann Putnam and other Salem girls begin acting similarly. A few weeks later they name Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne as their tormentors.

March 1, 1692: Tituba confesses to practicing witchcraft and confirms Good and Osborne are her co-conspirators. She later claims that Reverend Parris beat her into confessing.

March 1692: Five other people including both Rebecca Nurse and a 4 year-old are accused, arrested, examined, and questioned.

April 1692: Seventeen more accusations including several people who defended accused witches in March. John Proctor became the first man accused after defending his wife.

April 30, 1692: Several girls accuse former Salem minister George Burroughs of witchcraft.

May 1692: Fourteen more accusations and arrests. Sarah Osborne dies in prison.

May 27, 1692: Phipps creates the Court of Oyer and Terminer for trying the accused witches.

June 2, 1692: Bridget Bishop is convicted of witchcraft. She is hanged eight days later.

June 29-30, 1692: Rebecca Nurse and four others are pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang three weeks later.

August 5, 1692: George Burroughs and six others are sentenced to hang two weeks later. Elizabeth Proctor is not hanged because she is pregnant.

September 9, 1692: Six more are pronounced guilty and sentenced to hang.

Mid-September, 1692: Giles Cory is indicted and is pressed to death for refusing to testify.

September 17, 1692: Eight more are convicted and hanged five days later.

October 8, 1692: Governor Phipps orders that spectral evidence no longer be used.

October 29, 1692: Phipps prohibits further arrests, releases many accused witches, and dissolves the Court of Oyer and Terminer.

January 1693: 49 of the 52 surviving people brought into court on witchcraft charges are released because their arrests were based on spectral evidence.

1706: Ann Putnam publicly apologizes for her actions in 1692, claiming the devil had influenced her.

Citations:

- ¹ Elizabeth Reis. *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. Ithica, NY: Cornell, 1997.
- ² Elizabeth Reis. "Confess or Deny? What's a 'Witch' to Do?" *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 17.4 (3003) 11-13.
- ³ W. P. Upham. Map of Salem Village in 1692. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/maps/> 7 May 2011.
- ⁴ Lee Krystek. "Part I: The Witches of Salem: The Events of 1692." <http://www.unmuseum.org/salemwitch1.htm> 7 May 2011.
- ⁵ David Del Mar. "History Topic: Salem Witch Trials." TAHPDX and Portland State University, http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Salem_Witch.html Dec 2010.
- ⁶ Thompkins H. Matteson. "Trial of George Jacobs, August 5, 1692." <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem/people/gjacobspics2.html> 25 May 2011. Painted in 1855.
- ⁷ David Del Mar. "History Topic: Salem Witch Trials." TAHPDX and Portland State University, http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Salem_Witch.html Dec 2010.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Benjamin Ray. *Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*. <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem> 3 June 2011.
- ¹⁰ F. C. Yohan. "Witchcraft Victims on the Way to the Gallows." <http://www2iath.virginia.edu/salem/people/burroughspics.html> 25 May 2011.
- ¹¹ Benjamin Ray. *Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*. <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem/people.html#> 3 June 2011.
- ¹² Francis Hill. *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995.
- ¹³ Benjamin Ray. *Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*. <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem/people.html#> 3. June 2011.
- ¹⁴ Condensed from Douglas O. Linder. "Chronology of Events Relating to the Salem Witchcraft Trials". http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/asal_ch.htm. 24 June 2011.

Salem Witch Trial Testimony Word Sort

Magistrate—Puritan leader

spectral evidence—evidence accepted during these trials where accusers claimed that witches were harming them magically from across the courtroom, usually through pinching or forcing them to lose bodily control on the floor

afflicted—harmed (assumedly by the devil/witches)

covenant—a pact or promise

agonies—harm

temptations—desire to do something sinful or against the rules

specter—a ghost, usually an evil spirit

repentant—to be sorry, admit sinfulness, and ask for God's forgiveness

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SALEM WITCH TRIALS: Primary Source Analysis Lesson

Subject: US History

Appropriate Grade Level(s): High School

Topic: Salem Witch Trials

Oregon Social Studies State Standards:

CCG: Historical Skills: Understand relationships among events, issues, and developments in different spheres of human activity (i.e. economic, social, political, cultural).

CCG: Acquire and organize materials from primary and secondary sources.

CCG: Identify and analyze an issue.

Goals: Students will read and analyze questioning and testimony from two different women accused of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. In analyzing these documents, students will realize the influence of Puritan religious beliefs on both people who confessed to witchcraft and people who continually denied making a pact with the devil. Abigail Hobbs confesses that she did not harm the girls but “gave the Devil consent” to do so. This could be interpreted to mean that she had negative thoughts about these two other girls around her age. Rebecca Nurse on the other hand had been a lifelong church member. She is reluctant to call the girls liars and accuse them of sinning. She knows she is not harming them, but she cannot explain the phenomenon because judging them would be sinful herself.

Lesson Objective: Student will be able to analyze primary source text to determine how Puritan beliefs influenced some women to confess to making a pact with the devil while others denied the charges.

List of materials:

- Testimony of Abigail Hobbs, a confessor (attached with footnotes for people referenced)
- Testimony of Rebecca Nurse, a denier (attached)

Activities:

- 1) Review expectations of Puritan cultures of women in society. Make a list on the board. Be sure students include the following: obey male authority (fathers/preachers/magistrates), acknowledge their sinful nature and seek God’s forgiveness, promote community harmony, follow religious rules.
- 2) Review vocabulary: magistrate, spectral evidence, afflicted, covenant, agonies, temptations, specter, repentant. Have students put these in a T-chart on the board as positive or negative words in Puritan culture.
- 3) Read Abigail Hobbs testimony as a class. While reading, help students discuss:
 - a. Leading questions by the judge. Does he believe she is/isn’t a witch?
 - b. Pattern of people she names as other witches (they’ve already been executed).
 - c. Lengths of pacts with the Devil/expiration dates/her age at the time of these alleged signings (11 years old).
 - d. What she says she saw.
 - e. How/why Ann Putnam and Mercy Lewis were harmed (motive, teenage girl rivalry)?
 - f. What were the results for Hobbs’ life?
- 4) Read Rebecca Nurse testimony as a class. Help students discuss:
 - a. Leading questions by the Hathorne. Does he believe she is/isn’t a witch?

- b. What type of evidence occurs while she is testifying?
 - c. Was her trial before/after Hobbs'?
 - d. How does Hathorne change strategies during the questioning?
- 5) Fill out the opening chart on the worksheet as a class.
 - 6) Students answer questions 1-13 in small group discussions.
 - 7) Discuss answers in whole class discussion. Particularly examine textual evidence and multiple interpretations.
 - 8) Have students answer journal question (in notebook or on a separate sheet) as an individual formative assessment.

Scaffolding: Use the “Condensed Version: Transcript of Testimony of Abigail Hobbs and Rebecca Nurse” version of the transcripts and the “Condensed Version: Analyzing Two Primary Source Documents From the Salem Witch Trials”

Transcript of Testimony of Abigail Hobbs: Excerpt from Examination of Abigail Hobbs, September 1692 (some modernization of language)

Characters

Abigail Hobbs: a fifteen year old girl. She and other members of her family including her father were accused and imprisoned for witchcraft on April 18, 1692. She initially confessed during her multiple examinations in front of local magistrates between April and June. She stood trial in September, remained in prison, and was released when the trials were stopped.

Magistrates: Judge John Hathorne, assisted by Judge Jonathan Corwin

Vocab: covenant, repentance,

Transcript

Hobbs: He said he would give me fine things, if I did what he would have me.

Magistrate: What would have you do?

Hobbs: Why, he would have me be a witch.

Magistrate: Would he have you make a covenant with him?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: And did you make a covenant with him?

Hobbs: Yes, I did, but I hope God will forgive me.

Magistrate: The Lord give you Repentance. You say you saw dogs, and many sorts of creatures.

Hobbs: I saw them at that time.

Magistrate: But have you not seen them at other times too?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: Where?

Hobbs: At our house.

Magistrate: What were they like?

Hobbs: Like a cat.

Magistrate: What would the cat have you do?

Hobbs: She had a book and would have me put my hand on it.

Magistrate: And did you?

Hobbs: No, I did not.

Magistrate: Well, tell the truth, did you at any other time?

Hobbs: Yes, I did, that time at the Eastward.

Magistrate: What other creatures did you see?

Hobbs: I saw things like men.

Magistrate: What did they say to you?

Hobbs: Why they said I had better put my hand to the Book.

Magistrate: You did put your hand to the book you say?

Hobbs: Yes, one time.

Magistrate: What, would they have you put your hand to their book too?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: And what would they have you do then, would they have you worship them?

Hobbs: They would have me make a bargain for so long, and do what they would have me do.

Magistrate: For how long?

Hobbs: Not for above 2 or 3 years.

Magistrate: How long did they agree with you for?

Hobbs: But for two years.

Magistrate: And what would they then do for you?

Hobbs: They would give me fine clothes.

Magistrate: And did they?

Hobbs: No.

Magistrate: When you set your hand the last time to the book, how long was that for?

Hobbs: It was for four years.

Magistrate: How long is that ago?

Hobbs: It is almost 4 years. The book was brought to me to get my hand to it for 4 years, but I never put my hand but that once at Eastward.

Magistrate: Are you not bid to hurt folks?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: Who are you bid to hurt?

Hobbs: Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam¹.

Magistrate: What did you do to them when you hurt them?

Hobbs: I pinch't them.

Magistrate: How did you pinch them, do you go in your own person to them?

Hobbs: No

Magistrate: Do the Devil go for you?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: And what did he take, your spirit with him?

Hobbs: No. I am as well as at other times: but the Devil has my consent, and goes to hurt them.

Magistrate: Who hurt your mother last Lord's day (Sunday), was it not you?

Hobbs: No.

Magistrate: Who was it?

Hobbs: I heard her say it was Goody Wilds² at Topsfield.

Magistrate: Have you been in company with Goody Wilds at any time?

Hobbs: No, I never saw her.

Magistrate: Well, who are your companions?

Hobbs: Why I have seen Sarah Good³ once.

Magistrate: How many did you see?

Hobbs: I saw but two.

Magistrate: Did you know Sarah Good was a witch, when you saw her?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: How did you know it?

Hobbs: The Devil told me.

Magistrate: Who was the other you saw . . .

¹ Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam were two young female accusers. Putnam was 12 years old and the first accuser in the witch trials. She was friends with Betty Parris and was also caught trying to practice magic with her by playing fortune-telling games. In 1706, Putnam apologized for accusing innocent people and claimed that she had been tricked by the devil to accuse the innocent.

² Goody—Short for midwife. Sarah Wilds from Topsfield was hanged on July 19th, the same day as Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, and two other women.

³ Sarah Good was a debtor who rented rooms from other people's houses with her husband and two children. She was the first woman to stand trial. She had extreme debt from her first marriage that her second husband had to pay off. He testified against her, and only one person defended her. When one of the accusers brought forth a broken knife tip and said Good had stabbed her with it, a man testified that it came from his knife he had broken in front of the accuser. The judge reminded the accuser to stick to facts and the trial continued. Good continued to deny being a witch and was convicted but her trial was delayed until she gave birth. Her six year old was also arrested and later released. Her infant child died in jail before Good's execution on July 19, 1692. She was 39 years old.

Transcript of Testimony of Rebecca Nurse: Excerpt from Examination of Rebecca Nurse, March 24, 1692 (some modernization of language)

Characters

Rebecca Nurse: Rebecca Nurse was an elderly and respected member of the Salem Village community. She was accused of witchcraft by several of the "afflicted" girls in the Village in March of 1692.

Magistrates: Judge John Hathorne, assisted by Judge Jonathan Corwin

Narrator: The examination of Rebecca Nurse was recorded by the Reverend Samuel Parris

Vocab: afflicted, apparitions, agonies, temptations, specter,

Transcript

Magistrate: Do you see these women who accuse you? Is it true?

Rebecca Nurse: No.

Magistrate: Are you an innocent person relating to this Witchcraft?

Narrator: Here Thomas Putman's wife cried out: Did you not bring the Black man with you? Did you not bid me tempt God & die? How often have you eaten and drunk your own demon? What do you say to them?

Nurse: Oh Lord help me!

Narrator: Rebecca Nurse spread out her hands, and the afflicted went into fits.

Magistrate: Do you not see what a bad condition these women are in? When your hands are loose the persons are afflicted.

Narrator: Then Mary Walcot and also Eliz: Hubbard both openly accused Nurse of hurting them.

Magistrate: Here are these 2 grown persons now accuse you, what say you? Do not you see these afflicted persons, & hear them accuse you?

Nurse: The Lord knows I have not hurt them: I am an innocent person.

Magistrate: It is very awful to all to see these agonies & yet to see you stand with dry eyes when there are so many other people crying.

Nurse: You do not know my heart.

Magistrate: You would do well if you are guilty to confess & give Glory to God.

Nurse: I am innocent.

Magistrate: These women claim that you have come to them as a sprit. Now, what answer do you have to that?

Nurse: I have none Sir.

Magistrate: If you confess & give glory to God I pray God clear you. If you be innocent, or if you are guilty, give me a straight answer: have you any familiarity with these spirits?

Nurse: No, I have none but with God alone.

Magistrate: How did you get sick? The whole town has been talking about your illness.

Nurse: I am sick at my stomach --

Magistrate: Have you no wounds?

Nurse: I have none but old age.

Magistrate: Now when you are here and see such a thing as these women testify that black man is whispering in your ear & birds fly about you, what do you say to it? Do you know if you are guilty?

Nurse: It is all false I am clear.

Magistrate: Possibly you may believe you are no witch, but have you not been led astray by temptations?

Nurse: I have not.

Magistrate: What a sad thing it is that a church member here & now and other of Salem, should be thus accused and charged.

Narrator: Mrs. Pope fell into a terrible fit, & cried out. And then many more fell into sad fits.

Magistrate: Tell us, have not you appeared as a specter to people of the village?

Nurse: I have not, nor never had in my life.

Magistrate: Do you think these (women) suffer voluntary or involuntary?

Nurse: I cannot tell.

Magistrate: That is strange. Everyone else has an opinion. Why don't you?

Nurse: I must be silent.

Magistrate: They accuse you of hurting them, but if you think they are doing this to you on purpose, what do you make of their fits?

Nurse: I cannot tell what to think of it.

Magistrate: Well then give an answer now, do you think these women suffer against their wills or not?

Nurse: I do not think these women suffer against their wills.

Magistrate: Why did you never visit these afflicted persons at home?

Nurse: Because I was afraid I should have fits too.

Narrator: Note: upon the motion of her body, the accusers went into great fits.

Magistrate: Is it not a strange case that when you are examined these persons are afflicted?

Nurse: I have nobody to look to but God.

Narrator: Again, upon moving her hands, the afflicted persons were went into violent fits of torture.

Magistrate: Do you believe these afflicted persons are bewitched?

Nurse: I do think they are

Epilogue: Although a large number of friends, neighbors and family members wrote petitions testifying to her innocence, she was tried for acts of witchcraft in June, 1692. The jury first returned a "not guilty" verdict, but was told to reconsider, and then brought in a verdict of "guilty." Governor Phips pardoned her, but was later persuaded to reverse his decision by several men from Salem. She was excommunicated from the Salem church and hanged on July 19, 1692. Her house in Danvers, the former Salem village, still stands and is open to visitors. A large monument also marks her grave in the Nurse family cemetery on the grounds (<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/>).

Condensed Version: Transcript of Testimony of Abigail Hobbs and Rebecca Nurse

Excerpt from Examination of Abigail Hobbs, September 1692 (some modernization of language) and Excerpt from Examination of Rebecca Nurse, March 24, 1692 (some modernization of language)

Characters for Abigail Hobbs

Abigail Hobbs: a fifteen year old girl. She and other members of her family including her father were accused and imprisoned for witchcraft on April 18, 1692. She initially confessed during her multiple examinations in front of local magistrates between April and June. She stood trial in September, remained in prison, and was released when the trials were stopped.

Magistrates: Judge John Hathorne, assisted by Judge Jonathan Corwin

Hobbs: He said he would give me fine things, if I did what he would have me.

Magistrate: What would have you do?

Hobbs: Why, he would have me be a witch.

Magistrate: Would he have you make a covenant with him?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: And did you make a covenant with him?

Hobbs: Yes, I did, but I hope God will forgive me.

Magistrate: Are you not bid to hurt folks?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: Who are you bid to hurt?

Hobbs: Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam.⁴

Magistrate: What did you do to them when you hurt them?

Hobbs: I pinch't them.

Magistrate: How did you pinch them, do you go in your own person to them?

Hobbs: No

⁴ Mercy Lewis and Ann Putnam were two young female accusers. Putnam was 12 years old and the first accuser in the witch trials. She was friends with Betty Parris and was also caught trying to practice magic with her by playing fortune-telling games. In 1706, Putnam apologized for accusing innocent people and claimed that she had been tricked by the devil to accuse the innocent.

Magistrate: Do the Devil go for you?

Hobbs: Yes.

Magistrate: And what did he take, your spirit with him?

Hobbs: No. I am as well as at other times: but the Devil has my consent, and goes to hurt them.

Magistrate: Who hurt your mother last Lord's day (Sunday), was it not you?

Hobbs: No.

Magistrate: Who was it?

Hobbs: I heard her say it was Goody Wilds⁵ at Topsfield.

Characters for Rebecca Nurse

Rebecca Nurse: Rebecca Nurse was an elderly and respected member of the Salem Village community. She was accused of witchcraft by several of the "afflicted" girls in the Village in March of 1692.

Magistrates: Judge John Hathorne, assisted by Judge Jonathan Corwin

Narrator: The examination of Rebecca Nurse was recorded by the Reverend Samuel Parris

Vocab: afflicted, apparitions, agonies, temptations, specter,

Narrator: Rebecca Nurse spread out her hands, and the afflicted (girls) went into fits.

Magistrate: Do you not see what a bad condition these women are in? When your hands are loose the persons are afflicted.

Narrator: Then Mary Walcot and also Eliz: Hubbard both openly accused Nurse of hurting them.

Magistrate: Here are these 2 grown persons now accuse you, what say you? Do not you see these afflicted persons, & hear them accuse you?

Nurse: The Lord knows I have not hurt them: I am an innocent person.

Magistrate: Tell us, have not you appeared as a specter to people of the village?

Nurse: I have not, nor never had in my life.

Magistrate: Do you think these (women) suffer voluntary or involuntary?

Nurse: I cannot tell.

Magistrate: That is strange. Everyone else has an opinion. Why don't you?

⁵ Goody—Short for midwife. Sarah Wilds from Topsfield was hanged on July 19th, the same day as Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, and two other women.

Nurse: I must be silent.

Magistrate: They accuse you of hurting them, but if you think they are doing this to you on purpose, what do you make of their fits?

Nurse: I cannot tell what to think of it.

Magistrate: Well then give an answer now, do you think these women suffer against their wills or not?

Nurse: I do not think these women suffer against their wills.

Epilogue: Although a large number of friends, neighbors and family members wrote petitions testifying to her innocence, she was tried for acts of witchcraft in June, 1692. The jury first returned a "not guilty" verdict, but was told to reconsider, and then brought in a verdict of "guilty." Governor Phips pardoned her, but was later persuaded to reverse his decision by several men from Salem. She was excommunicated from the Salem church and hanged on July 19, 1692. Her house in Danvers, the former Salem Village, still stands and is open to visitors. A large monument also marks her grave in the Nurse family cemetery on the grounds (<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/>).

Name: _____

Date: _____

Analyzing Two Primary Source Documents From the Salem Witch Trials

Directions: While reading the two court transcripts from the Salem Witch Trials fill in the chart below. Make sure in use quoted text when applicable

Source		
Date relative to the witch trials		
People Involved and their role		
Attitude of Examiner		
Evidence used		
Attitude of person on trial		
Outcome: confession or denial		
Conclusions: what conclusions can you draw by reading these two primary source documents.		

Name: _____

Date: _____

Abigail Hobbs Transcript

1. What does the word covenant from the beginning of the Abigail Hobbs' transcript mean? _____

2. What do the stray dogs and cats from the transcript say about Puritan beliefs about nature? _____

3. What roles to Mercy Lewis and Ann Putman have in Abigail Hobbs' trial? How are they related to the trial? _____

4. What does Abigail Hobbs mean when she says "but the Devil has my consent, and goes and hurts them."? _____

5. How did Puritan values influence Abigail Hobbs testimony? _____

Rebecca Nurse Transcript

6. What is the tone of the questions being asked of Rebecca Nurse? _____

7. In Rebecca Nurse's testimony there is a reference to a "Black man", who is it referring to? _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

8. Why does the magistrate try to get Rebecca Nurse to try and confess to God? _____

9. What kind of evidence does the magistrate try and use to convince Rebecca Nurse that the girls are bewitched? _____

10. If you believe Rebecca Nurse is innocent, why does she not accuse these girls of lying? _____

11. Why does Rebecca Nurse admit that the persons are bewitched? _____

12. How did Puritan values influence Rebecca Nurse testimony? _____

13. In the table below list 3 ways that the transcripts are similar and 3 ways they are different.

Similarities	Differences

Condensed Version: Analyzing Two Primary Source Documents From the Salem Witch Trials

Directions: While reading the two court transcripts from the Salem Witch Trials fill in the chart below. Make sure in use quoted text when applicable

Source		
People Involved and their role		
Evidence used		
Attitude of person on trial		
Outcome: confession or denial		
Conclusions: what conclusions can you draw by reading these two primary source documents.		

1. In the table below list 3 ways that the transcripts are similar and 3 ways they are different.

Similarities	Differences

Individual Assessment

After reading the transcripts and completing the graphic organizers, what conclusion can you draw about the women who confess verses the women who deny? Why did some women confess and some deny? Use concrete examples from the transcripts.

Deliver Us From Evil

A Dramatic Script of the Salem Witch Trials

June 2011

A Project for Teaching American History

Mike Hellis and Beth Pettis

Deliver Us From Evil

Cast of Characters (In Order of Appearance):

Narrator

Rebecca Eames – accused of witchcraft

Mary Parker – accused of witchcraft

Ann Putnam – 12, one of the “afflicted girls,” daughter of prominent Salem leader Thomas Putnam

Betty Parris – one of the “afflicted girls,” daughter of Puritan Reverend Samuel Parris

Sheriff George Corwin – sheriff of Salem area

Mercy Lewis – one of the “afflicted girls”, accuser of Rev. George Burroughs who had saved her life

George Burroughs – former minister of Salem village, left due to financial dispute with Thomas Putnam

Reverend Cotton Mather – influential Puritan leader, believed in spectral evidence and “confessions”

Judge Hathorne – one of the judges of the Salem witchcraft trials

Thomas Brattle – well educated prosperous Boston merchant well schooled in politics and theology and a avid critic of witchcraft trials

Samuel Sewall – was a judge of the Salem witchcraft trials who later publicly apologized for his role in the Salem witchcraft trial

Scene 1

Two neighbors, Rebecca Eames and Mary Parker are having a quiet, guarded conversation across the picket fence that separates their yards.

(if using background slides, project slide 1 of the rural Salem home)

Narrator: In 1692, the small town of Salem, Massachusetts was wracked by terror and confusion. The village is composed largely of Puritans, a religion that required uncompromising adherence to its strict belief system. By March of that year, accusations and convictions of witches and witchcraft had reached a high point, and it seemed like no one was safe from the madness. It has been 70 years since the Pilgrims first arrived at Plymouth. It is dusk on the evening of August 6th 1692 in Salem Village. The evening is cooling off after a hot summer day. Normally this time of year the townspeople are focused on their crops and the oncoming harvest. However, this year there is a fervor sweeping the town. Lives have been disrupted by the witchcraft crisis. There is darkness to peoples’ actions, and a mistrust and fear to townspeople’s interactions. Two neighbors are talking quietly over the picket fence that separates their yards. They are in a guarded conversation about the events of the past six months, especially the escalating accusations and executions. Little do they know that they are being overheard by two of the afflicted girls.

Rebecca Eames: *(said in a hushed tone)* I will not and cannot believe the events I have witnessed today. I must reconcile with my Lord to seek solace. These trials are weighing heavy on my soul.

Mary Parker: *(said in a hushed tone)* I know Rebecca. Mr. Burroughs, the reverend who has lived on the frontier in Maine and was a hero of the Indian wars, to be tried on such accusations of witchcraft. I cannot believe this. He - a man of confidence and strong will - to be seen as a witch.

Rebecca Eames: *(said while cautiously looking around)* Mary, we must be cautious that we are not heard as we converse, for who knows who is listening. It seems that anyone can be accused of being a

witch these dark days. Reverend Parris has so adamantly pronounced that we are surrounded by the Devil's servants. I fear that perhaps I am at times possessed by the Devil.

Mary Parker: I cannot believe that the Lewis girl would single out the good Reverend Burroughs, especially when I hear that he saved her during an Indian attack when they both lived on the frontier in Maine. It is said that he will be hung before the month is over. *(sighs heavily)*.

Rebecca Eames: Oh Mary, it is so awful. His poor soul.

Mary Parker: That little Putnam girl accused the Reverend of torturing her and forcing her to write in the Devil's book. She claimed that his specter told her that the Reverend had bewitched his first two wives to death. Imagine that ! Mr. Burroughs bewitching his beloved wives to death. *(shakes head in disbelief)*. A marshal even travelled all the way to Welles, Maine to arrest Burroughs and bring him back to Salem Village. Do you remember what inspirational sermons he gave us before he left Salem? Reverend Burroughs is truly a man of God.

Rebecca Eames: *(Looks cautiously around)* Why did he leave ?

Mary Parker: Thomas Putnam's influence persuaded the town leaders to cease paying Reverend Burrough's salary. Although the kind Reverend briefly continued to minister to his congregation, he was accumulating debts and needed to find more secure employment. That's when the Putnam group hired Reverend Parris. It is so difficult to believe that Reverend Burroughs is now suspected of being not only a witch, but a leader of witches.

Rebecca Eames: But did he not bewitch a good citizen so that he saw spectral lights in his chimney? And is it not true that his strength was granted to him by the Devil? He is said to have carried a barrel of molasses with two fingers. I am constantly in fear of the Devil.

Mary Parker: Rebecca your heart must be so stricken. Could these accusations not have been the natural desire of humankind to cast blame and find explanations for things that can not be explained? Do you not think it odd that an animal becoming ill after its owner has been in an argument could be the basis for an accusation of witchcraft ? Is it not possible that these are situations of chance and not evil intervention? *(pause)* Or perhaps unholy mischief ?

Rebecca Eames: I am not sure of this. I do not feel comfortable discussing more *(pauses and looks around)*. I do not want to be seen as a witch. The Reverend Parris has made it clear that we are to trust no one. That anyone might be an agent of the devil. He admonishes us that our duty as Christians is to seek out the witches among us and destroy them.

Mary Parker: *(Keeps talking despite Rebecca Eames's hesitancy)* These trials! Without attorneys. To assume that God will reveal their innocence despite the fact the accused are not allowed to be represented by counsel or have witnesses testify on their behalf.

Rebecca Eames: But Judge Hathorne...

Mary Parker: *(Said with vehemence)* Rebecca, he is but a master of this chaos! He permits the constant screaming, writhing, twisting, and bleeding of the afflicted. Then there are the disruptions caused by people leaping up to attend the afflicted. Judge Hathorne has made no attempt to keep order. In fact he seems to encourage these shenanigans. I believe that the judge has despised Reverend

Burroughs since the Reverend married Hathorne's brother's widow. Furthermore, I believe Judge Hathorne is jealous of the good Reverend as he successfully completed his studies at Harvard and Judge Hathorne did not. In addition, does it not seem odd that the specters can only be seen by the afflicted girls? (*thoughtful pause*) Yes, I think "unholy mischief" may be part of the cause of all of this witchcraft mayhem.

Rebecca Eames: (*deep in thought with a worried expression on her face*) Can I be a witch, Mary, and not know it? I want to live my life so as not to jeopardize my place in heaven. I do not feel comfortable discussing this further. I fear I must go.

Mary Parker: (*Grabs Rebecca Eames's arm*) But you have not signed the Devil's Book, have you?

Narrator: Suddenly, both women overhear the sound of a snapping twig. They turn and stare intently at the origin of the noise. Peering at them through the hedgerow are two young girls: Ann Putman and Betty Parris, two of the afflicted girls. Both women gasp and freeze momentarily.

(*Rebecca Eames looks at her neighbor with worry, then pulls away and hurries inside her home. Mary Parker takes one last look at the girls and walks inside her home.*)

Narrator: The women retreat to their homes. Both women are God-fearing women wondering if each other is in league with the Devil.

Scene 2

Mary Parker, Rebecca Eames, and Mercy Lewis are standing together, as Sheriff Corwin is leading Reverend Burroughs to the hanging tree on top of Gallows Hill in Salem

(*if using background slides, project slide 2 of George Burroughs' execution*)

Narrator: It is August 19th in the town of Salem. The sun is beginning to set in the western sky, thus it is the time of day for hanging. "A cart filled with the prisoners has travelled down Essex Street for three quarters of a mile and turned north onto Boston Street. Fields and orchards stretch on the right side of the road to the river. On the left, marshland covers a few hundred feet. Beyond the marshland and river is the towering hill that is the condemned people's destination." The land beyond the hills of Salem is forest frontier. The cart is preceded by a parade of individuals that include the accusers, magistrates and affluent townspeople. A crowd of villagers follows the cart to watch the executions, possibly to experience a feeling of cleansing their own souls by observing the destruction of evil. Some of the village onlookers throw rocks at the condemned in the cart and yell taunts such as "Die witch!" Once the crowd and prisoners arrive at the hanging tree, the cart is unloaded and the prisoners are systematically hung one at a time from the large oak tree. After their executions, their bodies are tossed into the crevices on the backside of the hill where there is a sheer rocky drop. Next to be put to death is Reverend George Burroughs.

Sheriff Corwin: (*leads George Burroughs to the ladder under the limb of a great oak tree*) We are gathered here to witness the hanging of this witch. It has been proven in our court of law, through testimony of the afflicted that Mr. Burroughs is in fact a witch and not only a witch, but a leader of witches. He has forced the afflicted to sign the Devil's book and has appeared as an apparition to many. His specter has confessed that he killed his wives. He is sentenced to die on this 19th day of August 1692.

Mercy Lewis: (*Leans in to Rebecca Eames and whispers*) Burroughs! He is the Devil's servant and deserves to die.

Rebecca Eames: (*Looks worried and distraught almost ignoring Mercy*) I am not sure anymore of these proceedings. Spectral evidence does not seem to be enough to put a man like the Reverend Burroughs to death.

Mercy Lewis: But you were not possessed by the Devil's servant as I was, Rebecca. I truly saw his specter come to me and it pinched me and strangled me. He was trying to force me to sign the Devil's book. These cretins are but servants of the Devil and attempt to commit us to his evil ways.

Mary Parker: But did he not save you, Mercy, whilst you were in Maine? And did he not find you a family to live with after the Indians killed your parents? And now you accuse him?

George Burroughs: (*climbs the ladder*). Burn me or hang me – I will stand in the truth of Christ. I know nothing of it. Are we to believe that our good Lord sees fit to let these proceedings continue? We are all but humble servants of the Lord and must continue to do his good work. The Lord will vanquish evil and tyranny and we must live our lives the way Christ would have us live. We must strive not to take the path of the Devil which would jeopardize our eternal salvation. (*pause*) Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (*A murmur of surprise goes through the crowd*).

Rebecca Eames: (*slowly and thoughtfully*) ‘As we forgive those who trespass against us.’

Mary Parker: I cannot believe that he has recited the Lord's prayer perfectly. A witch is not supposed to be able to do that.

Rebecca Ames: (*obviously in deep thought*) ‘Deliverus fromevil.’

Narrator: The crowd begins to doubt whether Burroughs is truly a witch and many in the crowd begin to shed tears. Suddenly Cotton Mather strides in upon his horse.

Cotton Mather: Have you forgotten that he has been proven guilty in our court of law! Dare you doubt the sanctity of our courts? He is the Devil's own servant! Let us remember that the Devil is often transformed into an angel of light. Hang him!

Burroughs: Then I shall go to meet my lord. (*Burroughs steels his gaze and steps off the ladder*)

(*if you are using background slides, project slide 3 of George Burroughs' cemetery stone*)

Narrator: The crowd is silenced as they wait several minutes for Burroughs to die. Finally, there is stillness. The deed has been done. There are a few moments where no one speaks. Soon all the bodies hanging from the tree are cut down, dragged away, and tossed into crevices and piles of rocks. As they had been excommunicated and were no longer members of the church, they could not be buried in sanctified ground. George Burroughs is stripped of his fine clothes by sheriff's deputies, who will later sell them. His clothes are replaced with ragged trousers. His body is tossed amongst several other bodies in a rocky crevice on the other side of the hill. One of his hands and his chin are sticking out of

the crevice and no one bothers to put them back in. The crowd turns to walk back down the hill toward town. Rebecca Eames and Mary Parker shuffle down the hill with heavy hearts and minds. Another sheriff's deputy suddenly rides up to speak with Sheriff Corwin. They converse privately and the deputy pulls out two pairs of shackles from his saddle bag. Corwin points at Rebecca and Mary. The deputy, shackles in hand, strides toward the two women.

Scene 3

September, 1692- a dark, damp, and filthy dungeon in the Salem jail. Both women have suffered immensely the past several weeks during their incarceration. They are physically exhausted, unkempt and very weary.

*(If you are using background slides, **project slide 4 of shackled arm in jail**)*

Narrator: Both Mary Parker and Rebecca Eames are chained to the wall inside a damp, musty jail in Salem. It is believed that having accused witches' limbs chained to the walls will help prevent their specters from escaping to afflict the innocent. They, along with the other accused witches, are kept in the dungeon as they are the most dangerous of prisoners. Rats and various forms of filth are prevalent everywhere. Hunger, thirst, disease, unwashed human bodies and excrement abound. Some accused were tortured until they confessed. Confessions were believed to be a way to unveil more witches in the community. Also, confessions were self-validating of the entire witch hunt proceedings. Confessions confirmed the need to continue to seek and destroy the witches in their midst.

Mary Parker (*angry but weak*) I cannot believe that during my examination they believed those afflicted girls. They were having fits yet when they touched me, the fits stopped. How is that possible? This must be a nightmare. Sweet Jesus, have mercy. Oh, that I may awake and resume my life. Those girls have no sense nor do the men that listen to them. These magistrates who are deciding if we will live or die are not even trained in the law.

Rebecca Eames: (*very scared and weakened*) Mary, how can it be possible that we cannot have witnesses testify on our behalf? I do not know. The magistrates believe everything the afflicted girls say without question. Oh, what will become of us? What will become of us?

Mary Parker: I do not know Rebecca. For myself, I am sure that there has been great confusion concerning my name. There are three other Mary Parkers in our community. I am not the Mary Parker that they are looking for. I am not a witch. One of the other Mary Parkers is said to be not right in the mind. And another Mary Parker, I hear, has been found guilty at three other trials. I am sure there has been a mistake. I am innocent. I am not a witch. I have nine children and much land. How could this be happening? Why would they believe William Barker and Mercy Wardwell? He is but 14. Why is this happening? They have got the wrong Mary Parker.

*(if using background slides **project slide 5 of woman reading Bible in jail**)*

Rebecca Eames: What will you say at your trial? Perhaps you should confess. None of the confessors have been executed. Only those who deny witchcraft have been hung.

Mary Parker: (*assertively, summoning her strength*) I will speak the truth as long as I live. What would you have me do? I am clear of sin. I am innocent; this is a matter of mistaken identity.

Rebecca Eames: But they will hang you if you do not confess. My mother has begged me to confess. She has beseeched me to confess so I might be spared the hangman's noose.

Mary Parker: As for me, I will never confess crimes I did not commit.

Rebecca Eames: But what about your land? If you are found guilty, then all your land will be confiscated and sold at auction. Your poor children will have nothing left.

Mary Parker : May the Lord let my innocence be known to the judges.

Narrator: Both women lapse into silence and become aware that several of the other accused witches in the dungeon are softly singing the hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". Mary turns her eyes skyward hoping that her prayers will be heard and answered soon.

Scene 4

*(if using background slides, **project slide 6 of shackled woman's trial**)*

Narrator: It is September 17, 1692 in the Salem Village meetinghouse that serves as the court. It is the trial of Rebecca Eames. The judges and jurors silently and intently scrutinize the accused Rebecca Eames as she is led up the aisle of the meetinghouse, heavy leg shackles clanking. Her four accusers sit together on a bench to the left of the table where the 7 judges sit. The 12 jurors sit on benches to the right of the judges. The room is full of curious onlookers as they observe this fourth trial of the day. Although the meetinghouse is not brightly lit, Rebecca must squint as she is used to very dim surroundings. She looks so gaunt, haggard and thin that her relatives barely recognize her.

Judge Hathorne: Rebecca Eames, you are charged with the crime of witchcraft. Why have you afflicted the children?

Rebecca Eames: I have never hurt a child. I am a good woman. I read the Bible daily. I strive to live according to all Puritan dictates. I am not a witch.

Judge Hathorne: How do you know you are not a witch?

Rebecca Eames: I am free of this sin. I have prayed against the devil all of my days.

Judge Hathorne: Is it not true you actually pray **to** the devil? Speak truth. How long have you been a servant of the evil one ?

*(if using background slides, **project slide 7 of accused witch being checked for devil marks**)*

Rebecca Eames: Why do you turn my innocent statement against me?

Judge Hathorne: Your accusers have been sorely afflicted by your specter. How long have you served Satan? When did you sign the Devil's book?

Rebecca Eames: I never...*(Rebecca's reply is interrupted by her deep and uncontrollable coughing.)*

*(if using background slides, **project slide 8 of the afflicted girls having fits in the courtroom**)*

Narrator: Rebecca begins to reply but begins coughing, as she has acquired a lung disease in the crowded, damp jail and has been given the barest of nourishment. One of the afflicted girls who are accusing Rebecca begins coughing, and soon the other 3 accusers are also coughing and choking, saying they are being tormented by the specter of Rebecca. Two of the girls collapse onto the floor holding their throats and writhing and crying. The girls' parents quickly rush to their aide.

Judge Hathorne: (*shouting angrily*) Why do you afflict these innocent girls so ?

Rebecca Eames: I do not afflict them. I am innocent. The Lord knows I have not hurt them. They are mistaken. It is not so. Perhaps their affliction is due to a mixture of guile and self-delusion. I am an innocent person. I am no more a witch than you are. I am innocent.

Judge Hathorne: Innocent? Innocent ? The affliction of these girls is absolute proof. In addition, is it not true that in an earlier trial you were found guilty of unmarried sexual activity? You are now and have for years been a servant of the devil himself. You are an enemy to God. You are a vessel of damnation to yourself and to all in this community.

Rebecca Eames: The Lord above knows I am innocent. At the coming Great Day, all men and angels will know of my innocence in this matter of witchcraft.

Judge Hathorne: (*Yelling loudly and threateningly*) When did you first sign the Devil's book? Who else among us has joined the Devil's family? Rebecca Eames, confess to witchcraft and put your soul into the hands of God and he will forgive your sins and cleanse your soul ! You shall confess and repent or be struck down. You shall confess now or experience the wrath of God for eternity!

Rebecca: (*There is a pause. Rebecca puts her head in her hands and remains silent for a minute apparently crying. Finally she looks up and wipes her eyes*) The Devil came to me and bid me serve him. I signed the book. (*Gasps of surprise and murmurs can be heard throughout the room.*)

Narrator: Rebecca finally broke down and confessed at the urging of her family and partly due to the fact that with her previous transgressions, she believed she may actually be partially responsible for the afflictions. Confession was the only way to save herself. Later, in Mary Parker's trial, Mary pled innocence and begged the magistrates to investigate the three other Mary Parkers in the area. She insisted she was not the Mary Parker they were looking for. The Magistrates ignored her request. Five days later she was hung for witchcraft.

Scene 5

(*if using background slides, project slide 9 Puritan congregation*)

Narrator: 15 years have passed since Mary Parker was put to death for witchcraft. Thomas Brattle, a retired treasurer from Harvard University and an outspoken critic of the Salem witch trials is sitting in his study speaking with Samuel Sewall, a former judge from the witchcraft trials who later apologized for his involvement in the trials.

Thomas: Samuel, have you heard the news from Salem?

Samuel: No, Thomas, I have not. Do tell.

Thomas: Ann Putnam has apologized for her part in the witchcraft trials.

Samuel: Has she come to repent the innocent blood that has been shed?

Thomas: Not in the least. She still claims that she had been deluded by Satan and makes no acknowledgement of her guilt. She accused 19 people of which 11 were executed.

Samuel: Between you and me, Thomas, do you wonder whether Ann Putnam truly believes that she was an innocent tool of Satan.

Thomas: Was it possible that she had other hidden intentions by accusing so many individuals? *(pauses)* Perhaps she was simply hysterical and thus acted independently of the devil?

Samuel: We may never know her intentions, only our Lord will. I still believe in the existence of witches, but the accusations went too far when William Phips' wife was accused. When former Governor Phips forbid further imprisonment for witchcraft and pronounced that spectral evidence was no longer valid, and dissolved the court in October 1692, I began to have doubts myself about the shedding of innocent blood.

Thomas: When the accused who were able to pay their prison fees were set free in May of 1693, I knew that these atrocious events were coming to a close. *(sighs)* Several years after their release, did you not sign a letter of repentance?

Samuel: Yes Thomas, your recollection is accurate. Eventually, several of the judges, along with myself, and all the 12 jurors who had condemned the alleged witches to death, signed a petition for a public show of repentance.

Thomas: I do remember this, but still I cannot believe that there was never a general acknowledgment of the great miscarriage of justice and needless loss of innocent life.

Samuel: This was a time when fear and hysteria replaced reason and good judgment. "Such was the darkness of that day – we could not see our way."

Thomas: I guess we will never truly know what was in the hearts and minds of the people involved, nor why these dark events occurred.



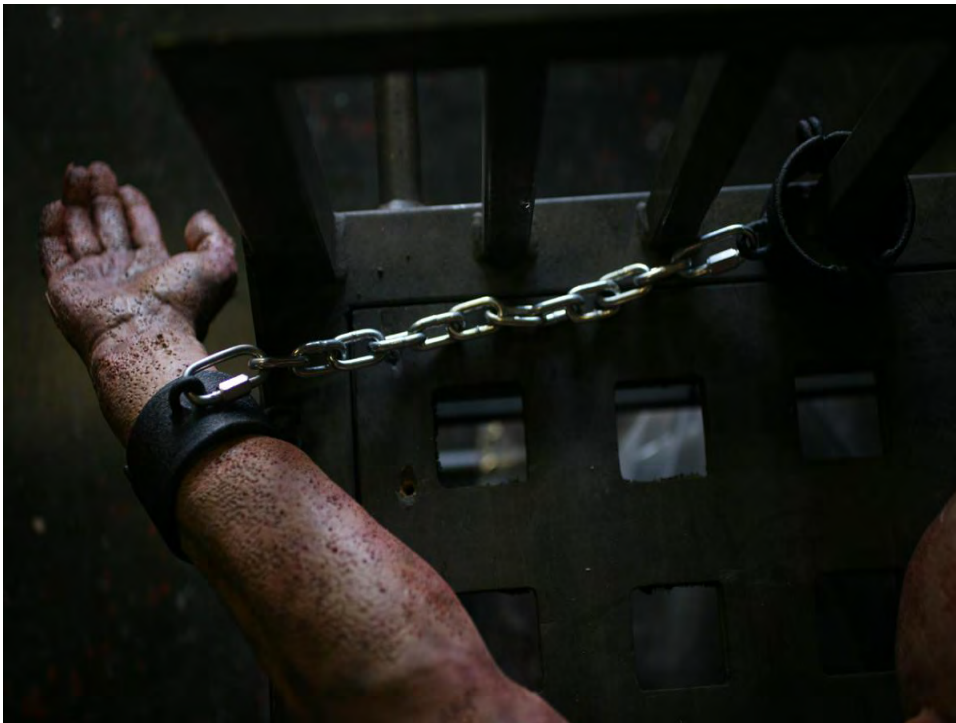
SLIDE 1



SLIDE 2



SLIDE 3



SLIDE 4



SLIDE 5



THE SHERIFF BROUGHT THE WITCH UP THE BROAD AISLE, HER CHAINS CLANKING AS SHE STEPPED.

SLIDE 6



SLIDE 7



SLIDE 8



SLIDE 9

SALEM WITCH TRIALS: Geography Lesson

Geography Lesson Plan Focus Question: What other factors might be at play in the Salem Witch Trials besides religious hysteria?

Subject: U.S. History

Topic: Salem Witch Trials

Appropriate Grade Level: 5th-12th grades depending on teacher support and possible modifications

Oregon Social Studies Standards:

SS.HS.GE.03 Locate and identify places, regions, and geographic features that have played prominent roles in historical or contemporary issues and events.

SS.08.HS.04 Evaluate data within the context in which it was created, testing its reliability, credibility, and bias.

SS.HS.HS.02 Compare and contrast institutions and ideas in history, noting cause and effect relationships

Topic: What historical topic are you addressing?

The Salem Witch Trials, specifically geography – East Salem Accused (prosperous, cosmopolitan) v. West Salem Accusers (agriculture, struggling)

Goal: The student will be able to examine tangible reasons for the hysteria in Salem.

List of Materials: Students will need access to a computer, or the teacher can use a projector to access Google Earth and/or two copies of the Salem Village 1692 historical map, one with the accusers on it and one with the accused on it.

Activities:

Start out with the critical thinking question: **What causes conflict between people in school or your community?**

Load the Salem Witch Trials Google Earth Project (alternatively, you can use printouts of the historical map).

Turn on the Salem Village of 1692 Map Layer

What is the map showing? (land claims, physical layout)

Where is the center of Salem Village?

What are the numbers?

Roman numerals

Dots with numbers?(houses)

Measure the distance between ten houses and calculate average distance between houses.

Do you think these people are relatively close together or far apart for the time period?

How does information travel from person to person?

Look at where the accused are on this map. What do you notice? Make 3 observations.

Look at the accusers. What do you notice? Make 3 observations.

Hypothesize what might be going on here (note the geographical division between accused and accusers).

In your community can you think of some examples of when your community has been divided over an issue?

Using the internet, access the "Regional Accusations Map" at www2.lath.virginia.edu/salem/maps/. Click on the "Regional Accusations Map" and have students discuss:

What are some things that surprise you watching the map?

Scaffolding: Questions can be done as a class discussion or small group and then class discussion.

Evaluation: Student responses to the ten questions on the geography lesson worksheet as well as their in class participation throughout the lesson will function as formative assessment.

7) Look at where the accused are on this map. What do you notice? Make 3 observations.

1)

2)

3)

Draw a circle around all the accused.

8) Look at the accusers. What do you notice? Make 3 observations.

1)

2)

3)

Draw a circle around all the accusers.

Critical Thinking Questions

9) What causes conflict between people in school or your community?

10) Hypothesize what might be going on here. Why was there a geographical division between accused and accusers?

SALEM WITCH TRIALS: Supplementary Lesson Plan

Subject: U.S. History

Topic: Salem Witch Trials

Appropriate Grade Levels: 7-11th grade. For middle school students, poem may need to be modified slightly.

Oregon Social Studies Standards:

SS.HS.HS.02 Compare and contrast institutions and ideas in history, noting cause and effect relationships.

Goal: The students will be able recognize gender roles in society and in current times as well.

Objective: The student will be able to analyze a secondary source for information pertaining to daily life for girls and compare and contrast markers of success between Salem 1692 and today.

List of Materials:

"An Alphabet of Lessons for Girls" from Nicole Cooley, *The Afflicted Girls*
(class set and an overhead or projected version as well)

Long strips of paper

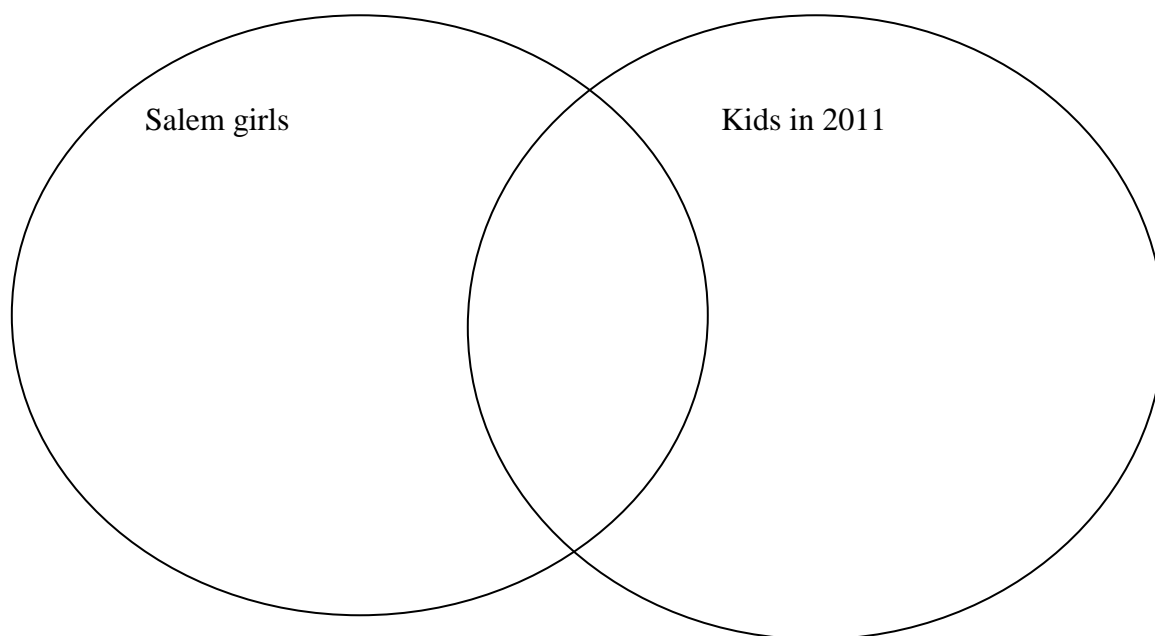
Markers

Alpha letters cut up by individual letter

Class set of venn diagrams

Activities:

1. Handout the poem "An Alphabet of Lessons for Girls" and read out loud, have each student read a letter. Cooley created a fascinating collection of poems related to the Salem Witch Trials which add depth and clarity to the trials when examined as secondary sources.
2. After reading the poem have students do a think-pair-share on the following questions:
 - What does this tell you about gender roles in Puritan society?
 - What does this tell you about gender expectations in Puritan society?
 - Which ones surprise or are interesting to you?
3. Ask the class if today we have gender roles and expectations? Have a short discussion.
4. Class will now create their own alphabet poem about gender roles and expectations today and it will be titled " An Alphabet of Lesson for Kids Today".
 - Students will be put into pairs and each pair will pick two letters from the alphabet.
 - They will need to create a sentence like we saw in the Salem poem that will inform people about the expectations of kids today.
 - Have them put it on a big strip of paper that the class can then put together and see as a class. Go over it to see if people agree with each letter and edit as needed.
5. Now students will compare and contrast the expectations and roles of Salem society and society today using a venn diagram.



After they fill in the venn diagram, students will write a paragraph summarizing their ideas of how Salem and 2011 are similar and how they differ. They will then write a paragraph about how gender relates to the unit question (**What led the Puritans in Salem to accuse, convict, and execute so many individuals for witchcraft?**). The paragraphs will be peer edited and then scored by the teacher using the 6+1 writing traits (ideas, conventions, voice, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, and presentation).

Scaffolding: Individuals may be placed in pairs with consideration of academic levels and perhaps partnered with peer tutors as well.

Evaluation: Students will be assessed by the contribution of their two alphabet letter sentences and also by their venn diagram. The venn diagram will show whether or not students are able to link gender roles in Salem society to gender roles today.

An Alphabet of Lessons for Girls

*As long as there is a contrary seed, a seed of the Woman,
and a seed of the Serpent, there will be opposition,
more or less, open or secret.*

-Reverend Samuel Parris, Sermon in Salem Village, January 3, 1692

A young girl should always be prepared to die.

Beware of a black man who would make you a handmaiden of the Devil.

Come to God willingly and quietly as if he were your husband.

Disagree with no man for men know the best and truest path.

Egg-in-a-glass will show your future husband's calling, but this trick is witchcraft.

Fast to find the road of correction on the Sabbath.

Graveyards are a place to remember that the Lord takes all girls' souls.

Houses where no women be are like deserts or untilled land.

Indians are evil men who will harm you, just as New England was once the Devil's land.

Judge not a man's deeds or thoughts, only let him judge you.

Keeep silence when in the meetinghouse with men.

Look to your father, brother or master for guidance.

Milk will curdle and butter will turn to wool if you are a witch.

New Jerusalem is our paradise and no place for daughters of the Devil.

Obedience is a good wife's finest virtue.

Pins mark the hems of dresses and must never be used to prick the skin of men.

Question the Lord's good work and be cast out of Salem Village.

Reckless speech will lead you into temptation.

Satan is the prince of Lies and witches are his servants.

Tying a woman neck and heels will cure her of the sin of witchcraft.

Unknown to witches is the power and light of God.

Vengeance against witchcraft is justice.

Witches' daughters must be witches themselves.

eXhort the Lord to save you by your confession of witchcraft.

Your name is blotted out of God's Book because you are a witch.

Zion will not be our true paradise till we have purged the witches from our land.

"An Alphabet of Lessons for Girls" from Nicole Cooley, *The Afflicted Girls*.

SALEM WITCH TRIALS

“The Choices of Accused Witch Margaret Jacobs”

Subject: U.S. History

Topic: This lesson is part of a larger unit on early Puritan colonists in New England and the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 in which 19 accused witches were hung and one man was pressed to death. This is a tragic story of the shedding of innocent blood due to a number of factors which melded together to create a destructive phenomenon. The unit contains historical narratives, a Google Earth activity, a dramatic script “Deliver Us From Evil” with background slides, and several other lesson plans.

Appropriate Grade Level(s): 7-11

Duration of lesson : 2-3 days

Prior Knowledge: Ideally, students will have read the historical narrative in this unit, or other introductory information about the Salem witch trials of 1692. Additionally, it is helpful if students are familiar with systems thinking concepts such as unintended consequences, and the iceberg analysis format. (This success of this lesson does not depend on the systems thinking steps, though they are very helpful to understanding cause and effect.)

Oregon Social Studies State Standards:

- Represent and interpret data and chronological relationships from history, using timelines and narratives.
- Evaluate data within the context it was created, testing its reliability, credibility, and bias.
- Clarify key aspects of an event, issue, or problem through inquiry and research.
- Examine the various characteristics, causes, and effects of an event, issue, or problem.
- Examine a controversial event, issue, or problem from more than one perspective.
- Consider two or more outcomes, responses, or solutions; identify their strengths and weaknesses; then conclude and justify which is the best

Goals:

- Students will increase their understanding of the complexities of the Salem witch trials.
- Students will understand the value of courage and integrity in decision-making.
- Students will develop historical empathy for individuals involved in this story.

Lesson Objectives: Students will...

- Analyze artwork as to the narrative and the elements of art.
- Read the biographical summaries of George Jacobs Sr. and Margaret Jacobs.
- Read and discuss two primary documents - the letters Margaret wrote following the execution of her grandfather.
- Be able to explain the “Unintended Consequences” (Fixes That Fail template) of Margaret’s decision to accuse her grandfather to save herself, and later, her decision to recant her confession knowing it would most likely lead to her execution.
- Complete a “Historical Frame” summary of this story, which includes a timeline and “So what / lesson” section.
- Analyze the story using the systems thinking “Iceberg” template to understand the context of the Salem witch trials and the mental models / paradigms involved at that time and place.
- Develop historical empathy for the characters of George and Margaret.
- Will complete a writing assignment based on this story.

List of suggested materials:

(For additional historical background and activities, please refer to the Salem Witch Trials historical narrative, dramatic script “Deliver Us From Evil”, Google Earth activity and other lesson plans in this curriculum unit)

1. Project a large image of the painting “The Trial of George Jacobs, August 5, 1692” by Matteson, or provide colored copies of this painting to students
(<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem/images/people/mjacobs2.jpg>)
(<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon-salem/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=salem/texts/pics.xml&style=salem/xsl/dynaxml.xml&chunk.id=p4&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes>) (see attachments)
2. Biographical summaries of George Jacobs Sr. (<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon-salem/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=salem/texts/bios.xml&style=salem/xsl/dynaxml.xml&chunk.id=b13&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes>) (see attachments)
3. Biographical summaries of Margaret Jacobs (<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon-salem/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=salem/texts/bios.xml&style=salem/xsl/dynaxml.xml&chunk.id=b18&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes>) (see attachments)

Copies of the primary documents – the two letters written by Margaret Jacobs after the execution of her grandfather (<http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/244jacob.html>) (see attachments)

Fixes that Fail/Backfire template - available from Waters Foundation System Thinking in Schools website (<http://www.watersfoundation.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=content.display&id=303>)

Iceberg Analysis template – available from Waters Foundation System Thinking in Schools Website (<http://www.watersfoundation.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=content.display&id=302>)

History Frame summary worksheet (<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/>) (see attachments)

Activities:

Anticipatory set – Ask students to think about a time when they were unfairly misjudged and to write down a short summary of that situation. Did they experience negative consequences due to the misjudgment? What emotions and thoughts did they have? (Let them know that they won’t be sharing this unless they choose to.)

1. Students view the painting “Trial of George Jacobs, August 5, 1692.” Think – Pair – Share the following questions: What might be happening in this scene? Why do you think that? What do you think is the most interesting part of the picture? What might have happened before the moment in this picture? What might have happened after the moment in this picture? What sounds would probably be heard in this scene? What does this picture have to do with what we have been learning about? (if you choose to, you can discuss the elements of art in the painting such as line, repetition, color) Leave discussion open, will revisit later.
2. Pre-teach vocabulary of underlined words in the readings in step 3.
3. Students will read the biographies of Jacob and Margaret with a partner using the strategy “Read – Cover – Remember – Retell” in which Student A reads a paragraph, then covers it, student B

remembers what he just heard and retells it in his own words to student A. Then Student B proceeds to read the next paragraph to Student A and so forth.

**Note : If you incorporate the dramatic script “Deliver Us From Evil” it is of interest to know that Margaret Jacobs was one of Reverend George Burroughs’ accusers. The night before he was executed, she apologized to him for falsely accusing him and asked for his forgiveness. He forgave her and prayed for her.*

4. Students read primary documents (the two letters Margaret wrote after the execution of her grandfather).
5. Teacher leads brief class discussion to clarify the language / spelling / meaning of the primary documents.
6. Class discussion of the causes and effects, and the unintended consequences of Margaret’s decision to attempt to save her life by accusing others of witchcraft. (You may want to use Waters Foundation template of “Fixes That Fail”). Point out that with the “Fixes That Fail” (also called “Unintended Consequences”), we begin with a problem. A solution is applied. However, the solution makes the original problem worse. The problem in this instance is that Margaret Jacobs has been accused of being a witch and is afraid of being executed. The solution she chooses is to falsely confess to being a witch, and accuse her grandfather George Jacobs of being a witch in order to save her life. Her grandfather and another man, Reverend George Burroughs, are hung, partly due to her testimony. She feels she has now jeopardized her eternal life due to her part in the shedding of innocent blood. She courageously recants her confession of being a witch, and admits to false accusations, knowing that these choices will most likely cause her own execution.
7. Working in groups, students fill out the iceberg analysis worksheet to see this trial in the context of the events in Salem at this time, and what mental models and paradigms were common among the Puritan population (can be done without the iceberg worksheet as well). Reference to the historical narratives will be helpful.



As with the tip of the iceberg, it is easy to become aware of the facts regarding the accusations and executions of the Salem witch trials. But the underlying social and cultural structures and patterns that were in place, and the mental models and paradigms of the people allowed/caused the visible actions. To understand the Salem witch phenomena, it is important to understand these “under the surface” factors.

8. As a pre-writing activity, students will summarize the story of George Jacobs Sr. and his granddaughter Margaret on the Historical Frame worksheet, followed by a class review discussion emphasizing the “Theme / Lesson / So What” section to encourage a discussion of the causes and effects of courage and integrity in decision making.
9. Students will complete a writing assignment from one of the following choices:
 - Select a person in the painting and write a poem from their perspective including their emotions and thoughts regarding the proceedings and the Salem witch trials
 - Write a who – how – when – where – why “newspaper article” about the trial
 - Create an annotated timeline of the story of George and Margaret Jacobs

Scaffolding: Various elements of the lesson can be modified or omitted to allow for differentiation.

Possible extension projects for individuals or groups:

1. Create a storyboard of illustrations and explanation / dialogue describing this narrative.
2. Create a short story or skit depicting the importance of integrity and courage in modern society.

3. Groups of students create a skit about this story to be acted out by themselves or puppets.
4. Higher level students could modify the primary documents to create easily readable versions.
5. Possible modifications for English language learners and special education students:
 - Individuals or pairs of students could create voice bubbles or thought bubbles for at least 6 characters in the painting “The Trial of George Jacobs.”
 - For lesson steps 3 and 4, teachers could create shorter, simpler versions of the biographies of Jacob and Margaret, as well as the primary documents.

Evaluation: Students’ writing will be graded on word choice, conventions, main ideas, organization, detail, coherence and factual content.

Teacher Information



"Trial of George Jacobs, August 5, 1692."

<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon-salem/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=salem/texts/pics.xml&style=salem/xsl/dynaxml.xml&chunk.id=p4&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes>

Description This well-known, dramatic painting by New York artist Thompkins H. Matteson, was painted in 1855. Four years later, it was presented to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem by local businessmen Ripley and Charles A. Ropes.

The painting depicts the trial of George Jacobs, Sr. at the Court of Oyer and Terminer in Salem. The scene is an imaginary one, as no records of the actual trial exist, and it is not known who was present at Jacobs' trial on August 5th. The inspiration for the painting comes from two moving documents written by 17-year-old Margaret Jacobs: "Margaret Jacobs to her Father" and "Recantation of Margaret Jacobs." In addition to the officials of the court, Matteson portrays several members of the George Jacobs family who became caught up in the witchcraft accusations in Salem Village. Kneeling in the foreground is the white haired, 72-year-old George Jacobs, Sr., wearing an expensive red cape, with his walking stick lying next to him on the floor. At the center of the picture, pointing her finger directly at Jacobs, is his granddaughter Margaret Jacobs. Urged to confess to witchcraft to save her life, she accused her grandfather among others who had already been accused. The distraught figure lunging towards Margaret is her mother Rebecca Jacobs, who was said to have been mentally deranged at the time. She, too, was accused of witchcraft. Standing next to George Jacobs, Sr. is his son, George Jacobs, Jr., whom Matteson shows responding in horror to his daughter's accusation of her grandfather. In the foreground, Matteson places a young man and a girl suffering from "fits," caused by George Jacobs senior's invisible "specter." The girl is possibly Sarah Churchill, Jacobs' household servant, or perhaps Ann Putnam, both of whom repeatedly testified that Jacobs' specter attacked them. The black robed magistrates are shown at the bench, with the chief magistrate, William Stoughton, tending to the commotion caused by Margaret's accusation of her grandfather. One of the magistrates, perhaps John Hathorne, who often took the lead role in interrogating the accused in court, holds a written document, in front of the young Margaret Jacobs. This document may be intended to represent Margaret's written confession in which she accuses her grandfather. Judge Hathorne gestures towards the clerk of the court, Stephen Sewall, who is shown writing down Margaret's testimony at the clerk's table, with the other court records lying in front of him. In the background against the windows, Matteson shows a group of people who may represent the grand jury. The artist also depicts the large crowd of onlookers that typically attended the trials in Salem.



"Gravestone of George Jacobs, Sr."

Description Gravestone of George Jacobs, Sr. placed in the cemetery of the Rebecca Nurse Homestead, 1992. The remains of a man believed to be George Jacobs, Sr. were recovered from the Jacobs property in the 1950s and finally laid to rest Sunday, August 2, 1992, 300 years after he was hanged on Gallows Hill.

Source Photograph by Richard B. Trask.

Student Handout – Biography of George Jacobs, Sr.

George Jacobs, Sr. was born ca. 1620. ...George Jacobs, Sr. was arrested on May 10, 1692, along with his granddaughter Margaret Jacobs. He was examined twice, on the day of his arrest and on the following day. His trial took place in early August, and he remained in prison from the time of his arrest until his execution on August 19.

His primary accuser was Sarah Churchill, who was a servant in his home. She came from a wealthy family of English gentry in Maine but was most likely orphaned in Indian Wars. She, like Margaret, had been accused of witchcraft and, in her confession, accused others. George Jacobs' granddaughter Margaret herself confessed to witchcraft and accused her grandfather among others who had already been accused in order, she wrote, "to save my life and to have my liberty." The list of accusers against Jacobs did not end there. It swelled to include Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, Elizabeth Hubbard, Mary Walcott, Sarah Bibber, Mary Warren, Joseph Flint, Thomas Putnam, John Putnam, Jr., and John DeRich.

The women accused Jacobs' specter of beating them with his walking stick and other physical abuses. Not only did the women testify that Jacobs afflicted them, they also testified to witnessing the afflictions of the others. The Puritans believed that witches and wizards had proof of their covenants with the Devil on their bodies. Doctor George Herrick was sent to examine Jacobs' body for the witch's "teat," and found one on his right shoulder. This slight protuberance on his skin combined with the spectral evidence made the case strong enough for indictment.

George Jacobs, Sr. emerges as an interesting person from the records of his examinations on May 10 and 11. He was incredulous from the moment the first accuser, Abigail Williams, cried out against him. He laughed in court, always a risky response and said: "Because I am falsely accused -Your worships all of you do think this is true?" One of his most famous protest was the defiant assertion, "You tax me for a wizard, you may as well tax me for a buzzard, I have done no harm." Emphatically portraying his unwavering Christian faith, he declared, "Well: burn me, or hang me, I will stand in the truth of Christ, I know nothing of it." Several times he argued that "The Devill can go in any shape" or "can take any likeness." This was sound theological doctrine at the time, warning the court that it was doing the Devil's work by accusing innocent people. The judges, however, believed that the Devil cannot take a person's form "without [his] consent."

George Jacobs, Sr. was then indicted, tried, and found guilty of witchcraft. He was hanged on August 19, 1692 with George Burroughs, John Proctor, John Willard, and Martha Carrier. This was the first time men were executed as witches in Salem. Meanwhile, Jacobs' granddaughter Margaret Jacobs was free from danger after confessing and accusing her grandfather but remained in jail. Her father, George Jacobs, Jr., was also accused but fled from Salem Town. When he did so, he left behind his wife, Rebecca, in jail facing witchcraft charges. She became severely emotionally disturbed and was most likely ruled mentally incompetent and escaped conviction.. Jacobs' body was retrieved from Gallows Hill by his family and buried on his land. In the 1980's his body had to be moved quickly, due to the sale of the Jacobs' family property. His bones were kept in storage in the Danvers Archive until 1992 when he was finally put to rest in the Rebecca Nurse Cemetery.

*Written By Kristin Buckstad
Salem Witch Trials in History and Literature
University of Virginia, 2001*

Student handout – Biography of Margaret Jacobs

Sixteen year-old Margaret Jacobs was the daughter of George Jacobs, Jr. After her father was accused of witchcraft and fled arrest from Salem Village, Margaret Jacobs was left in the care of her mentally unbalanced mother and had to fight Judge Hawthorne and his infamous court alone. Abandoned both by her father and by uncle, Daniel Andrews, who had also fled arrest, she confessed to having participated in witchcraft in order to save herself from a trial. To strengthen her confession, she named her own grandfather, George Jacobs, Sr. as a witch, knowing that he had already been accused by others -- Marcy Lewis, Mary Walcott, and Sarah Churchill. Later, stricken by her conscience, she recanted her confession... "out of terror of hanging." If you confessed and named other people as witches, you would not be tried or executed. Even at the price of her freedom, Jacobs could not lie. In Starkey's words, she preferred a "death with a quiet conscience than to live in such horror." The document in which she repudiated her confession and accusations was produced in court but had no effect on the judges, who wished to believe her confession. Margaret was, however, allowed to visit her grandfather in jail the day before his death and seek his forgiveness. George Jacobs, Sr. did hear of Margaret's courageous act before he was put to death and added a special provision for her in his will.

On August 20, the day after her grandfather was executed, Margaret wrote a moving letter to her father. She stated, "The reason of my Confinement [in jail] is this, I having, through the magistrates

Threatenings, and my own Vile and Wretched Heart, confessed several things contrary to my Conscience and Knowledg, tho to the Wounding of my own Soul, the Lord pardon me for it; but Oh! The terrors of a wounded Conscience who can bear and God knows how soon I shall be put to death"(Salem Witchcraft Papers.

Bernard Rosenthal in Salem Story puts it best when he says, "One does not often find people with the strength of Margaret Jacobs," especially at such a young age. He is absolutely right. It is rare to find someone willing to die for truth alone. Margaret was not the only woman accusing her grandfather of witchcraft. He could have been executed on the testimony of Sara Churchill and Mary Walcott alone. Margaret's accusations did not lead directly to her grandfather's death. She could have easily stuck to her story and avoided prison and the possibility of death. Her retraction of her accusation could not save her grandfather's life. The only thing that came out of her appeal to the magistrates was her own imprisonment and death sentence, both of which she accepted in order to live and die with the truth. Jacobs demonstrated at the age of seventeen a virtue that many people never acquire, moral integrity. Her story is a story of conscience and contrition which finds her alive in the end.

She remained in prison after her grandfather's death, awaiting her own fate. Her trial was temporarily postponed because of a boil on her head, which proved fortunate for her, because the witchcraft court was subsequently abolished, and she escaped the gallows. On January, 1693 she was brought before the newly established Superior Court of Judicature and found innocent.

*Written By Kelly McCandlish
Salem Witch Trials in History and Literature
University of Virginia, 2001*

Student handout – The letters of Margaret Jacobs

<http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/244jacob.html>

(Margaret Jacobs to her father, George Jacobs, Jr.)

From the Dungeon

in Salem-Prison, *August 20, 92* . Honoured Father,

After my Humble Duty Remmbered to you, hoping in the Lord of your good Health, as Blessed be God I enjoy, tho in abundance of Affliction, being close Confined here in a loathsome Dungeon, the Lord look down in mercy upon me, not knowing how soon I shall be put to Death, by means of the Afflicted Persons; my Grand-Father having Suffered already, and all his Estate Seized for the King. The reason of my Confinement is this, I having, through the Magistrates Threatnings, and my own Vile and Wretched Heart, confessed several things contrary to my Conscience and Knowledg, tho to the Wounding of my own Soul, the Lord pardon me for it; but Oh! the terrors of a wounded Conscience who can bear. But blessed be the Lord, he would not let me go on in my Sins, but in mercy I hope so my Soul would not suffer me to keep it in any longer, but I was forced to confess the truth of all before the Magistrates, who would not believe me, but tis their pleasure to put me in here, and God knows how soon I shall be put to death. Dear Father, let me beg your Prayers to the Lord on my behalf, and send us a Joyful and Happy meeting in Heaven. My Mother poor Woman is very Crazey, and remembers her kind Love to you, and to Uncle, *viz.* D. A. So leaving you to the protection of the Lord, I rest your Dutiful Daughter,

MARGARET JACOBS.

(*Robert Calef, More Wonders of The Invisible World [London, 1700], excerpted in Burr, ed., Narratives of The Witchcraft Cases, pp. 365-366 .)*

(Recantation of Margaret Jacobs)

The humble declaration of Margaret Jacobs unto the honoured court now sitting at Salem, sheweth

That whereas your poor and humble declarant being closely confined here in Salem goal for the crime of witchcraft, which crime thanks be to the Lord I am altogether ignorant of, as will appear at the great day of judgment: May it please the honoured court, I was cried out upon by some of the possessed persons, as afflicting them; whereupon I was brought to my examination, which persons at the sight of me fell down, which did very much startle and affright me. The Lord above knows I knew nothing, in the least measure, how or who afflicted them; they told me, without doubt I did, or else they would not fall down at me; they told me, if I would not confess, I should be put down into the dungeon and would be hanged, but if I would confess I should have my life; the which did so affright me, with my own vile wicked heart, to save my life; made me make the like confession I did, which confession, may it please the honoured court, is altogether false and untrue. The very first night after I had made confession, I was in such horror of conscience that I could not sleep for fear the devil should carry me away for telling such horrid lies. I was, may it please the honoured court, sworn to my confession, as I understand since, but then, at that time, was ignorant of it, not knowing what an oath did mean. The Lord, I hope, in whom I trust, out of the abundance of his mercy, will forgive me my false forswearing myself. What I said, was altogether false against my grandfather, and Mr. Burroughs, which I did to save my life and to have my liberty; but the Lord, charging it to my conscience, made me in so much horror, that I could not contain myself before I had denied my confession, which I did though I saw nothing but death before me, chusing rather death with a quiet conscience, than to live in such horror, which I could not suffer. Where, upon my denying my confession, I was committed to close prison, where I have enjoyed more felicity in spirit, a thousand times, than I did before in my enlargement.

And now, may it please your honours, your declarant, having, in part, given your honours a description of my condition, do leave it to your honours pious and judicious discretions, to take pity and compassion on my young and tender years, to act and do with me, as the Lord above and your honours shall see good, having no friend, but the Lord, to plead my cause for me; not being guilty in the least measure of the crime of witchcraft, nor any other sin that deserves death from man; and your poor and humble declarant shall for ever pray, as she is bound in duty, for your honours happiness in this life and eternal felicity in the world to come. So prays your honours declarant.

Margaret Jacobs.

(Thomas Hutchinson, History of Massachusetts-Bay, II, 30-31)

SALEM WITCH TRIALS: Annotated Bibliography

Boyer, P. & Nissenbaum, S. (1993). *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Boyer and Nissenbaum provide readers with a variety of primary documents to aid in their understanding of the trials. Throughout the book they encourage the reader to formulate his (or her) own understanding and theories regarding the trials rather than supplying the readers with a definitive answer.

Cooley, N. (2004). An Alphabet of Lessons for Girls. In her book *The Afflicted Girls*. (pp. 3). Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.

Cooley created a fascinating collection of poems related to the Salem Witch Trials which add depth and clarity to the trials when examined as secondary sources. The poem mentioned above was used as a part of a lesson plan for this unit.

Davidson, J. W. & Lytle, M. (1999). *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection Vol. 1, 4th Ed.* Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill College Press.

In the chapter "The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem" Davidson and Lytle provide readers with information regarding the residents of Salem and their views of Satan. It also offers multiple theories as to why the residents of Salem were acting peculiarly. Spectral evidence is defined and described, and several examples are offered. This chapter includes two maps of Salem in 1692 and several images of individuals (in the nude) having hysterical convulsions.

del Mar, D. "History Topic: Salem Witch Trials." TAHPDX. and Portland State University, Dec. 2010. Web. 2 Feb. 2011.

This resource provided a detailed background to the topic of the Salem witch trials. It presents an abstract, offers historical context, informs the reader of life in New England, provides basic facts, discusses the place and circumstances, raises the issue of gender in the trials, talks about the conclusion and aftermath of the trials, and lists additional sources for further reading. Available on the TAHPDX website at: http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Salem_Witch.html.

Demos, J.P. (1982). *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A detailed resource featuring graphics, charts, and tables to help readers understand the Salem Witch Trials. As opposed to simply providing the reader with an overview and a qualitative look at the trails, this book offers the reader assorted quantitative information regarding those affected. It also features unique flow charts of the accusation, trial, and conviction process.

Hill, F. (1995). *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Hill provides a detailed account of the trials, including specifics regarding prominent individuals who were accused, tried, and convicted of witchcraft. This project uses his work to add specific historical information to the narrative and drama piece to help the documents come alive to the reader.

The History Channel. (2005). In Search of History: Salem Witch Trials [In Search of History]. New York: Baseline, LLC (The History Channel).

In fifty minutes this video provides a factual overview to the Salem Witch Trials. It discusses the mass hysteria and rampant paranoia in the community that set the stage for a time when fear replaced logic and good judgment. If you only have time to show one video during your unit on the Salem Witch Trials, this should be the one.

Krystek, L. *Part II: The Witches of Salem: Theories and Speculations*. The Museum of UnNatural Mystery, 2006. Web. 7 May 2011.

This site gives a clear, chronological account of the events. It provides background information, offers theories as to why accusations were made, and in places offers judgment about the events.

Linder, D.O. (2009). Chronology of Events Relating to the Salem Witchcraft Trials.

http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/asal_ch.htm. 24 June 2011.

This is a comprehensive site on the Salem Witch Trials that features a detailed timeline of accusers, accused, and events surrounding the time period. It is beneficial for student research on specific people associated with the trials and for seeing how the trials progressed over time.

Ray, B. (2002). Salem Witch Trials Document Archive and Transcription Project. Retrieved from

<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/>.

The “Home” page of this website provides an incredible source of information and variety of materials including documents, transcripts, historical maps, archival collections, contemporary books, and an overview of the mission of the project. The site is a highly recommended resource for all those interested in researching the Salem Witch Trials. One of the highlights of the site is the page “Important People Named in the Salem Court Records”, which can be accessed at:

<http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/salem/people.html>. This page lists: people executed during the trials, who died in torture, important officials, associate magistrates, critics of the trials, important ministers, the afflicted girls, important accusers, and defenders of the accused. On the site a reader can click on the names of some of the individuals, such as Giles Cory, and gain additional information about the role the individual played in the trials.

Ray, B. (2002). Teaching the Salem Witch Trials. In A. K. Knowles (1st Ed.), *Past Time, Past Place: GIS History* (19-33). Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.

Benjamin Ray provides an assortment of maps and gives an overview of the geographical theories surrounding the accusers and the accused. He uses the maps to discuss previous research by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, which suggests that geography was a motivation for the accusations. Ray concludes that there is not enough evidence to say that the accusations were motivated solely for geographic reasons and he spends much of the article discussing other possible causes., such as: personal grudges, family feuds, economic disparities, and social dynamics. Ray also discusses the hysteria of witchcraft, which spread to communities near Salem during the time period.

Reis, E. “Confess or Deny? What’s a “Witch” to Do?”. *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 17.4 (2003): 11-13. Print.

In this article Dr. Reis provides the reader with an overview of Puritan society in the 1690s, provides an analysis of the role gender played in the trials, and discusses the options of confessing or denying that the accused had. The critical examination of the trials of several confessors and deniers makes this article a valuable resource of teachers to use as they prepare for the unit and is suitable for use in higher grade levels.

Reis, E.(1997). *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

This book highlights the role of gender in accusations, trials, and confessions in Puritan Salem; specifically the differences between the genders regarding the notion of sin. It addresses why women believed that Satan had possibly possessed them. This resource does a good job providing information about the religious aspects of daily life and how Satan was thought to influence an entire community. Also includes graphics and sweet illustrations (or woodcarvings) from the time period.

Reis, E. *Teaching American History Speaker Symposium #1*. Portland State University. PSU Urban Center, Portland, OR. 12 Feb. 2011. Keynote Speaker.

If you are teaching a unit on the Salem Witch Trials I highly recommend contacting Dr. Reis so you can consult her as a resource for the following information. Dr. Reis provided students with handouts containing basic facts on the Salem witch trials, several courtroom transcripts, poetry selections from the book *Afflicted Girls* by Nicole Cooley, and a copy of her article “Confess or Deny? What’s a “Witch” to do?”. While at PSU, Dr. Reis also discussed her book *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* and provided a historical context for the trials. Her materials and lecture provided an excellent basis for our examination of the topic and the resources (many of which are also listed here) provided excellent primary and secondary sources for the topic.