



THE SALEM WITCH TRIAL

What Happened in Salem, 1692 ?

(Written sources from History.com)

Discover : what happened in Salem 1692 **Explore** : why this happened and the effects **Skill** : source investigation and evaluation.



The Salem witch trials began during the spring of 1692, after a group of young girls in Salem Village, Massachusetts, claimed to be possessed by the devil and accused several local women of witchcraft. One of those they accused was Tituba, a house slave owned by Samuel Parris. As a wave of hysteria spread throughout Massachusetts, a special court was set up in Salem to hear the cases; the first convicted witch, Bridget Bishop, was hanged that June.

A

Belief in the supernatural—and specifically in the devil’s practice of giving certain humans (witches) the power to harm others in return for their loyalty—had emerged in Europe as early as the 14th century, and was widespread in colonial New England.

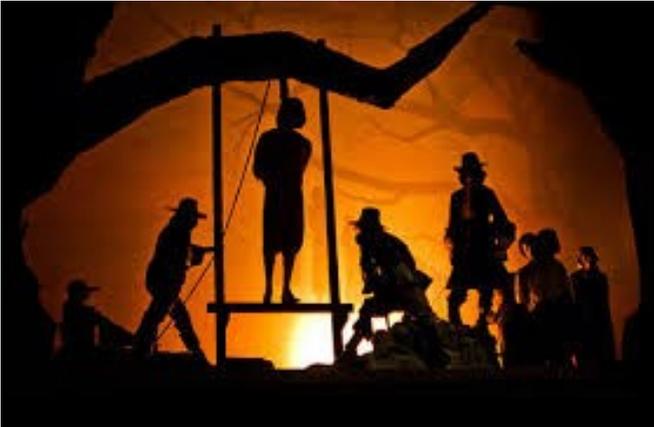
B

In an effort to explain by scientific means the strange behaviour of the "bewitched" Salem women in 1692, a study published in **Science magazine** in 1976 cited the fungus ergot (found in rye and wheat) can cause symptoms such as delusions, vomiting and muscle spasms. The women may have eaten poisoned bread but believed they had been cursed.

C

The three accused witches were brought before the magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne and questioned. One of them, Tituba confessed, likely seeking to save herself from conviction by acting as an informer, she claimed there were other witches acting alongside her in service of the devil against the Puritans. As hysteria spread through the community and beyond into the rest of Massachusetts, a number of others were accused, including Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse—both regarded as upstanding members of church and

D



Like Tituba, several accused “witches” confessed and named still others, and the trials soon began to overwhelm the local justice system. In May 1692, the newly appointed governor of Massachusetts, William Phips, ordered the establishment of a special Court of Oyer (to hear) and Terminer (to decide) on witchcraft cases for Suffolk, Essex and Middlesex counties. Presided over by judges the court handed down its first conviction, against Bridget Bishop, on June 2; she was hanged eight days later on what would become known as Gallows Hill in Salem Town. Five more people were hanged that July; five in August and eight more in September. In addition, seven other accused witches died in jail, while the elderly Giles Corey (Martha’s husband) was pressed to death by stones after he refused to enter a plea at his arraignment. Though the respected minister Cotton Mather had warned of using testimony from dreams and visions, his concerns were largely ignored during the Salem witch trials. Increase Mather, president of Harvard College (and Cotton’s father) later joined his son in urging that the standards of evidence for witchcraft must be equal to those for any other crime.

E

How far does source E support A	
Point of support / corroboration	
P1 :	
P2 :	
Point not supported / corroborated	
P1 :	
P2 :	
Mostly supports	<input type="radio"/> Does not support <input type="radio"/>

How reliable is source C ?	
The content (what) is / is not reliable because ..	
The provenance (who) is / is not reliable	
Mostly reliable	<input type="radio"/> Mostly unreliable <input type="radio"/>

Quick Questions	
Give two possible reasons for the Salem Witch Trials	
Who was pressed to death ?	
Why did Tituba confess to using witchcraft ?	

Describe The Salem Witch Trails	
Why :	
What :	
Effect :	

Salem Witch Trials Summary

Mission : to complete a brief summary of the Salem Witch trials.

My Salem Summary

- 1 Year
- 2 First accused
- 3 Magistrates
- 4 Governor of Mass
- 5 Reason / why
- 6 Reason / why
- 7 What happened
- 8 What happened
- 9 What happened
- 10 What happened
- 11 What happened
- 12 Consequence
- 13 Consequence



Salem Witch Trials Summary

 **Teacher note:** allow lots of room for different interpretations for 'answers'. Use the Salem source sheet for information.

Salem Summary Suggestions

1	Year	1692
2	First accused	<i>Tituba</i>
3	Magistrates	<i>Jonathon Corwin and John Hawthorne</i>
4	Governor of Mass	<i>William Phips</i>
5	Reason / why	<i>Ergot Poisoning</i>
6	Reason / why	<i>Beliefs in supernatural (connect to religion, Devil and Satan)</i>
7	What happened	<i>Possessed women / blamed Tituba</i>
8	What happened	<i>Tituba confessed</i>
9	What happened	<i>Blamed spreads</i>
10	What happened	<i>Trials of suspected witches</i>
11	What happened	<i>Hangings in Salem</i>
12	Consequence	<i>Hysteria / panic spread</i>
13	Consequence	<i>Hangings and trials spread.</i>

