

What is a Witch Worth?

The value of men at the conclusion of the Salem Witch Trials

By
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Submitted to the graduate degree program in History and the Graduate Faculty of the
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Date Approved: 17 May 2021

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Abstract

This dissertation will summarize the history of Salem and the events that led up and through the Trials, but more importantly will look at why statistically more men were accused, convicted, and executed in Salem than in other parts of the English commonwealth, as well as events that transpired after Governor William Phips ended the trials in 1693. I will also argue that the concept of reparations as used in Salem is more comprehensive and thoughtful than elsewhere, and that in those reparations, the families of male victims were awarded a statistically significant larger sum of money.

This qualitative study of the Salem Witch Trials and their aftermath draws upon evidence from the leading historians on the events of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts and from the primary source records edited by Bernard Rosenthal et al. in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, as well as the University of Virginia, Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project. The UVA database offers primary sources from the time of the trials and depositions. The site maintained by the University of Virginia provided access to the Essex County records books that detailed the events individuals had been involved in years preceding the trials.

In addition to textual research, I also committed to personal investigation of the history of Salem and New England. Over the course of my research, I made three trips to Salem and the surrounding region, as well as Maine. While in Salem, I was fortunate to view documents housed in the Peabody Essex collection as well as the local library. I also traveled to the Danvers Archives and spoke directly with town historian and trials descendant Richard Trask, who provided invaluable insight into the social perspective of the trials, as well as assisting to find more primary source documents. On the final trip, I

traveled to Portland, Maine to visit their historical archives. The archives yielded information about George Burroughs and his time in Maine, Additionally, I was able to meet with Hope Shelley who resides in Maine and wrote a book about the history of Wells which included the time Burroughs resided in Maine, it was through Ms. Shelly that I acquired the image of the map detailing the route Burroughs was taken back to Salem to face his accusers.

This paper explored the disparities in reparations paid to victims and the families of the Salem Witch Trials. One focus is on those families that lost a loved one and were of higher standing in the community received more money from the Commonwealth, their status consequently earned their families more compensation, while those seeking money for the loss of a female recouped less. By the late 1600s, reparations were moving from a monetary restoration of financial losses, to restoration of reputation and acknowledgement and apology by the persecutors. In addition, the number of men accused and convicted in Salem is an aberration from the rest of New England at the time, as well as in England. As has been demonstrated, Salem was the first significant use of reparations to value social standing, not just material losses, and thus those with higher overall standing in the community were compensated at a far higher rate. Men such as Burroughs and English, not to mention Proctor and Corey, had contributed a great deal to the community and were seen as leaders. Their status consequently earned their families more compensation, while those seeking money for the loss of a female recouped less.

Acknowledgments

Throughout the course of writing this dissertation, I have received a great deal of support and assistance. There are many that I need to thank that have guided me along the way. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Kim Warren, whose expertise and patience was invaluable in guiding my research and methodology. Your feedback pushed me to dig deeper into my research and raised the level of my work.

Next, I must thank Dr. Peter Grund, his prior work with the transcription of the Salem records urged me to look at and question some of my thoughts. His guidance, time, patience and working with me was an incredible experience and I feel fortunate to have had him as part of my team.

Maureen Donegan deserves a great deal of credit for this paper. Without her securing a Teaching American History grant, none of this would have been possible. While my supervisor in the Olathe Kansas School district, she sought out ways to for teachers to improve content knowledge and thus provided an avenue to become better educators. The time she took to work out the details and logistics of the grant with the University of Kansas has not gone unnoticed and is what has gotten me to this point in my education and career. I must also thank my class and research companions Larry Swanson and Kim McKissick who made learning fun and taught me to keep moving forward.

I must thank my husband Chuck Lunney who really put in the hard work. He ensured kids made it to their destinations while I worked, made meals and most importantly was there to help in any capacity. He kept me on track and encouraged me to stick with this project through the loss of my grandmother, mother and brother. I only wish they could

see the end of the project. From taking time to read over chapters, look for records, travel to Salem, and listen to and encourage me when I felt like giving up. THANK YOU for believing in and pushing me.

Lastly, credit goes to my dad. His words have been stuck in my head for years. “If I would have had some education, I might have amounted to something.” Dad, you amounted to a great deal with the education you received, and I am so proud to be your daughter. Thank you for encouraging me from a distance and creating the thirst and drive to continue down the path of higher education. You are my inspiration.

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Introduction

Background – What is it About Salem?

The story of the Salem Witch Trials resonates with people for many reasons: mystery, witchcraft, torture, history. The intrigue surrounding the Witch Trials, the sorrow for the twenty innocent individuals who lost their lives, and the mystery of how a normal New England town could be transformed by a hysteria that spread from the English shores across the Atlantic and over a large swath of Massachusetts, fascinates and horrifies modern day explorers of the history. Yet there are still questions to be answered, even four hundred years later. One of those questions is why in Salem were men accused, condemned, and executed at higher percentages than elsewhere in England or the colonies. Another question that needs resolved is the idea of how much a human life is worth, and does the person's gender, social status, or past history matter? Additionally, the concept of reparations for loss of life was not used prior to Salem, and even when reparations were sued for in later times, it was most often not for compensation due to loss of life but rather for material goods.

The village of Salem, Massachusetts is a destination for curiosity seekers and scholars alike. People come from near and far to experience a part of history they learned about in school. Exhibits and tours abound, taking tourists to sites that were part of the witch hysteria that occurred during the years 1692–1693. However, very few tours take visitors to the heart of the accusations. For most of those that come to the home of the Witch Trials, there is only one place called Salem. But those who have taken the time to study the events of 1692 understand that the story is not just one that belongs to Salem

but also belongs to nearby Danvers, the former Salem Village, and the neighboring communities of Andover and Peabody, all part of Essex County.

Visitors take in exhibits that tell the story of a community struggling in the late 1600s. The tourist information center presents a movie, *Salem Witch Hunt: Examine the Evidence*, that explains the story of 1692 from the viewpoint of many Salem scholars such as Richard Trask, Dr. Emerson Baker, Dr. Benjamin Ray, and Dr. Mary Beth Norton. Other sites include the Witch House which was the home of Judge Jonathan Corwin and the only structure still standing from the time of the trials. Many other sites, such as the Salem Witch Museum, the Salem Witch History Museum, and the Salem Wax Museum, in addition to ghost tours, compete for tourist dollars, and they all tell a version of the events of the 1690s. Most likely the most memorable tribute to the victims of the trials is the memorial dedicated by Elie Wiesel in August 1992, which contains individual black granite benches inscribed with the names of those who were executed during the trials. The stark and barren plaza is a fitting spot to contemplate the hysteria that enveloped the region and the long-term effects left after the trials. The twenty names engraved on the benches are a reminder that the families continued to suffer, and that it would be decades before restitution was finalized. Yet those individuals and families had different outcomes of reparations, apologies, and restitution based on their socioeconomic status and gender.

Much of what one sees in Salem is devoted to the accusations and subsequent trials. Visitors are shown copies or listen to recitations of partial transcripts of events and depositions before verdicts were rendered. The shows and exhibits center around the accusations and fits experienced first by a group of girls as young as age nine, and

subsequently evolve to accusations made by late aged teenagers, and men and women of Essex County. These limited experiences for tourists focus on the dramatic, salacious, and scandalous pieces of the events, but leave out important details and explanations of the societal background of the region and aftermath of the trials.

For those of Essex County, the initial accusations of witchcraft by a few young girls were just the beginning of what was to come. By the end of the trials, over two hundred men and women from many families across multiple income levels, stretching from the area around Salem all the way across Boston, and even up to the Governor's residence, would be accused and forced to defend themselves from accusations.

Refining the Understanding of Gender and Reparations in the Aftermath of the Trials

There is no question the events of Salem caused a great deal of turmoil for the residents of Essex County. Neighbors and family members accused each other of witchcraft. Families and friendships were forever altered because of the events of 1692. Twenty individuals were killed for being linked to the events, five died in prison, two dogs were killed, and over 150 others stood accused. This dissertation will look beyond the twenty condemned who lost their lives and the standard story that women were accused and lost their lives more than their male counterparts. After the trials, apologies began but not by all who were involved, and individuals and families tried to put shattered lives back together. Eventually, the courts would become involved, compensating some for the loss of a family member.

This dissertation will summarize the history of Salem and the events that led up to and through the trials, but more importantly I will examine the reasons more men were accused, condemned, and executed in Salem than in other parts of the English commonwealth, due their relationship with females who had been accused and the need for explanations of the events that transpired around them. I will also explain how the events during and after the Trials lead directly to the apologies and reparations that transpired after Governor William Phips ended the trials in 1693. Finally, I will argue that the concept of reparations used in Salem is more comprehensive and thoughtful, and that in those reparations, the families of male victims were awarded a statistically significantly larger sum of money based on their social status in the community. While there are some instances prior to the twentieth century overall, the payments made by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1712 stand out as an atypical event. Although it isn't surprising that men who were tied to the trials and lost their lives were considered more valuable, both economically and socially, than a woman of the same time period, this dissertation will attempt to quantify and explore that difference through examination of legal records and court transcripts.

Historians have utilized the surviving records to determine that women were more often accused and convicted of the crime of witchcraft than men. Women made up 78 percent of those that were accused of colluding with the devil in New England.¹ However, the number of females tied to the outbreak at Salem are not that high as many more men were accused, convicted, and lost their lives in this episode. According to

¹ Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 47.

Marilyn K. Roach, there were a total of 164 individuals accused of witchcraft during the Salem Trials, of which fifty-five were male (33.5 percent).² This 50 percent increase in accusations of men is worthy of more exploration and is significant to show how the Salem Trials were different from others in England and the colonies.

In addition, the number of men condemned and executed in Salem are also much higher than what was common in other English-speaking locales. The accepted data for Salem shows twenty individuals lost their lives, with nineteen of these individuals hanged, and Giles Corey pressed to death. Although some sources state five died in prison, one of those that is included in the loss of life was the unborn child of Sarah Osbourne. As the sex was not determined for the child, it can be stated that four died in jail rather than five. This takes the total number of victims to twenty-four, of which eight were men, also 33 percent of the total. Based on these data, men had a larger loss of life in Salem compared to the rest of New England.

*Table 1: Female Witches by Presence or Absence of Brothers or Sons, New England, 1620–1725*³

Action	Women without brothers or sons	Women with brothers or sons	Total
Accused	96 (61%)	62 (39%)	158
Tried	41 (64%)	23 (36%)	64
Convicted	25 (76%)	8 (24%)	33
Executed	17 (89%)	2 (11%)	19

Carol Karlsen, in her work *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, shows the frequency at which women were accused and whether those accused had a male relative in their lives. The data in the table clearly shows the correlation that women without a brother or

² Marilynne K. Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-to-Day Chronicle of a Community under Seige* (Lanham, Maryland: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2002), Appendix A.

³ Karlsen, 102.

son in their life were more often subjected to accusations and trials than those who had a male presence in their life between the years 1620–1725.

How does an individual, or even a community, recover from such a miscarriage of justice? For many outside academia, it is not commonly known that families who lost family members received financial compensation from the Massachusetts Commonwealth. However, as men controlled so many of societal norms at the time in history, it is useful to examine the correlation between the gender of the accused and condemned and the amount of money the family received. I argue that the monetary discrepancy in favor of families who lost a male family member in the trials reflects and can enumerate the sexism inherent in Puritan culture and the societal value of a man's life over a woman.

As the trials progressed, five men were hanged: George Burroughs, John Willard, George Jacobs Jr., John Proctor and Samuel Wardwell. In addition to these five men, Roger Toothaker died in prison and Giles Corey succumbed after being pressed to death under the weight of stones. There were other men who also were jailed but were able to escape and some that fled before being arrested. Each of the men that died had specific connections to the community that contributed them being accused.

John Willard was a jack of all trades and farmer who served as deputy constable for the community and was responsible for arresting those who were accused. At the beginning, he exercised his position faithfully, but as time went on and the numbers continued to increase, he began to have doubts over the validity of the trials. His concern over innocent individuals being called out led to his resignation and ultimately

contributed to him being accused.⁴ Although he served the town there was another part of his life that would also serve to be contributing factor to being accused. There were those within the community who believed Willard to be an abusive husband, charges which he denied.⁵ The concern over treatment of his wife as well as his resignation served as contributing factors to him being accused.

George Jacobs Sr. was an old man of approximately 80 years and walked with 2 canes. He had spent over 30 years in the community working his farm. While he lived modestly with a few head of livestock, he did employ Sarah Churchill as a servant.⁶ Jacobs could not read and had a history for abusing others, fighting and getting into trouble with justices of the peace.⁷ The abuse he leveled at others would serve as a contributing factor as he was not following the prescribed Puritanical covenants.

John Proctor is well known to many due to his role in Arthur Miller's *Crucible*. Proctor married three times, was a father to eleven children, managed a farm, ran a tavern with his wife, and owned property Ipswich.⁸ He was born in England and had come to Ipswich with his parents. In 1666 he acquired 700 acres and in 1668 he applied to get a license to run a tavern with his wife.⁹ He criticized the trials early on and once arrested

⁴ Chadwick Hansen, *Witchcraft at Salem*, 10th ed. (New York: George Braziller, 1969), 91.

⁵ Bernard Rosenthal, *Salem Story Reading the Witch Trials of 1692* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 115-15.

⁶ Larry Gragg, *The Salem Witch Crisis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 162.

⁷ Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials: A Legal History*, ed. Peter Charles and N.E.H. Hull Hoffer, Landmark Law Cases and American Society (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1997), 43.

⁸ Diane E. Foulds, *Death in Salem* (Guilford, Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press, 2010), 98.

⁹ *Ibid.*

he wrote a letter to the justices. In his letter, he laid out his case that those presiding over the trials were not providing a fair and impartial court. He believed they had decided guilt before each person had appeared thus making fairness impossible.¹⁰

Samuel Wardwell of Andover was married to Sarah who along with two of their daughters was also accused of witchcraft. He was a carpenter and farmer but also known for his fortune telling. As Rosenthal mentions, Wardwell confessed to practicing witchcraft of September 1.¹¹ Although Wardwell recanted his confession, the cards were still stacked against him. Not only were his wife and daughters accused, but his father Thomas had been banished years earlier for heresy and his brother was a practicing Quaker.¹²

Giles Corey was made famous by Arthur Miller in *the Crucible* and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem *Giles Corey of Salem Farms*, but Corey's story is an anomaly within the Salem story, as he was the only individual in North American history to suffer the fate of *peine forte et dure* (being pressed to death) in order to elicit a plea.

Philip English also has a story that contributes to the idea of those with high social and economic status receiving higher payments and less legal woes than women. He was a successful merchant and prominent member of the local community but was viewed with suspicion and antipathy because of his French birth and ruthless business practices. And although he was convicted of witchcraft, he successfully escaped the trip to the gallows and managed to regain much of what he had lost during the trials.

¹⁰ Gragg, 167.

¹¹ Rosenthal, 153.

¹² Foulds, 114.

Lastly, the Reverend George Burroughs had not been a community member in several years and was leading a congregation on the Maine frontier. He was taken from his home during the evening meal and carted to Salem to face his accusers. He was the only individual able to recite the Lord's Prayer perfectly while awaiting his turn at the gallows, and his family was granted a much higher reparation amount than the female victims. While there were other ministers accused of witchcraft in New England, none had ever been charged or convicted. The Reverend John Busse of New Hampshire and Reverend Jeremiah Shepard of Lynn were accused, but arrest warrants were not issued, and the Reverend Francis Dane was accused in Salem, but he was only passing through the area and was never charged with any actual crime.¹³ This left Burroughs as the exception and in an unusual situation for the accused in Salem, and his death and subsequent reparations paid to his family demonstrate that it wasn't just residents of Salem who were compensated.

The story of the Witch Trials has almost exclusively been told through the perspective of women and girls accusing community members. The story continues to highlight the women that were brought before the magistrate, always focusing on those women who were first accused, Sarah Good, Sarah Osbourne, and Tituba. However, men figure just as prominently in the narrative. This dissertation will use three of the men previously mentioned – Giles Corey, Philip English, and the Reverend George Burroughs – as a demonstration of how individuals with differing life circumstances and social positions were objectively valued at a higher amount based on their male gender.

¹³ Emerson W. Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 137-38.

Men during this time in history were granted more civil and sectarian rights than their female counterparts. New England society enshrined the legality of coverture, a legal doctrine whereby, upon marriage, a woman's legal rights and obligations were subsumed by those of her husband, and thus women most often were not permitted to own property or take part in legal or financial affairs. This lack of a role in daily transactions allows one to argue that a woman was valued by society less than a man. Upon looking at the requests for reparations and the amounts that families were willing to settle for, it becomes clear that families who lost a male kinsman during this event received more financially than those who lost a female family member. The records from the committee that paid out the funds show amounts received by each family, and when one looks back at the Essex County records and reconstructs a family's position in society, it becomes clear that those who were male received more monetarily than others.

Historiography of the Salem Witch Trials

The play for power would, according to Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, be a point of contention and a contributing factor to the outbreak of witchcraft accusations. In their book *Salem Possessed*, they make the assertion that the events that took place in 1692 occurred due to political alliances and ultimately pitted Salem Village against Salem Town. Boyer and Nissenbaum began their study with the geography of Essex County. From their study they were able to surmise:

The first twelve witches were either residents of the Village or persons who lived just beyond its borders. But of all the indictments which followed this initial dozen, only fifteen were directed against people in the immediate vicinity of

Salem Village. The other victims came from virtually every town in Essex County, including the five which surrounded the Village.¹⁴

Since the initial accusations were limited to Salem Village, the girls making accusations likely knew those they were calling out. However, as the girls began to accuse others and the net of accusations spread farther from their homes, they had to be helped and there had to be a reason why particular people had their names called out. In formulating their theory, Boyer and Nissenbaum turned to the research of Charles Upham. Upham created a map that detailed the location of many of the residents of Salem Village. His map shows the residence of “every villager who testified for or against any of the accused witches and also of those accused who themselves lived within the Village bounds.”¹⁵

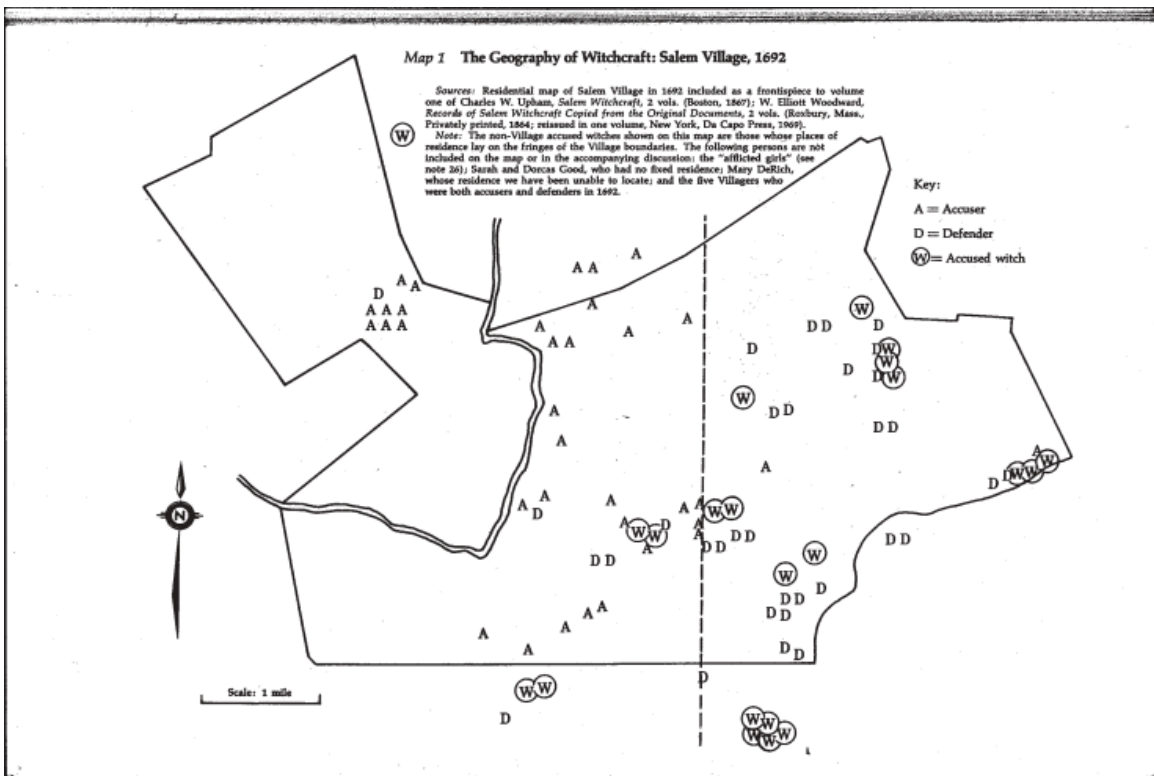


Figure 1: Page 34 of Boyer and Nissenbaum

¹⁴ Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 35.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The map (Figure 1) shows that fourteen of the individuals accused of witchcraft lived within Salem Village with the majority living on the eastern side. Most of those who testified against the accused lived on the western side of the Village. Finally, those who were unsure or skeptical of the accusations lived on the same side as those accused. Benjamin Ray, using the same map, notes that the majority of the accused that resided within the Village were not members of the church.¹⁶

There have been several scholarly studies of the Salem Witch Trials in the centuries following the events of 1692. While many simply recount the events and conclusions of the trials, more recent authors have sought to delve into the basis for the hysteria and the impact on the people and their communities. John Demos is best known for his 2004 work, *Entertaining Satan*. Demos argues that the events of 1692 were more than simply one faction economically pitting against another. While Demos breaks up the structure of a witch, biological, psychological, sociological, and historical, he looks at the construction of a witch throughout New England. Relying on transcripts, Demos points out that most accusers were young girls and most of those accused were adults. He sums up the events of 1692 by combining these elements and concludes the entire affair was a play for attention by the girls within the community.

Demos followed *Entertaining Satan* with *The Enemy Within* in 2008. *The Enemy Within* took a broader approach and looked at witch hunting over the last two thousand years in the western world. The book attempts to cover witchcraft in the western world,

¹⁶ Benjamin C. Ray, *The Witch-Hunt Crisis of 1692: Satan & Salem* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 190.

but only the first quarter is dedicated to witchcraft in Europe while part two focuses on early America, part three on Salem, and the final quarter on modern America. In this book, Demos picks up where he left off in his analysis of the role women played in *Entertaining Satan*, making note in *The Enemy Within*,

Afflicted victims, mostly teenage girls, were the immediate sources of accusation. (As such, they stepped far out of the modest role prescribed for persons of their age and sex, overshadowing even the magistrates who were officially in control. Within their families they engendered a similar reversal, as regular household routines became reorganized around their ongoing “torments.”)¹⁷

The girls were being given attention, which was something they were not accustomed to receiving. Additionally, given the hardships of living in a remote area compared to what some of their families had experienced in England, this was a way to receive relief from the hard work necessary for some to survive in Salem. However, this shows a change in the argument put forth by Demos. In the section on Salem, he ends with a recap of a variety of theories that have been put forth on why these events happened in Salem and why they transpired. Demos devotes twenty-four pages to describing the various theories of what happened and why. He begins with one of the first theories put forth by Reverend John Hale of Beverly in 1697. As Hale was an observer and a friend to many of the clergy involved, he reflected seventeenth-century ideas at the time that the event occurred, believing the trials took place because individuals had not been living up to their faith. Hale stated, “The Lord sends evil angels to awaken and punish our negligence.”¹⁸ He believed that the Puritans and their Calvinist tendencies had a strong

¹⁷ John Demos, *The Enemy Within: A Short History of Witch-Hunting* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 163.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

faith and if bad events were occurring it was simply because they had not been fully committed to their faith. As the events influenced the entire community, it was clear to Hale that many had been involved and had not been looking out for each other's welfare as was expected of a member of the Puritan community.

Just as Boyer and Nissenbaum had previously asserted in their work, Demos refers to the conflict between the residents of the Village and those of the Town. He begins with Charles Upham's account from 1867, pointing out that the girls were more than likely influenced by the adults in their lives. Rather than upholding the belief that the girls were just being influenced by the white community members, Upham increases the role that Tituba and her husband John Indian had in the events by claiming, "These two persons may have originated the Salem witchcraft, coming as they did from the Caribbean islands, they in all probability contributed, from the wild and strange superstitions prevalent among their native tribes."¹⁹ These statements by Upham, written after the American Civil War, were from a time when blacks were still seen by many as biologically and intellectually inferior with many traditions and customs that seemed foreign to many.

Demos puts forth a third theory utilizing Upham and George M. Beard. The theory put forth by Beard in *The Psychology of the Salem Witchcraft Excitement of 1692* argues the girls were "overstimulated by Puritan tales of the 'invisible world' of devils and hellfires, that they became 'partly insane and partly entranced.'"²⁰ An example of this theory of mental illness or hysteria was also explored later by Emerson Baker in his

¹⁹ Ibid., 191.

²⁰ Ibid., 192.

work *Storm of Witchcraft* where the condition becomes more widely known as Conversion Disorder. Baker admits that some of the girls may have been faking their symptoms. He goes on to say that “people are in such mental anguish, for a variety of reasons, that literally their minds convert their anxieties to physical symptoms.”²¹ Many of the girls that made accusations had witnessed conflicts between colonists and Native Americans on the frontier before moving to Salem, so it is possible they were reacting to the trauma they had previously been exposed to when they started to accuse individuals of conspiring with the devil. Mary Beth Norton notes that many of the accusers and confessors had at one time lived on the frontier in Maine.²²

Carol Karlsen in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* continues to focus on the role of women in the Witch Trials. Her book concentrates on the roles some women played within the community both as single and married women. Men were put in dangerous positions eking out a living on the frontier and protecting the community from conflict with local Native Americans. Thus, some women were left widowed and placed in positions that had primarily fallen to those of the men, especially when they became the beneficiary of property. The laws in New England also saw adult children inherit part of their father’s estate at the time they were married.²³ This inheritance would be considered part of the property owned by a woman when her husband died, thus potentially giving her more power and potentially making her more intimidating to some

²¹ Nik Decosta-Klipa, "The Theory That May Explain What Was Tormenting the Afflicted in Salem’s Witch Trials," *Boston Globe*, October 31, 2017.

²² Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 12.

²³ Karlsen, 81.

men in the community. Karlsen points out that women who came from a family that had accrued some wealth were also less inclined to be called out as witches. Karlsen states, “Accused women from wealthy families...with estates valued at more than 500 pounds...could be fairly confident that the accusations would be ignored by the authorities or deflected by their husbands through suits for slander against their accusers.”²⁴

A claim made by Karlsen that is often overlooked by other scholars is how men that confessed were treated compared to their female counterparts: “Men who confessed to witchcraft outside of the Salem outbreak were punished to be sure—but whereas most confessing women were taken at their word and executed, confessing men were almost all rebuked as liars.”²⁵ Men were viewed as not just physically stronger, but also spiritually and morally stronger, and therefore less likely to succumb to temptation, and thus could not fall easily to inducement by the devil and witchcraft. The courts still took accusations against men seriously, just like the accusations made against women; however, when it came time for punishment historically in most of the world, men were treated less severely.²⁶ Yet when examining the records and looking at the men of the community around Salem, it is evident that men there were treated just as severely as women and were taken to the gallows at a rate higher than experienced in the past.

Sources

²⁴ Ibid., 79-80.

²⁵ Ibid., 52.

²⁶ Ibid.

This qualitative study of the Salem Witch Trials and their aftermath draws upon evidence from the leading historians on the events of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts and from the primary source records edited by Bernard Rosenthal et al. in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, as well as the University of Virginia Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project. The UVA database offers primary sources from the time of the trials and depositions. For this study, the site maintained by the University of Virginia provided access to the Essex County records books that detailed the events individuals had been involved in during years preceding the trials. These records helped to paint a picture of the type of individuals and families that were being accused. In their work, Bernard Rosenthal et al. publish the records kept by the Commonwealth at the conclusion of the trials when the Return of Twelve Ministers, written on July 8, 1703, began calling first for the clearing of names for those who had lost family members. This plea by the ministers set the stage for the families of Philip English, George Jacobs, Jr., and relatives of several others in May 1709 to petition the government asking for reparations and the continued clearing and restoring of their names and reputations. The Commonwealth listened and formed a committee of five individuals who traveled to Salem in September 1710 to hear and receive the claims from families seeking compensation. These records and first-hand accounts illustrate how much pain families were suffering, but at the same time hint at how much the families wanted to move beyond the events by their willingness to accept the monetary amounts the appointed committee was willing to offer.

In addition to textual research, I also committed to personal investigation of the history of Salem and New England. Over the course of my research, I made three trips to Salem and the surrounding region, as well as Maine. While in Salem, I was fortunate to view documents housed in the Peabody Essex collection as well as the local library. I also traveled to the Danvers Archives and spoke directly with town historian and trials descendant Richard Trask, who provided invaluable insight into the social perspective of the trials, as well as assisting to find more primary source documents. On the final trip, I traveled to Portland, Maine to visit their historical archives. The archives yielded information about George Burroughs and his time in Maine. Additionally, I was able to meet with Hope Shelley, who resides in Maine and wrote a book about the history of Wells, which includes the time Burroughs resided in Maine. It was through Ms. Shelley that I acquired the image of the map detailing the route on which Burroughs was taken back to Salem to face his accusers.

While many primary sources were utilized in this dissertation, additional resources from secondary sources also provided details and expansive commentary that provided clarity and continuity with the overall arch of the Witch Trial narrative.

Chapters

This dissertation is divided into three parts consisting of a total of eight chapters. The first portion of the dissertation focuses on the Puritans themselves and their journey from England to Massachusetts. The first two chapters reveal what life was like for Puritans in England prior to sailing to Massachusetts, their life and the organization of

their community once they arrived in New England, and how gender roles established societal norms. Chapter One traces the history of the Puritans from England to the New World. One element that flows through the early history of the American colonies, and Massachusetts specifically, is the religious beliefs of the colonists. Chapter One focuses on the pre-colonial Puritan beliefs and followers, documenting their reasons for leaving for the New World. Their beliefs shaped the colonists' views on life, family, and history, which impacted every aspect of society. The restrictions and impositions of the prevailing church doctrines in England stifled the Puritans' views of religion, and they sought refuge in the colonies. The chapter then follows the emerging Massachusetts colony as it grew and developed with the influx of many new settlers, some with different beliefs and views of religion and life. The struggles of living on the frontier, along with incorporating the religious ceremonies and beliefs into that life, set up much of the background for the hysteria of the Witch Trials. Location, distance, and individual beliefs caused challenges for the Salem township leaders, especially with regard to the expansion of the church into the distant reaches of the new colony. In addition, many of the new settlers did not wholly follow the Puritan tradition, which set up additional controversy and challenges.

Chapter Two discusses limitations and expectations imposed on the sexes in society and the impact those constraints had in setting the stage for the events of 1692. This chapter identifies the effects of the prescribed sexual norms on social status, culture, and religious life, which for most individuals was determined based on their biological sex. Men were assigned the role of protector and head of the family, while women were expected to remain subservient to men and assume the role of caring for them and the

children. Women were seen as the caregivers and, apart from situations such as men being away from home for extended periods of time, were expected to remain in a passive role.

The middle portion of the dissertation discusses the trials and highlights several key male participants and victims. Chapters Three and Four recount the events that occurred during the trials, followed by the reparations by the state and church in the decades following the trials. The trials are discussed in the third chapter, highlighting the evidence used to convict many of the individuals, and the legal, ethical, and religious arguments that ensued. What started as a case of “hysteria” among several young girls blossomed into a storm of accusations and executions ensnaring some of the highest individuals in the colony. After the trials, the government and church recognized the injustice that was done and sought to compensate the individuals and families for their losses. Chapter Four starts with the committee that traveled to Salem and met with those who were seeking compensation for the loss of their family members. The committee ultimately recommended payment to the families who had a member condemned or executed. On December 17, 1711, the committee authorized 578 pounds to be distributed to kin of those they deemed eligible for the funds. After analyzing the records in Rosenthal et al.’s *Records of the Salem Witch Hunt*, it was apparent many families just wanted to put this horrible event behind them. The reparations and remonstrations were not equally distributed, and this chapter discusses the role gender and social status played in determining the value of the reparations.

Chapters Five through Seven focus on three specific male victims whose families were compensated far more than those of the female victims, identifying their differing

circumstance to show that no matter where in the social strata a man was, his value was measurably larger than the value considered for any female victim. Some of the most prominent and well-known victims of the trials were men, but few writers have focused on them as a categorical class. The men who lost their lives in Salem came from all levels of society, Proctor and English were both very successful in their own regards. Proctor has amassed a large tract of land as well and a tavern, while English was a successful merchant. Willard like the previous men liked to make investments and sought to purchase land and turn it for a profit. Corey and Jacobs were both elderly, opinioned and poorly educated. Samuel Wardwell just as Corey had an extensive farm but dabbled in fortune telling. Finally Reverend Burroughs wasn't a successful merchant or owner of a large tract of land but rather like all of the men previously mentioned had been married multiple times and had many children. These three chapters expand on the lives and experiences of some of those men: Giles Corey, Reverend George Burroughs, and Philip English. Giles Corey was a curious old man that liked knowing the happenings around the community. He was uneducated but through hard work had managed to accrue a large tract of land and had become fairly successful on his farm. Life had been hard on him, and he was residing with his third wife at the time of the trials. Martha Corey was a religious woman and attended church regularly. She had cautioned Giles to stay away from the events that had become part of the trials. She even went so far as to hide the saddle for his horse to prevent him from being near the depositions and indictments. In time, Martha's name was uttered from one of the girls and some men were sent to question Martha about her role in the hysteria. After interviewing her, she was brought in for questioning as she stood accused. Although she

denied any involvement, Giles made what he thought was an innocent comment. He talked about all her reading and how at times he was unable to remember his Bible verses. This admission added to the evidence that she had made a pact with the devil. Corey did not intend to send his wife to prison, and it would not take long until his name was brought into the courtroom. After being arrested and knowing that he was innocent, Corey refused to plead to the charges set before him. Without a plea, the court could move forward with his death sentence, pressing him to death outside the Salem jail.

Philip English was a successful merchant in the colony, who had come to Salem from the Jersey Isle. French being his first language made him seem like an outsider to the English colonists. Additionally, he was an Anglican and did not fit the traditional Puritan mold in the colony. Although different from most, he was still able to rise to the top and build a very successful merchant fleet and lived in a large home in Salem. During the trials, he and his wife Mary were both named as witches. His case is different from the majority as he was a man of a higher economic standing and a very successful businessman, while the data show most accused were from lower incomes or had made life decisions that could be called into question. English and his wife were also treated differently from the others due to their financial standing, and rather than being confined to the cold, damp jail, they were able to stay in a home in Boston. In addition to being held prisoner in a home, they were allowed to move about the city during the day and attend church services. English and his wife had the economic means and help to flee the colony and the charges, so they hid in New York until the trials ended. When they returned to Salem, it is said they were well received. Yet when they returned to their home, their warehouses had been looted. English went on to sue the colony for over one

thousand pounds in losses. The courts refused to award him what he sought. When they did render a verdict of 150 pounds, he viewed it as an insult and refused to accept the money. English remained in Salem and worked to return his business to the level of success it had achieved prior to the trials.

Chapter Seven centers on the third man in my dissertation, the Reverend George Burroughs. Burroughs had come to Salem to receive steady employment in the ministry after fleeing the Native American attacks on the Maine frontier. His time in Salem had been a difficult time as the parsonage was not suitable for inhabitants upon his arrival. As he and his family needed a place to stay, John Putnam, Sr. and his wife Rebecca opened their home to the Burroughs family. Once the parsonage was ready, Burroughs and his family moved in. However, life still did not go smoothly for Burroughs. The community was slow in paying his salary, and then his first wife Hannah passed away. With so little of his salary having been paid, he had to borrow money to pay for Hannah's funeral. John Putnam advanced him the money and Burroughs continued his ministry to the community. Eventually the community stopped paying him completely as he had been unable to stop the feuding taking place within the community. Once this happened, he took his second wife Sarah Ruck and children and sought employment elsewhere. He returned to the Maine frontier, where he was received with open arms and could continue to deliver the gospel. While at dinner in his home in 1692, he was met with an arrest warrant and returned to Salem. His unique position as a man of the cloth brings a new perspective to the trials. Up until this time, women of the community or men with a connection to an accused woman had been called out. Burroughs stood out as a man of the cloth with no female family member accused.

The final chapter focuses on the impact of the trials on families and individuals, as well as the differences in reparations provided to the survivors and victims' families based on gender and social status. Chapter Eight evaluates the reparations awarded to each family and the way in which male victims were compensated at a higher rate than female victims, both in financial and religious domains. This chapter brings the dissertation to a close with a discussion of the clearing of names, reversals of attainders, and the paying of reparations considering gender norms and social status. The influence and power that men had in Salem was reduced for those that were condemned, and the restoration of that power was one of the goals of the reparations. The argument stands that a man who had been accused and condemned lost a degree of power within the community, however with the concept of reparations and the reversal of their attainders, they were able to get some of their power restored. In the case of those who were hanged, reparations which cleared their names allowed the families to return to their position in society as put forward by Joan Scott. While many of the victims and their families sought compensation, they left it up to the committee/government to determine the amount they would receive. Other families were clearer in their requests and the amounts sought were honored. The data shows the families of men who had suffered death clearly received more money than those that only lost a female family member.

Chapter 1 – Puritans: Setting the Stage for 1692

Chapter Abstract

In order to attempt to understand 1692 and the aftermath of the Salem Witch Trials, one must understand who the individuals were that played a role in the event, the goals of the community they lived within, their beliefs and how those beliefs came to be. The early settlers that constitute this narrative were a group that chose to leave their home country due to religious beliefs and persecution in their original homelands. The concept of Puritanism as presently understood arose during the Elizabethan times in England, the era from about 1558–1603. This was the era known for its new ways of thinking and rise in exploration to new parts of the globe. Along with Spain, Portugal, and other European nations, England expanded its colonies and influence across the globe, from Asia to North America. Parts of society were experiencing a rebirth with the rise of the Renaissance and the willingness to investigate a variety of areas such as religion and science. Although there were some groups with the financial and educational means within major cities across Europe promoting experimentation with religion and science, most individuals continued to reside in small and rural communities throughout England. Remoteness meant some changes came more slowly. Rural families often consisted of four or five members, with neighbors working together for the good of the land and through a social contract based on tradition.²⁷ The families occupied the center of the

²⁷ John Marlowe, *Puritan Tradition in English Life* (London: The Cresset Press, 1956), 2; Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 2nd ed. (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1995), 101-02.

village and farmed the land on the outskirts.²⁸ Neighbors were accustomed to helping each other in a communal environment, as the work was long and tiring. These early communities preceded the Enclosure Movement, the period of lords buying up common land in an effort to increase the amount of available pastoral land for their own benefit rather than allowing it to remain as communal land for the community to use for grazing. Thus, the early Puritan communities were able to rely on farming without fences, known as open field agriculture. The lack of fences made it easier to get onto the neighbors' parcels and assist with tending or preparing the land for crops. As Puritans stressed the Bible and good deeds, helping their neighbors could help in their quest to reach salvation.

Historical Perspective of the English Origins of Puritanism

During the fifteenth century, the Catholic church and its ideologies dominated society, especially on the European continent. After Luther composed his 95 Theses to point out the corruption of the church—including its focus on raising money through the selling of indulgences in order to purchase more artwork for the collection of the popes as well as fund St. Peter's Basilica—a shift began to occur. Theologians such as Luther and John Calvin began to speak up and protest the excesses of the Pope and church. The term “puritan” was imparted on the nonconformists as they attempted to make church services simpler and to interpret the Bible in a much more literal fashion. The Puritans saw the corruption and wanted a service that focused on their spiritual needs. They sought to

²⁸ Gragg, 28.

have services focus on the spiritual rather than on the fancy vestments, artwork, and stained glass that were becoming more prominent in the traditional churches. The Puritans were a simple people and wanted a simple, straightforward church service.

In order to fulfill his obligation to produce a male heir to the throne, King Henry VIII sought to divorce his current wife, Anne Boleyn, and find a new one. However, this was prohibited under the doctrine of the Catholic church, so the King broke away from the church in 1534 through the Act of Succession and the Act of Supremacy. In its place, he formed the Anglican Church, which established the English monarch as head of the church. Henry VIII desired church services to remain the same as they had under the Catholic doctrine, but without allegiance to the Papacy of Rome.²⁹ This change of leadership allowed Henry VIII to be the leader and make the rules of the church rather than relying on the beliefs of the current pope and established Catholic practices.

Under Henry VIII, Puritans believed that the Anglican Church had not achieved what they viewed as necessary reforms, as the church still retained many of the features of a Catholic service. Some in England began to believe the clergy were not as educated on scripture as they ought to be in order to adequately perform their ministerial duties.³⁰ According to professor G.M. Trevelyan, Puritanism “is the religion of those who wished either to purify the usage of the Established Church from the taint of the Papacy, or to worship separately by forms so purified.”³¹ They believed there was a lack of understanding of the words of the Bible and were suspicious of the clergy’s resulting

²⁹ K. David Goss, *Daily Life During the Salem Witch Trials* (Santa Barbara, California: The Greenwood Press, 2012), 2-3.

³⁰ Marlowe, 8.

³¹ Ibid.

interpretation of God's message, and this was a critical factor in the establishment of the Puritan religion. Puritans began to read the Bible without interpretation from clergy and used it to guide and explain everyday occurrences around them. Subsequently, when Elizabeth took the crown in 1558, two schools of Puritan thought emerged, the first seeking toleration for practices outside the church, while the second attempted to change the ways of thought within the church. Because of their distrust of the clergy and Papal authority, both schools first looked at individual salvation and then at how to influence society, both of which would become hallmark ideas of the Puritans and their mission.³² It would be during the reign of Elizabeth I that many future Puritans would become nonconformists and seekers of church reform.³³

Much of the Puritan belief system derived from the beliefs of theologian John Calvin, including the belief of predestination.³⁴ Calvin believed that God had infinite power as demonstrated by all he created.³⁵ With the power to create, God also had the power to determine who would be saved, as he already knew the actions individuals would take throughout their lives. Puritans differed from Calvin in that they followed an even more strict, literal interpretation of the Bible, and preferred to be called Biblicists rather than Calvinists,³⁶ as they did not feel the term Calvinist accurately represented

³² Ibid., 10.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Baker, 46.

³⁵ Emory Elliott, "The Legacy of Puritanism," National Humanities Center, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/legacy.htm>.

³⁶ Allen Carden, *Puritan Christianity in America: Religion and Life in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990), 47.

their belief system. Although much of their ideology can be traced back to his writings, as a whole they were cautious about looking toward one person for all their beliefs.³⁷

For Puritans, both family and community were critical in working together to promote the society and salvation. The Puritan orthodoxy believed all people were derived from Adam and Eve, a tenet which became known as the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works stressed the belief that God had pledged eternal happiness to Adam and Eve and their posterity contingent on full obedience to God's will.³⁸ God had created the universe, including the earth and all life, and as long as humans avoided the temptations placed before them, they would prosper. Adam had committed the original sin, breaking the Covenant with God, and believers interpreted this crime as a sign of what must be overcome in order to reach salvation. Puritans believed people existed in sin because Adam broke the covenant, leading to suffering, illness, and death. If adhered to, this covenant would ensure that God would treat them well.³⁹

In addition to applying to the individual, Puritans believed the Covenant of Works also applied to government, but not simply a ruler who claimed divine right, and that a government should be comprised of saints, those chosen to be considered worthy of God's good graces.⁴⁰ Those who subscribed to the Puritan mindset felt the monarchy should have a limited role in their lives. In order to prosper and succeed, entire nations would need to be committed to a strong relationship with God. In the Puritan eyes,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Bremer, 18.

³⁹ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*, 3rd ed., Library of American Biography (New York: Pearson, 2007), 15-16.

⁴⁰ Marlowe, 60.

England was failing in that promise.⁴¹ They believed that individuals had the right to critique those in government positions, and if they were failing in the mission to protect their subjects, then they ought to be replaced with those who would adhere to the mission of God and help them on their mission to salvation. Allen Carden states in *Puritan Christianity in America: Religion and Life in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts*, “Puritanism was concerned primarily with man’s depravity and God’s plan of salvation, and as a spiritual rather than a social movement it gained adherents from all classes in England.”⁴² Puritans believed social classes existed as part of God’s plan for an orderly society, with some being subordinate to others.⁴³ Within this belief framework, all individuals had different levels of social rank and some were meant to be superior while others were destined to occupy the inferior ranks of the social structure. This system would come to play out in the trials as accusations were made.

According to Carden and Bremer, many subscribers to Puritanism were members of the middle class and were owners of small farms, artisans, or lawyers, and although their methods of employment were varied, they all shared a belief in study of the scripture and thus the importance in knowing how to read.⁴⁴ In their view, the church was about a relationship with God and therefore needed to be focused on obtaining salvation for the individual. The Bible was the vessel for the relationship and as such, the text should be the one and only focus. In their efforts to seek reform of the Anglican

⁴¹ Morgan, 63.

⁴² Carden, 23.

⁴³ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 18.

⁴⁴ Bremer, 28.

Church, Puritans believed the church should abandon some of the ceremonies and traditions which did not support individual salvation, such as passages spoken in Latin, vestments, stained glass, and singing of the psalms, which they still saw as connected to the Catholic Church.⁴⁵ Puritans saw these as unnecessary and frivolous in their mission to have a pure relationship with God. In their view, the money spent to adorn churches, as well as by Archbishops on servants, was ill used when Puritan priests could not support themselves and many local Puritan merchants had to take up collections to support their ministers.⁴⁶ The money could have been used to help communities or to provide more education to the clergy, thus benefitting the lives of many and allowing the clergy to better take care of their flock.

In 1590, William Perkins, a prominent Puritan voice at the time, authored the *Treatise Tending unto a Declaration Whether a Man Be in the Estate of Damnation or in the Estate of Grace*. Perkins stated that individuals were responsible for knowing their own soul.⁴⁷ It would be this statement that furthered the belief in the Covenant of Grace and working to ensure that one's future would include being of the elect or those chosen to receive salvation, the Covenant of Grace allowed for possible individual redemption; individuals who repented could receive salvation for their souls.⁴⁸ It was through ideas such as this that Puritans began to scrutinize all aspects of their lives to ensure that they were one of those chosen for salvation.

⁴⁵ Morgan, *John Winthrop*, 5.

⁴⁶ Bremer, 26.

⁴⁷ Sarah Rivett, *Science of the Soul in Colonial New England* (United States: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 36.

⁴⁸ Carden, 73.

By the 1590s Puritanism had continued to gain more followers throughout England. During this time period, the practice of individual churches hiring ministers and of personal Bible study also became more common.⁴⁹ Desiring to limit the role of the British government and ensure they were being guided by those familiar with God's message, Puritans hired preachers who had graduated from Oxford and Cambridge and thus had solid knowledge of the scripture. Puritans' desire for knowledgeable clergy required hiring those they knew had studied and interpreted the Bible as the foundation of their education. Personal Bible study allowed individuals to read scripture and apply it to their individual lives as they pursued salvation. This stood in contrast to the practice employed throughout this time of the government appointing ministers, to control and influence the messages being communicated to the laity. Puritans understood, in their system of beliefs through their covenant and through the concept of original sin, that government could not absolve an individual of their sins, as all were sinners and only those chosen by God through predestination would be subject to salvation.

The Succession of James I and the Drive to Settle the New World

In 1603, James I succeeded Elizabeth. James, a Presbyterian, had ruled Scotland and believed he had the experience and knowledge to rule England effectively. He did not take into account how to work with Parliament, which Elizabeth had done well, and rather than reform religious practices, he became repressive toward the Puritans after

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

siding with the bishops during the Conference at Hampton Court in 1604.⁵⁰ Those of the Puritan faith had sought to work with James I and hoped for change, however he made only a few changes to the Book of Common Prayer rather than larger sweeping changes desired by the Puritans. James I outlawed the Geneva version of the Bible on which the Puritans relied, and had his new version published, which left out notes that explained the passages in Puritan terms. Not only had these notes been valuable to keep individuals on a righteous path, so interpretation of scripture was always the same and not open to questions or personal opinion, but more importantly, King James I's removal of these notes threatened the Puritan code of keeping political power out of religion, as Puritans opposed the idea of divine right. James I went on to make possession of the Geneva version a felony, flexing his muscles as a divine right monarch.⁵¹ With a government they felt was not addressing their needs, many believers in Puritan values sought refuge in a place where they could practice their religion free of outside influence. Those who moved to the New World wanted a home in which they could worship God without the interference of politics. Monarchs such as Henry VIII and James I had made changes to religion to fit their needs. Those who followed the Puritan ideals just wanted a place where they could follow God's plan as outlined in the Bible.

James I was interested in exploring new land for England and strengthening his religious stronghold. He had chartered the Virginia Company in 1606 to convert Native

⁵⁰ Ning Kang, "Puritanism and Its Impact Upon American Values," *Review of European Studies* 1, no. 2 (2009): 1.

⁵¹ Paul Flesher "Religion Today", 2007, <https://religion-today.blogspot.com/2007/10/bible-battles-king-james-vs-puritans.html>. May 28, 2018.

Americans to Christianity.⁵² In accordance with the Massachusetts Bay Charter granted by James I on November 3, 1620, and renewed by Charles I on March 4, 1629, all men who paid their own transportation costs to the New World received fifty acres of land.⁵³ The promise of land away from the King's influence on religion made the location appealing. Most early Puritans originated from East Anglia (comprising the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire) on the east coast of England. They were seeking to escape Anglican church reforms toward uniformity initiated by Archbishop William Laud during the reign of Charles I.⁵⁴ The Great Migration occurred during the 1620s through 1640s and individuals came from all levels of society. They included the old and very young as well as children, parents, masters, and servants.⁵⁵ According to Carden, between 1630–1640, over eighteen thousand mostly Puritan Englishmen headed for New England.⁵⁶ Many of these individuals were looking for a place that would not be as repressive to their views of religion, and as Morgan stated, "Puritans came to New England not merely to save their souls but to establish a 'visible' kingdom of God, a society where outward conduct would be according to God's laws, a society where a smooth, honest, civil life would prevail in family, church, and state."⁵⁷

The followers of the Puritan faith had spent years planning the trip, along with fasting, praying, and saving. They believed such a trip would transform their relationship

⁵² Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 7.

⁵³ Charles Upham, *Salem Witchcraft* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1867), 11.

⁵⁴ Rivett, 72.

⁵⁵ Butler, 56.

⁵⁶ Carden, 30.

⁵⁷ Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 3.

with God.⁵⁸ Although the journey across the Atlantic would allow them time to reflect on their connection with God, they kept sight of their primary goal, religious freedom. Those who endured the trip believed they ought to be free to practice their one true faith.⁵⁹ Upon arrival in New England, those first immigrants wanted a church whose foundation was the word of God and headed by Jesus. Cotton Mather, who was born in Boston in 1663, would support this notion: “It is the Lord Jesus Christ, as GOD-MAN, who is The Head of the Church, and in that capacity, we have our Union with Him.”⁶⁰ Mather’s words reflected the commitment to adhere to the belief of self-determination, in contrast to the belief in monarchies dictating how one was to worship.

However, not all those who made the journey to Puritan-established New World communities would be deemed worthy enough to take up residence and receive membership in the church and the colony. According to Allen Carden, of the one thousand new arrivals aboard various ships, only seventy-nine were added to the church rolls. This low number of admissions reflects the Puritans’ very strict rules regarding membership. Those seeking membership had to profess how God had influenced or been a part of their lives and explain why God had chosen them for salvation.⁶¹ Many of the arrivals were outspoken about their religious beliefs and welcomed a land without the influential proximity of the monarchy. Some of those who did make the journey were considered Orthodox Puritans who wanted to get away from the kings, bishops, and other sects in order to practice their faith and grow their relationship with God, even while

⁵⁸ Rivett, 70.

⁵⁹ Bremer, 92.

⁶⁰ Carden, 99.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

knowing that some of them would never receive salvation due to the concept of predestination.⁶²

John Winthrop and the City Upon a Hill

John Winthrop was born into the gentry class around 1558 in England and attended Trinity College, eventually becoming an attorney at the Court of Wards and Liveries, where he sold rights to the ward to the highest bidder.⁶³ He was also passionate about religion. In 1629, after agonizing over the decision to sell his English estate, he joined the Massachusetts Bay Company and committed to sailing to America. Although not the first to leave England, in March 1630 Winthrop, after much deliberation, embarked on a trip to the New World with approximately one thousand others.⁶⁴

While they were all aware that the passage would be long and arduous, the trip across the Atlantic was not easy on Winthrop and the others. The voyage took its toll, and travelers often turned to scripture to explain the twists and turns along the way and to pray for their continued safety. While on the *Arbella* and preaching to the passengers his “A Modell of Christian Charity,” Winthrop envisioned a “godly community in which congregants become the visible earthly members of the invisible body of Christ.”⁶⁵ Becoming a true Puritan was not an easy undertaking. Winthrop understood that one had to devote their life to seeking salvation and that evil was lurking everywhere. His beliefs

⁶² Roach, xvii.

⁶³ Morgan, *John Winthrop*, 18.

⁶⁴ Carden, 29.

⁶⁵ Rivett, 71.

in Puritanism would require him to reform his new community in the image of God's holy kingdom, "we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us" and he was aware the journey they had undertaken would not be an easy matter.⁶⁶ In his speech, Winthrop outlined the society that they would be establishing in the New World: "In all times, some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie, others meane and in subjection."⁶⁷ The message of the speech became more relevant as they got closer to land; one group was meant to govern society and the others were to be subject to their laws. Everyone had a place and were not to move out of their station.

Winthrop, although wanting the colony to practice religion according to his ideas, understood religion alone would not make the colony secure. To be successful, the colony would need laws along with religion to keep order and harmony. His words on the *Arbella* were the start of an experiment that, if followed, would meet with success, and if not, would be destined to fail. Either way, those of Puritan faith saw the journey to the New World as what God had planned. Winthrop and his followers represented the beginning of what was to come to the shores of New England, and the success of the colony depended on it withstanding the test of time.

With his sermons and charisma, Winthrop was chosen to be the colonists' leader when they reached the New England shore. He was elected governor of the colony on October 29, 1629, replacing John Endicott.⁶⁸ The Puritans had trusted him as their

⁶⁶ Morgan, *John Winthrop*, 5.

⁶⁷ Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1996), 9.

⁶⁸ Upham, 12.

spiritual guide thus far in their journey because he understood their mission to have a home where they could follow their interpretation of a suitable relationship with God. Winthrop believed that in order to survive, the community would need not just right doctrine, right worship, and right laws, but also and especially right hearts.⁶⁹ His ship would be one of many that transported reformers seeking new homes. Between 1637 and 1639, more than one thousand people would arrive in Boston to reside in Winthrop's "city on a hill."

Before Winthrop took over the governorship of the colony, earlier arrivals to Salem had signed a covenant in early 1629 authored by John Endicott and minister Samuel Skelton. It was hoped that the document would lead them in ecclesiastical as well as political matters. The document avowed their desire of "establishing a society based on Christian communalism — on mutual watchfulness and tenderness."⁷⁰ Although the intent was evident in the minds of the Puritans, the reality was the majority did not sign it, as only thirty of the two hundred citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were actually accepted as church members.⁷¹ England was experiencing economic changes during this time period. The enclosure movement was taking shape, although not to same degree of the eighteenth century. The quest to turn community land into more productive land for manorial lords caused displacement of some community members. "The wandering poor were more worrisome," notes David Thomas Konig, "for the enclosure

⁶⁹ Abram C. Van Engen, *Sympathetic Puritans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 26.

⁷⁰ David Thomas Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

of common fields had dispossessed thousands and produced a population of menacing ‘sturdy beggars’ who streamed into London or wandered about the countryside.”⁷² These displaced persons created a need for relief, which the crown had to address. Many feared the increase in crime attributed to the beggars and disapproved of the changes by the government. As followers of Puritan ideals, those of the elect were especially frustrated. Some of those who did not sign the document were in the colony to escape a government and religion that they did not believe in. Such a low number deemed worthy to sign it would clearly leave its message hard to enforce.

In order to become the type of home that Winthrop and the others who traveled during the Great Migration imagined, a great amount of work needed to transpire in order to survive the new environment. Religion had an obvious role, but a civil component needed to exist as well. The founders of the colony used their charter for “settling of the formes and ceremonies of government and magistracy... impositions of lawfull fynes, mulcts, imprisonment, or other lawfull corrections, according to the course of other corporations in this our realme of England.”⁷³ The founders’ form of government continued to evolve as the population continued to grow and new situations developed that warranted a legal intervention.

The Organization of the Colonies According to Puritan Standards

⁷² Ibid., 4.

⁷³ Ibid., 19.

Life was not easy in the colonies, as there was a great deal that needed to be done to survive at a basic level. The challenges encompassed many situations, from cultivating land to creating laws that would need to continue to evolve to meet the ever-changing environment created as more moved to the colonies. Puritan communities were established to promote the welfare of the group, not just the individual. The Covenant of Grace pertained to individual salvation, while the Covenant of Works pertained to the salvation of the community. The behavior and choices made by the community determined whether the community would thrive or fail.⁷⁴ The original colonists who had come over from East Anglia and other similar locales had practiced owning and working the land collectively. Most of the families that occupied land in New England in the late seventeenth century lived in rural areas, outlying towns, and villages. Puritans believed that the land needed to be improved and that failure to complete this was akin to residing in the wilderness. They associated the wilderness with corruption, chaos, or evil; to the Puritans wilderness was like an empty soul in need of Christ.⁷⁵ Many of the colonists maintained farms in an effort to support their communities.⁷⁶ In addition to farming, many of the men also held other occupations as weavers, millers, or barrel makers.⁷⁷ By taking on second occupations, farmers had ways to generate revenue and support themselves and their families during the seasons when farming wasn't as time-

⁷⁴ Carden, 72.

⁷⁵ Susan Juster, *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics & Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 15.

⁷⁶ Goss, 134.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

consuming. This practice would remain in effect until 1675, when it would no longer be as feasible with a growing population and less open land.

Land in New England was often granted to groups of colonists, reflecting the idea that individuals should not be more important than the overall community.⁷⁸ As more people arrived in the colony, Massachusetts Puritans organized towns and churches on a contractual model, which encouraged individuals and the community to be involved in covenants.⁷⁹ The colonial New England system of land grants did not favor individuals, as land was viewed as a gift from God. Puritans believed the land needed to be turned into a sacred place and saw the conversion of the land as similar to the conversion of souls.⁸⁰ In their view, just as Satan could tempt the soul, the land in its native state needed to be cleared of the Native Americans who already lived there and of the existing plants and animals to be productive in order to support the Puritan inhabitants. Granting land to a group was not problematic, as the goal was to build a community and often those who settled in particular areas had traveled from the same region of England, thus sharing similar beliefs and culture. Being chosen by God was critical to their destiny and they knew there was a tremendous responsibility to live up to his ideals, both as individuals and as community members.⁸¹ Puritans believed that if a disaster occurred to the entire community, it was the result of their collective sins. Disaster would demonstrate that individuals were not living up to the standards of the elect and the inhabitants had not

⁷⁸ Bremer, 102.

⁷⁹ Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Foster, "The Puritans' Greatest Achievement: A Study of Social Cohesion in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *The Journal of American History* 60, no. 1 (1973): 12.

⁸⁰ Juster, 14.

⁸¹ Breen and Foster, 12.

demonstrated the art of being good neighbors by looking out for the well-being of their peers. In the Puritans' eyes, the obvious conclusion to draw from a disaster was that they had allowed their neighbors to succumb to temptation. This concept would rear its head as accusations mounted during the Witch Trials.

Some of those who made the voyage to the New World traveled with servants, while others acquired them once they established themselves in the colonies. According to Morgan, "most inhabitants of seventeenth century New England either were or had been 'servants'."⁸² The cost of passage to the New World was not cheap, and some seeking a home in the New World entered into indentured servitude. An indentured servant was an individual who worked without pay for someone else either as a domestic servant or in industry. The category of servitude is a broad category, as many families sent away their children to be apprentices when they were young teenagers. Servants had statuses that varied both economically and socially.⁸³ Unlike slaves, most servants in New England served voluntarily. Servants in New England had the law on their side: masters were expected to treat them with respect, and the law stipulated that if servants could prove the master had mistreated them, they could be set free.⁸⁴ The time they spent in servitude afforded them the opportunity to gain capital and get an education.⁸⁵ The fact that the father was the head of the house and responsible for educating all those in his home ensured that servants had knowledge of the Bible in addition to learning how to read. However, a servant was an employee and therefore had to have the consent of the

⁸² Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 109.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

master to perform tasks other than those they were hired to perform and had to be available to the master at all hours of the day.⁸⁶

In order to protect their communities, all individuals had to promise to obey the civil and religious laws for the benefit of all those around them. The Puritan community only tolerated those of similar beliefs. Belief in the Covenant was so strong that Puritans were leery of newcomers to the community. To remain within the confines of a Puritan establishment, newcomers often had to present evidence of good character before they were allowed to take up residence.⁸⁷ Those wishing to join had to provide examples of how they had placed the good of others ahead of individual gain. Individuals seeking membership to join the community congregation were scrutinized by current members and had to make a confession of faith before being considered for membership.⁸⁸ If an individual was unsure of their status among the saints, ministers offered options to improve upon it. The first option presented was to reform and hope that God agreed, and the second option was to prepare for hell if refusing his grace.⁸⁹ The irony here was that Puritans believed in predestination, the idea carried over from the Catholic Church that all events were willed by God, which was instituted to try and prevent members from straying from what the ministers believed was the proper way to practice religion.

Meetinghouses were located in the center of the town to show their importance to the community as well as the belief that God was the most important aspect of their lives

⁸⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁸⁷ Breen and Foster, 12-13.

⁸⁸ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 148.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 17.

and therefore should be at its center. The early inhabitants of New England used the term “meetinghouse” rather than “church,” as that was the institution they left behind in England. By 1640, the population of New England had reached twenty thousand and there were over forty meetinghouses.⁹⁰ The wealthier and most important members of the community often occupied residences closer to the town center and meetinghouse, while those of lower social standing were often in residences farther from the center.

The early inhabitants of the Massachusetts Bay as well as New Hampshire, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven met in 1646 to define a policy on churches and sought to avoid interference from England in religious matters. Representatives met in Cambridge, Massachusetts and formulated the Cambridge Platform which was ratified in 1648. The Platform, based on Calvinist theory, defined congregational polity and provided for the autonomy of local congregations. The Platform also defined matters of church affairs, ministry, membership, and cooperation among the churches and mandated the use of the word “meetinghouse” rather than “church.”⁹¹

The Central Role of the Church in Colonial Life

As more made the journey, their culture continued to grow based on the concepts of purity and liberty. The church in New England would remain free from the over-the-

⁹⁰ Harry S. Stout, *New England Soul*, 25th Anniversary ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 50.

⁹¹ Jerrold T. Jones, "Meeting House to Church: The Effect of Puritanism on 19th Century New England Church Architecture," (Oak Creek, Wisconsin: The Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, 1992), 3.

top architecture and vestments and rely on the words in the New Testament as much as possible. The plain building style ensured that congregants heard God's message and saw his power. With the fancy adornments and extravagance of the Old World missing, congregants could focus on the words and actions of God and not be distracted by materialism. The orientation of the community around its meetinghouse signified the respect they had for God by placing him in the center of all the residences. Liberty for Puritans was the freedom to construct their society based on their beliefs in an area where it could grow and flourish.⁹²

In order to progress toward a relationship with God, Puritan clergy believed individuals had to complete five stages: election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification.⁹³ Election was the first stage and was decided before one was born, as God made choices of predestination. Vocation consisted of an offer of grace and cooperation from the spirits. Justification was providing proof one should be of the elect based on how their daily life was lived and their deeds performed. Sanctification described how one chose to live and help those around them in the community and was very closely tied to justification. Finally, glorification removed all uncertainties of the status of an individual. It was glorification that cemented the relationship with God. Most ministers, however, believed glorification was only established in the afterlife. Since most people didn't ever make it to glorification, they spent most of their public lives seeking to provide proof of their vocation and justification to the church and community.

⁹² Stout, 15.

⁹³ Bremer, 20.

Churches needed knowledgeable individuals to explain and interpret the word of God, so a church hierarchy was established. Officers consisted of the pastor to encourage the congregation, a teacher that attended to doctrine, ruling elders, and a deacon who managed the church and ensured that care was provided for the poor and those who had become widowed.⁹⁴ After positions within the church were established, the church could begin their mission of helping individuals achieve salvation. The Puritans knew they were always subject to the temptations of Satan and therefore needed spiritual guidance on their path of salvation. The pastor was there to preach the sermons, which congregants internalized. For the Puritans, church attendance was a serious obligation that consisted of more than one trip a week to the community meetinghouse, as sermons were not just delivered on Sunday. The members of the community attended services for all significant community events.⁹⁵ One such event was Election Day, which was held each May. On this day all freemen gathered to elect representatives to the assembly and legislators met to nominate members to the governor's council.⁹⁶ Those in the colony acknowledged they had to obey their governmental leaders but were reminded there was a greater power that had placed all of them in this location, as God had created their society and church. As the government managed daily affairs, the elections were very important to ensure appropriate representation. Election Day would earn its own sermon each year, intended to protect the colonial leaders and hope that their decisions would guide the colony to be successful.

⁹⁴ Stout, 19.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 29.

Ministerial Responsibilities and Obligations in the Colonies

Each congregation in New England had its own minister and followed its own covenant of rules pertaining to membership and communion.⁹⁷ Only those who had received membership within the church, and were therefore deemed worthy, were permitted to take communion. In order to receive the sacraments, one had to complete three steps: conviction of sin, humiliation, and self-emptying. By taking the steps of admitting to the sin, professing it in public, and emptying one's soul so repentance could occur, one was allowed the right to participate in communion.⁹⁸ Those of the Puritan faith recognized two sacraments, the Lord's Supper and baptism.⁹⁹ The Lord's Supper took place one morning a month and was restricted to members only. Baptism was open to children and adults. The baptismal ceremony often occurred at the conclusion of afternoon Sabbath services. For children to be baptized they had to be children of congregational members in good standing. It was understood baptism was necessary in the quest to receive salvation, as the baptized were sealed in the Covenant of Grace and the act confirmed that they were then guaranteed salvation by the church.

The ministers in charge of the early congregations and the people's purity had originally been trained in England. These ministers would earn the name "first generation" due to the time they became "men of the cloth," or clergy members. These

⁹⁷ Elliott, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/legacy.htm>.

⁹⁸ Rivett, 101.

⁹⁹ Bremer, 110.

leaders who trained from 1600–1640 believed that no area of Puritan life fell outside God’s words and that there was a scripture for everything.¹⁰⁰ The job of these leaders would differ from future ministers. It was this group of first-generation ministers that looked to the situation in England that had caused them to move to America and use many of those experiences as a basis, along with the Bible, for their sermons. As the first generation of ministers aged and the second generation assumed the pulpit, the lines between the classes in the colonies became less clear, as the aristocracy was not as pronounced on the frontier. The children who had once been dependent on their parents were now becoming independent.¹⁰¹ The second-generation ministers experienced a decline in church membership in the 1650s, because the children did not experience the same struggles as the previous generation and therefore had not undergone a conversion experience necessary to obtain membership in the church.¹⁰² This new generation was not as committed to their faith, as they had not experienced the struggles of previous generations, and consequently did not promote the importance of religion in society as had those who had experienced the monarchy.

In addition to leading the congregation in Sunday services, ministers were tasked with various other duties. Ministers were responsible for visiting congregation members at home, providing tutoring and catechisms to youth, as well as farming their own land.¹⁰³ Although ministers had contracts in the communities they served, the contracts did not meet all their daily needs. Some contracts provided for firewood and particular types of

¹⁰⁰ Stout, 41.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 33.

grain; however, fruits, vegetables, meat, and butter were often not part of the negotiations. Ministers, much like others in the community, were essentially employed in two occupations. The ministers were responsible for taking care of the spiritual and emotional needs of their congregants, but also responsible for growing or negotiating other necessities for survival on the frontier. The ministerial contract between Salem Village and Samuel Parris would become part of the Salem narrative as well as the contract between the community and George Burroughs.

Ministers such as Samuel Parris believed “the sermon served as the primary medium of communication and the sole avenue of spiritual interpretation concerning community affairs.”¹⁰⁴ During the week leading to the Sunday sermon, a minister would spend a great deal of time in his study working on the sermon for that week’s Sunday service in addition to the lecture for Thursday. The sermons presented to the congregation were usually based on one verse of biblical text, which would be placed in historical context.¹⁰⁵ Writing the weekly sermons was not an easy task. The minister had three groups of congregants he had to keep in mind while composing the service. He had to preach to those who thought they were among the elect for salvation, those who were unsure of their status, and those who were among the sinners; the latter two groups made up the majority of the congregation.¹⁰⁶ Services for the community often began at nine in the morning with the pastor leading the congregation in a prayer that would last

¹⁰⁴ James F. Cooper Jr. and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *The Sermon Notebook of Samuel Parris, 1689-1694*, vol. 66 (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts distributed by the University of Virginia Press, 1993), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Carden, 120.

¹⁰⁶ Reis, 15.

approximately fifteen minutes. Upon completion of the prayer, a psalm was sung, followed by a chapter reading from the Bible, another psalm, and then the sermon was preached.¹⁰⁷ Sermons would typically last for an hour, followed again by a lengthy prayer and another psalm. After the psalm, the service often ended, and would be followed by a second service that would begin at 2:00 p.m., causing most Puritans to spend six hours in the meetinghouse each Sunday.¹⁰⁸

Colonial Governance and the Influence of the Church on Laws

As the community continued to grow, it became more evident that the community needed both a strong ecclesiastical law as well as effective civil governance for the population. Civil law was becoming more necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all those who were residing in the colony. In 1641, with the population increasing, Reverend Nathaniel Ward authored the Massachusetts Body of Liberties. This document was the first code of law created by Europeans in New England. The document drew from English laws and replaced common law.¹⁰⁹ For example, the Puritans had always acknowledged a belief in the father being the head of every family, and if anything were to happen to the family it would be a reflection on him. As part of the 1641 Body of Liberties, among other statutes, safeguards were put in place that said husbands could only hit their wives in self-defense. This clause would be amended in 1650 to become

¹⁰⁷ Carden, 116.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Goss, 30.

gender-neutral; however, prosecutions for spousal abuse were low, as neighbors looking to protect each other from sin often intervened before any crimes could be prosecuted.¹¹⁰

Once established within the community, the church operated independently of state and government control. Given the prior setup in England and the control the monarchy was able to yield over church affairs, it was important to the Puritans to continue to practice their religion in the purest form without the influence of government. It only made sense that the church and the state would operate independently of each other in New England. When the Puritans arrived in the New World, they made a concerted effort to separate the ecclesiastical and civil courts, and a measure to keep individuals from holding office in both civilian and ecclesiastical government was passed in New England by a vote in 1632.¹¹¹ Although Puritans believed they should be allowed to practice religion without the influence of the government, they subscribed to a belief that the state set the religion to keep heresy and immorality at bay.¹¹² Each congregation was responsible for being self-sufficient and choosing their own officers.¹¹³ These rules supported the concept put forward in the Cambridge platform allowing congregations to choose their own leaders, decide how to admit new members, and develop their own policy for excommunication.

The Puritan communities of New England had three components. The church was at the center and was believed to form the soul of each community, essential to

¹¹⁰ Elaine Forman Crane, *Witches, Wifebeaters, and Whores: Common Law and Common Folk in Early America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), 86.

¹¹¹ Bremer, 60.

¹¹² Stout, 73.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

helping people not stray in their quest for salvation. Families came after the church and served as the heart of the community. Finally, schools were necessary, as evidenced by Caulfield in *Witches and Historians*. Children were educated by their family and community elders that they were sinners from birth and were unable to change, with a belief in predestination continually being communicated in the covenants and an emphasis on how to seek salvation. It fell to the parents to teach children about the Covenant of Grace. Failure to teach children about this critical component of the Puritan belief system could cause parents to lose standing in the community, because education provided salvation.¹¹⁴ Schools were needed to assist the community in intellectual growth and to identify and train the next group of future leaders. Being able to read was very important to the Puritan community and their quest to ensure their selection to heaven. To ensure the concept of literacy retained its importance in the colony, a law regarding schooling was enacted in 1647, which made clear that “the future of the Protestant religion was bound up with knowing how to read.”¹¹⁵ According to Stout, “no 17th century culture was more uniformly literate than New England,”¹¹⁶ as most owned and were able to read the Bible. It wasn’t just teaching children how to read that was regulated by law. The law of Massachusetts also instructed fathers to guarantee a future earning for their children. The law of 1648 called on fathers to instruct their children “in some honest lawful calling, labour or employment, either in husbandry, or some other

¹¹⁴ Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 92.

¹¹⁵ Hall, 38.

¹¹⁶ Stout, 32.

trade profitable for themselves, and the Common-wealth if they will not or cannot train up in learning to fit them for higher employment.”¹¹⁷

The father, being the head of the family, was responsible for making sure the lessons taught at church were carried out at home. The lessons read from the Bible, in addition to the sermons heard in church, ensured that Puritans had an equal familiarity with Satan and the Bible. By exposing individuals to lessons on Satan, it was hoped individuals would see the dark side and make the choice to follow the righteous path toward salvation. It was also understood that within the Puritan home, in exchange for protecting and educating his children, the father should be shown respect and obedience from his children.¹¹⁸ The minister preached his sermon and lesson, and the father had to help his family and servants/apprentices understand and practice what had been taught. The father had to support his family and ensure they were adhering to the Puritan ideals.

When one envisions individuals of the Puritan faith, a commonly conjured image is of cooperative and obedient individuals who were very submissive and engrossed in their work or the Bible. It was believed that failure to teach the catechism to offspring and apprentices residing in one’s home could cause misbehavior. The Bible’s commandments and beatitudes instructed individuals how to behave and treat others. The thinking was that if misbehavior was occurring, then clearly the Bible and its teachings were not in the forefront of the home. This perception of strict obedience, however, is an inaccurate representation of the Puritans of the era. In 1648, Massachusetts Bay passed the Laws and Liberties which was a revised version of the

¹¹⁷ Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 66.

¹¹⁸ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 106.

Body of Liberties from 1641, which instituted the death penalty on rebellious children over sixteen who cursed or struck a parent.¹¹⁹ The fact that such a law had to be passed indicates that Puritan children, at least, were not the docile church-going population that we tend to imagine.

The decline in membership of churches of the 1640s–1650s, in addition to an overall lack of spirituality, forced ministers to look to new methods to retain their wayward citizens. Richard Mather suggested a document known as the Half-Way Covenant as a means to increase and retain membership in the congregation.¹²⁰ In 1657 an assembly of thirteen church leaders met to discuss the document that would be approved in 1662.¹²¹ The Synod of 1662 stated that “if a person born and baptized in the church did not receive faith he could still continue his membership and have his own children baptized, by leading a life free of scandal, by learning and professing the doctrine of Christianity, and by making a voluntary submission to God and his church.”¹²² The religious leaders also recommended all baptized children up to the age of maturity should be able to have their own future children baptized. This allowed those who had not attained full membership through the conversion process to still have their children baptized, which would ward off Satan.¹²³ The clergy supported the covenant, as it provided a way to get people back to church. However, many congregation members were not so accepting, especially older members, as they felt it was lowering church

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 104.

¹²⁰ Stout, 59.

¹²¹ Baker, 49.

¹²² Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints the History of a Puritan Idea* (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut: Martino Publishing), 131.

¹²³ Bremer, 161; Hall, 153.

standards. Those who had their children baptized through the provisions of the Half-Way Covenant still could not vote in church meetings or participate in Lord's Supper unless they had finally participated in conversion, thus limiting any influence or control they could have in the church.¹²⁴

With the decline in church membership, the societal role of women within the church and home was intentionally redefined by the clergy, in order to rejuvenate church participation. Although men were considered the head of household and all choices the family made were a direct reflection of them, the acceptance of the Half-Way Covenant led to an increase in female church members.¹²⁵ The increase in female membership meant women were becoming more instrumental in sharing the word of the Lord, especially in the home. Women became more visible in the church but did not receive an increase in their religious rights. With the increase in the number of women in church, women appeared to have a greater presence or larger role in the community. However, the increase in church membership did not translate to other aspects of life, as women were still relegated to their lower status and lack of voice due to gender.

Decline of church participation and the resulting loosening of membership requirements were not the only factors that caused some Puritans to feel that their perfect society was coming to an end. In December 1686, Sir Edmond Andros arrived in Boston to lead the Dominion of New England. Unlike the accepted norm of the Puritans not tolerating those who worshipped differently, Andros tolerated all Protestants. Andros made his presence known by taking over Boston's South Church as a religious home for

¹²⁴ Stout, 78.

¹²⁵ Rivett, *The Science of the Soul*, 176.

Anglicans. He permitted Quakers, which had been banished by the Puritans, to worship freely along with Baptists. The mere presence of those who believed differently caused the Puritans to feel their covenant with God was being threatened.¹²⁶

Conclusion

Whether for the better or worse, by the 1690s the New England Puritans had established a prosperous society. Their farms were able to feed the population and exports to the Old World and the Caribbean continued to grow.¹²⁷ And with growth came the reality that many matters had become harder to control. The society they had so desperately sought to build had grown in size and was being threatened with the realization that all their dreams were no longer feasible. By 1700 the concept of Puritanism had changed, and people were now Yankees, or the beginning of what would become the salad bowl of today's America.¹²⁸ The "city on the hill" was no longer the ecclesiastical utopia they had set out to create. It now stood as a community of many sects.

The thought of building a perfect community was an unrealistic ideal. However, these people who traveled to the New World had a belief and they stuck to it, even though upholding such strong ideals would be daunting for anyone. These people were so preoccupied with their status within the church and community that it caused them to

¹²⁶ Baker, 54.

¹²⁷ Goss, 54.

¹²⁸ Carol Berkin, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (New York: Hill and Wang a division of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1996), 46.

question and challenge events and people which did not fit in with their ideals. The questioning in the end led to an atmosphere of distrust that launched the Witch Trials, as well as a need to explain events or occurrences when they did not go as planned. The yearning for a society that would lead them to salvation and being of the elect was a contributing factor and a cause of the events of 1692.

Chapter 2 – Patriarchy and The Paradox of Male Witchcraft

Chapter Abstract

American history is made up of moments of disparity, power, and privilege, many of which can be tied to beliefs associated with the gender or race of an individual.¹²⁹ When one looks to legal statutes, women have historically been denied the right to vote, to own property and to have a say in legislation that affects them. According to historian Joan W. Scott, gender supplies “a primary way of signifying relationships of power.”¹³⁰ Historical patriarchal norms and attitudes were brought from England with the colonists and remained mostly unchanged as the colonists continued to create a new home on the frontier. Women were expected to be subservient to their husbands, circumspect, and quiet in public. Those who violated the norms were considered unusual and suspect, and this led to many women being accused because of their unique circumstances and brashness.

The individuals who settled the colonies saw the man as the patriarchal leader of the family and that it was his desires that must be lived up to, with the women of the house following his commands while still wielding a degree of power over the children. Although women figure prominently into the story, one must look to earlier events occurring in England and the colonial attitudes towards gender, to fully grasp the beginnings of the Puritan movement, which set the stage for the events in Salem.

¹²⁹ Jon Hanson and Kathleen Hanson, "The Blame Frame: Justifying (Racial) Injustice in America," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Review* 41, no. 413 (2006): 415.

¹³⁰ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 6.

Puritanical Patriarchal Perceptions

The beginning of Puritanism was much more concerned with religion and a prescribed set of norms for the female adherents. Carol Karlsen states that “Puritanism took shape in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England amidst a heated controversy over the nature of women, the value of marriage and the propriety of women’s social roles.”¹³¹ This definition might seem to allude to the beginning of a movement and to indicate that the undertaking was wholly about women, when in fact it began as a movement to protest a church that had become power hungry and, at least to those of the Puritan ideology had lost its way as a true vehicle for achieving salvation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Puritans strove for a simple service without distractions as a means of furthering their relationship with God.

Those that traveled to the new world brought their beliefs regarding the role of women with them. Fred Pelka states, “New England women were chattels of their fathers, husbands, or brothers. They were expected to be docile, obedient, and above all uncomplaining ‘helpmeets’ for men.”¹³² As daughters of Eve and burdened with the curse of Biblical original sin, they were viewed as morally and intellectually inferior to men and easily tempted by Satan.¹³³ By remaining docile and obedient, women made the job for the husband as the head of the house easier to manage. If a husband knew his

¹³¹ Karlsen, 160.

¹³² Fred Pelka, "The Women's Holocaust," *The Humanist* September/October (1992): 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

wife was following his wishes, he could focus on eking out a living on the land, as well as keeping the family safe from possible conflict with Natives. This belief system relegated women to the home and a life based on domesticity. To help ensure that women understood their place in society, *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* were published in London in 1632. Although published outside the colonies, just as with many other legal concepts, the idea crossed the Atlantic with the colonists. The document stated, “women have nothing to do in constituting Lawes, or consenting to them, in interpreting of Lawes, or in hearing them interpreted.”¹³⁴ The passage of laws such as this showed a concrete belief in the idea that women were intellectually inferior and as such, have no right to make decisions for themselves or the colony. The *Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* ensured that all laws would be created and managed by men to control the lives of women without giving them a voice in rules that applied to them. However, as with most rules, there were exceptions, and as more women traveled to the colonies their roles within society continued to fluctuate. Women began to more frequently step out of their traditional role due to husbands being on guard duty, away in conflicts, or dying. Women in certain situations began to make decisions over land, family and business that had been reserved only to men in the past.

Of the first immigrants that came to the New World seeking freedom to practice their puritanical beliefs, initially one third were adult men, yet between the years of 1621-1651, single men outnumbered women 4:1 in New England.¹³⁵ This skewed sex ratio is best explained by the risks inherent in undertaking a trip to an unknown land.

¹³⁴ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 291.

¹³⁵ Berkin, 25.

Additionally, the cost of the voyage prevented many women and children from making the journey initially. Once it was determined that the new world was the place they envisioned and families had the funds to afford the travel, the rest of the family followed.

After the colonists arrived, the task of creating an ordered society awaited them. While Puritan men understood there would be disagreements at various times, they were also cognizant that the government of the mother country was too far removed to offer assistance for matters that would need addressed in the New World. The Puritan men understood that conflicts should be worked out peacefully, and men should always think about their obligation to the commonwealth and God before thinking of oneself.¹³⁶ Knowing they were here to fulfill their destiny in God's eyes, they recognized that civil matters did not belong in the ecclesiastical courts but rather in courts of law. This understanding would lead to a code of laws and establishment of governmental hierarchy in the colonies.

The men who endeavored to undertake the challenges in the new world had another obstacle to face besides survival. According to Morgan, single men were not permitted to live independently without companionship as God had ordained them by covenant to live in families.¹³⁷ The men who arrived without families would have been expected to hire servants or find another family to live with. Those that chose to live with another family could assume the role of boarder or servant. This expectation ensured that men would not stray from the vision of an untainted society built on a

¹³⁶ Breen and Foster, 12.

¹³⁷ Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 27.

positive relationship with God. If one lived with others, individuals would be present to help one avoid temptation or actual sin and remain on the path toward salvation.

Throughout the seventeenth century, New Englanders continued to follow a hierarchical model of authority with men making many of the decisions.¹³⁸ Male society members not only controlled and influenced the way the home and church were run, but also the government. Male community members made decisions that impacted all members of the society, and the women were expected to follow the rules and laws that they lacked a voice in legitimizing. However, Puritan wives were permitted to be present when debts were incurred, and when contracts to provide goods and services were negotiated in addition to land transaction but could have no voice in the decisions or negotiations.¹³⁹ It could be inferred this was done to know the terms with the man was away. This would become evident in the case of Eleanor Hollingworth, mother of Mary English, who kept the business running both while her husband was working while at sea and eventually when he was declared lost at sea.

A Woman's Place in New England

Women had a great deal of responsibility in their homes and a strong religious conviction. Although established laws in New England dictated a society that favored men, wives and daughters were more likely to be church members in colonial New

¹³⁸ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 13.

¹³⁹ Berkin, 30.

England than their husbands and sons.¹⁴⁰ This can partly be attributed to men being away from home for business, hunting, or guard duty, and thus not able to attend Sabbath services. Women and men also had different thoughts on sin and guilt. While men believed they could reform their behavior and turn to God, women believed it was more complicated. Women were more likely to believe their sins as covenants with Satan and were convinced they had embraced the devil when they had committed a sin.¹⁴¹ Due to the commonly held belief that women sinned more often than men due to their weaker character, a strong relationship was needed with the church for a woman to maintain a favored status with God. Because women's shortcomings were seen as more serious matters, they took longer to repent and move on from their guilt. According to Elizabeth Reis, "A confessing woman was the model of Puritan womanhood, even though she was admitting to the worst of sins, for she confirmed her society's belief in both God and the devil."¹⁴² A woman who could recognize her shortcomings by confession and work at improving her standing before God was deemed more earnest, although clearly a relationship existed between both God and the devil. It was believed the confession would provide distance between the mortal female and the lurking devil.

Male church members were responsible for voting on church matters, selecting ministers to lead their congregations, vetting candidates that desired to be part of the congregation, and establishing the salary to be paid to the minister.¹⁴³ Each family within

¹⁴⁰ Hall, 14.

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth Reis, ed., *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, Worlds of Women (Lanham, Maryland: SR Books, 1998), 56.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁴³ Hall, 151.

the community was expected to contribute through taxes their portion of the minister's salary. Although men enjoyed more power and privilege in New England, women also sought membership in the local congregations. In the early years of settlement, men and women delivered "verbal accounts of God's labors, with their souls in order to be admitted to full membership in the church."¹⁴⁴ As previously established, women were considered the weaker sex and more prone to sin, and as such their requirements for membership were more stringent. These requirements would evolve to require women to supply their verbal account to the minister privately rather than before the whole congregation. By the end of the seventeenth century more women would become church members.¹⁴⁵ The number of females undergoing conversion increased and one would think if more were members of the church and listening to the words preached by the members of the clergy, their numbers would not be so prevalent among those who were accused of witchcraft. However, as they had been led to believe they were weaker before God, they became targets of many within the community for a variety of reasons. Additionally, the belief that women had such weakness contributed to some confessing during the trials.

Church was clearly a hallmark of Puritanical life. Although it was considered a significant component of life, one would not know this by the way women were treated. Karlsen explains that "Over the course of the 17th century, Puritan rituals, symbols, and myths perpetuated the belief that women posed ever-present dangers to human

¹⁴⁴ Juster, 31.

¹⁴⁵ Reis, *Damned Women*, 121.

society.”¹⁴⁶ Women were not allowed to enter church through the same door as male members, and they were segregated from male congregation members during the service. Women’s inferior status also influenced the covenants that created new churches; they were not seen as important enough to sign papers creating new houses of worship. Additionally, although they were expected to listen to the words being preached from the pulpit and practice what was preached, they still had no voice in choosing new ministers. However, given all the shortcomings in being able to have a voice in the congregation, they were permitted to become full members of the congregation and thus take communion.¹⁴⁷

Although women had no voice in religious matters transpiring at the church, they were still expected to take the lessons learned to their homes and, in addition to typical household duties, instruct children in how to receive salvation. Their gender dictated they be economically dependent on male family members.¹⁴⁸ The dependence could be on husbands or in the case of widowed females on brothers or fathers. As women were to be dependent on men, society was suspicious of women who did not have direct male supervision.¹⁴⁹ A woman without supervision could more easily fall prey to unsavory influences, thus many in the community were leery of them being on their own, or worse yet a woman with some degree of success without the presence of a man clearly supported the idea that other factors were at play.

¹⁴⁶ Karlsen, 155.

¹⁴⁷ Berkin, 41.

¹⁴⁸ Karlsen, 77.

¹⁴⁹ Pelka, 7.

With women lacking a voice in so many aspects of Puritan life, there was little reason to be without male supervision, as there was not much that could be accomplished without a male voice present. In addition to being dependent, it could be argued that women were considered nearly invisible in their households. In Norton's *Founding Mothers and Fathers*, Thomas Hobbs described houses consisting only of men, their servants, and children.¹⁵⁰ Thomas Hobbs subscribed to the belief that women are not necessary to the authority of the home and that it is the men that made all of the decisions to ensure that the home continued to function. This belief further supports the notion that the female gender was insignificant.

Exceptions to the Patriarchal Rules

Women were clearly inferior in the eyes of the court and church when it came to making decisions that affected life outside the four walls of the home. This gender disparity is evidenced not only in applying for membership to a congregation, but also to the words that were uttered in public. Puritans looked to the words of English theologian, William Perkins, who nearly one hundred years earlier had stated "when thou speakest evill, thy tongue is kindled by the fire of hell and Satan comes from thence with a coale to touch they lips."¹⁵¹ While men would vocalize their displeasure in public women were chastised for being vocal with their thoughts in a public setting. Cotton Mather issued a

¹⁵⁰ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 96.

¹⁵¹ Jane Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 151.

reminder to the godly women of New England when he advised them to say, “I will take heed...that I sin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle.”¹⁵² However, when the records of those accused of witchcraft are examined, many of the women accused were those who spoke out or uttered thoughts under their breath showing they had not taken Mathers words into account.

The accusations regarding speech were not just related to uttering thoughts, but rather many in seventeenth century New England believed they could detect the devil in the speech of individuals.¹⁵³ Several of the women in Salem who were accused had reputations of being outspoken in public. Bridget Bishop was considered to be one that did not live up to the Puritan ideal of a virtuous woman, and while her unique situation will be discussed below, as Hoffer states “she had the reputation of dunning those who owed her money and dodging those she owed. She spoke ill of neighbors and harassed her enemies in public.”¹⁵⁴ Bishop was not alone in speaking out. Sarah Good also stood accused. Part of the reason she was accused was for calling children “vile names.” Going one step further, Samuel and Mary Abbey who had allowed Sarah Good and her husband to live with the in the 1680’s admitted to evicting her in order to return their home to a sense of quiet.¹⁵⁵ Speaking out was clearly the mark of a not so godly woman. A typical Puritan matron who followed the norms of society was considered to have a silver

¹⁵² Kamesky, "Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England," in *Spellbound Women and Witchcraft in America*, 25.

¹⁵³ Kamesky, *Governing the Tongue*, 153.

¹⁵⁴ Hoffer, 84.

¹⁵⁵ Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue*, 157.

tongue, she spoke judiciously and infrequently while conversely those considered to be in collusion with Satan spoke with tongues of fire.¹⁵⁶

In general, women in Puritan society were not permitted to own property, bring lawsuits or vote without the help of a male such as a husband or father.¹⁵⁷ There were exceptions to this belief, such as when the female was the only surviving family member, as Bridget Bishop was. This overall belief system supported coverture, which would remain in place until the American Revolution. Coverture was a legal doctrine whereby, upon marriage, a woman's legal rights and obligations were subsumed by those of her husband. As an unmarried woman had no husband, she had limited rights to own property and make contracts in her own name. Single women who did possess property were often exploited by men looking to improve their station.¹⁵⁸ The inferior status of women was not only based on a biblical interpretation of women being the weaker sex, but also on English Common law.¹⁵⁹ The Common law was built on traditions of males making decisions and serving as representatives and was implemented in New England as had been done in the old world.

Like the legal system in England, women were allowed to be present for negotiations, as well as permitted to testify in court. The testimony recorded in the *Ipswich Quarterly Review* is interesting because when disputes arose over the negotiated terms, arbitrators did listen to women whereas when it came to most other legal matters,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 152.

¹⁵⁷ Kim Lorton, "Republican Motherhood: Coverture and Virtue in Early National America," *Historia* 22 (2013): 57.

¹⁵⁸ Hoffer, 83.

¹⁵⁹ Lorton, 57.

women were often silenced and did not have a voice. In 1678, Giles Corey was accused of setting fire to John Proctor's home. The testimony made public in the *Ipswich Quarterly Review* reveals testimony presented by Mary Corey pertaining to this case. Mary Corey is recorded as saying that she "slept with her husband and could affirm that he was not out of doors that night."¹⁶⁰ Family members were not the only ones who received an opportunity to speak in court. James Poland, a community member, provided additionally testimony: "Jno. Proctor said that his boy carried a lamp into his lodging room and set it near the boards and that was how the fire caught."¹⁶¹ Even though responding to the testimony of Mary Corey was unusual for the Puritan colony, the court found Giles Corey innocent.

According to Bremer, for all the shortcomings that women had to deal with and with fewer of them in the colonies, women did have an improved status in certain categories over those in England. Women who moved to New England were more likely to marry above their social class. Women had more opportunities for education in the colonies and greater responsibilities in marriage.¹⁶² These opportunities arose due to husbands traveling to support their families and providing guard duty against attacks by Native Americans such as the Narragansett during King Phillip's War.

Married Life in the English Colonies

¹⁶⁰ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1919), 90.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶²Bremer, 115.

In seeking relationships, Puritans were encouraged to find “life partners, love and marry them...enjoy each other sexually throughout their married life together.”¹⁶³

Although the Bible and its teachings were significant in everyday matters, Puritans saw marriage for more than just reproduction, although procreation was a vital component to keep the colony and belief system intact. Husbands and wives shared a definite affinity for each other. Most men treated their wives with tenderness and respect.¹⁶⁴ Individuals used love and respect as components of marriage, and the average age for marriage was higher than what one might expect for the period. The average age for adult females to marry was 23, and a male was 26 years. Furthermore, according to Goss and his research, 94% of the women and 98% of the men were married in Puritan Massachusetts.¹⁶⁵

Weddings were not fancy affairs for those in the Massachusetts colony. Although church services were held in the local meetinghouse, weddings were generally held in the home of the bride. Weddings were not performed by the community minister, but rather by a court magistrate. The marriage need not be performed by the ministry as predestination had already determined the individual’s path toward salvation. Shortly after the service, the new couple would sign the register held by the town clerk.¹⁶⁶ As with society today, the bride and groom often received a gift from the family of the bride. New England fathers often gave their children part of their inheritance upon marriage and

¹⁶³ Goss, 147.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

the remaining portion upon death.¹⁶⁷ Puritans, with their belief in supporting the community, were quick to take care of their own children. By granting part of the inheritance at the time of marriage, the children stood a better chance of not falling into financial trouble. The laws of the colony stipulated that when a husband died, wives were left one third of the husband's estate; this law allowed women to have some funds that helped to make them desirable to suitors that might come and take the place of the recently deceased spouse. Most Puritan men had wills that were enforced upon their deaths. When writing his will, a man could choose to only provide for his wife and not his children.¹⁶⁸

Once a woman married, the practice of coverture continued to influence many of the decisions of her life. The woman's place in the home was always beneath her husband, but above that of her children and any servants that may have been employed by the family.¹⁶⁹ However, when it came to making decisions that impacted the family and especially children, men and women were equal.¹⁷⁰ Husbands and wives presented a unified front when it came to dealing with decisions that impacted the children of the household. Although women married for love and were cherished by husbands, they still were expected to produce offspring. While the average Puritan family had seven children, childbirth was also a risky endeavor, with 3-10% of women perishing during or soon after the labor process.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Carol F. Karlsen, "The Economic Basis of Witchcraft," in *Spellbound Women and Witchcraft in America*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 111.

¹⁶⁹ Berkin, 27.

¹⁷⁰ Bremer, 116.

¹⁷¹ Berkin, 26.

The life of the Puritan wife was one of constant motion requiring her to balance her duties in home, church, and society. In addition to taking care of the children and the home, she performed the weeding, hoeing, weaving of cloth, and brewing of beer and cider.¹⁷² Moreover, she made daily meals, cleaned, mended, and did laundry. As the seasons began to change, she was also tasked with preparing supplies to be stored for winter meals. Not all Puritan families resided in towns; thus, many families lived in remote locations with a great distance between neighbors. Due to location and the types of commodities that were nearby, the role of the wife could be vastly different from family to family. For example, a family that lived in a remote location might expect the wife to participate more in harvesting of crops and preparation of meat and textiles. Wives that experienced a life within a town were able to purchase some goods from other individuals rather than enduring the amount of physical labor that their rural counterparts were expected to perform.

As time continued to advance within the New England colony, the occupations for women continued to evolve in the late 1600s. Women found ways to generate revenue and support their families, by renting out rooms, preparing meals for boarders, washing clothing, teaching school, operating inns and taverns, and leasing land.¹⁷³ Women could run enterprises and generate money, but this also placed women in direct contrast with many of the society's accepted mores regarding women and the place they are to occupy in life. Bridget Oliver Bishop married her second husband Thomas Oliver on July 26, 1666. This marriage was one of many quarrels that involved the neighbors

¹⁷² Goss, 136.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 139.

and consequently the courts where they received their punishment.¹⁷⁴ In 1679, Thomas Oliver died without a will, the courts granted the entire estate to Bridget, including the house for the remainder of her lifetime.¹⁷⁵ This ruling allowed her to run her own affairs contrary to the accepted norms of the time. Bridget married again in 1687. Although her past relationships had gotten her in to trouble and brought before the courts, it was not the only part of her life that brought attention. Bridget was said to operate an unlicensed tavern from her home. She sold cider and was the target of complaints that she was leading to the corruption of young people.¹⁷⁶ The choices she made would bring her more attention and cause suspicions that would come back to haunt her.

The Disparity in Accusations During the Salem Witch Trials

Witch hunts were not a new phenomenon in the 17th century. As discussed in chapter 3, the practice migrated to the New World with the colonists. According to Pelka, anywhere from several thousand to nine million were tortured to death in Europe during the 15th-17th centuries.¹⁷⁷ Witch-hunts began as a way to root out the undesirable, those straying from the church or those considered heretics who were professing new ideas that stood in conflict with the ideals of the Catholic church.

¹⁷⁴ Marilynne K. Roach, *Six Women of Salem* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2013), 18.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ Foulds, 44.

¹⁷⁷ Pelka, 7.

Over time, as evidenced by the records of the Salem Witch Trials, women were more often than men accused of partaking in a relationship with Satan. One such example was Mercy Wardwell, in her confession she claimed to have been told “she should Never hath such a Young Man who loved her “and because of this chose “to take Satan as her lover.”¹⁷⁸ Between 1620-1725, at least 344 New Englanders were accused of performing or participating in witchcraft.¹⁷⁹ Gender is a visible factor/influence when one looks at the numbers of those who stood accused. According to historian Carol Karlsen in *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, of those that faced accusation between 1620 and 1725 in America, 267, or 78%, were women.¹⁸⁰ John Demos notes that of the 75 men accused, half were due to association with an accused woman, such as being husband, sons, or relatives of another nature, or that they had vocalized support for certain women.¹⁸¹ A lower percentage of women were accused of witchcraft in the American colonies than in Europe, where 85% of accusations were against women.¹⁸²

Those in New England who were convinced they had fallen under a spell of bewitchment could file a formal complaint against the individual(s) to start prosecution.¹⁸³ Charles Peter Hoffer states “men of learning in England and New England agreed; suspected witches were either weak-minded wenches, easily misled by the Great Deceiver, or ill-tempered hags who asked the Devil for assistance.”¹⁸⁴ The

¹⁷⁸ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 127.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Pelka, 7.

¹⁸³ Richard Godbeer, *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 161.

¹⁸⁴ Hoffer, 5.

court would seek witnesses and determine if the complaint should move forward. With the complaint filed, the accused would be brought to the court. Margo Burns, in *Coercion of False Confessions by the Salem Magistrates*, states that “in a typical witchcraft case, interrogation occurred when the accused was first arrested and brought before local Justices of the Peace to answer the complaint against them. These local magistrates would decide whether the person would be released or bound over to a Superior Court, with the power to try capital cases.”¹⁸⁵ Those that constituted the juries and served as magistrates often held a strong belief those women were witches, more so than those committing the accusation.¹⁸⁶ In the beginning, many professed their innocence. However, as time went on more began to confess their guilt in hopes of avoiding the fate of being executed. The confessors, rather than facing immediate execution, were kept alive in the hopes they would name other individuals who were part of the pact with the devil. Most were not professing an allegiance to the devil but merely stating they had strayed and had committed a sin in an effort to save their lives.

If a man was thought to have abandoned his job as a husband and a father, he was more apt to be accused of being a witch.¹⁸⁷ As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Puritan society placed the husband as the head of the family. The community depended on men to run the church, manage local affairs that impacted the government, and ensure his family was being taught and following the lessons imparted by the church. A man that shirked his responsibilities would often draw the ire of those around him. Although men

¹⁸⁵ Margo Burns, “‘Other Ways of Undue Force and Fright’; the Coercion of False Confessions by the Salem Magistrates,” *Studia Neophilologica* 84 (2012): 25.

¹⁸⁶ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 48.

¹⁸⁷ Reis, *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, 65.

were the minority of those accused of participating in witchcraft, nearly all men convicted of this crime faced the punishment of execution.¹⁸⁸ Through her research Karlsen points out that more men came under suspicion of witchcraft than other times in New England history. If men were called out as potential witches, often not much stock was placed in the accusation. However, if the male was tried, the chance of being found guilty and convicted was greater than other times in colonial history.¹⁸⁹ Punishment differed for men and women who admitted to witchcraft in New England history. The men who confessed would endure punishment such as whipping however most were considered lying about their involvement in witchcraft. Women meanwhile were believed when they confessed, and the punishment was execution.¹⁹⁰

Voices Were Heard – the Power of the Accusers and Accused

Women in colonial times lacked the power in Puritan society that men had, and would do anything to achieve a voice, and so would go so far as to collude with Satan in order to elevate their status in society. In *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, Karlsen quotes Fray Martin DeCastanega, “women became witches because they were born female, not male, because they were dissatisfied with their natural inadequacies and limitations, and because they wanted revenge and retribution badly enough to sell their souls for it.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Sean Purdy, "Conjuring History: The Many Interpretations of the Salem Witchcraft Trials," *River Academic Journal* 3, no. 1 (2007): 5.

¹⁸⁹ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 49.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 156. Fray Martin DeCastanega quoted in Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*

Karlsen presents the argument that women wanted a voice that only men had in society, and they would do anything to achieve that voice. If a voice translated to increased power, “ministers, magistrates, and common folk would have agreed that the witch’s crime was often, at root, a crime of female speech.”¹⁹² Women such as Sarah Good faced accusations for the words they used and the mutterings they committed. Sarah Good faced accusations for speaking her mind rather than holding back thoughts that could be construed as malicious. In the examination of Sarah Good on Tuesday March 1, 1692, the following conversation between her and John Hathorne occurred:

Hathorne: why did you go away muttering from mr Paris his house

Good: I did not mutter but I thanked him for what he gave my child

Further in transcript

Hathorne: what is it that you say when you goe muttering away from persons houses

Good: If I must tell I will tell

Hathorne: doe tell us then

Good: if I must tell I will tell it is the commandments I may say my commandments I hope

Hathorne: what commandments is it

Good: if I must tell you I will tell you it is a psalm

Hathorne: what psalm

Good: after a long time shee muttered some part of a psalm¹⁹³

For Sarah Good, the mutterings she made amounted to speaking in public when it was not warranted, which along with her begging at various residences, made her someone that stood out within the community. As she spoke and muttered and violated the cultural

¹⁹² Jane Kamensky, "Words, Witches, and Women Trouble: Witchcraft, Disorderly Speech, and Gender Boundaries in Puritan New England," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 128, no. 4 (1992): 288.

¹⁹³ Rosenthal, 127; *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 3rd ed. (United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 126-29.

norms, she became an example for what the trials would seek in their effort to rid Salem of the devil, which had taken up residence among the inhabitants. All her unsolicited speech amounted to her not holding onto the accepted Puritan value of a female with a silver tongue.

In the case of the Salem Witch Trials, it wasn't just those that were accused of being in a relationship with the devil who used their voices. The girls who voiced accusations at community members were given a degree of power by using their voice. Females were to be seen and not heard, and the girls were doubly subjected to this rule by being female and minors. By making accusations against those of the community, they received power from being recognized and listened to. The girls were no longer in the shadows but rather in the spotlight and getting attention. As they continued making accusations, those accused were coming from higher levels of society.¹⁹⁴ It was no longer just the common folk that were conspiring with Satan. The girls were gaining recognition and power at all societal levels. On November 14, 1692, testimony was given that accused the wife of Reverend John Hale had come to Mary Herrick and asked if she believed her to be a witch.¹⁹⁵ Accusations had begun at the lowest levels of society then moved up to target wives of wealthy merchants, respected ministers, and government officials such as Reverend Hale and Governor Phips.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Martha Young, "The Salem Witch Trials 300 Years Later: How Far Has the American Legal System Come? How Much Further Does It Need to Go?," *Tulane Law Review* 64 (1989-1990): 241.

¹⁹⁵ Hansen, 204.

¹⁹⁶ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 279; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 703.

Those that stood accused were often middle-aged or older women eligible for inheritances because they had no brothers or sons.¹⁹⁷ These women often did not fit in society; although they were wise and had experiences that could be shared, they were beyond childbearing age and often no longer considered useful in society. Widows did not fit into the two acceptable categories for women of the time, those married or those to be married. So, the question became: how much power should they have?¹⁹⁸ These women were placed in the difficult position of making decisions often reserved to men, in addition to getting men to listen and accept their word. As some women stood to inherit property at the loss of a spouse and with no male offspring to take control, they became targets of allegations.¹⁹⁹ Being childless also denied a woman the opportunity to have a male act as her agent and speak on her behalf, which is significant, considering a sixth of the women who were accused were childless.²⁰⁰ Although childlessness could have been the result of infertility, it made women stand out as not in God's favor, and without being able to bear children, it was assumed by many colonists only a pact with Satan would allow this to happen.

The accused were often comprised of women considered poor by the economic standard of the time.²⁰¹ The women that made up this demographic were often found seeking charity from their neighbors. Prior to the Witch Trials, many less fortunate were aided by those in the community that saw it as their duty to provide care for those less

¹⁹⁷ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 117.

¹⁹⁸ Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 139.

¹⁹⁹ Barbara Ritter Dailey, "Where Thieves Break through and Steal: John Hale Versus Dorcas Hoar 1672-1692," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 128, no. 4 (1992).

²⁰⁰ Berkin, 47.

²⁰¹ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 77.

fortunate than themselves. However, during the Trials a change occurred, and many were brought to the point of no longer having tolerance to provide assistance for those suffering, and it would initially be these outcasts that were accused. Success had come for some while others saw the stress of living on the frontier and did not want or have time to be bothered by others that had clearly done something wrong in Gods eyes. Some of the women that stood accused of witchcraft were involved in disputes over property, mistreatment, or divorce, and if they had been of the elect and lived a godly life, they would not be suffering and in the position to require assistance from the community.²⁰²

The idea of a woman having property was difficult for some men to accept, and these women fell victim to claims of colluding with Satan. For example, Katherine Harrison from Connecticut stood accused of being a witch in the 1660s. She had married well and when her husband died, he left her with 789 pounds after each of her minor children received their portions.²⁰³ She would continue to stand out in Connecticut society for her decision not to remarry and her ability to make all financial decisions for the land and business her husband had left. Harrison would take several cases to court in Connecticut for the way her neighbors treated and vandalized her land. Although she lost in the end and stood banished from the Connecticut colony, she was able to go against the norms of society of that time and take a case to court. Even 30 years later, women with property, or who make financial decisions were seen as suspect and colluding with the devil during the Trials.

²⁰² Ibid., 128.

²⁰³ Ibid., 84-89.

The research completed by Karlsen, and others supports the belief that many of those accused had experienced unfortunate circumstances financially. Of those that experienced financial hardship, Karlsen believes approximately 20% were impoverished.²⁰⁴ However, Karlsen also demonstrates that if one had financial security, the court often turned a blind eye to the accusation. Wealthy women with estates of over five hundred pounds often were fortunate enough that the courts ignored the accusations, often because their husbands threatened to sue for slander those who tarnished their family name with allegations of witchcraft.²⁰⁵

Once an individual was on trial, the descriptions of the type of witchcraft performed varied based on the sex of the individual that stood accused. Many women who had faced charges of witchcraft in the early years of the seventeenth century were often subjected to future charges of witchcraft.²⁰⁶ These women had been exonerated earlier in life only to face charges once again. Their history would come back to haunt them and be used against them when strange or unexplained events occurred. Although women comprised most of those accused, men still faced accusations. Women were very reserved when being questioned by the magistrates. Men on the other hand were sometimes more audacious when vocalizing their innocence.²⁰⁷ The testimony of accused men often spoke of harm to animals by those practicing dark magic, while women were more often accused of using their specter to harm community members.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Karlsen, "The Economic Basis of Witchcraft," 3.

²⁰⁵ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 79.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁰⁷ Reis, *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, 64.

²⁰⁸ *Damned Women*, 122.

According to EJ Kent, “male witches were blamed for troubling visions and terrifying apparitions, and for causing afflictions, illness and death in humans and animals,” often recalling time with their cows had become sick or their butter going rancid.²⁰⁹ Although animals often became ill and food went bad before it was used up, when numerous people corroborated a story about events that had transpired after an accused individual had been at their home, it was often enough to raise suspicions.

The division in the community between the town and village along with the changing economic status provided a backdrop to the events as the girls had heard their parents talk about various situations, and as Hoffer states, “The men and women of Salem were ready to believe in the girls because they had long harbored suspicions of some of their neighbors and by early April the girls were joined by a variety of adults who remembered strange episodes from past years, sometimes twenty or thirty years before.”²¹⁰

Conclusion

The Trials were about more than women accusing one another as Ernest King and Franklin Mixon Jr. state that 75% of those accusers in New England witchcraft cases were female and 80% of them were married.²¹¹ While 75 % is a large number, still 25%

²⁰⁹ E.J. Kent, *Cases of Male Witchcraft in Old and New England, 1592-1692*, Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013), 4; Reis, *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, 54.

²¹⁰ Hoffer, 59.

²¹¹ Ernest W. King and Franklin G. Mixon jr, "Religiosity and the Political Economy of the Salem Witch Trials," *The Social Science Journal* 47 (2010): 682.

of the accusations came from men. The number supports the possibility that men felt threatened by women who were exerting their influence in time when they lacked a man to act on their behalf. Giving women a voice, and how they used that voice, could lead to accusations of being a witch.²¹²

The above numbers reference the overall cases in New England. However, when one looks specifically at Salem, most female accusers fell between the ages of nine and twenty.²¹³ This was a contrast to past accusations in which those that filed accusations were not as young. Additionally, in *Damned Women*, Reis refers to Karlsen's suggestion that women often accused each other due to a dislike of an individual.²¹⁴ There was a jealousy amongst women that they may remain alone. Women knew life for them, and their children would be easier if they were able to remarry. If they were left widowed or single, the dowry would not be available to help support their individual needs or that of their family.

There have been many attempts to determine or speculate on the circumstances that led young women to charge so many other women with committing the crime of witchcraft. One of the purposes of this paper is to look through the lens of gender to determine in the aftermath whether families were compensated based on the gender and societal place of the accused and executed, and if gender played a factor in the amount of funds received. DeRosa says "historical research is the process of bringing the dead to life, of sitting down with them and having a chat, of peeking inside their heads and hearts

²¹² Kamensky, "Words, Witches, and Women Trouble: Witchcraft, Disorderly Speech, and Gender Boundaries in Puritan New England," 287.

²¹³ Purdy, 5.

²¹⁴ Reis, *Damned Women*, 123.

with the intimate access only a historian can have.”²¹⁵ The time has come to examine the record once again and look at the outcome from the perspective of a male individual. The records speak mostly of the women who lost their lives, while the men prosecuted for such crimes are most often only a footnote in the histories. The numbers are not just about allegations and accusations, because gender also comes into play when one looks at the numbers of those who confessed. In the research put forth by Benjamin Ray, in *Satan and Salem*, forty women confessed to practicing the art of witchcraft while only four men confessed.²¹⁶ The question that many historians have grappled with, what was different about Salem? Why in this small area were so many accused, and why did the demographics here differ from those of the rest of New England?

²¹⁵ Robin DeRosa, *The Making of Salem: The Witch Trials in History, Fiction, and Tourism* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company Inc., Publishers, 2009), 76.

²¹⁶ Ray, 207.

Chapter 3 – The Salem Trials in the Larger Context of Witch Trials

Chapter Abstract

Throughout history, witches were most often women, in art, literature and in the accusations and trials that took place around the world. Yet Salem was an exception to that, and in this chapter the long history of witch accusations and trials will be considered and compared to the events of Salem with an eye to the disproportionate number of males accused and executed there. To try and understand the accusations that led to the trials within Salem, Massachusetts, one must look back in time to the era of their origin and the adjudication process of the trials. The idea that witches were mainly female came from the Bible. It can be traced back to Moses when he used the feminine form of Hebrew which when translated to English means a woman witch.²¹⁷ In the English colonies, and even in England itself, women were accused, tried and convicted at far higher rates than what occurred in Salem. In Salem, however, a significant number of men were accused of witchcraft. This chapter argues that the ratio of men accused and convicted was much higher than in any other European colony or in the Old World, and this had significant social and monetary impacts on the reparations that were issued after the trials.

History of European and English Witch Trials

²¹⁷ William Perkins, Thomas Pickering, and Collection McManus-Young, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft, So Farre Forth as It Is Reuealed in the Scriptures and Manifest by True Experience* (Essex; Cambridge: T. Pickering ; Printed by Cantrell Legge, 1618), 168.

The era of witch hunts in Europe began in the early 1400s and concluded in approximately 1775 in North America. By the end of the 15th century, the number of trials was on the rise and communities were urged to name suspects of witchcraft in order to cleanse the community as the image of the diabolical witch emerged.²¹⁸ Although the responses varied depending on the locale, many believed in the “power of malevolent people to project their malice magically.”²¹⁹ The belief that magic and/or witchcraft could explain events of good and evil allowed individuals an outlet to explain the events that went awry. The tide of belief changed; inquisitors and judges were no longer looking for those dealing with potions they believed could help with ordinary issues. Rather, judges at this time sought evidence the accused were involved in a demonic conspiracy against the Christian faith and society.²²⁰ Under Holy Roman Emperor Charles V the Carolina Code was passed in 1532, putting forth a legal definition to deal with the accusations of witchcraft throughout the Empire. Under the Carolina Code, witchcraft was now open to public prosecution which meant charges now originated from the state. The code was divided into many sections, clarifying how witches were to be dealt with. Examples of these sections and the punishment for witchcraft included section 109, describing burning as the acceptable punishment if *maleficium* was proven for both men and women, section 52 there must be material evidence present in order to render a verdict and section 219 which established that courts needed to have an outside

²¹⁸ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 194; "The First Wave of Trials for Diabolical Witchcraft," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, 159.

²¹⁹ Edward Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs and Magical Practice," *ibid.*, 53.

²²⁰ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 194.

expert to voice their opinion. While it seemed that the code could allow fair trials to proceed, the reality was most jurisdictions did not adhere to the code. The lack of adherence had other implications for the accused as well. Many who survived the accusations eventually succumbed to death from broken limbs or dislocations caused during torture to elicit confessions or from the cold conditions of the dungeons in which they were being held.²²¹ Once the belief in the diabolic witch emerged, religious institutions began attacking witches in addition to magicians and heretics, much of which was fueled by the religious turmoil of the Reformation transpiring across Europe.²²²

Religion professor Richard Kieckhefer in the *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Witches) asserts the increase in persecution on the European continent resulted from a variety of conditions such as the Inquisition, courts both secular and ecclesiastical, use of torture, the development of a witch stereotype and suspicion that some forms of magic could be harmful.²²³ The growth of witch persecution on the continent can be traced back to the period after the Council of Constance.²²⁴ This time in history created an enormous struggle for the Catholic Church. Catholic followers were left to grapple with determining who was the rightful leader of the Catholic Church. As a follower of the church, they were forced to decide whether to follow Pope Gregory XII in Rome or Pope Benedict XIII in Avignon. The prospect of two Popes not only led to a split in the Church but also a cultural and epistemological division as they continued to call each

²²¹ Rolf Schulte, *Man as Witch*, trans. Linda Fromme-Doring (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 44-45.

²²² Ann Kibbey, "Mutations of the Supernatural: Witchcraft Remarkable Providences, and the Power of Puritan Men," *American Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1982): 127.

²²³ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 199.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

other inappropriate names such as the anti-Christ. The solution would not be simple when the Council of Pisa met in 1409 and elected a third Pope assuming the other two would step down. For some both on the continent and in England, the situation within the Catholic Church made them question their relationship with the church. The status of the church was not the only component of the time that fed into the increase of witchcraft trials. The political instability of the Holy Roman Empire as well natural occurrences that led to crop failures causing difficulty for both the population and economic climate of Europe also contributed. On the continent, conflict in the villages and a claim of witchcraft could originate from a variety of situations, such as illness among animals, property loss, misfortune, pregnancy and childbirth, and slander.²²⁵ Although men were stronger, women had a hand in preparing food both from domestic animals and crops. When the crops failed due to weather or another occurrence, women were still connected to the product and thus they became the target of blame.

English lore said witches would appear out of nowhere and were likely to harm children and cause women to miscarry.²²⁶ Stories and a heightened fear led to the increase in accusations and executions throughout England. This increase in fears and stories continued to circulate in the reigns of Henry VIII through James I. These English Monarchs in the 1500s-1600s passed laws such as The Witchcraft Act of 1542 establishing witchcraft as a crime that could be punished by death. Additionally, James I passed an act making all forms of witchcraft punishable by death. These laws created a

²²⁵ Thomas Robisheaux, "The German Witch Trials," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, 191.

²²⁶ Crane, 60.

climate of paranoia during the reign of James. Publications such as *A Discourse of The Damned Art of Witchcraft* by M. William Perkins helped to define the witch and the sins committed by individuals who “entered into an agreement with Satan either with intention or without.” Perkins in his definition chose the gender-neutral word ‘individual’ which would seem to imply witches could be either male or female. Perkins defines a witch as a person whom either in “open or secret league, wittingly and willingly consenteth to use the aide and assistance of the Devil, in the working of Wonders.”²²⁷ While being able to read wasn’t a skill that all possessed, with a definition in print, it provided a means for witch hunters to have a standard criteria to find and convict witches.

The hunting of witches became “a mandate” for the British, leading to individuals such as Matthew Hopkins taking on careers as professional witch hunters.²²⁸ Matthew Hopkins capitalized on his career as a witch hunter with his book, *Discovery of Witches* in which he described his job. He was able to make a living from hunting as courts would pay up to a month’s wages to rid their communities of witches.

²²⁷ Perkins, Pickering, and McManus-Young, 92.

²²⁸ Kat Eschner, "England's Witch Trials Were Lawful," (2017), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/englands-witch-trials-were-lawful-180964514/>, 12/16/2019.



Figure 2: Matthew Hopkins, Witch Finder General. From a broadside published by Hopkins before 1650

As evidenced by Matthew Hopkins, the belief and hunt for witches was not contained to just the continent, as England also experienced a spike in accusations. The height of the English witch-hunts was in the mid-1640s during the English Civil War, with more than 250 accused and 100 executed just in East Anglia.²²⁹ The country was suffering the effects of the war as well as taxes were rising and damage increasing. The climate had also changed with the arrival of the Little Ice Age which may have led to reduced crops in the area. It could be argued the increased numbers for East Anglia were byproduct of Matthew Hopkins' crusade to rid the area of those he believed to be witches. East Anglia had been the home of John Winthrop and many others that made the harrowing journey across the Atlantic in search of religious freedom. When those first immigrants traveled to America, they brought their customs and belief systems with them

²²⁹ Baker, 7.

to the new world. However, in 1653, Sir Robert Filmer, in *Advertisement to the Jurymen of England Tracking Witches*, argued that if witchcraft did exist, witches could only be tried as accomplices because the devil committed the actual crime.²³⁰ However, with over 100,000 accused and 50,000 executed throughout the nearly 300 years of Witch Trials,²³¹ it is clear that Filmer's argument was not accepted by the jurymen or the general public, in the years prior to Salem and in the years leading up to the late 1700s when prosecutions ceased. The fear of witchcraft was so real for those at the time, they believed that if they came into contact with the land of the witch, they might suffer repercussions. The witch-hunt in Europe was essentially over by 1660, unlike in the American colonies.²³²

Witch Trials in New England

The initial English colonies of the North American continent each upheld different rights allocated to their residents. The residents of the English colonies brought their culture with them across the Atlantic and consequently their beliefs on witchcraft. Puritans did not have laws against witchcraft until 1641 and the first prosecution occurred in 1647 and in deciding the consequences, they looked to Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:27 and Deuteronomy 18:10.²³³ These verses from the Bible are admonitions to avoid

²³⁰ Ibid., 258.

²³¹ Ibid., 7.

²³² Bruce Watson, "Salem's Darkest Hour: Did the Devil Make Them Do It?," *Smithsonian*, April 1992, 118.

²³³ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 14; Gilbert Upton, *The Devil and George Burroughs* (London: Wordwright Publishing, 1997), 59.

associations with witches, conjurors and sorcery, the penalty which was described is death. Peter Charles Hoffer states that men of learning “suspected witches were either weak ended wenches, easily misled by the Great Deceiver, or ill-tempered hags who asked the Devil for assistance.”²³⁴ This view was held both in the old world as well as the new world. Virginia, Rhode Island, and Maryland all adopted English laws pertaining to witchcraft while Pennsylvania and New York which were under Dutch control had no such laws.²³⁵ The middle and southern colonies all had fewer prosecutions, because even though they were also composed of colonists from England, those colonies did not espouse the same level of religious conviction as the stricter Puritan faith in New England. The path to court and the verdict varied depending on the colony in which they resided, who made the accusation and the period in time for which it occurred.²³⁶ The colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Haven, and Plymouth had laws that focused on the Bible and believed witches should not be allowed to live and so the laws focused on witch’s offenses made against God.²³⁷ The colonists’ deep faith and devotion to scripture such as this eventually led to a situation where the events of Salem were allowed to transpire and continued to grow.

By the time the trials and hysteria were shut down in late 1692, over 150 men and women from the area had been accused of being witches.²³⁸ Of those that had been

²³⁴ Hoffer, 5.

²³⁵ Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 15.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt: A Brief History with Documents*, The Bedford Series in History and Culture (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011), 1.

accused, nineteen would hang for the crime, one was pressed to death, and at least four others would perish in prison.²³⁹ Ironically the magistrates in most cases did allow those accused of being a witch to live, clearly going against the Bible and their culture's reverence for its wisdom. Without including the trials that took place in Salem, throughout the 17th century over 60 trials took place in New England for witchcraft in which 33-35 men and women lost their lives compared to one execution in Maryland, supporting the concept of a more religious New England.²⁴⁰

1692 was not reserved for just trials in Salem. Connecticut was experiencing their own trials at about the same time. In April of 1692 a 17-year-old servant to Daniel and Abigail Wescot began suffering fits at her home in Stamford.²⁴¹ Katherine Branch began having fits and the Wescots were determined to find the source of their servants' afflictions. They blamed the events on their neighbor Elizabeth Clawson whom they had quarreled with in the past and who had also been argumentative with other neighbors.²⁴² The magistrates who led the trials in Connecticut proceeded more cautiously than their neighbors in Salem. Connecticut had experienced Witch Trials earlier in the colony's history. During 1662-63, eleven women and men and been accused in Hartford. Of the eleven accused at that time only four were actually convicted.²⁴³ In 1665 and 1668 two more women, Elizabeth Sanger of Hartford and Katherine Harrison of Witherfield, were

²³⁹ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 3.

²⁴⁰ Richard Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, 393.

²⁴¹ Richard Godbeer, *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692*, 3.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 53.

also accused and found guilty but neither was put to death.²⁴⁴ After Katherine Branch had been examined it was believed she was bewitched.²⁴⁵ As in Massachusetts, a Court of Oyer and Terminer was established in Connecticut to hear the accusations of Katherine Branch against her tormentors. Although the Court was established in June 1692 it did not convene until September.²⁴⁶ Connecticut Governor Robert Treat, Deputy Governor William Jones and five others heard the accusations against Mary Staples, her daughter Mary Harvey and granddaughter Hannah Harvey in September. The following day, September 16, the three were released and the charges dismissed.²⁴⁷ The hearing for Goody Clawson took longer than that of the three mentioned above as 76 members of the community both men and women came to speak on her behalf. However, even with so many standing up for her the grand jury still recommended she be put on trial.²⁴⁸ After all the evidence had been heard, Elizabeth Clawson was acquitted of the charges.²⁴⁹

Life for those in New England was rooted in the Reformation that had been occurring in Europe.²⁵⁰ Religious foundations in New England society were changing as Puritans found themselves drawn to the simpler church services of Protestantism over the previously dominant Catholicism. Religion remained central to the beliefs of the early inhabitants of New England. Puritan settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony believed that God had a hand in all that was right and wrong in the world. As mentioned in

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 54.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 41-42.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 59-60.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 61.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 61,67.

²⁴⁹ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 290.

²⁵⁰ Hall, 10.

chapter 1, historian Richard Godbeer writes, “Puritan beliefs encouraged a preoccupation with evil forces that seemed to endanger individual souls and New England as a whole.”

²⁵¹ Rather than accept they had a bad harvest or a bad storm had just occurred, the Puritans looked to their relationship with God for the explanation as to why unfavorable events transpired. They believed that the forests of New England were home to the devil prior to their arrival, and that the native inhabitants worshipped the devil in addition to practicing witchcraft. Puritans believed that only ministers could have a relationship with God. They did not believe that God could come to a mortal in a dream or vision. As native inhabitants believed heavily in visions, in the mind of the Puritan this was a sign of conspiring with the devil.²⁵² Those that took up residence in New England practiced a religion “infused with ancient attitudes and practices” which included a belief in magic.²⁵³

The fear that led to many accusations and prosecutions in Europe had crossed the ocean with the immigrants. Individuals were afraid of situations that were not part of the established norm. Women were regularly blamed for miscarriages, still births and preventing conception.²⁵⁴ When natural events or other tragedies occurred and lacked rationalization, witchcraft often served as the accepted explanation. As early as 1641 and again in 1648, Massachusetts set out to stop the spread of witchcraft within the colony.

²⁵¹ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*. 6.

²⁵² William Simmons, "Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans; Perception of Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1981): 59.

²⁵³ Hall, 19.

²⁵⁴ Anne Llewellyn Barstow, "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4, no. 2 (1988): 8.

The Body of Liberties of 1641 and the Massachusetts Laws of 1648 both state that “If any man or woman be a WITCH, that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death.”²⁵⁵ The passage of such laws followed the scripture of the Bible found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, all showing that those who adhere to the constructs of the Bible believed those who practiced magic, consulted a conjurer or subjected their children to witchcraft should not be allowed to live. The fear was legitimate for many, causing Massachusetts to pass a law in 1646 requiring everyone who resided in the town to attend church services.²⁵⁶ Attendance at church services was believed to serve as protection to keep the devil at bay. Attendance allowed one to seek salvation and repent for any questionable choices they had made, improving godliness and behavior.

A facet of history that scholars have studied and grappled with is why were there more accusations at this time compared to England and the rest of Europe. The climate of the area was changing both politically and economically. Those of the Puritan faith needed order in their lives and needed to find an explanation for occurrences that otherwise seemed unexplainable. Godbeer states, “Allegations of witchcraft brought together three important components of pre-modern culture: the inability to explain or control illness and other forms of misfortune, a deeply embedded belief in supernatural forces that could be used to inflict harm, and the densely personal nature of human interactions.”²⁵⁷ Those on the frontier needed the assurance of being able to explain why

²⁵⁵ Frank W. Grinnell, "Obscuring American History: Reversing the Salem Witchcraft Convictions," *American Bar Association Journal* 43 (1957): 998.

²⁵⁶ Morgan, *Visible Saints the History of a Puritan Idea*, 123.

²⁵⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 15.

and how events occurred around them. Without any clear answer the only outcome they could turn to was witchcraft. Puritans had an anxiety about death and epidemics, fear of Satan, and a hatred of minorities. Those of the Puritan faith would have considered all groups with small numbers as minorities, religious and ethnic. These ideas all helped to create an environment favorable to a belief in witches.²⁵⁸

Chadwick Hansen asserts that magic did in fact exist in Salem at the time of the trials and in his book, *Witchcraft at Salem*, identifies three types of magic: white, black, and pact.²⁵⁹ White magic entailed remedies that served as protection from evil such as horseshoes on or in walls, and shoes buried in a fireplace to keep the devil from coming down the chimney. White magic also included charms, conjuring or telling where goods or treasures are located and was believed to be used for selfless purposes.

²⁵⁸ Joseph Klaitz, *Servants of Satan* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 32.

²⁵⁹ Hansen, 4-5.



Figure 3: Horseshoe and Trident from the Zeruababble Endicott house (from Emerson Baker's Storm of Witchcraft, page 132, used with permission)

Hansen describes an example of white magic where two individuals each hold a side of a pair of sheers above a sieve suspended between the points of the sheers and ask questions. Depending on the how sieve moves reveal the answer.²⁶⁰ He additionally referenced the long-shared story of Elizabeth Parris and Abigail Williams looking at an egg in a glass to determine the identity of their future husbands.

Black magic was construed as an appeal to the devil to complete an evil act. While there are those who will argue that magic did not occur in Salem, Hansen is a firm believer that it did in fact occur. Hansen uses testimony against Bridget Bishop as support for black magic “being employed by Bridget Bishop, alias, Oliver, of Salem to help take

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 77.

down the cellar wall of the old house she formerly lived in, we the said deponents, in holes in the old wall belonging to the said cellar, found several puppets made up of rags and hogs' bristles with headless pins in them with the points outward."²⁶¹ The poppets with pins supported the concept of an evil act as the pins were meant to inflict physical harm on others.

Those who subscribed to the belief in pact magic believed they had an actual contract or arrangement with the devil. In an effort to come to terms with the amount of turmoil they perceived in the world, some Puritans turned to counter magic for protection. Counter magic was thought to be a spell that could reverse the devil's magic. Godbeer states, "Scripture taught that witches were real and should be hunted down."²⁶² Those who turned to "counter magic" would inflict damage on an afflicted item or person, hoping they could undo the harm. Examples of counter magic included burning the hair of an afflicted child or creating a cake with urine of the afflicted which was fed to a dog who would point to the individual was doing the bewitching.²⁶³ Puritans were not hesitant to accuse neighbors of bewitching them when unusual events transpired. Puritan society was willing to look toward any remedy that would bring peace to their lives. Records of the trials show that what could be construed as black magic as well as pact magic occurred in Salem.

A Historical Perspective on Males Accused of Witchcraft

²⁶¹ Ibid., 65.

²⁶² Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 9.

²⁶³ Ibid.

Witchcraft has often been associated with women. It was shown previously that this could be attributed to the word choice of Moses. But in the New Testament, according to Perkins, a man named Balaam thought he was a Prophet but was actually by his occupation and actions a witch.²⁶⁴ Although Balaam did good rather than follow the wishes of the King Balak, his dark side persevered when he advised the Maobites on how to entice the citizens of Israel, ultimately leading them to sin in order to receive a reward which he had originally been promised by King Balak. In *A Discourse on the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, William Perkins argues that both men and women were able to perform magic. However, throughout history men were accused and put to death at much lower numbers, an average of 19% of total deaths, as shown in Table 1. In many cases, men were accused due to their relationship to a woman who had been accused; however, in other cases there is proof that men acted alone in the art. Malcolm Gaskill believes that male witches did in fact exist and could be just as guilty as the woman they were married to. According to Gaskill, male witches were individuals who got into conflicts with their neighbors, competed for power, resources and space.²⁶⁵ This description fits Giles Corey and his litigious nature during the outbreak in Salem. The research of Apps and Gow shows that depending on the location of where one looked in Europe, whether in Essex, England, southwestern Germany or along the lengthy border of Switzerland and France, a different conclusion could be made regarding the role played by men. In some of these locations, men were more likely to be accused in association with women, while some

²⁶⁴ Perkins, Pickering, and McManus-Young, 94.

²⁶⁵ Kent, 7-8.

were accused when the community was going through a panic, and finally some men stood accused more often in areas with a greater amount of heresy.²⁶⁶ Clearly, throughout history there have been at least some males accused of witchcraft, although the numbers were far smaller than the women accused of the same.

While men did not appear to factor into the original conception of witches, the Bible clearly shows the concept of a male witch while not common was not unheard of but had rather shifted over time to being of female gender. However, in a colonial society entrenched in religious and Biblical teachings that included beliefs in the possibility of witchcraft, it should not be surprising that men were accused and even punished with death after being accused. According to Bernard Rosenthal, the first hanging in Massachusetts, of a man for the crime of being a witch, occurred on August 19, 1692.²⁶⁷ That day four men were executed, including George Burroughs the former minister of Salem. Up until that time, the Massachusetts courts had only dealt with thirty-one cases of witchcraft. Of the thirty-one cases only eight had been found guilty, roughly 26%.²⁶⁸ Until the hysteria in Salem, witchcraft had been a relatively quiet crime and did not significantly figure into the types of crimes and executions in Massachusetts.

	Number			Percentage	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Scandinavia	2409	785	1624	33%	67%
Great Britain	3184	454	2730	14%	86%
Netherlands	247	16	231	6%	94%
France	2066	1102	964	53%	47%

²⁶⁶ Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 28-29.

²⁶⁷ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 108.

²⁶⁸ Baker, 186.

Spain	576	215	361	37%	63%
Switzerland	2350	770	1580	33%	67%
Italy	1931	656	1275	34%	66%
Eastern Europe	4470	640	3830	14%	86%
Total Europe	17538	4741	12797	27%	73%
Colonies (no Salem) - Demos	139	27	112	19%	81%
Colonies & Salem - Roach	191	51	140	27%	73%

Table 2: Male and Female Witch Accusations in European Countries and the Colonies 1500-1750 ²⁶⁹

While the statistics of witchcraft in Massachusetts prior to Salem only showed thirty-one cases it is important to note they supported the belief that witchcraft was a crime that women almost exclusively participated in. However, by the time the trials concluded men would comprise 20% of those that perished and 26% of those hanged not including Giles Corey who suffered a separate fate of being pressed to death. Based on data in Table 2, it is clear that Salem was not like the rest of the English colonies or England when it came to the percentage of witchcraft accusations against men.

As Schulte, Demos, and Roach have shown, the number of those accused as witches fluctuated depending on where one lived on the continent, with men more likely to be accused in France as well as Iceland. In this table, Iceland is grouped with the Scandinavian numbers, however in Iceland itself, the percent of men accused stood at 92%.

While these numbers show men and women were both accused of witchcraft, what is missing are the circumstances of the community in which they resided. The trials

²⁶⁹ Schulte, 71-72; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 592-607; John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 402-09.

held in Great Britain had juries which decided one's guilt or innocence. In the case of Great Britain, males were accused and convicted less often than their peers on the continent. Those who resided on the European continent were subject to depositions that aided in determining guilt. With the use of a deposition, the community was not involved as a jury but rather the decision was often made by the judge alone. Both Catholics and Protestants believed men and women could take an active role in witchcraft. Men could play a role in weather magic which could harm crops as well as create illnesses in humans and livestock.²⁷⁰ Many also believed both could consent to a pact with the devil. In some instances, more accusations flowed in land under the influence of Catholicism while in other locales, it was the inverse, more accusations occurred in Protestant lands. Additionally, in some of the cases torture was allowed to elicit a confession while in other jurisdictions it was prohibited. The purpose of this is to show that while women are often most associated with witchcraft, it was not just a crime of females.

In Europe, male clerics and lawyers created the image of the female witch and were responsible for the prosecution and the executions of those put-on trial, with many of the accusations coming from men of the community.²⁷¹ However, statistics show that at the end of the 15th century it was not just women accused as witches. According to research completed by Rolf Schulte, between the years 1450-1499, one quarter of those tried on the European continent were men (Table 1).²⁷² Although the belief and practice of magic had existed for some time, in an effort of competing for followers at a time of

²⁷⁰ Schulte, 149.

²⁷¹ Kibbey, 128.

²⁷² Schulte, 46.

dueling ideologies between Catholics and Protestants, the Catholic church had to find ways to attract members. In an effort to increase prosecution, images were produced of women worshipping Satan. Images of witches and scenes of life for those who followed in the perceived footsteps of the devil were circulated through pamphlets and more enduring images were created as well, such as those carved into woodcuts as early as 1540 in Wittenberg.²⁷³ With most not being able to read, the items that began to flow off the printing presses and the images produced conveyed the message that the community needed to be on the lookout for women appearing as witches.

Between Europe and North America many commonalities tied to witchcraft began to emerge during the 1600s. Those accused of being witches were four times more often women than men, were middle aged between 40 and 60, were married or widowed, had a lower social status, and were suspicious of Protestants.²⁷⁴ As mentioned above, pamphlets appeared that showed females as witches, but in 1616 a pamphlet that quoted the vicar of King's Lynn shared that in addition to women, "but men also on whose behalfe, no exception can be laid."²⁷⁵ The image of the male witch can be traced back to woodcuts in found in Ulrich Molitor's *De laniis et phit onicis mulieribus* published in 1488. Within the publication are six images, of which two depict men.²⁷⁶ Historian Rolf Schulte stated men were also regularly accused as witches on the continent: "In the course of the 17th century the courts increasingly assimilated men as potential agents of

²⁷³ Peter T. Leeson and Jacob W. Russ, "Witch Trials," *The Economic Journal* 128, no. August (2018): 2074.

²⁷⁴ Demos, 117-18.

²⁷⁵ Malcolm Gaskill, "The Devil in the Shape of a Man: Witchcraft, Conflict and Belief in Jacobean England," *Historical Research* 71, no. 175 (1998): 160.

²⁷⁶ Apps and Gow, 109.

the devil into their witch concept learning behind the phenomenon of the 16th century when women had represented the vast majority of people persecuted and executed.²⁷⁷ Schulte, an expert on witchcraft in the German lands, completed an exhaustive study of the records from this time which showed that men were often accused and, depending on the locale, were often accused in high numbers compared to women. Theologian William Perkins agreed and referenced Moses and the Bible as his proof. Jean Bodin, a French Catholic political theorist contributed to the conversation in 1580, authoring *De las Demonomanie Des Sorciers* in which he said the state had an obligation to “fight against evil in the form of magical activities” as they were one of the highest offenses against God.²⁷⁸ While Bodin did believe that men could be guilty of witchcraft, he also declared that women were fifty times more likely to succumb to witchcraft. In the course of completing his book and in shaping his beliefs, he used confessions from French witchcraft trials, such as when one man performed weather magic, while another used magic to kill livestock. Bodin also described the participation of men in the witches’ Sabbat, stating “the man, finding himself in the company of a large number of [male and female] witches unknown to him and hideous devils with human countenances, began to say, ‘My God, where are we?’”²⁷⁹ His position within the French hierarchy allowed for numerous printings of his work and many jurists referenced it when involved in cases.

In France, public prosecutor Nicolas Remy, who worked his way up to the position of General State Prosecutor for Lorraine in 1591, published work on witch

²⁷⁷ Schulte, 75.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 108.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 109-10.

persecutions in 1595. During his time as a prosecutor, he was tasked with the job of prosecuting those accused of witchcraft. While in office he had numerous examples of men involved in pacts with the devil in addition to women. Often, many theorists refer to women as the weaker sex per the biblical story Adam and Eve. Remy however refers to ancient authors Fabius and Plinius. They believed that men were less likely to enter into a pact with the devil but were not immune as their wives would draw them into the events.²⁸⁰ His argument supported the concept that women were weaker, and men were often found to be involved in witchcraft based on the association of close relationship they had with women. Remy also is one who believed the concept of association could also fall to the children in a marriage. Remy had such an aversion to witchcraft and such a strong desire to rid the community of them that he would ultimately claim to have a role in the burning at the stake of 800 men and women in Lorraine.²⁸¹

From examining the data in Table 1 and the research completed by various historical researchers, we are able to conclude that men made up nearly 30 % of those put-on trial for witchcraft in Europe, but less than 20% in Great Britain.²⁸² Salem stands as an anomaly to the British trend, because the number of men accused matches the greater European numbers, while the rest of the colonies are closer to the English numbers. The men that were accused came from all walks of life. Men guilty by association often came from lower levels of society, however there were men from higher

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 125.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Alison Rowlands, "Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, 464.

classes that faced accusations due to the behavior of their wives or due to improving their station in life as well as men that were cunning individuals manipulating their societies.

A Historical Perspective of Salem and the Witch Trials

Salem Town was the first of two Salems: the second, Salem Farms (Village), was founded in 1639²⁸³ approximately 5-8 miles inland from the town center,²⁸⁴ and is known as Danvers today. Settlers established Salem Town on the bay first, and as more individuals crossed the Atlantic, the community began to grow, resulting in the establishment of the neighboring Village. The town became home for the traders, fishermen, and merchants, while those who relied on the land for their livelihood moved to the Village. As mentioned in chapter one, during the 1600s the residents of Salem Village and the surrounding area had to figure out how the town should be administered, with disagreements about boundaries, taxes, and voting rights, as well as who should guide the ministry.²⁸⁵ These disagreements have often been thought of as a key component of what led to the Trials.

The events, which became known as the Salem Witch Trials, began in Essex County, in the town of Salem Village in Massachusetts. The inhabitants of Salem Village had for years, attended church services in Salem town. However, as the population continued to move away from the town center, those who made their homes in the

²⁸³ Richard Latner, "'Here Are No Newters': Witchcraft and Religious Discord in Salem Village and Andover," *The New England Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2006): 94.

²⁸⁴ Ray, 15.

²⁸⁵ Latner, 93.

Village repeatedly asked for permission to establish their own church. Salem Village, through court order, received the right to launch their meetinghouse and hire a minister on October 8, 1672.²⁸⁶ Although the inhabitants of the Village now had a meetinghouse and minister, their connection to the church in Salem Town was not severed. The first ministers for the Village were not ordained until 1689; thus, special services for communion and baptisms continued to be held in the Town for the first seventeen years.²⁸⁷ The residents of Salem Village were still required to pay taxes to the town and follow their administrative and religious decisions, although they were permitted to collect taxes to pay their own minister.²⁸⁸ This system effectively resulted in those who resided in the Village paying double taxes, while those living in Salem Town only paid once.

Membership of the parishes was varied due to residences and occupations of the congregation members. The demographics of the church in Salem Town showed membership rolls that contained more merchants and officials while the membership of the church in Salem Village was comprised mostly of farmers. The composition of the congregations as well as the individual leading the congregation caused the churches to institute some distinctive practices. As briefly addressed in chapter two, Salem Village church under Samuel Parris made the decision to not accept the Half-Way Covenant. Those seeking membership to this congregation had to stand before it and confess all

²⁸⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, xxvii.

²⁸⁷ Ray, 16.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

their sins in order to be considered for membership.²⁸⁹ Meanwhile, Salem Town chose to honor the Half-Way Covenant. By accepting this doctrine, members only had to exhibit good behavior, stay out of scandals, and demonstrate they understood Christian doctrine before being admitted to the church rolls. The difference between the two congregations led to resentment and distrust, culminating in accusations of witchcraft between them, as some not deemed worthy in one location were permitted to join the neighboring congregation.

Some of the accused were also targeted for having religious beliefs outside of Puritanism. The so-called “City on the Hill” had been established as a Puritan settlement, a utopia for those who wanted to purify the church and escape what they considered religious repression in England. The Puritans believed that as they were the chosen sect, it was their duty to carry out the mission of God as they saw it. They did not count on other religious sects making the same trip, therefore those of Quaker or Baptist beliefs did not factor into the Puritans’ plan, so non-Puritan sects faced accusations of witchcraft. Cotton Mather, after recounting the earlier Massachusetts case of Goody Glover bewitching the Goodwin children, stated in 1691 “I look upon Quakerism as a snare of the devil” and compared their quaking to being possessed by the Devil.²⁹⁰ Those who adhered to Baptist beliefs were targeted for their credence in only allowing adults to be actual members of the church.

²⁸⁹ Emerson W. Baker “OUPblog”, 2015, http://blog.oup.com/2015/09/who-was-giles-cory/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=oupacademic&utm_campaign=oupblog. September 21, 2015.

²⁹⁰ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 133.

Samuel Parris was the minister presiding over the congregation of Salem Village at the time of the witchcraft hysteria. He was hired on June 18, 1689, at a rate of 66 pounds per year (\$17,000 today).²⁹¹ Like many of the ministers of the time, Parris was educated at Harvard, but did not graduate from the institution due to the death of his father.²⁹² Even with the lack of a degree, Parris was ordained in November of 1689 and was hired to be the minister in Salem Village with only part time ministry experience. Although he arrived with limited experience, he made an impact almost immediately. Parris opened the Village Church on November 16, 1689. By December 1690, under Parris the parish grew from an initial 28 members who had signed the covenant and transferred their membership from other churches to 55 members.

However, between December 1690 and November 1691, he was not able to sustain the growth, admitting only seven members, all women.²⁹³ The lack of growth compared to the town church can be attributed to the refusal by Parris to accept the Half-Way Covenant. While community members enjoyed having services closer to their homes, they were not all fans of the type of preaching done by Parris. When Parris took over the church, he brought his strong convictions to the pulpit. He believed in supporting services but also in delivering services that provoked discipline among members. His sermons could get contentious as he reminded the congregation there was no easy way to heaven. His messages were more often negative rather than helpful in their quest toward salvation.

²⁹¹ Upton, 65; Eric Nye, "Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency," University of Wyoming, <https://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>.

²⁹² Ray, 18.

²⁹³ Latner, 102.

The afflictions began in January 1692 with two girls living at the house of Reverend Parris. As nine-year-old Betty Parris and her cousin Abigail Williams began to suffer from strange fits, Samuel Parris called on John Hale to help him determine the origin of the fits. The two men continued to examine and discuss Abigail's behavior and reached the conclusion, with the guidance of Dr. Griggs, that her behavior was the result of being bewitched. However, in order to assist her in overcoming the behaviors, a source of the affliction needed to be located. According to Princeton History Professor, Lawrence Stone, those accusers of witchcraft fell into three categories: first, village peasants who were believed to have committed a social error by refusing to lend money to those in need; second, women who appeared hysterical, had fits, and claimed to hear voices; and third, those who had become dedicated witch-finders, traveling throughout New England with books such as *Malleus Maleficarum* to root out those that were corrupting the pure society of New England.²⁹⁴

The crime of witchcraft began as a transgression that was tried in the ecclesiastical courts as heresy, but as the definition continued to evolve it turned more into a civil crime against an individual or property, and it moved to the secular courts for prosecution. Those that claimed they had fallen under a witch's spell had certain steps they had to follow in order to move forward with a case. An individual had the right to launch a formal complaint that would lead to the initiation of a criminal prosecution through the courts. As it was a capital offense, the case typically moved slowly and methodically to ensure a fair verdict. In an effort to ensure a fair outcome, the judges and

²⁹⁴ Marc Mappen, ed., *Witches and Historians*, 2nd ed. (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2002), 13.

their subordinates investigated the crime to determine if the accused was guilty. Although many of the cases in England were still decided by juries, in many of the European cases as well as those in Salem, decisions were made based on depositions.²⁹⁵ In the years prior to the Salem trials, of the 61 cases that are known to have been prosecuted only 14 resulted in a guilty verdict followed by execution.²⁹⁶ These cases were relatively easy as 4 of those accused actually confessed; however, when looking at the percentages of conviction when a confession is lacking the conviction rate for witchcraft was at 19.7%. The rate was low for these cases as the evidence was usually circumstantial and thus justices were cautious in an effort not to falsely condemn someone to death.

Many of those accused of witchcraft initially came from Salem Village, where the initial hearings took place, but due to public interest in the cases, the trials were held at the courthouse in Salem Town as it was larger than the Village meeting house.²⁹⁷ This usually meant prisoners were detained in Boston or Charlestown and transferred to Salem Town when necessary. This led to a larger audience being aware to the trials by the public, which increased the attention the accusers were receiving.

As warrants were issued and the accused were brought to jail, a common thread emerged.²⁹⁸ Many of those accused were widows, over the age of forty and past

²⁹⁵ Brian P. Levack, "Witchcraft and the Law," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, 473.

²⁹⁶ Richard Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," *ibid.*, 400.

²⁹⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 67.

²⁹⁸ R.B. Trask and Salem Village Witchcraft Committee of Danvers, *Danvers Remembers: The Commemoration of the Tercentennial of the 1692 Salem Village Witchcraft Delusion* (Salem Village Witchcraft Tercentennial Committee of Danvers, 1993), 24.

childbearing age. Widows drew particular suspicion and hostility and became targets for accusation of witchcraft because while women were traditionally unable to own land, widows were allowed to own land or control it until their children were of age to take it over. The idea of women owning and controlling land conflicted with Puritan ideals, which stressed that the man was the stronger sex and thus held more control.²⁹⁹ Karlson argues that Puritans needed to believe that women played a constructive role within the community as a companion and helpmeet for men and ensure children would be raised to become committed to the Puritan faith.³⁰⁰

To the Puritans, a witch “was someone who had covenanted with the devil rather than with God, thus allowing the devil to use her shape to torment others in his war against the godly.”³⁰¹ This definition would become one of the central beliefs as the desire to achieve justice got underway. Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and a servant named Tituba were the first three accused of witchcraft, and their arrest warrants were issued on February 29, 1692. The women were held in the Boston jail after questioning by John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin. A panel of judges needed to be selected to hear the cases brought on by those suffering at the hands of the purported witches. Of the seven judges chosen only Bartholomew Gedney was from Salem. Samuel Sewall, John Richards, Peter Sargeant, and Wait Winthrop were from Boston and the remaining two, John Hathorne and Nathaniel Saltonstall from nearby Haverhill and Dorchester.³⁰² Once the

²⁹⁹ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 101.

³⁰⁰ Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," 396.

³⁰¹ Reis, *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, xiii.

³⁰² Marion Lena Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 152.

judges were selected, they had to determine a definition of witchcraft. Corwin and John Hathorne, both local justices of the peace, looked to the Bible for the answer, where although witchcraft is mentioned, it is not defined.³⁰³ The state of Massachusetts had defined by law in 1648 a witch as “any man or woman...[who] hath or consulted with a familiar spirit.” In order to convict, there had to be proof that the accused was allegiant to the devil or had inflicted harm through a spirit.³⁰⁴ The definition put into place by the state of Massachusetts was not the only explanation relied on by the justices. They men utilized books and chapters from Bernard’s *Guide to Jurymen*, Glanvil’s *Collection of Sundry Tryals in England and Ireland*, Keeble’s *Common Law*, Baxter’s *Certainty of the World of Spirits*, R. Burton’s *Kingdom of Darkness* and Mather’s *Memorable Providences*.³⁰⁵ Now that Corwin and Hathorne had a definition from the state in addition to their own research, they set out to determine what evidence of allegiance to the devil would look like or consist of. They determined that there were three principles of evidence:

1. A teat or “devils mark”—an unnatural excrescence on the body of the accused, usually in the genitalia region.
2. A type of mischief after neighbors had a disagreement, and
3. The devil cannot assume the shape of an innocent person, if he is going to take on a human shape it would be one of someone who had pledged loyalty to him.³⁰⁶

In addition to the three criteria outlined above, Corwin and Hathorne also believed, “a witchcraft accusation had to be widely supported and sustained by

³⁰³ Ibid., 52.

³⁰⁴ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 24.

³⁰⁵ Starkey, 53.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

conscientious agreement across social groups.”³⁰⁷ This belief should have protected any one group from ganging up on another individual; however, given the number of accused and the manner in which trials were conducted it is argued that a group of young girls, desirous of influence and power that was not ordinarily afforded to their gender, did initially gang up on those that exhibited characteristics they felt were less desirable from a Puritan woman.

As the girls of the Parris house began to divulge names, the first was Tituba, the servant of Reverend Parris. The mere accusation, along with her confession, showed that witchcraft was indeed occurring in the city on the hill. Tituba was a likely suspect for performing witchcraft because she looked different from many of the others in the colony. There is much speculation as to her background. Some historians believe her to be from Barbados, others, because of the way her husband was referenced, think she may be of Native origin, and finally some feel she is of mixed heritage. There were few slaves in the region, so she stood out due to her skin color and the fact she was from another country, most likely speaking with a different accent than those around her. Tituba became a figure in the trials once she agreed to help Mary Sibley with the preparation of the Witch Cake in February 1692. The warrant for Tituba was signed on February 29, 1692 and she appeared at Ingersoll’s Tavern on March 1. Once word of the cake got out, Tituba admitted she was familiar with methods of locating witches.³⁰⁸ During the examination of Tituba on March 1, Hawthorn asked her,

³⁰⁷ Gibson, 55.

³⁰⁸ Elaine G. Breslaw, *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritans* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 99.

“Tituba what evil spirit have you familiarity with

Tituba: none

Hawthorn: why doe you hurt the children

Tituba: I doe not hurt them

Hawthorn: who is it the then

Tituba: the devil for ought I know

Hawthorn: did you ever see the devil,

Tituba: the devil came to me and bid me serve him

Hawthorn: who have you seen

Tituba: 4 women sometimes hurt the children,

Hawthorn: who were they?

Tituba: goode Osburn and Sarah good and I doe not know who the other were
Sarah good and osburn would have me hurt the children but I would not see
further saith there were a tale man of Boston that shee did see”³⁰⁹

In her questioning as recorded by Jonathan Corwin on March 2, Tituba admitted to serving the devil for six years. With her admission that others had signed the book, the “witch hunt” began. The authorities were determined to find out who the other participants were and to rid the community of their influence.

The first arrests in Salem Town were made in February 1691 or 1692, but the first trial was not held until June 2 when the court heard the evidence regarding Bridget Bishop.³¹⁰ The court had already determined that the only way to rid Salem of the contamination of witches was to put them to death, but the court had to wait until after June 8 when an old colonial law was revised, making witchcraft a capital offense.³¹¹ Once the law was in place, Bridget Bishop was sent to Gallows Hill and hanged on June 10.

³⁰⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 128.

³¹⁰ Starkey, 156.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

The possibility of putting innocent people to death did not go unnoticed. At the end of May 1692, Cotton Mather began to question the validity of spectral evidence. Five days after the execution of Bridget Bishop, on June 15, twelve leading ministers submitted a document, written by Cotton Mather, to Governor Phips stating that the touch test as well as spectral evidence should not be considered reliable for sending suspects to prison or convicting them, as there was no way to refute it.³¹² *The Return of Several Ministers* called for the rejection of testimony presented by a confessed witch.³¹³ Although spectral evidence was now being called into question, it did not stop the executions from continuing at Gallows Hill. On July 19, five more were hanged, including Rebecca Nurse and Sarah Good.³¹⁴

Governor Phips and the Court of Oyer and Terminer

The appointment of a governor for the colony was reserved to the Crown. Increase Mather, the father of Cotton Mather, who was respected by William III, appointed Sir William Phips. By early 1692, the colony was awaiting the arrival of a new governor, and until he arrived, the trials could not take place. Additionally, the colony was awaiting the arrival of their new charter which would outline laws and procedures. The previous one being revoked for numerous reasons such as trade with other countries,

³¹² Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 143; David Harley, "Explaining Salem: Calvinist Psychology and the Diagnosis of Possession," *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 318.

³¹³ Hansen, 125.

³¹⁴ Starkey, 175.

minting their own currency and passing laws in conflict with those of the crown. Sir William Phips, a native of Maine, arrived in Boston on May 14, 1692 after traveling to England to seek funds to lead an attack in Canada against the French and discovered over 40 individuals in prison accused of witchcraft.³¹⁵

Phips had to decide how to handle the growing accusations of witchcraft. He set up a special court known as Oyer and Terminer to prevent too many people being jailed because of the accusations, thus prohibiting the courts from hearing other cases. His special court received its commission on June 2, 1692 and proceeded to hear its first case that day.³¹⁶ Governor Phips quickly appointed six members of his council to sit as magistrates, with his deputy governor, William Stoughton, serving as chief justice of the court.³¹⁷ The men that he chose to serve on the committee had never worked as professional lawyers; however, William Stoughton had been trained for the ministry at Harvard College, so he had knowledge of theology, an important consideration given the supernatural accusations being tried by the court.³¹⁸ Those that made up the court came from a variety of respected backgrounds. Members of the court included merchants, clergymen, physicians, and one member of the military that declined to serve.³¹⁹ The judges that comprised the court were well known within the community and were all church members. Six of the Salem justices were related by marriages that allied

³¹⁵ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 3; Emerson W. Baker, 2015, <https://blog.oup.com/2015/05/salem-witch-trial-judges/>. 10/28/2017.

³¹⁶ Emory Washburn, *Sketches of the Judicial History of Massachusetts from 1630 to the Revolution in 1775* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1840), 140.

³¹⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 3.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ "Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts," ed. Benjamin Arrington (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1922), 837.

merchant families.³²⁰ The task of the Court of Oyer and Terminer was to only hear cases involving those accused of witchcraft so the regular courts could continue to hear other cases, essentially clearing up a backlog that was impeding the courts from handling the many other disagreements that arose. The Court of Oyer and Terminer was instructed by Phips to “proceed according to the Law and Custom of England, and of this their Majesties Province.”³²¹ The proceedings that were to follow would be greatly impacted by common law.

The questioning done by the magistrates and their predisposed interpretations of the responses often led the court to a decision of guilt regardless of the answer supplied. The magistrates believed not only that if the accused answered yes, they were guilty of the accusations, but also that a response of denial coupled with the reaction of the afflicted implied the desired verdict of guilty. The afflicted girls testified that when the specter of Tituba had come to them, she asked them to sign the devil’s book pledging him their allegiance. Tituba at first denied being a witch, but during her examination she named Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne as others who practiced the dark art. During her time in front of the magistrates, Tituba’s confession mentioned that the book belonging to the devil contained nine signatures.³²² With only three of the names identified, the court started looking for the remaining six conspirators.

John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin examined the first three accused of witchcraft. Hathorne performed his role with the purpose of getting the women to

³²⁰ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 10.

³²¹ David C. Brown, "The Forfeitures at Salem, 1692," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1993): 91.

³²² Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 29.

confess to the crime.³²³ “The Puritans had a low opinion of lawyers and did not permit the professional practice of law in the colony,” historian Marion Starkey explains. “In effect the administration of the law was in the hands of laymen, most of them second generation colonists who had an incomplete grasp of current principles of English jurisdiction.”³²⁴ As the trials got underway, the judges always kept the accusers in the courtroom, as they wanted to see their reaction in front of the defendant.³²⁵ The judges were looking for twitches, outbursts, or echolalia. They believed that if a person had truly made a pact with the devil, the results of that pact would be visible in the courtroom. Benjamin Ray in *The Witch-Hunt Crisis of 1692* states that early in the episode at Salem, Judge Hathorne told the girls that if they were not “genuinely affected, they were murderers.”³²⁶ If the girls were feigning their symptoms and not actually affected, they could be considered murderers because individuals were losing their lives after being convicted based on their statements and behavior. Given the importance of getting to heaven, once the girls had made their first accusations, it was nearly impossible to change their stories. Retracting their accusations would subject them to damnation and stigmatize their families within the community. The girls were forced to continue their performance in order not to be considered the guilty ones.

Sarah Good also denied any role in witchcraft. Like Tituba, she stood out as someone unlike many of those in Puritan society. Her first husband, Daniel Poole, who had been an indentured servant, died shortly after they were married and left her

³²³ Ibid., 25.

³²⁴ Starkey, 51.

³²⁵ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 21.

³²⁶ Ray, 64.

homeless and stuck with his debts.³²⁷ Sarah went on to marry William Good, but was looked down on for being a beggar. The Puritans believed that because God had a reason for all that he did, he must have intentionally chosen for Sarah to suffer financial insecurity. Sarah Good was brought to trial on June 28, 1692, found guilty, and hanged on July 19th.³²⁸ Sarah Osburne, the last of the initial three to be accused of witchcraft, was also seen as an outsider. Although she held a higher status than Tituba and Sarah Good, she had lived with her husband William prior to being married and had failed to attend church for fourteen months.³²⁹

As outlined in the principles of evidence used during the trials, the juries of the same sex as those accused would search the bodies of the accused for any abnormalities such as a third teat.³³⁰ Those that were chosen to complete the exam were often older women who had experienced childbirth or women who had served as mid-wives as they were more familiar with female anatomy. Once the examinations had concluded, the findings would be shared with the judges for them to consider in their rulings. On June 2, 1692 after being told to conduct a search by Sheriff Corwin, nine women and surgeon J. Barton examined Bridget Bishop, Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Proctor, Alice Parker, Susannah Martin and Sarah Good. “On the first three namely Bishop, Nurse, [and] Proctor, by diligent search [we] have discovered a preternatural excrescence of flesh between the pudendum and anus much like to teats and not usual in women and much unlike to the other three that hath been searched by us and that they were in all the three

³²⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 68.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ Starkey, 51.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

women near the same place.”³³¹ The searching of bodies was not isolated to just females. On August 4, 1692 a group of 7 men were ordered by Sheriff Corwin to examine the bodies of George Burroughs and George Jacobs Jr. Upon their examination “we find nothing upon the body of the above said Burroughs but what is natural, but upon the body of George Jacobs we find three teats which according to best of our judgments we think is not natural, for we ran a pin through two of them and he was not sensible of it.”³³² While these examples show that the accused were subjected to body searches records do not survive that indicate this was done in all cases.

Much of the evidence was established through one of the following methods. Because Puritan society was very superstitious, witchcraft could be blamed if someone had quarreled with a neighbor and then suffered a misfortune, to frame those in society who were considered healers by using their medical knowledge as evidence against them,³³³ or to explain odd or suspicious behavior. For instance, Martha Corey’s husband Giles claimed he could not remember his prayers at certain times when she was around. Although victims claimed to be tormented by what was invisible to those in the courtroom, the judges claimed they were not convicting based on the scenes. However, many of those who were observing felt the contrary, and that the magistrates were in fact impacted by the displays.³³⁴ The magistrates also watched with interest the results of the “touch test.” In this case, if the victims were touched by the accused and the torment

³³¹ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 108.

³³² *Ibid.*, 140.

³³³ Godbeer, *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692*, 162.

³³⁴ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 4.

stopped it was an indicator of their guilt.³³⁵ Because the “specters” were only visible by the accuser, those accused had no defense.³³⁶ The judges also accepted acts of malefic witchcraft, such as causing a person or animal to get sick or die, as evidence.³³⁷

The right of counsel, or access to an individual trained in the law, an aspect of the trial that many today take for granted, was not yet established in the courtroom in 17th-century Salem. As Starkey puts it, no official or magistrate “saw any reason to provide an accused witch with right of counsel, and their notions of evidence and courtroom etiquette were, to put it mildly, peculiar.”³³⁸ Although many of the accused pled innocent, witchcraft was considered a capital offense, and as such, defendants were not entitled to legal representation or permitted to testify under oath. However, the prosecution was allowed to offer sworn testimony from all its witnesses.³³⁹ In addition to denying the accused the right of counsel, they permitted the use of spectral evidence, allowing hallucinations and dreams to be accepted in court as factual proof of the behavior of the accused.

Customs of the time period dictated that court hearings were to be private affairs, reasoning that the accused stood a better chance of getting a fair hearing without biased third parties present in the courtroom gallery. However, when a serious offense was committed, the church, seen to have the authority on serious matters, proceeded to have

³³⁵ Wendel D. Craker, "Spectral Evidence, Non-Spectral Acts of Witchcraft, and Confession at Salem in 1692," *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 2 (1997): 332.

³³⁶ Starkey, 54.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Upton, 53.

the offender appear publicly before the congregation.³⁴⁰ The preliminary hearings were held in public before large crowds,³⁴¹ which provided the accusers with an audience and attention, bolstering the accusers. Such a format was highly conducive to giving accusers more targets for their accusations.

As accusations continued, and girls continued to share information about the meetings held by the witches, one point is often overlooked: the witches held their meetings under the cover of darkness. The Puritans believed the witches were trying to conceal their identity in an effort not to be caught practicing their craft. Given they couldn't meet in the day, Hoffer shared a concern of the judges that if witches were only meeting in the night hours, would they perform their dark art in front of the girls in the courtroom?³⁴² As the number of accused continued to grow, the girls' testimony led the judges to require that the accused witches perform their dark art in front of a room full of onlookers, to prove that they were witches. Cases continued to come before the judges, and if being denied counsel and having one's name and reputation tarnished were not enough, the magistrates continued to make examples of the accused: once a person was arrested or found guilty, they were sent to prison to await their fate, and the public came to "stare" or observe those who had been condemned.³⁴³ Although some most likely came with the purpose gawking at those in chains, others came to offer sympathy and pledged to assist their friends in showing they were wrongly accused.

³⁴⁰ David C. Brown, "The Keys of the Kingdom; Excommunication in Colonial Massachusetts," *The New England Quarterly* 67, no. 4: 550.

³⁴¹ Ray, 67.

³⁴² Hoffer, 98.

³⁴³ Starkey, 151.

Of those who had been brought in for a physical examination for devil's marks, the prospect of facing punishment by hanging was nearly guaranteed. The accused faced a conviction rate of 100%,³⁴⁴ which was easy to obtain when one looks at the two types of evidence required: a voluntary confession and testimony from two witnesses.³⁴⁵ The confessions were not hard to obtain; the type of questioning used by the magistrates and view that women of the time period were expected to comply and agree, as well as the assumption that women were already sinners, resulted in them being found guilty of crimes they had never committed. Their acquiescence was not unexpected, and along with the girls colluding with spectral evidence, which was accepted without question, allowed for any easy conviction. "Every confession reinforced the conviction of the magistrates, the ministers, and the community that they were on the right track," thus the necessary motivation to keep the trials moving in order to weed out all those trying to corrupt their lives in New England.³⁴⁶

By the end of September 1692, twenty more people had been convicted and executed for their roles in witchcraft.³⁴⁷ Most of the evidence used in the trials came from those who had confessed and then accused others, as well as accusations from the first afflicted girls. As the trials continued, some residents began to have their doubts about the accusations and number of convictions. By early fall the court was able to document fifty confessions; however, many individuals recanted their confessions in an

³⁴⁴ Young, 243.

³⁴⁵ Craker, 336.

³⁴⁶ Hansen, 112.

³⁴⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 143.

attempt to save their own lives.³⁴⁸ Once spectral evidence was no longer allowed, the pace of the trials accelerated. Due to the quicker pace and lack of evidence, some who had been accused were released from prison quicker than had been done previously.

However, just because the accused were released, they were not automatically acquitted. The village expected payment by the prisoners or their families for the time those accused had been held in prison. The cost associated with incarceration was two shillings and six pence per week, a sum that many struggled to pay.³⁴⁹ According to Mixon and Trevino, many of the indictments and death sentences were on village farmers or mercantilists that lived in the eastern part of the village.³⁵⁰ The cost caused many to take loans and mortgage their farms. These families were hit doubly hard: on top of having to make payments to the municipality, having a family member incarcerated limited the amount of production that could occur on their property, causing them to make less money. This put further financial pressure on the family to take care of those they loved both in and out of jail. Those who began to recant their confessions presented a new problem for the magistrates: what else had the accusers testified to that could now be called into question?

Governor Phips terminated the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29, 1692, but some trials still transpired after this date in the regular court.³⁵¹ With the Court of Oyer and Terminer no longer functional, the Superior Court of Judicature took its place.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁴⁹ Starkey, 230.

³⁵⁰ Franklin G. Mixon Jr. and Len J. Trevino, "The Allocation of Death in the Salem Witch Trials: A Public Choice Perspective," *International Journal of Social Economics* 30, no. 9 (2003): 938.

³⁵¹ Starkey, 220.

Those serving on the bench included Stoughton, John Richards, Wait Still, Winthrop, and Sewall. In October, Massachusetts passed legislation to define the punishment for witchcraft. In December 1692, the General Court passed an Act that made practicing magic punishable only by imprisonment and the pillory unless it was used to commit murder. If an individual was deemed guilty of using enchantments, they were to serve one year in prison and spend six hours at the pillory four times per year.³⁵² The act reduced the number of individuals facing potential execution. During their session held in January and February 1693, the court heard cases for fifty defendants but only convicted three. Governor Phips went on to reprove the three they had found guilty.³⁵³ The court had been busy during its time of operation.

In 1693, in response to mounting political and ecclesiastical pressure, Governor Phips stopped the trials. He sent a letter to London explaining why he had stopped the trials, regarding “the black cloud that threatened this province with destruction,” which also had “clogged and interrupted their Majesties affairs.”³⁵⁴ The trials had gotten the better of the community and were on a path to destroy life in New England both financially and socially if Phips didn’t try to intervene to halt the paranoia that had taken hold in the colony. Phips received a reply on July 27, 1693 from Queen Mary demanding the trials be stopped.³⁵⁵ Not everyone was happy about the trials coming to an end. One particular judge held fast to his beliefs that witchcraft had indeed taken over the colony.

³⁵² Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 196.

³⁵³ Richard Francis, *Judge Sewall's Apology: The Salem Witch Trials and the Forming of an American Conscience* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 165.

³⁵⁴ Philip Ranlet, "A Safe Haven for Witches? Colonial New York's Politics and Relations with New England in the 1690s," *New York History* 90, no. 1/2 (2009): 43.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

William Stoughton is recorded as stating, “We were in a way to have cleared the land of them, who it is that obstructs the course of justice I know not, the Lord be merciful to the country.”³⁵⁶ Stoughton who had been on the bench for a trial in another location was shocked that the government would conclude the trials before the land was clear. There is not clear agreement on what prompted the end of the trials. Some argue that the end came about due to accusations being made against government official’s families such as the complaint lodge against Governor Phips’ wife. Others would contend the trials came to end due to a rise in enlightenment thinking.³⁵⁷

During the time that it functioned, the Court of Oyer and Terminer handed out twenty convictions each with a death penalty.³⁵⁸ Between the Court of Oyer and Terminer and the regular court sessions 156 individuals were indicted. Of those to face indictment, 28 went to trial with 20 ending in orders for execution.³⁵⁹ Margo Burns, in *Other Ways of Undue Force and Fright: the Coercion of False Confessions by the Salem Magistrates*, states that over one third of those accused actually confessed to practicing witchcraft.³⁶⁰ For those that confessed, the damage was done, as some of them lost family and friends for the role they had played in the ordeal. Some were just caught up in the moment while others were truly convinced of their role and possible actual use of witchcraft. Tituba recanted her confession in the fall of 1692. In April 1693, an unknown

³⁵⁶ unknown, "Historical Collections of the Essex Institute," (Salem: G.M. Whipple & A.A. Smith, 1861), 19.

³⁵⁷ Edward Bever, "Witchcraft Prosecutions and the Decline of Magic," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 2 (2009): 264.

³⁵⁸ "Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts," 1922. 837.

³⁵⁹ Craker, 333.

³⁶⁰ Burns, 24.

person paid her jail fees and took her away, and her fate and location would remain a mystery.³⁶¹

How Salem Cases Reflected Differences in Gender and Societal Position

It is common knowledge that many women lost their lives in Salem. The accepted demographic has been a woman who was on the margins of society and beyond childbearing. However, as demonstrated throughout this paper, that has not been the case. Both men and women of all levels of society faced accusation and were forced to go on the defensive. The accused were placed in a position often of assumed guilt and had to prove their innocence.

On Friday, March 11, 1692, Ann Putnam Jr. named Martha Corey as a witch.³⁶² Edward Putnam and Ezekiel Cheever, who were members of the church with Martha, went to her home on March 12 to talk to her about the accusation.³⁶³ When the gentlemen arrived at the house, Martha was inside and alone. As they talked with her, she shared that she could not be a witch as she was a good Christian and attended church regularly. When they questioned her further, she indicated that she did not think there were any witches.³⁶⁴ Martha Corey was the first upper class woman to be accused in the trials. Author Mary Beth Norton believes Martha Corey's past marriage to Henry Rich and giving birth to a "bastard mulatto child" may have caused the afflicted girls to accuse

³⁶¹ Craker, 333.

³⁶² Starkey, 65.

³⁶³ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 44.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

her.³⁶⁵ On March 14, Abigail Williams gave Martha's name as the person pinching her.³⁶⁶ Although many of the accusers had initially been young girls, that changed on March 18, when Ann Putnam senior, who had been caring for her afflicted daughter, decided to lie down for a nap. Due to her daughter's bewitched condition, there were witnesses in the house both helping and observing. As she was lying down, she said that she was being pressed and choked by Martha Corey. She went on to say that Martha asked her to sign the devil's book, causing the justices to issue a warrant for Martha's arrest on Monday, March 21.³⁶⁷

The trials caused those in powerful positions to assume that they had no reason to be concerned. They believed there was no chance of being accused, and if they were accused, they had the resources to escape and avoid prosecution.³⁶⁸ Most who were accused of involvement in witchcraft actually knew each other and appeared to use the accusations to settle old grudges and punish those who violated societal norms. Godbeer asserts accusations came from one of three circumstances. In the first case a neighbor asking another for a favor and was refused which led to the second neighbor to feel guilty. The original neighbor, feeling slighted possibly cursed at the second. Once this action transpired the second neighbor at the hint of anything going awry blamed the first for bewitching him. A second possibility was a problem with the exchange of goods

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 51.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 53.

³⁶⁸ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 22.

between two neighbors. Finally, in the third possibility was one neighbor had damaged the property of the other neighbor.³⁶⁹

Because Puritans believed they had been assigned a place in life and therefore looked down on social mobility, when the Nurse family was trying to acquire property from the Allens, they were seen as interfering with the way God had intended things to be.³⁷⁰ On Sunday, March 13, seventy-year-old Ann Putnam accused old Rebecca Nurse of being a witch.³⁷¹ Rebecca's husband Francis and many others in the community quickly came to her defense. Initially the courts found her not guilty. In her case, the magistrates did not allow spectral evidence to be introduced and carefully watched her behaviors on the stand and listened to the community members speak of her upstanding reputation in the community. In June 1692, as the "not guilty" verdict was read, however, the girls began to go into fits, causing the judges to rethink their verdict and declare Nurse guilty.³⁷² Additionally, although she was hard of hearing, the magistrates watched for her reaction to the verdict and, seeing none, concluded that this was part of her pact with the devil.

With spectral evidence starting to be called into question, the courts had to determine what types of evidence could be legally accepted. The courts looked toward English Puritans William Perkins and Richard Bernard for advice on how to proceed. Perkins and Bernard recommended that evidence against individuals be divided into two

³⁶⁹ Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," 398-99.

³⁷⁰ Starkey, 77.

³⁷¹ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 47.

³⁷² Starkey, 159.

categories: convictive and presumptive.³⁷³ Convictive evidence established a direct link between the accused and the devil. If the individual being accused did not supply a confession, the court could rely on the testimony of two reliable witnesses stating the accused had made a pact with the devil. Bernard went on to state that a visible witch's mark was proof that the accused had worked with the devil, and the use of misdeeds and malefic witchcraft was considered presumptive of guilt. Sole use of presumptive evidence could not render a conviction.³⁷⁴

Presumptive evidence would ensnare Giles Corey. He was an elderly member of the community who had some friends but had also suffered more than his fair share of disagreements with neighbors. As the accusations began, he shared that his wife did a great deal of reading. Giles was not an educated man and began to question whether the amount of reading done by Martha Corey was normal. He stated that when his wife was reading, he was unable to recite his prayers. The court interpreted that Goodwife Corey must be in an arrangement with the devil because nothing else explained why he was unable to remember his verses. The court brought Giles in to testify against his wife. Eventually Giles Corey was accused of being a witch as well. Once he was brought into court, he refused to testify and stood mute in the courtroom. "When his turn came, he stood speechless before the judges," historian Marion Starkey found. "He would not plead, he would not testify before such a court. Better the breaking of his bones one by one than the mockery that the she-brats would heap on him if he opened his mouth."³⁷⁵

³⁷³ Reis, *Damned Women*, 78-79.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ Starkey, 206.

Corey had adhered to a part of English Common law that said if he stood mute, his property would not be forfeited and become government property.³⁷⁶ The court wanted his statement and a confession that he was also a witch. Due to his refusal to speak, his trial was unable to proceed. In order to get the confession from him, the magistrates invoked a sentence of *peine forte et dure* or hard, forceful punishment. Giles Corey was taken to an open field adjacent to the jail and placed on the ground for the placement of stones on his body. The stones were to be placed on him until a confession was elicited. Instead of confessing, he remained quiet, and allegedly uttered the words “more weight.” The rocks crushed him to death and his property went to his sons-in-law who believed he and his wife Martha were innocent.³⁷⁷ Prior to 1692, only two men in New England had been executed for witchcraft, both who had wives that had also been executed.³⁷⁸

In the end, over 150 citizens would be accused of witchcraft, with 76% of those being women, as they were believed to be the weaker sex and therefore easier for the devil to take over.³⁷⁹ While this is only one factor, it is the one most often cited. Records show many factors could have been in place such as jealousy over lives others dreamed of socioeconomic changes for some families, fear of the unknown in a strange land, and retributions for events of the past. The individuals that made the accusations were not all females. Boys also made some of the accusations but according to Rosenthal, the girls made the first accusations, therefore received the most attention.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ John M. Murrin, "Coming to Terms with the Salem Witch Trials," *American Antiquarian Society* (2003): 311.

³⁷⁹ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 82.

³⁸⁰ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 55.

By the conclusion of the trials 58% of those accused of being witches in New England were over the age of 40, and 18% of all accused were over the age of 60.³⁸¹ The women were at a pivotal point in their life within New England society. These women were beyond childbearing years, and many had outlived spouses often with few or no children to help support them in their older years. They often made up a demographic of those with inheritances and no male to speak on their behalf or were in possession of land and waiting for their male children to come of age where they could take responsibility. Many of those that were accused had faced prior charges for theft, verbal assault, slander, and cussing.³⁸²

Of the men that had stood accused in New England, half were considered secondary suspects. These men became suspects based on the unfortunate circumstance of being related to an accused witch either through familial ties or through social ties.³⁸³ Although the fame and legacy of the trials is attributed to Salem Town, only 3 of the 19 that hanged were actually from the town.³⁸⁴

Conclusion

The turmoil that began at the Parris house and created distrust among neighbors caused many people to develop a hatred and mistrust of Reverend Parris and even caused

³⁸¹ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 64.

³⁸² Demos, 120.

³⁸³ Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England," 36.

³⁸⁴ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 11.

the community to divide into two factions, those that supported him and those who did not. The attitude of the community led him to resign in 1696.³⁸⁵ It would take time for residents to realize the impact the previous year had on their community. With the removal of Samuel Parris, the parish needed a new spiritual leader. The entire congregation voted to hire Joseph Green to minister to Salem Village on July 31, 1698.³⁸⁶ Within five years of the final verdict, one judge and twelve jurors apologized for their roles in the trials.³⁸⁷ In 1709, twenty-one accused witches and the children of those executed asked for the restoration of their family members' names and restitution for the financial losses their families had experienced.³⁸⁸ The families had their demands met. Family members were restored to the church rolls and some were compensated for their losses. Along with the convictions being overturned, 598 pounds and 12 shillings were set aside in 1711 to compensate the families, although not all families received restitution. If an individual had been found not guilty but had fled the area due to fear of being convicted, their property could be seized or forfeited, as in the case of the Philip English family.³⁸⁹ A committee headed by Stephen Sewell was in charge of the distribution of the funds.³⁹⁰ The amount each family received varied depending on the perceived value of the individual that lost their life. The question to consider is how gender factored into the amounts received, and is one gender worth more than another or are all humans valued the same? Does the amount received vary depending on whether

³⁸⁵ Trask and Danvers, 24.

³⁸⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 565.

³⁸⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 167.

³⁸⁸ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 10.

³⁸⁹ Brown, "Forfeitures," 103-04.

³⁹⁰ Starkey, 267.

the individual requesting the money was male versus a female requesting reparation, and did social position affect the outcome?

Chapter 4 – Reparations

Chapter Abstract

The episode that became known as the Salem Witch Trials affected numerous families in multiple ways. By the end of the Trials, several hundred lives were disrupted, and the loss of property and family members extended the hardship for years.³⁹¹ It would take years of legal and sectarian wrangling by families, individuals, and legal scholars to recover reputations, finances, and family pride for those who were accused, convicted, or executed during the Trials.

As the trials got underway and testimony and convictions continued, the initial worries for many of those accused and convicted in such a religious society was for their immortal souls, not the unprecedented financial burdens that ultimately occurred. It would eventually become clear to many of the accused that in order to avoid death, one would have to lie and admit being a witch or having a relationship with the devil. The Bible taught Puritans that lying was a sin, and because they took their beliefs seriously, they often told the truth, realizing the consequence for their honesty was death.³⁹² One of the leading theologians in New England was Cotton Mather. When asked about the trials, Mather viewed the executions as just, because the new world was full of the devil.³⁹³ Believing that the new land was full of temptation and that heathens roamed and lived in the woods, it made sense in his mind that some individuals had found themselves on the devil's side. To the Puritans, maintaining their honesty meant salvation was still

³⁹¹ Breslaw, 171.

³⁹² Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 5.

³⁹³ Upham, xii.

possible. The trials that occurred in Salem reversed the rules that had been traditionally applied in matters of witchcraft. Those brought to trial for the charge of witchcraft were executed when they did not confess unlike in past cases where those that admitted their relationship with the dark arts would have been automatically put to death.³⁹⁴ Citizens' loyalty to friends and family members would be tested during the months of the trials, and the ties between child and parent, spouses, and siblings would become damaged. As accusations continued neighbors as well as family members were called on to supply testimony about behaviors and situations that had observed. For some, these relationships would never be restored.³⁹⁵

The assignation of blame and property loss would take years for the survivors and their families to recover, and the reparations by the state of Massachusetts were intended to right the wrongs done to so many. In this, the state tried to heal the divides and recover the reputations of the lost. The question remains, did the reparations and apologies achieve those goals? This chapter argues that the reparations paid, both monetarily and apologetically, fit all the criteria for complete reparations, and although not sufficient for some, were adequate and accepted by most of the families involved.

The Looting of Salem – Confiscation of Property and Legal Arguments During the Trials

At the start of the outbreak no one could have predicted the scope and the magnitude the trials would take, or the legacy they would leave behind. A community

³⁹⁴ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 28-29.

³⁹⁵ Breslaw, 171.

that was trying to survive was forever altered due to interpretation of laws and their indifference to other acts. In fact, 67% more people were executed during the Salem Witch Trials than during the entire prior history of New England. Preceding Salem, only twelve executions had taken place in the American colonies, compared to 20 during the trials.³⁹⁶

Seventeenth century New England laws were often a reflection of, and consistent with, those of England. If someone committed a felony and received a conviction in England, their property could be seized and the inheritance taken from their children.³⁹⁷ But unlike in England, Massachusetts did not allow for loss of property for convictions pertaining to felonies or treason.³⁹⁸ In 1641, the colony of Massachusetts passed the Body of Liberties, the first legal code established by the European colonists, which exempted witchcraft from the list of crimes for which property could be seized. However, as the trials progressed in Salem, this exemption was usually ignored, and property was seized anyway, often by an overzealous sheriff. The sheriff of Essex County was a twenty-five-year-old named George Corwin. He would become instrumental in carrying out the arrest warrants and had a direct connection to the trials, as he was the nephew of Justice Corwin and grandson of Justice Winthrop, in addition to being married to Lydia Gedney who was the daughter of Justice Bartholomew Gedney.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶Edmund S. Morgan, *American Heros* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 115.

³⁹⁷ Gragg, 128.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 144.

In England, in accordance with the accepted norm of women being inferior to men, coverture was practiced, in which a woman's legal rights and property were forfeited to her husband upon marriage. According to David C. Brown, the only way a woman could have her property confiscated would be if her husband were also convicted of a crime.⁴⁰⁰ Women who were unmarried or widowed could retain their property and land, although it was an uncommon circumstance. Those accused of witchcraft who most often forfeited goods were widows and men, while married women only forfeited goods when their husbands were found guilty, and men historically were rarely accused of witchcraft. Following common law procedures, no land was forfeited during this time,⁴⁰¹ so while the forfeiture in Salem was significant when it came to chattel, the land that one owned was allowed to be retained. Additionally, English law stated that if one stood mute it was legal to confiscate their goods and chattels.⁴⁰²

The law in Massachusetts stated it was illegal to take the property of those found guilty of witchcraft, so the only way that Corwin could legally obtain their property was if they were fleeing from justice, as was the case with the family of Philip English, a merchant and considered one of the wealthiest residents of Essex County.⁴⁰³ Corwin exacerbated the problems for the families of Essex County, rendering them unable to get back on their feet at the conclusion of the trials when they often were left with nothing to restart their lives. As the number of women accused of witchcraft continued to climb and the sheriff demanded goods while they were incarcerated, the issue of property and what

⁴⁰⁰ Brown, "Forfeitures," 91.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 105.

⁴⁰³ Gragg, 129.

belonged to a woman became central to the town. Before the conclusion of the trials, families such as the Proctors and Coreys became examples of this type of forfeiture. In the cases of the Proctors and Coreys both spouses stood accused, and with both facing accusations very little was left for the dependents to utilize for their basic needs.

As mentioned earlier, Governor Phips established an effective and quick way to handle the number of accusations with the establishment of the Court of Oyer and Terminer. When translated from French, *oyer* and *terminer* means “to see” and “to hear”. This court was established for the specific purpose of the Witch Trials so that other courts could continue to function free from the strain that the influx of witch accusations had placed on them. On May 27, 1692, Phips instructed his judges to proceed “according to the law and Custom of England, and of this their Ma^{ties} Province.”⁴⁰⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3, the trials then proceeded and followed the common law practice, while not burdening the standard court system with these accusations and controversies.

According to Charles Hoffer, the evidence suggests parents, ministers, and later government officials helped Betty Parris, Mercy Lewis, Ann Putnam Jr., and Mary Warren create their stories of harm inflicted on them by particular individuals to make them sound like witchcraft was being practiced.⁴⁰⁵ Their parents brought forth the charges and sometimes brought up as evidence events that had transpired before the girls were born—for example, the incident of Giles Corey beating up a hired hand named Jacob Godell. The first step to bring a person to justice was for the family to file a complaint which consisted of three parts: it listed the people being accused, the names of

⁴⁰⁴ Brown, "Forfeitures," 91.

⁴⁰⁵ Hoffer, 50.

the accusers, and the names of the children who claimed to be afflicted.⁴⁰⁶ With a complaint on file the magistrates would issue an arrest warrant. Once the individual had been taken into custody, they were subject to examination. Witnesses such as the girls were brought into court to provide testimony, sometimes functioning as actors whose performances gave credence to the accusations of witchcraft in the eyes of the court. The magistrates now had the task of deciding whether to release the accused or remand them to jail. The individual would eventually return to the court if an indictment had been issued by a grand jury. The suspect would now be put on trial where the girls or other witnesses would testify. After all the testimony had been heard the jury would issue their verdict.⁴⁰⁷ The type and structure of questions implemented by court officials often led to the verdict of guilty. Risto Hiltunen of the University of Turku, Finland, in his linguistic study of the examination records from Salem, looked to the records that were taken verbatim and upon his analysis of the records, it has been determined that majority of the records were written by Reverend Samuel Parris.⁴⁰⁸ Throughout the trials, the accused were questioned by John Hathorne or Jonathan Corwin. Rather than the view of “innocent until proven guilty” that we function with today, at the time of the Salem trials, the court operated under the “assumption that there are witches in Salem Village; their aim is to substantiate it by proving those brought to trial guilty of witchcraft.”⁴⁰⁹ With magistrates operating under the guise of proving individuals on trial as guilty, it is easy to

⁴⁰⁶ Enders A. Robinson, *The Devil Discovered: Salem Witchcraft 1692* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1991), 103.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁰⁸ Risto Hiltunen, "Tell Me, Be You a Witch?," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 9, no. 25 (1996): 20.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

see how as more stood accused, more found themselves declared guilty. Because the prosecution and magistrates were eager to rid the community of witches, they formulated their questions in a direct effort to receive the answer for which they hoped, that resulted in a confession. It wasn't until the end of the trial that the magistrates allowed the defendants an opportunity to ask questions.

Once a person was accused and brought to jail, they were subject to expenses related to their care. Those in jail awaiting their day in court and those who had already been sentenced needed food, bedding, clothing, and firewood, which were supplied by their family members.⁴¹⁰ Blankets were especially important to survive the New England winters in the drafty jail, both providing warmth and serving as a barrier from the muddy floor. According to Larry Gragg, families faced a large financial burden to release their loved ones from jail after the trials. Each week spent in jail resulted in maintenance costs and jailer fees of approximately 5 shillings per week. With average jail time of four and a half months, that came to over four pounds owed just for the incarceration. In addition, court costs and filing fees amounted to over 2 pounds.⁴¹¹ In total, families often owed more than six pounds, a financial burden that was overwhelming for most. In today's value, that amount of money would be the equivalent of over \$15,000, based on the amount of work needed to earn the money.

Prior to the American Revolution, the typical daily wage for a farm laborer in Massachusetts was about two shillings per day, which meant that in a typical three-month growing season the individual could expect to earn approximately 7 pounds 4 shillings,

⁴¹⁰ Gragg, 126.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 126-27.

an equivalent of \$19,000 in today's money.⁴¹² Most of those that were accused and held in jail were those further inland from Salem town. Being further inland meant that most families that endured a family member committed to jail were often making their living off the land. The cost associated with release was a significant burden for any of these families but more so for those such as the Corey family that had two family members jailed.

Unlike today's courts that follow the concept of innocent until proven guilty, during the trials guilt was assumed, and the trials were in place to obtain a confession.⁴¹³ As previously mentioned George Corwin, the Sheriff for Essex County, was the nephew of Jonathan Corwin, one of the judges in the trials—an obvious conflict of interest. Sheriff Corwin was in charge of executing those sentenced to the gallows as well as seizing their property.⁴¹⁴ While the law required Sheriff Corwin to wait until after the accused were convicted before seizing any of their property, he illegally made trips to the homes of the accused to take control of their possessions before decisions of guilt had been reached.⁴¹⁵ This practice created situations where families struggled to take care of the loved one in jail, while maintaining a feasible lifestyle at home.

In the cases of Dorcas Hoar, George Jacobs, and John Parker, the sheriff waited to seize their goods until after they were condemned, following the standard of English

⁴¹² United States Department of Labor, "History of Wages in the United States from Colonial Times to 1928," ed. United States Department of Labor, *Wages and Hours of Labor Series* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), 126; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present," <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁴¹³ Demos, 161.

⁴¹⁴ Robinson, 192.

⁴¹⁵ Stacy Schiff, *The Witches* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 306.

common law. Other times it appears that Sheriff Corwin jumped the gun and seized items without regard for those that might be impacted by his actions. Robert Calef accounts that Sheriff Corwin went to the home of John and Elizabeth Proctor while they were in prison and seized “all the goods, provisions and cattle that he could come at, and sold some of the cattle at half price, and killed others, and put them up for the West-Indies; threw out the beer out of a barrel, and carried away the barrel; emptied a pot of broth, and took away the pot, and left nothing in the house for the support of the children.”⁴¹⁶ In doing this, Corwin went beyond the legal right to seize property and into unnecessary malice, leaving the children with very little to survive while both their parents were incarcerated. It is likely that Corwin intended to intimidate the town by sending the message that those who involved themselves with witchcraft would condemn their loved ones to suffer consequences. While some may argue it was avarice, by taking everything he was making it harder for families to survive.

Many believed in this time period that witchcraft was more apt to be carried out by family members or relatives. By working to get rid of or harm family members they would no longer be around to continue to carry out witchcraft. The children of Mary Parker experienced a similar situation. In their petition for Restitution dated Monday, November 7, 1692 they relay the story of the Sheriff coming to their home:

Since her Death the Sherriff of Essex sent an officer to seise on her Estate. The said officer required us in their majestyes name to give him an Account of our mothers Estate, pretending it was forfeited to ye King; we told him that our mother left no Estate; (which we are able to make appear) notwithstanding which, he seised vpon our Cattell, Corn & hay, to a considerable value; and ordered us to go down to Salem and make an

⁴¹⁶ Robert Calef, *The Wonders of the Invisible World Displayed in Five Parts*, New ed. (Boston: T. Bedlington, 1828), 224.

agreement with y^e Sherrif, otherwise the Estate would be Expos'd to sale. We not knowing to what advantage the Law might give him against us, and fearing we should Sustain greater Dammage by y^e loss of our Estate, went to the sherriff accordingly, who told us he might take away all that was seis'd if he pleas'd, but was willing to do us a kindness by giving us an oppertunity to redeem it. He at first demanded ten pounds of us, but at length was willing to take six pounds which he has oblig'd us by Bill to pay him within a moneth. Now if our mother had left any Estate, we know not of any Law in force in the Province, by which it should be forfeited upon her condemnation; much less can we vnderstand that here is any Justice or reason, for y^e Sherriff to seise vpon our Estate...⁴¹⁷

In addition to the Parker children, William Barker, Dorcas Hoar, George Jacobs Sr, Samuel Wardwell, John Proctor, Giles Corey, and Mary Parker all had their possessions confiscated or were threatened with seizure.⁴¹⁸ In records analyzed by Brown, the residents of Salem did not lose any real estate, only goods that could be easily transported; unlike the laws of the mother country, which said real estate profits would be forfeited to the King for crimes committed upon until the time of their execution.⁴¹⁹ Rosenthal argues Corwin knew exactly what he was doing and seized goods in order to profit from the estates. Although the property was taken under the pretense of it being in the name of the King and was supposed to be sent back to England, records show that did not always happen. In the case of Philip English, he won a judgement against the Corwin estate showing that Corwin did in fact profit from the seizures.⁴²⁰

Church Remonstrations and Societal Reunification

⁴¹⁷ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 700.

⁴¹⁸ Gragg, 129.

⁴¹⁹ Brown, "Forfeitures," 100.

⁴²⁰ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 199.

After a year and several months of accusations, executions and discord, the trials ended, and the community worked to move forward from the circumstances that had pitted neighbors, relatives, and congregation members against each other. Beginning in 1698, the church took steps to reconcile with the families who had been impacted by the trials. In an effort to move beyond the town's haunting past, in 1701 Reverend Green sold the Salem meetinghouse and disposed of the pulpit that had come to be a symbol of a past which had caused so much damage. With the meetinghouse gone, a new committee was established, consisting of accused and accusers working together to find a new location for the construction of a new meetinghouse.⁴²¹ This step toward cooperation was at the forefront of initiating change in the community. One of the first measures taken to heal the congregation was to reverse the excommunication of Martha Corey. Joseph Green, the presiding pastor of the church, had not known Martha Corey, but he presented the facts from the trials to the congregation and let them make the decision on whether to reverse the excommunication of Mrs. Corey. The church chose to reverse what had been done in 1692:

Feb. 14, 1703 – The major part of the brethren consented to the following: 'Whereas this church passed a vote, Sept. 11, 1692, for the excommunication of Martha Corey, and that sentence was pronounced against her Sept. 14, by Mr. Samuel Parris, formerly the pastor of this church; she being; before her excommunication, condemned, afterwards executed, for supposed witchcraft; and there being a record of this in our church-book, page 12, we being moved hereunto, do freely consent and heartily desire that the same sentence may be revoked, and that it may no longer stand against her; for we are, through God's mercy to us, convinced that we were at that dark day under the power of those errors which then prevailed in the land; and we are sensible that we had not sufficient grounds to think her guilty of that crime for which she was condemned and executed; and that her excommunication was not according to the

⁴²¹ Ray, 168.

mind of God, and therefore we desire that this may be entered in our church-book, to take-off that odium that is cast on her name, and that so God may forgive our sin, and may be atoned for the land; and we humbly pray that God will not leave us any more to such errors and sins, but will teach and enable us always to do that which is right in his sight.’ There was a major part voted, and six or seven dissented. J. GR., Pr⁴²²

The church, by its actions, was leading the way in helping the community heal and move forward. While the Puritans had such strong feelings against witchcraft and through the trials rid their community of twenty individuals they believed had gone to the dark side, the reality was they did not remove them from the church rolls. In fact, only three members of the Salem community were excommunicated for their roles in witchcraft, Martha Corey, Giles Corey and Rebecca Nurse. One would expect a higher rate for conspiring with the devil, but it did not occur.

The first opposition to the trials can be traced back to August 9, 1692, in a letter addressed to “the worshipful Jonathan Corwin Esq.”⁴²³ The letter Corwin received was unsigned but carried the initials R.P. and the town of Salisbury, and has been attributed to Major Robert Pike of Salisbury, who saw the girls as nothing more than foolish with their made-up stories.⁴²⁴ While most historians will look to Robert Calef and his publication *More Wonders of the invisible World* as the start of the vocal opposition to the trials, Robert Pike was the first one to speak out against the trials while they were in progress and attach his name to his viewpoint.⁴²⁵ Although Calef was collecting information and in contact with Cotton Mather, he did not actually publish his work until 1700 in London, as

⁴²² Rebecca Beatrice Brooks “History of Massachusetts Blog”, 2015, <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/martha-corey/>.

⁴²³ Upham, 617.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 621.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 626.

publishing about the trials was illegal, which pointed out the many wrongs of the trials. With the jails continuing to fill up and no end in sight, some family members made appeals to the General Court. The jails at this time were not large, nor were they built for the influx of accused. Up until this time, those that committed crimes usually had a public punishment such as the stocks, because embarrassment was viewed as a way to modify the behavior. The jails were becoming filthier and more crowded, and with a change of seasons in the air it would be a short time before the drafts that already existed would become more frigid and the snow would make living conditions unbearable. On October 12, 1692, seven individuals appeared before the General Court, requesting their wives and family members be released on bond to serve their sentences at home where they would receive better care.⁴²⁶

Days later, on October 18th, Ministers Francis Dane and Thomas Barnard of Andover along with twenty-four citizens “addressed a memorial” to the Governor and General Court condemning the witch trial proceedings and criticizing the accusers. This group spoke up to erase the tarnish that was being placed on their friends and family members who regularly attended church, fearful that the accusations could spread if they did not counter the children who continued to dominate society in their endless accusations. The ministers wrote, “Our troubles we foresee are likely to continue and increase, if other methods are not taken than as yet have been; and we know not who can think himself safe, if the accusations of children and others who are under a diabolical influence shall be received against persons of good fame.”⁴²⁷ The gentlemen realized the

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 627.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 628.

trials were not going to go away without bringing down respected/powerful individuals in the community.

As the trials continued to drag on, citizens began to question whether those being condemned were really associated with the art of witchcraft. On October 26, 1692, the Massachusetts Bay Colony assembly passed a bill 33-29 calling for a community fast and a convocation of ministers to determine if the Court of Oyer and Terminer should continue to meet.⁴²⁸ Taking the advice of the ministers, Governor Phips decided to disband the Court of Oyer and Terminer on October 29th. Twelve of the those that had served on the juries during the trials issued the following statement believed to be in January 1697, “hereby declare that we justly fear that we were sadly deluded and mistaken.”⁴²⁹ This admission of erroneous decisions seemed to begin the road to closure and reparations, but it was only the beginning of the subsequent phases of getting some lives back on track and forgiving those who had accused others. While the Court of Oyer and Terminer ceased to exist, the Court of Superior Judicature established in 1693 began to meet and hear cases of witchcraft without the aid of spectral evidence and to work on clearing the jails of those still under indictment. The trials had not yet come to full closure, but their speed had greatly slowed down.

At the conclusion of the trials, many realized that a travesty had occurred within the community, but the citizens didn’t blame the leaders or judges for the events.

Although they acknowledged that the trials had resulted in some errors of judgment, the

⁴²⁸ Francis, 163.

⁴²⁹ Anthony Brandt, "An Unholy Mess," *American History* 49, no. 5: 38-39; Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 175-76.

community voice did not reflect that view when electing officials. On May 31, 1693, Justices Stoughton, Sewall, Hathorn and Corwin were all re-elected to the Massachusetts Council.⁴³⁰ The election of them solidified the position of power they had in the community, regardless of the role they had played in the trials.

In the immediate aftermath of the trials, some members of the Salem community blamed Samuel Parris for instigating the hysteria that gripped their friends, families, and neighbors, and sought his removal. In order for the minister to be removed from the community, the congregation had to come to agreement that the removal was in the best interest of the congregation. In the spring of 1693, Francis Nurse, surviving spouse of Rebecca Nurse, with the support of his family, had presented to the church their grievances against Samuel Parris.⁴³¹ However, the congregation did not lend their support to Mr. Nurse, and his campaign to have Parris removed failed—an unsurprising outcome, given that the community was still hurting from the accusations and death sentences from the previous year and hesitant to jump to conclusions. The village continued to allow Parris to preach the gospel on Sundays, although a rift was still visible within the congregation regarding the reverend. Years later, on April 4, 1695, a group of mediators met with those within the community to discuss Reverend Parris and his position as the community’s presiding religious figure. After first conferring with Parris, the mediators consulted with community members and read records from the trials, and concluded Parris had a change of heart regarding the presence of witches in the Essex County community. The mediators advocated for the congregation to accept an apology

⁴³⁰ Schiff, 363.

⁴³¹ Ray, 146.

from Parris, which he ultimately wrote in the margins of the church record book.⁴³²

Parris expressed the following to his flock,

...I do most heartily fervently, and humbly beseech pardon of the merciful God, through the blood of Christ of all my mistakes and trespasses in so weighty a matter; and also all your forgiveness of every offence in this or other affairs, wherein you see or conceive I have erred and offended; professing, in the presence of the Almighty God, that what I have done has been, as for substance, as I apprehended was duty, however through weakness, ignorance, etc., I may have been mistaken; I also through grace, promising each of you the like of me. And so again, I beg, entreat, and beseech you, that Satan, the Devil, the roaring lion, the old dragon, the enemy of all righteousness, may no longer be served by us, by our envy and strife... but that all from this day forward may be covered with the mantle of love and we may on all hands forgive each other heartily, sincerely, and thoroughly, as we do hope and pray that God, for Christ's sake would forgive each of ourselves...⁴³³

Despite this, some in the community were still not satisfied with him as their spiritual leader. On May 6, 1695 a petition with 84 signatures of inhabitants of Salem Village was presented to area ministers expressing their dislike of Parris remaining in the pulpit. Given the continued disruption his presence was causing the congregation, Increase Mather and eight other ministers advised Parris it was time to step down.⁴³⁴ Parris was paid for the land, parsonage, and back salary, and left the community, heading to Newton and eventually Concord where he continued his ministerial duties. The removal of Parris ultimately helped start the healing process that some wanted, while others just wanted to forget the matter and move forward.

Within the first year after Parris exited the pulpit and was replaced by Reverend Joseph Green, twenty-eight new members joined the congregation, and Green performed

⁴³² Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 492.

⁴³³ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 170.

⁴³⁴ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 495.

twenty-nine baptisms.⁴³⁵ The church had sought a fresh start and was receiving it under the guidance of Green. Reverend Green continued to seek the confidence of the congregants. According to Charles Upham, ‘he was frugal and simple in his habits, and liberal in the use of his means. The parsonage, while he lived in it was the abode of hospitality and frequented by the best society in the neighborhood.’⁴³⁶ Although he was a scholar, he did not see himself above those in the community, sought to live like those around him, and was often found out hunting or playing with his children. Green showed those who relied on him that he was someone trying to live a humble and obedient life in order to please God. He saw himself as someone there for the greater good and worked hard to ensure that conflict like that of 1692 was in the past.

The judges were not the only individuals who made decisions regarding the lives of those who stood accused during the trials. Decisions to stand trial and verdicts were rendered with the assistance of juries. In 1696 a dozen men who had served on juries throughout the trials issued a public apology for condemning certain persons during the trials. They went on to admit they had erred and asked for forgiveness.⁴³⁷ Not just the jurors were apologizing. On January 14, 1697, in addition to being a day of fasting, trial judge, Samuel Sewall, apologized in written form to the church for his role in the trials. The apology, while not read in Salem was read by Samuel Willard, minister at the Old South Church in Boston: “Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the Guilt contracted upon the opening

⁴³⁵ Latner, 118.

⁴³⁶ Upham, 671.

⁴³⁷ Demos, 187.

of the late Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order of this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and shame of it, Asking pardon of men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that sin and all other his sins; personal and Relative...”⁴³⁸ Because the apology was not penned until five years after the trials, Sewall had time to distance himself and look at the events objectively. Time and reflection had allowed him to see he had been gullible to the events and caught up in the hysteria. He had been blinded by the events and now sought to right a wrong by apologizing and asking for forgiveness both from his mortal counterparts as well as the higher power.

Reverend John Hale of Beverly wrote *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* in 1697 and published in 1702 stated that the events that had transpired in Salem were a mistake. Reverend Hale had been at the trials since the beginning and had been called in by Parris to observe the girls who were being tormented and didn't deny the possible existence of witches. Hale provided a disposition in May 1692 pertaining to concerns Christian Trask had regarding Sarah Bishop. Reverend Hale testified against Sarah Wilds on July 2, 1692. Although he took part in court proceedings, he felt that the situation at Salem had quickly gotten out of hand and conclusions had been reached without thoroughly weighing all the evidence. Although Reverend Parris had written his apology note in the margins of the church record book in 1695, the writings by Hale were the first public published acknowledgement by a New England clergyman that a travesty

⁴³⁸ "Sewall Repents," *American Heritage* 47, no. 8: 104.

had taken place ten years earlier.⁴³⁹ Chief Stoughton, on the other hand, never admitted he erred or was tricked by the devil for the decisions he rendered during the trials,⁴⁴⁰ instead standing by his word until the very end.

Apology was also a component of the healing process for the accusers. Ann Putnam was only a child when she participated in calling out individuals as witches. Life after the trials took its toll on Ann when both of her parents died in 1699, leaving her to care for her many siblings. The ordeal of 1692, its aftermath, and the loss of her parents had profound effects on Ann and her mental and physical health. With the Reverend Joseph Green in charge of the congregation of Salem Village, Ann sought forgiveness from the community and God.⁴⁴¹ Before Reverend Green allowed this, he conferred with Samuel Nurse, who served as the representative for those whose families had suffered the most during the trial. With the approval of those most impacted by her actions, a date was set for her to appear and confess in front of the congregation. Ann Putnam made her appearance at the meetinghouse on August 25, 1706 to those of the congregation as well as those who traveled from other communities that had also been impacted. Her statement was recorded in the church record book and signed by her before being read by the pastor with her standing near.⁴⁴² In her statement she asked for forgiveness and owned her part in helping send innocent individuals to the gallows. Ann lived until the age of thirty-six. Her will was written in May 1715 and went before probate on June 29,

⁴³⁹ Upham, xiii.

⁴⁴⁰ Demos, 187.

⁴⁴¹ Upham, 672.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

1716. Her land was left to be divided among her brothers and her personal effects were to be divided amongst her sisters.⁴⁴³

Legal Reparations and Remuneration by the State

Essex County bore the brunt of the cost of the Witch Trials. In an attempt to assist the county with the debt incurred for the trials, the Massachusetts colony raised taxes in February 1693. The taxes were also used to compensate the innkeepers, constables, jail keepers and blacksmiths for their time and expenses associated with the trials.⁴⁴⁴ The innkeepers had provided lodging for the justices that traveled to hear cases, or in the case of Nathaniel Ingersoll, his ordinary provided a setting for preliminary hearings in the beginning. The constables were sent to pick up and transport the accused, and the jail keepers and the blacksmiths forged the chains and shackles for those imprisoned.

Philip English, a wealthy trading merchant, also sought damages from the trials to prove a point that Sheriff Corwin had no right to confiscate the property. English was said to have an estate that included fourteen buildings, twenty-one sailing vessels, a wharf and a warehouse, and owned a great deal of land in the area. English and his wife fled to New York after many weeks in jail. At the conclusion of the trials, he sought compensation for the possessions that had been seized by Sheriff Corwin. His estimate of the amount of damages from 1692 was 1,183 pounds, which represents a modern value

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 673.

⁴⁴⁴ Schiff, 355.

of over \$250,000.⁴⁴⁵ Although he was awarded two hundred pounds in November 1718, which represents more than \$43,000 today, English refused the funds as he saw them as insult to his worth.⁴⁴⁶ The colony took the lawsuits brought on by English as serious and sought to protect other government officials who had been involved in the trials.

The choices made by Sheriff Corwin to seize property were not easily resolved. “Whereas Philip English late of Salem Merch^t did b<y> his Peticon bearing nto the second of March last past set forth that you th<e> s^d George Corwin in the Month of August last did illegally seize into your hands the Goods Chattles Merchandi<ze> belonging to the said Philip English and others...promi<se> All the Goods Chattle &c so seized from the s^d Philip English to restore them unto him the s^d Philip English.”⁴⁴⁷

Although Mr. English was fortunate enough to get this ruling for his possessions, as a successful merchant with the position and funds to sue and win, others did not receive the same treatment when it came to having their goods returned.

The claim of Philip English would be the beginning of what would become many claims for restitution and recompensation from the government by the families of those wronged during the trials. In May 1693, Governor Phips pardoned those still in prison and sent them home as the trials came to an end. Soon after they received their freedom, the claims for reparations began. These claims by survivors and their family members continued to be presented before the government for the next twenty years.

⁴⁴⁵ Anne Taite Austin, "Philip English," University of Virginia, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>. , 1."Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁴⁴⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 571; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁴⁴⁷ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 813.

The claims were all amassed against a court that had been quick to punish based on questionable evidence and support as well as a supposition of guilt. In the history of Essex County compiled in 1922 looking back on the events of 1692, “Each act of judge and counsel, each step in legal procedure, is in essence a making of history; and therefore the written story of bench and bar is but a tale of the progress of public affairs in the particular sphere.”⁴⁴⁸ The governor’s decisions about reparations set the stage for those who had suffered either at the hands of the court to eke out a living without particular family members and to seek recourse and alternate justice for their losses.

Family members were anxious for the reversals of convictions to begin so names could be cleared, and lives could move forward. With an attainder on record or the loss of their civil rights, family members were in a sort of limbo and therefore had limited legal standing within the community. Those who had property seized by Corwin wanted justice. On May 15, 1694, a court led by Stoughton specifically exempted Sherriff Corwin and his heirs from any liability resulting from his actions while serving as the Sheriff of Essex County during the witchcraft hysteria.⁴⁴⁹ This action made it virtually impossible for families whose property had been stolen by the sheriff to be reimbursed for their belongings.

It can be argued that the first petition seeking damages from the trials was submitted to the court Wednesday, May 27, 1696. The court received a petition from Elizabeth Proctor to recover the estate of her husband, John.⁴⁵⁰ The petition claimed that

⁴⁴⁸ "Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts," 1922. 826.

⁴⁴⁹ *Salem Story*, 200.

⁴⁵⁰ *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 844-45.

while Elizabeth and John were in custody, someone came in and had John change his will. There is not a record of why the will was changed, however as his wife was also in custody for witchcraft it could be assumed, he changed it under the guise she was also going to be executed. As she was not executed, she wanted to receive any entitlement she deserved as his wife. However, with an attainder on her name, she was dead in the eyes of the law and not privy to his estate. The courts did not remove her attainder until 1703. According to the Massachusetts Historical Record, her petition was read in council on June 10, 1696. There is a note in the legislative records of the council that “several petitions were read and sent down to the House of Representatives.”⁴⁵¹ However, there are no surviving records to indicate the actions of the House of Representatives. The probate records from Massachusetts show that Mrs. Proctor was more than likely successful in receiving her portion of the estate. The probate record from Essex County reads, “April 19, 1697 Whereas Elizabeth Proctor, Relict, Widow of John Proctor Late of Salem dec^d praying that a citation might go forth to the executors of the dec^d to Render an accompt of their Executorship &c^a who appear this day & say that their is no more or other Estate of the dec^{ds} Come to their hands or possession more than what was given in p Inventory: & the said Widow being restored to the benifit of the law the Judge’s advice to the Executo^{rs} is that they Render the s^d Widow her Dowry in the Said Estate.”⁴⁵² The text on record would seem to indicate that she was able to receive his estate or at least the portion equal to the dowry she had brought to the relationship, however with her attainder

⁴⁵¹ "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society," ed. Edward J. Young (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University Press, 1885), 343.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 345.

not yet reversed this remains a mystery. If she did in fact receive her portion of the estate, it would have relieved the financial stress on the family.

Those that had been accused continued their quest to have their names and reputations restored. Abigail Faulkner, who had been reprieved by Governor Phips, became the second to petition a reversal of attainder on June 13, 1700. In her petition, Faulkner asked to

[Reverse] The pardon having soe farr had its Effect as that I am as yet suffred to live, but this only as a Malefactor Convict upon record of y^e Most henious Crimes that mankind Can be supposed to be guilty off, which besides its utter Ruining and Defacing my Reputacion, will Certainly Expose my selfe to Iminent Danger by New accusations, which will thereby be y^e more redily believed will Remaine as a perpetuall brand of Infams [= infamy] upon my family And I Knowing my owne Inocency as to all such Crimes (as will att y^e last fully appeare) and being soe Defamed in my Reputation and my like Exposed besides the Odium Cast upon my Posterity Doe humbly pray that his high hono^{ble} Court will please to take my Case into serious Consideration and order the Defacing of y^e record against me soe that I and mine may be freed from y^e Evill Consequents Thereof...⁴⁵³

Faulkner understood that the stain on her reputation would only continue to make her life and that of her descendants more difficult. In July 1703, the General Court of Massachusetts reversed the attainders for three women, Abigail Faulkner, Sarah Wardwell and Elizabeth Proctor.⁴⁵⁴ These three women had all been condemned to die for their alleged crimes but were spared due to government intervention. The reversal cleared the way for their lives to resume.

⁴⁵³ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 848.

⁴⁵⁴ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 246.

After the attainder that had been placed against John and Elizabeth Proctor was reversed, Elizabeth able to participate in society once again.⁴⁵⁵ With her rights restored, she was able to make decisions and enter into contracts. With the passage of time and with her attainder being lifted, she remarried after John was executed. The court of Massachusetts awarded her 150 pounds for her time in prison and as compensation for the loss of her husband.

The Massachusetts legislature, in an effort to move beyond the trials, declared that a day be set aside to help the community heal. The legislature proposed a day of fasting and repentance to be held in 1696.⁴⁵⁶ By the turn of the century all levels of society acknowledged “errors and mistakes” had been made during the trials in Salem.⁴⁵⁷ That admission by the General Court opened the door for families to seek justice for the wrongs they had experienced. The Massachusetts colony took a big step in 1702 when the General Court declared the trials that had taken place ten years earlier to be unlawful.⁴⁵⁸ On March 2, 1703, the General Court received a petition from twenty residents of Salem Village and Topsfield asking for their names to be cleared publicly.⁴⁵⁹ Those seeking justice for their loved ones wanted clear reputations and for the funds they had lost paying fines and upkeep to be replaced. Additionally, a group of Ministers from

⁴⁵⁵ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 113.

⁴⁵⁶ "Sewall Repents," 104.

⁴⁵⁷ Gretchen A. Adams, *The Spector of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 24.

⁴⁵⁸ Jess Blumberg, "A Brief History of the Salem Witch Trials," *Smithsonian*, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-brief-history-of-the-salem-witch-trials-175162489/>.

⁴⁵⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 567.

Essex County sent a petition on July 8, 1703 asking the Governor and the Council and Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts Bay to clear the names of those accused since there was insufficient evidence to prove their guilt of the crime of witchcraft.⁴⁶⁰ The members of Essex County did not seek restitution for defamation of character.⁴⁶¹ The clearing of the names would allow for restoration of reputations and clear the way for the families to return to a sense of normalcy close to what existed prior to the trials within the community, both for daily life as well as legal transactions.

For a lens into the contemporary perception of the duty and purpose of the legal system in the day, we can look to the poetic The Day of Doom, published by the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth in 1662. Like many ministers of the time, Wigglesworth had attended Harvard and been employed as a minister for many years, mostly in Malden. He was known for his strict interpretation of the Bible and constant desire to overcome sin in a world full of temptations. In his poem, he talks of life before God and the many temptations that are brought before man. In lines 25-32, Wigglesworth warns of men seeking vengeance upon one another.⁴⁶² The trials, although not always vengeful, were an avenue that utilized individuals speaking out against one another for perceived wrongdoings or events unexplained. As the trials continued and more individuals were accused, they were brought before their accusers and the judges. In the 1662 poem, Wigglesworth writes beginning on line 105, "They were brought in, and charg'd with sin. Another company, Who by petition obtain'd permission, To make

⁴⁶⁰ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 851.

⁴⁶¹ Hoffer, 133.

⁴⁶² Michael Wigglesworth, "Day of Doom," in *Specimens of American Poetry*.

apology: They argued, “we were misled, As is well known to thee, By their example that had more ample abilities than we:” As the poem continues, it could be interpreted to represent those who rendered verdicts. Given the emotion and the concern to ensure the community was safe, many fell for the hysterics the girls demonstrated, and many families were altered forever. Having penned his words in 1662, Wigglesworth could not have foretold of the horrific accusations and trials that would occur in Salem during 1692.

In 1704, Wigglesworth asked Increase Mather for swift restitution for the families of Essex County. Wigglesworth was convinced “innocent blood hath been shed and that many have had their hands defiled with.”⁴⁶³ He believed the general court owed it to the families to correct a wrong. “[I]f it be true as I have been often informed, that the families of such as were condemned for supposed witchcraft, have been ruined by taking away and making havock of their estates and Leaving them nothing for their relief, I believe the whole country lies under a Curse to this day, and will do, till some effectual course be taken by our honored Governour and Generall Court to make them some amends and reparations.”⁴⁶⁴ According to Wigglesworth, if the government had wronged families there needed to be some culpability, followed by accountability. While unable to find exact reference to the poem in the claims for reparations, the poem was often memorized by many of the time.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Reis, *Damned Women*, 168.

⁴⁶⁴ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 197.

⁴⁶⁵ Percy H. Boynton, *American Literature: A Textbook for Secondary Schools* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1923), 26.

Families were not content with just having names removed and restored, and with the government now admitting there may have been some mistakes in the trials, families began to ask for financial compensation for their losses. Samuel Nurse, who had been one of the most vocal after losing his mother, Rebecca and aunt Mary Easty, to the trials, submitted a letter to the government estimating the family had spent forty pounds on jail fees and trips to both Salem and Boston to visit his mother while she was imprisoned.⁴⁶⁶ The Nurse family realized no actual price could be put on the loss of life and the amount of time they had spent with Rebecca in her final days. He stipulated that he would settle for twenty-five pounds if the attainder could be removed, and her reputation restored. The time was right to address the events of 1692, and in 1704 the Massachusetts General Court reversed the bill of attainder that had deprived the families of the convicted witches of their property.⁴⁶⁷ The next step would be to determine which families would receive compensation and the amount of the compensation.

Over time, the Massachusetts legislature granted money only to those who appealed for it.⁴⁶⁸ Although the courts had determined they would reverse the attainders, Cotton Mather advocated for more restitution than just the reversal of attainders, and he pushed for swifter action to compensate the families on behalf of the government. Sufficient time had passed since the trials, and families needed to move forward. On Wednesday, May 25, 1709, Philip English, along with the support of twenty-one others who had family members condemned or who had members executed, petitioned the

⁴⁶⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 570.

⁴⁶⁷ Breslaw, 176.

⁴⁶⁸ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 570.

governor and the General Assembly. English and those that signed on to his petition sought "...to pass some sutable Act as in Your Wisdom You may think meet and proper y^t shall (so far as may be) Restore y^e Reputations to y^e Posterity of y^e suffurars and Remunerate them as to what have haue been Damnified in their Estates thereby we Do not Without Remors and greif Recount these sorrowfull things..."⁴⁶⁹ English wanted his estate returned to its status before the trials and wanted others to have the opportunity to return to life as it had been before the events of 1692. Mather followed suit in November 1709, stating that the government of Massachusetts owed the families of those impacted by the trials and should help them move forward with their lives.⁴⁷⁰ Compared to the time since the trials, families would not have to wait long after Mather appealed to the government. Elizabeth How, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Wilds, and Sarah Good all had their attainders reversed on September 13, 1710.⁴⁷¹ Although all these women lost their lives during the trials, the reversal of attainder helped set in motion the clearing of their names and the reputation of their families. This was an early step in the healing process for the members of their families.

Bowing to the pressure from multiple fronts, the legislature formed a four-member committee in 1710 to review the petitions and investigate the claims of those seeking justice for the wrongs of 1692. Given so many had been impacted, a committee was the only viable option to ensure all were heard and fair and just decisions could be reached. The General Court passed a bill of attainder in 1711 nullifying most of the

⁴⁶⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 853.

⁴⁷⁰ Adams, 24.

⁴⁷¹ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 105.

convictions.⁴⁷² Additionally in 1711, after analyzing all the facts and testimony that had been given, the General Court acknowledged that there had been mistakes in 1692, admitting something had gone wrong, but did not accept the blame for so many losing their lives.⁴⁷³

In October 1711, the committee began to hold session in Salem, with the goal to determine who should receive compensation. Today, compensation is central to the law, with some awards dating back to Aristotle.⁴⁷⁴ During their six-day stay in Salem, the Committee received 45 petitions for redress and 796 pounds in claims, excluding the claim by Philip English.⁴⁷⁵ Within the 45 petitions by those who had lost land or livelihood, more than 70 people claimed they or their property had been injured.⁴⁷⁶ The committee submitted its report, which detailed a list of those executed, a list of those condemned but not executed, and their recommendations for financial compensation.⁴⁷⁷ From this list the committee worked to make their final decision on who would receive funds and the amount for which they were entitled, ultimately deciding that only the petitions of those condemned or those from families that had members executed would be awarded compensation for jail fees and property which had been seized.⁴⁷⁸ With so many seeking funds, a total amount of damages had to be determined. On Wednesday, October

⁴⁷² Demos, 188.

⁴⁷³ Adams, 25.

⁴⁷⁴ Stanley Engerman, "Apologies, Regrets, and Reparations," *European Review* 17, no. 3 and 4 (2009): 594.

⁴⁷⁵ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 249.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁷⁷ Hansen, 218.

⁴⁷⁸ Adams, 24.

17, 1711, the General Court wrote and passed “An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. for Witchcraft.”

Foreasmuch as in the year of our Lord One Thousand Six hundred Ninety two. Several Towns within this Province were Infested with a horrible Witchcraft of Possession of devils; And at a Special Court of Oyer and Terminer holden at Salem in the County of Essex in the same year 1692. George Burroughs of Wells, John Procter, George Jacobs, John Willard, Giles Core and [] his wife, Rebecca Nurse, and Sarah Good all of Salem aforesaid. Elizabeth How of Ipswich, Mary Eastey, Sarah Wild and Abigail Hobbs all of Topsfield, and Samuel Wardwell, Mary Parker, Martha Carrier, Abigail Falkner, Anne Foster, Rebecca Eames, Mary Post and Mary Lacey all of Andover, Mary Bradbury of Salisbury, and Dorcas Hoar of Beverly Were severally Indicted convicted and attained of Witchcraft, and some of them put to death, others lying till under the like Sentence of the said Court, and liable to have Executed upon them.

The Influence and energy of the Evil Spirits so great at that time acting in and upon those who were the principal Accusers and Witnesses proceeding so far as to cause a Prosecution to be had of persons of known and good Reputation; which caused a great Disatisfaction and a Stop to be put thereunto until their Majesty’s pleasure should be known therein.

And upon a Representation thereof accordingly made Her late Majesty Queen Mary the Second of blessed Memory by Her Royal Letter given at Her Court at Whitehall the fifteenth of April 1693. Was Graciously pleased to approve the care and Circumspection therein; and to Will and require that in all proceedings ag^t persons Accused for Witchcraft, or being possessed by the devil, the greatest Moderation and all due Circumspection be used, So far as the same ^ without Impediment to the Ordinary Course of Justice.

And

[Reverse] And Some of the Principal Accusers and Witnesses in those dark and Severe prosecutions have since discovered themselves to be persons of profligate and vicious Conversation.

Upon the humble Petition and Suit of the s^d persons and of the Children of others of them whose Parents were Executed.

Be it Declared and Enacted by his Excellency the Governors Council and Representative’s in General court assembled and by the Authority of the same That the several Convictions Judgement<s> and Attainders against the said George Burroughs, John Procter, George Jacob, John Willard, Giles Core and [] Core, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Good, Elisabeth How, Mary Easty, Sarah Wild, Abigail Hobbs, Samuel Wardell, Mary Parker, Martha Carrier Abigail Falkner, Anne Foster, Rebecca Eames, Mary Post, Mary Lacey, Mary Bradbury and Dorcas Hoar and every of them Be and hereby are Reversed made and declared to be Null and void to all Intents, Constructions and purposes whatsoever, as if no such Convictions,

Judgments or Attainders had ever been had or given. And that no penalties of forfeitures of Goods or Chattels be by the said Judgments and Attainders or either of them had or Incurr'd.

Any Law Usage or Custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

And that no Sheriffe, Constable Goaler or other Officer shall be Liable to any prosecution in the Law for anything they then Legally did in the Execution of their Respective Offices.

Made and pass'd by the Great and General Court or Assembly of Her Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England held at Boston the 17th day of October 1711.⁴⁷⁹

According to the text of this act, the judgment and attainders were reversed; however, the court had already pardoned all the accused and condemned of wrongdoing.⁴⁸⁰ Although the justices invoked the final decisions on the fates of so many, the court sided with them in that they were doing their jobs, asserting that the blame should rest on the conscience of those who made accusations rather than those who imposed the sentences. Later, in 1713, The General Court asserted "that no Sheriffe, constable, Goaler or any other officer shall be Liable to any prosecution in the Law for anything they then Legally did in the Execution of their respective offices."⁴⁸¹ This measure allowed justices and those who had acted in accordance with colonial law immunity from prosecution for the decisions and roles they had played in the events of 1692. The statement by the General Court effectively ensured government officials could not suffer repercussions for their roles in 1692.

Thomas Carrier was one of the first to seek reparations after the court ruled, they would grant money to some who had suffered years before. On September 13, 1710, Mr. Carrier asked for compensation and the return of his wife's good name. In his petition he

⁴⁷⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 888-89.

⁴⁸⁰ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 200.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

stated he had paid the Sheriff fifty shillings and paid her prison keeper four pounds and sixteen shillings for keeping his wife and four children. He asked for compensation of seven pounds, six shillings and removal of the attainder. Although he did not receive compensation that day, he eventually did receive reparations from the colony.⁴⁸² While the total compensation sought by the victims and their families equaled 796 pounds (\$154,810 today) a 1711 bill to restore rights and names of the accused, the colony granted that only approximately 600 pounds could be used as restitution.⁴⁸³

In addition to these reimbursement petitions to replace the property citizens had lost and the money spent to house people in jail, there was also the task of restitution for lives taken in the trials. The Legislature of Massachusetts claimed they would allow restitution to all those who had “suffered in their Estates at that Sorrowful time.”⁴⁸⁴ In 1711 the court was tasked with judging families’ level of suffering and quantifying the value of a life lost, in order to determine how much in reparations to award them. The table below represents those who petitioned the government of Massachusetts seeking compensation for their loss in property and lives, while the families listed in the table represent only a portion of those impacted by the trials. All but two of the petitions seek specific amounts of money from the government. Many claims were submitted to reimburse families for supplies to make family members more comfortable while in prison. On December 17, 1711, the General Court authorized 578 pounds to be paid for

⁴⁸² Ibid., 127-28.

⁴⁸³ Blumberg, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-brief-history-of-the-salem-witch-trials-175162489/>; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁴⁸⁴Breslaw, 176.

claims from 1692. According to David Goss, allowing for inflation, the value of the money for claims was equal to \$394,600 in 2012.⁴⁸⁵ The allocated funds were to come from the public treasury, and exceeded 1/40 of the province tax from the previous year.⁴⁸⁶ The money was allocated to families of those executed or those who had been condemned.⁴⁸⁷ Although this was a bold step and a progression to correct a wrong, those who had been imprisoned and never received a guilty sentence were left out of reparation payments.⁴⁸⁸

The families had the opportunity to collect their awards. Although literacy was high among Puritans, many opted to have a representative accept the funds on their behalf. Samuel Sewall was appointed by many of the families to collect the money from the treasury. He was chosen for his intellect and because he was believed to be in possession of many of the records from the trials.⁴⁸⁹ The possession of the records was vital in the event there were any challenges to the cases of those seeking restitution. Although many sought compensations for the time their loved ones were incarcerated, only those who were condemned or executed actually received funds from the colony. However, those who had a family member executed made it clear in their petitions that no amount of compensation could make up for the loss of life. The surviving family

⁴⁸⁵ Goss, 47.

⁴⁸⁶ Robert C. Winthrop et al., "June Meeting, 1883 Witch-Trials in Massachusetts," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 20 (1883): 291-92.

⁴⁸⁷ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 250; Jr. Abner C. Goodell, "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts, Containing Additional Evidence of the Passage of the Act of 1711, for Reversing the Attainders of the Witches; Also, Affirming the Legality of the Special Court of Oyer and Terminer of 1692; With ... An Appendix of Documents, Etc," (Cambridge 1884), 14.

⁴⁸⁸ Winthrop et al., 289; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 892.

⁴⁸⁹ Winthrop et al., 288.

members indicated they would settle for smaller amounts if the court would clear or remove the attainder of the family member. This allowed the legal process to move forward and restore the character to the individual who had died. With attainders lifted, families could settle estates and move on with their lives.

Table 3: Petitioner Requests and Restitution Granted

Date	Title of Petition	Amount requested	Status	Amount Ordered for Payment by Gov. Dudley
9/8/1710	Petition of Isaac Esty Sr. for Restitution for Mary Esty	20 pounds	Executed	20
9/9/1710	Petition of Edward Bishop Jr. for himself and Sarah Bishop	100 pounds		0
9/9/1710	Petition of Mary How and Abigail How for Restitution for Elizabeth How	20 pounds but will take 12	Executed	12
9/11/1710	Petition of Jane True and Henry True for restitution for Mary Bradbury	20 pounds	Condemned	20
9/11/1710	Petition of Ephraim Wilds for Restitution for Sarah Wilds	20 pounds but will take 14	Executed	14
9/12/1710	Petition of Rebecca Eames for Restitution	10 pounds	Condemned	10
9/13/1710	Petition of Ebenezer Barker for Restitution for Abigail Barker	5 pounds, 7 shillings. 4 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John Barker for Restitution for Mary Barker	3 pounds 15 shillings, 10 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John Barker for Restitution for William Barker Jr	3 pounds 15 shillings, 10 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John Barker for Restitution for William Barker Sr	3 pounds, 11 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Sarah (Bridges) Preston for Restitution	4 pounds, 22 shillings, 4 pence will settle for 4 pounds		0
9/13/1710	Petition of William Buckley for Restitution for Sarah Buckley and Mary Whittredge	15 pounds		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Charles Burroughs for Restitution for George Burroughs	50 pounds	Executed	50
9/13/1710	Petition of Thomas Carrier Sr. for Restitution for Martha Carrier	7 pounds 6 shillings	Executed	7-6
9/13/1710	Petition of Sarah Cole for Restitution	6 pounds 10 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John Moulton for Restitution for Martha Cory and Giles Cory	paid sheriff 11 pounds, 3 shillings, and said expenses not less than 10 pounds= 21 pounds	Executed	21
9/13/1710	Petition of Nathaniel Dane for Restitution for Deliverance Dane	4 pounds 13 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Mary DeRich for Restitution	Does not seek specific amount		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Philip English for Restitution	1183 for property and 50 pounds for jail		0

9/13/1710	Petition of Abigail Faulkner Sr for Restitution	20 pounds	Condemned	20
9/13/1710	Petition of Abraham Foster for Restitution for Ann Foster	6 pounds 10 shillings	Condemned	6-10
9/13/1710	Petition of John Frye for Restitution for Eunice Frye	4 pounds, 17 shillings, 4 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of William Good for Restitution for Sarah Good, Dorothy Good, and Infant	No amount requested but states to allow 30 pounds	Executed	30
9/13/1710	Petition of Peter Green for Restitution for Mary Green	3 pounds, 31 shillings, 12 pence but leave up to court to decide		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Francis Johnson for Restitution for Sarah Hawkes	4 pounds 24 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John King and Annis King for restitution for Dorcas Hoar	21 pounds, 1 shilling and 3 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John King and Annis King for restitution for Dorcas Hoar (2nd petition)	21 pounds 17 shillings	Condemned	21-17
9/13/1710	Petition of William Hobbs for Restitution for Abigail Hobbs	10 pounds	Condemned	10
9/13/1710	Petitions of George Jacobs for Restitution for George Jacobs Sr., Rebecca Jacobs, and Margaret Jacobs	79 pounds 13 shillings	Executed	79
9/13/1710	Petition of Francis Johnson for Restitution for Elizabeth Johnson JR	3 pounds		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Francis Johnson for Restitution for Elizabeth Johnson Sr	7 pounds 18 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of John Johnson for Restitution for Rebecca Johnson and Rebecca Johnson Jr	6 pounds, 4 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Lawrence Lacey for Restitution for Mary Lacey JR	2 pounds 22 shillings 4 pence		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Lawrence Lacey for Restitution for Mary Lacey Sr	8 pounds 10 shillings	Condemned	8-10
9/13/1710	Petition of John Marston for Restitution for Mary Marston	4 pounds, 19 shillings, 4 pence but on record from 9/28 adjusted to 2.14		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Mary Morey for Restitution for Sarah Morey	12 pounds 5 shillings		0
9/13/1710	Petition of Samuel Nurse Jr. for Restitution for Rebecca Nurse	Wanted 40 pounds but would settle for 25 if attainder removed	Executed	25
9/13/1710	Petition of Samuel Osgood for Restitution for Mary Osgood	5 pounds, 7 shillings. 4 pence		0

9/13/1710	Petition of John Parker and Joseph Parker for Restitution for Mary Parker	8 pounds 46 shillings (also included Sarah Parker had originally requested in 1692)	Executed	8
9/13/1710	Petition of Mary Post for Restitution	Wanted 14 but would settle for 8 pounds 14 shillings	Condemned	8-14
9/13/1710	Petition of Mercy (Woodell) Wright for Restitution	5 pounds 4 shillings		5-14
9/13/1710	Petition of Samuel Wardwell Jr. for Restitution for Sarah and Samuel Wardwell	36 pounds, 15 shillings	Executed	36-15
9/13/1710	Petition of Margaret Willard Towne for Restitution for John Willard	20 pounds	Executed	20
	John Proctor & wife	4/19/1697 court restore Elizabeth rights and returned dowry	Executed	150
9/28/1711	Robert Pease for his wife Sarah	Requested 13 pounds, 3 shillings		0
	Joseph Wilson for his wife Sarah			4-15

Source: ⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 847-92.

The Goals of Reparations – Did Massachusetts Achieve Them?

The reparations were an important part of the healing process and moving forward with life in the communities impacted during the trials. To understand the role of reparations in this healing process, we can look at the concept of historical memory. Economist, Stanley Engerman writes, “Central to the idea of reparations and apologies is the concept of historical memory and its transmission over time. The memory may be that of an individual who was alive at the time of the crimes, but most frequently the point refers to the group memory of the descendants of the initial group of victims or the perpetrators of the crimes.”⁴⁹¹ Family members had memories of their deceased loved ones and sought to have their reputations restored so that they could be remembered by those positive images, rather than the ugly events that comprised the Witch Trials. According to Alfred Brophy, there are three goals of any application of reparations by a by a government to correct wrongs. The first is to acknowledge the past contributions and harms of the individual. Second is the change in the public understanding about the present impact of past injustice. The last goal is to effect justice and freedom through community empowerment.⁴⁹² When we apply these goals of reparations to the actions of the government of Massachusetts and within the historical context in the 1700s, it appears that they sufficiently addressed all three goals. The government, through their legislative sessions and their committee, acknowledged the harm that had been done to these families. By reversing the attainders that had been placed on the individuals, the

⁴⁹¹ Engerman, 601.

⁴⁹² Alfred Brophy, "Reconsidering Reparations," *Indiana Law Review* 81 (2006): 835.

government was making a statement to the community that injustice had been carried out in 1692. Finally, when one looks at the work of Reverend Green and his attempt to move his congregation beyond the trials, he was providing freedom through community empowerment. The congregation under his leadership sold the meetinghouse, erected a new home, and reversed the excommunication of those members that had been separated from the church.

With the goals of reparations in mind, according to Brophy there are five key forms of accomplishing reparations, no matter when or where they occur.

1. Truth commissions
2. Apologies
3. Civil rights legislation
4. Cash or in-kind payments to groups/ communities
5. Cash or in-kind payments to individuals⁴⁹³

The forms identified by Brophy are easily applied to Massachusetts in 1711. The first goal identified by Brophy was the establishment of truth commissions. The first step was not accomplished through a committee, rather it was through the petitions by leading community members to Governor Phips. The first concept to be considered in step one of Brophy's goals of reparations would be the disbanding of the Court of Oyer and Terminer in October 1692. Governor Phips ultimately changed the course of the events of Salem when he disbanded the Court of Oyer and Terminer and replaced it with the Superior Court of Judicature, thus acknowledging there had been a potential for condemning innocent individuals. The dissolution of the court changed the direction for the rest of the

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 836.

trials. With the omission of spectral evidence, it became harder for the accusers to push their agenda of being tormented by an individual, and the concept of a fair trial was more accessible to the accused, and the outcome of the trials dramatically shifted. Under the new court, there were 52 under indictment and brought to court and only 3 were convicted and that was due to their confessions.⁴⁹⁴

Monetary and civil rights reparations weren't the only components of moving forward and healing the wounds caused by the events of 1692. With the acknowledgement that errors might be occurring, and once individuals had time to begin to reflect on the situation, the apologies began to come forward. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, apologies from Samuel Sewall, Ann Putnam, twelve individual Jurors and finally by Samuel Parris were shared with the community. In 1703, Ann Putnam, who had been a major contributor to so much of the animosity in the community, was the only accuser to publicly apologize for her role.⁴⁹⁵ Although other apologies were not clearly stated, it could be argued one was created, as the government did approve funds.

The court's decision to deny the admission of spectral evidence, also supports the fulfillment of step 3 of Brophy's scale, and is an early example of civil rights by leveling the playing field for the accused. The government listened and read the petitions of family members seeking to have the attainders removed from the names of their loved ones who had suffered in jail, faced accusation, or lost their lives in 1692. The Act to Reverse the Attainders, passed on October 1711 could be considered the completion of

⁴⁹⁴ Jack A. Gottschalk, "Witchcraft and Other Supernatural Forces in American Justice," *University of West Los Angeles Law Review* 24, no. 1 (1993): 138.

⁴⁹⁵ Demos, 188.

step three in Brophy's scale. By the government passing this legislation it acknowledged the community had created an environment where individuals' rights had been stepped on. The form of questioning by the justices had presumed a presence of guilt thus denying the accused of their rights.

The fourth and fifth forms of reparations—payments to communities and payments to individuals – are lumped together. The purpose of reparations was to provide some recognition of guilt and the recognition of a wrong that had been committed.⁴⁹⁶ Cash was paid to some survivors and their family members as well as individuals. Stanley Engerman, creator of the reparations framework, writes that this was the case in Salem, where reparations went to the living who suffered or to their descendants, and that payments for wrongs were appropriate social policy.⁴⁹⁷

Reparations were limited to the convicted survivors as well as the heirs of many that that had lost their lives, and distribution of payments began in January 1712.⁴⁹⁸ The court now had to look at the amount's families requested and determine the sum that would be allocated for their losses. Many families often settled for amounts smaller than what they had originally sought. Although money went a long way in helping families, it was not always enough, especially for those who lost an income earner. Because of the religious atmosphere of the time, the act of clearing the names of those accused was often deemed more important than monetary compensation.⁴⁹⁹ Families sought closure and

⁴⁹⁶ Engerman, 597.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 593.

⁴⁹⁸ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 570.

⁴⁹⁹ Jr. Abner C. Goodell, "Reasons for Concluding That the Act of 1711, Reversing the Attainders of the Persons Convicted of Witchcraft in Massachusetts in the Year 1692, Became a Law," (Cambridge 1884), 15.

were willing to negotiate the amount of compensation in order to move forward. For many, if the accused's name was cleared it meant the family member could rest in peace and reach salvation. Correcting such a large mistake in history did not take place overnight. The total reparations process lasted twenty years and began with a day of fasting. While the majority of reparations were settled in 1712,⁵⁰⁰ not all the names appear in records.⁵⁰¹ The final payment for the trials was made to Thomas Rich in 1724. He was the son of Martha Corey from her first husband. Although Rich asked for 60 pounds, the court paid him 50.⁵⁰²

Even after the courts had made their decisions regarding reparations for the trials, the memory of the events did not disappear from the public record, as some would have liked. In 1765, Governor Thomas Hutchinson wrote the history of the state of Massachusetts, which included the events of Salem. He suspected that the “afflicted girls and women” had been overcome by superstitious beliefs and committed fraud along with good acting, duping the judges and ministers.⁵⁰³ The beliefs of the females, along with good acting, caused the judges and ministers to make the fateful and life changing decisions. As historian Marion Gibson summarized, “The trials were a campaign against free thought and liberalism, led by ambitious ministers and despotic magistrates of who ‘not one held office by the suffrage of the people.’”⁵⁰⁴ The individuals tasked with deciding the fate of so many of the community were not chosen by those most impacted

⁵⁰⁰ Hansen, 207; *ibid.*, 218.

⁵⁰¹ Breslaw, 177.

⁵⁰² Ray, 177.

⁵⁰³ Gibson, 38.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

by their decisions. As community members began to question the actions of the judges there was little recourse for their actions as they had been appointed to their positions by the governor rather than the population. The leaders of the Puritan community were more concerned about their reputation as a whole rather than individuals. They sought to eliminate anyone who stood in the way of their image of a utopia on the hill. The majority of the community did not elect the leaders, which was common at the time, and therefore they did not have the best interest of all at hand. At that time, only those who stood in the community as male church members were permitted to exercise the right to vote, and according to Gibson, if they had an agenda to follow, they were much more difficult to stop.

Conclusion

Nearly 265 years have passed since the ordeal at Salem. In 1957 the state of Massachusetts was still receiving requests to annul the sentences of the witchcraft victims.⁵⁰⁵ Although monetary amounts had been paid to families and attainders had been reversed, some names were still part of the judicial record. Descendants as well as scholars campaigned to have the sentences permanently erased. Massachusetts's lawmakers agreed to exonerate the remaining accused witches that had never been cleared of any wrongdoing. However, the wording of the legislation passed stated "one

⁵⁰⁵ Grinnell, 997.

Ann Pudeator, and certain other persons.”⁵⁰⁶ Bridget Bishop, Alice Parker, Margaret Scott, Wilmott Redd, and Susannah Martin had never officially been cleared and in 2001, they were the focus of a campaign to have their names restored. On October 31, 2001, Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift signed documents that officially pardoned the remaining five individuals who had never had their names officially cleared.

Other various events transpired in what would eventually become the United States, where victims sought compensation for events that were determined to have wronged them. In the *Blame Frame*, Hanson and Hanson write “the craving of justice can be satisfied easier by changing the perception of the victims, then by acknowledging and addressing the underlying unfairness”.⁵⁰⁷ In the case of Salem, the court only paid a portion of the families that had been impacted by the trials, and while the overall goal of reparations was met, many families did not receive what was requested, and many had to fight for decades after the trials to receive any satisfaction. While there was a focus on paying out financial recompensation, the focus for many was on the lifting of the attainders to ensure the departed would be allowed salvation. The others that had suffered losses were left to pick up the pieces and determine how they would continue to move forward, after the lack of income from the person they had lost, or after the loss they suffered while the family member was incarcerated.

⁵⁰⁶ Laura Peek, "Descendants Want Justice for Salem's Witches," *Washington Times*, 5/29/2001, 10; "Profile: Descendants of Five Women Not yet Exonerated in Salem Witch Trials Seek to Have Their Ancestors' Names Cleared," in *All Things Considered* (Washington DC.2001).

⁵⁰⁷ Hanson and Hanson, 420.

The events of Salem stand out as a miscarriage of justice that was supposedly remedied with the reparations that were paid to the families. The memories and history of Salem ensure that it will remain legendary in the minds of Americans, because “the occurrence of an extraordinary event in a particular place enriches the progression from enshrining event to national myth and calls for remembrance, tradition, and commemoration”.⁵⁰⁸ Salem has become for many a place where several ‘witches’ lost their lives, yet the reality is people now come to Salem to experience the Haunted Happenings of October or to take witch tours at night. Salem is considered the witch capital and a place that tourists flock to unaware that most of the actual events associated with the Witch Trials actually occurred in Danvers. The actual story has been lost to so many over the years, and in order to correct this wrong the events need to be commemorated correctly. The scholars of Salem have done a great job. However, it is the capitalists striving to make money that have caused the true story to be lost on so many.

According to Schultz and Morrison in *Salem Place, Myth and Memory*, “Events such as the Witch Trials become mythologized when their tragedies are perceived to be beyond the realm of ordinary human experience.”⁵⁰⁹ Those who have looked back on the events of 1692 have tried to understand what could have led to the accusations and actions taken by the residents on Essex County. Without the complete records, historians are left with infer the reasons for such a complex time in history.

⁵⁰⁸ Dane Anthony Morrison and Nancy Lusignan Schultz, ed., *Salem Place, Myth, and Memory* (Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 6.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

However, history cannot be changed, and even if the records were expunged the history will not be forgotten. Even with all the names cleared and money paid to the families of this tragedy, the trials continue to fascinate individuals trying to discover what caused the events that led to such rampant executions. The city of Salem continues to profit from the trials, from using witch symbols and graphics on city publications, to the annual Haunted Happenings festival each fall, and the tourist trade that generates the majority of the city budget. Some descendants will be fascinated to learn this is part of their family history and will embrace their connection to Essex County history. Others are not proud, such as Malcolm Williams, who was related to Bridget Bishop and two other accused witches, and still refuses to visit Salem. He sees the names and memory of the events as purely as a moneymaker for certain individuals trying to capitalize off of the misfortune families have suffered in the past.⁵¹⁰ It is up to individuals to make a decision on how to approach and remember what transpired in 1692. Some will continue to investigate, hoping to learn something for their own knowledge, while scholars will continue to formulate theories and rehash old theories with a new twist.

⁵¹⁰ "Profile: Descendants of Five Women Not yet Exonerated in Salem Witch Trials Seek to Have Their Ancestors' Names Cleared," 2001.

Chapter 5 – Giles Corey

Chapter Abstract

Giles Corey, a name often associated with the Salem Witch Trials, is familiar to many through Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Corey stands out for being the only North American to ever die by *peine forte et dure*, or being pressed to death, in 1692. Corey's legacy is also one of stubbornness and the lengths taken to elicit confessions in the Witch Trials, as well as how determined families were to clear their names in the aftermath. As interesting and unusual as his life was, Corey was also in many ways an average 17th century working man in Salem. This makes his story a compelling example of how men were valued at higher rates and received far higher reparations than the numerous women and families after the trials.

During his time in Salem, Giles Corey made a name for himself. He moved up the social ladder by purchasing more land and by his marriage to a very respected woman in the community. Martha was known for her exceptional religious morals and was a role model to the community. However, one cannot escape from one's past. Giles Corey's past was checkered with neighbor disputes. He appeared in court more than many others in his community, and his temper and past decisions would ultimately play a role in his being accused of witchcraft.

With two family members executed during the trials, the Corey family became one of the prominent ones fighting to restore their family name and receive compensation from the government for the wrongful deaths of Martha and Giles. Given all that this

family and others endured during this time, did gender factor into the amount received by his family as reparations were paid out?

Biographical Sketch of Giles Corey

It is believed that Corey was born in August 1619 to Giles and Elizabeth Corey of Northampton, Northhamptonshire, England, and was baptized at St. Sepulcher's Church on August 19, 1619.⁵¹¹ There is nothing known of his life in England or exactly when he came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Corey originally resided in Salem Town, but his search for more land caused him to move to Salem Farms in 1659.⁵¹² By the time Corey was accused of witchcraft in 1692, according to Diane Foulds, he had amassed three hundred acres in Southwest Salem.⁵¹³ The land he once owned is located in the present-day town of Peabody, Massachusetts.⁵¹⁴

It is not known when he married his first wife, Margaret Devon, who was born around 1624 in England. Devon bore him five daughters before her death in 1664 while residing in Massachusetts. Martha was the oldest and was born around 1650 in Salem, followed by Mary around 1653, Margaret around 1655, Deliverance born August 5, 1658, and lastly Elizabeth, born around 1660.⁵¹⁵ All five daughters lived until adulthood and married.

⁵¹¹ "Giles Corey, Salem Witch," <http://www.geni.com/people/Giles-Corey/6000000013172703092>. November 17, 2015.

⁵¹² Rebecca Beatrice Brooks "History of Massachusetts: A History Blog About the Bay State", October 12, 2011, <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/the-curse-of-giles-corey/>. 1. March 1, 2016.

⁵¹³ Foulds, 58.

⁵¹⁴ Eleanor V. Spiller, "Giles Corey," *The Essex Genealogist* 5, no. 1 (1985): 11.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

Corey married for the second time on April 11, 1664. The marriage was to Mary Britt (Bright, Britz), who was born in England around 1621.⁵¹⁶ Mary Britt was brought to Virginia on a ship from London as an indentured servant and was subsequently purchased by the father of Caleb More.⁵¹⁷ According to family genealogy, she was allegedly accused of witchcraft in 1678. My research of the Essex County records of 1678 does indicate that neighbors testified regarding Mary and witchcraft. The testimony indicated that horses were heard when she was around, but none were seen. Additional testimony speaks of her cursing and being drunk. Drunkenness and cursing could have influenced someone to name or accuse her of witchcraft. As Jane Kamensky points out, “accused witches far exceeded the general population...in the rates of ‘assaultive speech, lying, and railing against authority.’”⁵¹⁸ Mary ultimately passed away August 28, 1684 at the age of 63 and is buried in the Charter Street Cemetery located in Salem.⁵¹⁹

Corey married his third wife, Martha Penoyer (Panon?) Rich, on April 27, 1690. Martha Penoyer was born around 1620 in England. She married her first husband, Henry Rich, and had a son, Thomas. In addition, she gave birth to a “mulatto” son named Ben in 1671.⁵²⁰ Martha resided in a Salem boarding house for ten years with her illegitimate son while Henry Rich remained at home, raising their son Thomas.⁵²¹ After becoming widowed between 1684 and 1690, she married Giles Corey in Salem. The couple made

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵¹⁷ Harriet S. Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1919), 148.

⁵¹⁸ Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue*, 156.

⁵¹⁹ Spiller, 11.

⁵²⁰ "Giles Corey's Wife," *The Essex Antiquarian* 1904, 18; 11.

⁵²¹ Foulds, 62.

their home in Salem Farms, east of Salem Town and south of Salem Village.⁵²² Martha had a positive influence on Corey, and it was after their marriage that he joined the local church. Unlike Giles, Martha Corey had belonged to the Salem Village Church since April 1690. Because of too many legal problems in his past, Corey was never admitted into the Village Church. He also was part of a group dissatisfied with Parris, and instead became a member of the Salem Town Church in 1691 at the age of 80.⁵²³

Mr. Corey Goes to Court: The Trials of Corey before 1692

Puritan society was very litigious, and neighbors often took each other to court. Cases often covered a multitude of complaints, including cursing, drunkenness, working on the Sabbath, theft, and fornication.⁵²⁴ There were so many complaints, many within the community found themselves in court at various times for a variety of accusations. Giles Corey was no exception to this sort of litigation. The first mention of Corey in the court records dates to July 11, 1644. The records from the Salem Quarterly Court indicate that Corey served as a witness along with John Verin in a case against Obadiah Govis. The court determined that Obadiah should be severely whipped for several misdemeanors.⁵²⁵

⁵²² Robinson, 141.

⁵²³ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 41; Robinson, 141.

⁵²⁴ Harriet S. Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1913), 277; "Records and Files of Essex County," 1919. 149.

⁵²⁵ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1911), 68.

Giles Corey is next mentioned in the records of the court held at Salem in January 1647. To ensure safety from Native American attacks, men in the community were required to perform watch duty, and Corey slacked during one of his assigned watch nights. Corey, along with John Burton, Thomas Oliver, and John Verin were all fined for sleeping during their watch with a punishment of having their arms taken from them.⁵²⁶ Falling asleep during watch duty was not the only issue Corey had with performing his duty for the safety of the community. In court held September 15, 1648, Corey was once again present for failing to stand watch. This time, he was caught fetching a wooden canoe instead of standing watch but denied this before the court.⁵²⁷

On April 28, 1649, the court at Salem found Giles Corey guilty of selling cloth for eight shillings, which had cost him six.⁵²⁸ According to the records of the *Salem Quarterly Court*, Corey appeared again in court on June 28, 1649 and was fined for stealing wheat, powder, soap, flax, tobacco, bacon, port, butter, and knives from the homes of Mr. Curwin and Thomas Anthrom.⁵²⁹ Although there is no mention of why Corey stole these items, it appears he was setting up house, as they are all items necessary for daily life. This same Mr. George Curwin was also the father of Justice Corwin, one of the justices in the court of Oyer and Terminer who presided over Corey's trial for suspicion of being a witch. Giles appears in the Salem Quarterly Court records again in December 1650, indicating he was the victim of assault:

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 137.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 152.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 172.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

Giles deposed, “That Mr. Edwa. Noris and he were going toward the brickkiln; John Kiching, going with them, “Fell a nipping and pinching of us,” and when they came back again, John Kiching “struck up Mr. Edwa. Noris his heels and myne, & Fell uppon me & keched me by the throte and held me soe long tell hee had almost stoped my breth & I sayd unto John Kiching thes is nott good Jesting, and John Kiching replyde this is nothing, I doe owe you more then this of ould: this is nott halfe of the wch yew shall haue afterwards” After this they went into Kitching’s house and he took stinking water and threw upon them, and took Cory and thrust him out of doors, and he went his way, Kiching following him half the way up the lane or thereabouts. Corey perceiving him following, attempted to go over the Rayles, but he threw him off the Rayles and beat him until he was all bloody. Tho. Bushop was a witness to the assault.⁵³⁰

Giles Corey appears to have been a contentious individual, judging by the frequency of his appearance in court, and given his reputation, one must wonder what Corey had to done to earn this treatment and the threat of future harm. Yet despite his cantankerous nature, according to Charles Upton, Corey had made a name for himself as a landowner in 1660 and again in 1663 by owning 150 acres in southeastern Salem, which he acquired from Robert Goodell and Ezra and Nathaniel Clapp.⁵³¹ The rough personality was overlaid on a man who worked hard and smart, as evidenced by the amount of land he accrued to the point where he was encroaching on those of higher status. In an ever more populated region, such a large parcel was quite valuable.

During the year 1670, Corey was in court at least three times. The first mention was for constructing a lean-to that was not satisfactory. He was also brought to court for theft and for failure to pay a debt. On April 13, 1670, Corey “admitted to stealing several

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 208-09.

⁵³¹ Upham, liii.

small things, some of which he confessed, and some proved, from Capt. Corwin.”⁵³² In July 1675 or 1676, Corey was accused of beating 33-year-old Jacob Goodell, the son of Robert Goodale from whom he had bought 50 acres in 1660. Testimony provided by Mary Corey in defense of Giles stated that Elizabeth Goodell, the wife of Zakarrey Goodell, stated that Jacob had been at her house and had taken apples from her cellar, and that Zakarrey Goodell, who had been outside gathering wood, put down the wood and beat Jacob. John Proctor testified that the above facts were correct. However, as the court testimony continued, Elisha Kebee, who was about twenty-eight years old, testified that he witnessed Giles Corey beat Jacob nearly one hundred times with a stick approximately one inch in diameter. Lot Killum testified before the grand jury on June 28, 1676 that Jacob stated that John Proctor had struck him with the side of the bed. Finally, John Proctor testified that Corey had admitted to him that he had in fact struck Jacob.⁵³³ Giles Corey was charged with physical abuse and fined for his role in the death of Jacob Goodell.⁵³⁴

The July 1678 record of the Salem Quarterly court shows Corey’s name yet again. The case “Gyles Coree v. Jno. Proctor,” where Corey accused Proctor of defamation, is found in the Ipswich Quarterly Court records for September 1678. “Giles Coree” was under suspicion for setting fire to the home of John Proctor. However, according to court records dated August 5, 1678 and signed by Hilliard Veren for the court, James Poland

⁵³² Harriet S. Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1914), 275. 275.

⁵³³ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1917), 190-91.

⁵³⁴ Ray, 103.

stated that Proctor told him that the fire was caused by a lamp that his son carried to bed with him:⁵³⁵

Abraham Walcott testified that he lodged in Gyles Core's house the night of the fire, and Core went to bed about nine o'clock, having come from work very weary. Also that Core could not have risen in the night without deponent hearing him, and for a long time he had not gone afoot and his horses were all in the woods.

Mary Cory testified that she slept with her husband and could affirm that he was not out of doors that night.

James Poland testified that Jno. Procter said that his boy carried a lamp into his lodging room and set it near the boards and that was how the fire caught.

Jane Moore and Caleb Moore testified to the same.⁵³⁶

The ruling in the case was decided in favor of Giles Corey and was subsequently upheld. The defamation case against John Proctor was not the only case Corey was party to in 1678. In the same sitting of the court, Robert Moulton testified against Corey for threats made against him.

...Gyles Core had several times threatened him about his planting, saying that he should not plant, also deponent's fence had been pulled down and Coree had threatened to turn all the horses that he met into his ground. Deponent had stolen from him wood, hay, fencing stuff and carpentry tools and some had been seen in Coree's house, and twelve bushels of apples had been stolen from his house. After some difference between Gyles and himself, he threatened that deponent's saw mill should saw no more and later the mill would not work. Deponent said that Corey was 'a very quarellsom & contentious bad neighbor.'⁵³⁷

In the society promoted by the Puritans, speaking so contentiously against another would not have been viewed favorably. Language such as this could be recalled later as a sign of an individual in collusion with the devil.

⁵³⁵ Tapley, "Records and Files of Essex County," 1919. 89-91.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 90.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 91.

Time in court seemed to be a common trait of the Corey family. While the Corey family was not the only family in court, as many families faced time in the legal setting for crimes such as drunkenness, cursing, fornication and trespassing on land. The Puritan ideals of a perfect society and striving to earn their way to salvation brought many to court to ensure they found a way to right their ways and return to the righteous path they should have been on. However, the Corey family seems to have more than their share of legal troubles compared most in Salem. His second wife, Mary, was also mentioned in court records. In court held at Salem on September 26, 1678, there is mention of John Bates and his wife Martha v. Giles and Mary Coree. This case involved John and Mary Gloyd testifying that they were at the home of the Coree's in June and had heard Mary Coree state the wife of John Bates had milked cows belonging to the Corey's as they came out of the woods and walked past the Bates home. Mary Parker, who swore in court that she had heard Mrs. Bates say she had milked some of the Coree cows, provided additional testimony.⁵³⁸ The verdict in this case of defamation favored the Bates family.

Later in 1678, Mary was in court again.

Charles Phillips, aged about forty-nine years, deposed that he saw Geyles Corie's wife, sometime in the last June, drunk upon the highway and that she tumbled off her horse several times, and was not able to go or stand. Benjamin Proctor and Elizabeth Procter deposed that the next day being the Sabbath Goody Cory said that she had her drink at Edw. Bridges. Mary Gloyd, aged about twenty-one years, deposed that being in the milking yard of Geyles Corie milking her own cow she heard a noise like tramping of several horses coming toward her. She looked but could not see nothing, and being startled went to the house the nearest way. Going over a pair of draw bars, she thought she heard the horses go tearing over before her. She told her story to John Parker, who said she was a simple woman to be affrighted for there was always a troop of horse about the milking yard, winter and summer.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 123-24.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 147.

Mary Corey was still not finished in court on this day. Testimony continued against her. John Moulton provided testimony that he had heard Mary Corey swear several times, a behavior not invoking the ideal of the silver tongue for women. John Proctor and Benjamin Proctor stated they had been making hay in their meadow and had gone to the Corey house to smoke a pipe of tobacco. While they were in the home, they stated Mary Corey called John Pudney's wife vile names.⁵⁴⁰ More witnesses were called, such as Mitchell Combs, who had dealings with Mary for about four years; Combs's testimony was the opposite; they had never heard her swear. George and Ales Booth provided testimony stating they had lived near Mary Corey for four years and she was civil and orderly and had been helpful in times of need. They went on to voice their opinion that the charges were prejudiced. Finally, Caleb More provided testimony. He stated he was with his father when Mary was purchased off a ship as an indentured servant from London in Virginia. During the trip home, while living with his father, he had never heard her swear, drink or speak unfavorably about anyone. He had only heard individuals say good things about her. After all the testimonies had been heard, Mary Corey petitioned the courts for damages to her character for all the accusations of cursing and drunkenness.⁵⁴¹ After considering all testimony and the petition of Mary Corey, the court still fined her for cursing and swearing, abusive speech toward Mrs. John Pudney, and for being drunk.

The Witch Trial of Giles Corey in 1692

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 148.

Prior to 1692, various individuals throughout New England had been accused of witchcraft, but never had the accusations occurred as frequently as they did in Salem that year. Like many of the community, Giles Corey and his third wife Martha were curious about the events transpiring around them. On March 1, 1692, Corey wanted to check out the situation for himself; however, Martha wished him to stay away from the commotion, so she hid his saddle. However, the Coreys were soon brought into the hysteria after it was learned that Martha Corey had voiced her concern about the legitimacy of the claims being made by the girls. She was questioned at home by Edward Putnam and Ezekiel Cheever after her name was mentioned as a tormenter of the girls.⁵⁴² Based on her responses to the questions asked of her, an arrest warrant was soon issued, and she was jailed on April 19 for witchcraft and remained in jail until June 19.⁵⁴³ She was transferred between various locations, like many of those incarcerated at the time. Not long after her arrest, a warrant was announced for Mr. Corey after a complaint was filed by John Putnam Jr. and Ezekiel Cheever.⁵⁴⁴ He was examined in front of the girls on April 18, 1692, where they exhibited symptoms of being tortured while in his presence.⁵⁴⁵ Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, Abigail Williams, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Abigail Hobbs accused Corey of being a witch after his wife was accused, and he was imprisoned on May 12 and remained so until June 19. The fact Giles was charged fits the larger pattern that saw men more easily accused when a female relation had already been called out as a witch.

⁵⁴² Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 149-50.

⁵⁴³ James B. Felt, *Annals of Salem*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Boston: W. and S.B. Ives, 1849), 481.

⁵⁴⁴ Robinson, 105.

⁵⁴⁵ Hoffer, 123.

Once he was officially put on trial, there was a variety of testimony against Giles. Throughout the time of the Witch Trials, events of the past were often used against someone in finding them guilty of witchcraft. During his examination, Robert Moulton, a neighbor, expressed his dislike for Giles. Moulton and Giles had had run-ins in the past and Moulton claimed that after they had clashed, twelve bushels of apples were stolen from his property. He went on to state that his sawmill stopped working on another occasion.⁵⁴⁶ Mary Warren testified that Bridget Bishop (Oliver) had stated she planned to bring Giles Corey to torment her.⁵⁴⁷ Those that spoke out against him accused him of torturing the girls, theft, feasting, and going to church.⁵⁴⁸

As his time before the magistrates continued, Corey realized his future seemed bleak as evidenced in the will that he recorded while in prison on July 25, 1692. In the will, witnessed by the Salem jailer, William Dounton, he left all his property, buildings, land, livestock, money and household items to his sons-in-law, William Cleaves of Beverly and John Moulton of Salem as English law could take personal goods but not land.⁵⁴⁹ After nearly five months of imprisonment, Corey would ultimately appear before the grand jury on September 9, 1692, one day after his wife Martha had been pronounced guilty. Giles Corey was brought back before the justices on Friday, September 16th and condemned. In an effort to save his life, his friend Thomas Gardner tried to get him to

⁵⁴⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 41.

⁵⁴⁷ Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 107; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 262-64.

⁵⁴⁸ Hoffer, 125.

⁵⁴⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 98; Hoffer, 123.

enter a plea over a period of two days. Corey, held firm by his stubbornness, refused to plea.⁵⁵⁰

It was also during this time that Ann Putnam had a dream that Corey had gotten away with murder in the past regarding Jacob Goodale.⁵⁵¹ On September 18, 1692, two days after Corey was condemned, Thomas Putnam wrote a letter to the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Although there is not a copy of the letter that survives, Cotton Mather in his *Wonders of The Invisible World* described an extract of the letter.⁵⁵² The letter, received by Judge Sewall, retold the story of Corey beating Jacob Goodale and of Goodale eventually succumbing to his wounds. He went on to write that Giles had killed a man by crushing him with his feet.⁵⁵³ Since Corey had already gotten away with murder once, Putnam used the words of his daughter, “God Hardened his Heart, that he should not hearken to the Advice of the Court, and so Die an easy Death; because as it said, ‘It must be done to him as he has done to me.’”⁵⁵⁴ Given the litigious society of Salem, it is hard to believe that receiving the letter was the first Sewall had heard of the Giles Corey and the Goodale case. According to Benjamin Ray, Sewall misunderstood the letter and thought the person that had come to Ann in her dream was Corey when in fact it was Goodale.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁰ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 293.

⁵⁵¹ Francis, 145-46.

⁵⁵² Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World - Being an Account of the Tryals of Several Witches Lately - Executed in New England, to Which Is Added a Farther Account of the Tryals of the New England Witches* (Boston, MA: Special Command of His Excellency the Governour of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1693), 165.

⁵⁵³ Ray, 103.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 671.

⁵⁵⁵ Ray, 103.

During this time, Corey pled innocent to all indictments. When it came time for him to answer the question from the magistrates on how he wished to be tried, he refused to answer. Those before the court were expected to respond with the phrase, “by God and my Country.”⁵⁵⁶ As he refused to utter the above phrase, the trial was unable to move forward. He was sentenced to face punishment of *peine forte et dure*—being pressed until he enters a plea or succumbs to death. Corey was taken to a field near the sheriff’s office and stripped down. A board was placed on his chest and rocks were gradually added. Giles Corey was asked over the course of the next two days if he was ready to answer. He stayed true to his claim of innocence and remained quiet. At the end, it is said the only words he allegedly uttered were “more weight.”

On September 19, as he succumbed to the pressure of the stones, it was reported that his tongue hung from his mouth, and Sheriff Corwin allegedly used his cane to shove the tongue back in. While Giles was languishing under the weight that was being piled on his chest, he was excommunicated on September 18 by Reverend Nicholas Noyes. Although Corey had succumbed to the weight, he would still be part of the discussion after his death. Justice Samuel Sewall recorded the following in his diary on September 20th, “Now I hear from Salem that about 18 years ago, he was suspected to have stamped and pressed a man to death but was cleared. Twas not remembered till Ann Putnam Jr. was told of it by said Corey’s specter, the Sabbath-day night before the execution.”⁵⁵⁷ The recollection of this after the death supports the notion that occasions from the past would and could be used to justify the witch hunt of 1692.

⁵⁵⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 281.

⁵⁵⁷ Robinson, 222.

Relieving the Weight of Punishment: The Corey Family After the Trials

In the years that followed the trials, many appealed to the government to clear the names of their loved ones who suffered and died, and have the attainders reversed. This was of great importance to the families, as it amounted to clearing the family name, and for some women it allowed them to exist in the eyes of the law again. John Moulton, son-in-law to Corey, represented the family in petitioning the government for his family to receive restitution for money extorted by Sheriff Corwin, constituting a total of eleven pounds and six shillings.⁵⁵⁸ John Moulton desired this amount as he based it off taking care of Giles and Martha as they were moved from the jail in Salem to Ipswich, Boston and back to Salem, the whole time supplying them with food and bedding.

The legislature approved the reversal of attainder for Giles Corey on October 17, 1711.⁵⁵⁹ Although the funds were approved to pay reparations to the families, the Commonwealth did not take any blame or make an apology to God and placed the blame for the events of 1692 on the accusers.⁵⁶⁰ The General Court eventually approved the payment of funds for Giles Corey and several others on December 17, 1711. The Court approved a total of 578 pounds for payment to the families of those who were executed and to those who had been convicted.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Ray, 175; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 865.

⁵⁵⁹ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 249.

⁵⁶⁰ Ray, 174.

⁵⁶¹ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 250.

The financial settlement wasn't the only matter of importance to the families. Families also desired the names of their loved ones be cleared in the eyes of the church, rather than being subjected to an eternity of damnation. In addition to the pain caused by the trials and the expenses put upon families to fund their family members' stay in jail, the Corey family was faced with the stigma of both Giles and Martha being excommunicated from their respective churches. Giles Corey was the first Salem Town Church member to be excommunicated since 1666, when the church removed Joseph Williams and John Archer.⁵⁶² The Salem Town Church, or First Church, excommunicated Corey the day before his death,⁵⁶³ basing the excommunication on the fact that Corey chose to have the weight applied, which, in their opinion, constituted suicide. In the view of the Puritans, suicide was a mortal sin, a demonstration of being reprobate in the eyes of God; a person who committed suicide was no longer considered one of the elect.⁵⁶⁴

In a measure to heal and move the congregation forward, Reverend Nicholas Noyes, the senior minister of the Salem church, asked them to reverse the excommunication of Giles in 1712.⁵⁶⁵ Although Martha Corey's excommunication had been reversed years earlier, it was a more complex matter when it came to her husband. Because he was indicted but never convicted due to the lack of entering a plea by not stating 'by God and country,' his death was considered suicide, which the church looked

⁵⁶² König, 125.

⁵⁶³ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 38.

⁵⁶⁴ Elisabeth Hunter, "Melancholy and the Doctrine of Reprobation in English Puritan Culture, 1550-1640" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2013).

⁵⁶⁵ Felt, 2, 485.

at in a different light.⁵⁶⁶ According to Ray in *Satan and Salem*, the excommunication of Giles Corey was eventually rescinded, the church basing their reversal on “testimony that before his death he did bitterly repent of his obstinate refusal to plead in defense of his life.”⁵⁶⁷ The excommunication was formally erased on March 6, 1712.⁵⁶⁸

The story of Giles Corey did not end after the clearing of his name. Stories have passed down through the centuries that his ghost haunts an area around the Howard Street Cemetery. Individuals have reported seeing his ghost before and after terrible events in the town, such as the Salem Fire of 1914.⁵⁶⁹ Another story emerged that said Giles Corey had placed a curse on all sheriffs of Essex County since his arrest and death in front of Corwin. All men who served as sheriff, beginning with Corwin, ended up suffering heart ailments such as heart attacks while in office. This story was believed to be true up until 1991, when the location of the sheriff’s office changed due to a new jail being constructed.

The name of Giles Corey was not to be lost to history and can be found in historical literature as well. The story of Giles Corey, from his legal troubles and cantankerous nature, to his refusal to testify in the Witch Trials and his horrific death, make for a compelling narrative. Beginning in the 1800s, three plays were written that contained him as a central character. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote *Giles Corey of Salem Farms*. In 1893, Mary E. Wilkins published her account of his life in *Giles Corey, Yeoman*. Additionally, students across the United States continue to read Arthur Miller’s

⁵⁶⁶ Ray, 169.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Spiller, 12.

⁵⁶⁹ Brooks “Curse of Giles Corey”. 7.

play *The Crucible*. While Corey is not the central figure of the play, he does figure prominently in the script.

Conclusion

Often the trials are thought of as stories of women and individuals losing their lives. However, men like Corey need to be remembered, as they demonstrate that men are just as much part of the story as women. In this case, a man lost his life because of decisions he made earlier in life that came back to haunt him. Corey is used in this dissertation as an example of the average working man in Salem who were accused and convicted during the trials. Men of all social levels were far more likely to be accused and convicted in Salem than were ever accused elsewhere in the colonies or England. As discussed in Chapter 4, those men and their families also were compensated at a higher rate than any female victim or family. In the case of Corey and other men that faced accusations, is the man's life worth more than that of a female that went through the same process? I argue throughout this dissertation that the legal system of the time believed so, and the society felt that all men had a greater value than any woman.

Chapter 6 – George Burroughs

Chapter Abstract

George Burroughs was believed by Salem residents to be the ringleader or mastermind behind the witch crisis in Salem. According to his accusers and the court's ultimate verdict, it was he who summoned the witches to convene at appointed times. Burroughs's relationship with the community of Salem was complex, beginning long before the trials. The events in his life leading up to the Salem Witch Trials illuminate the extreme actions taken against him and lend understanding regarding the accusations and aftermath of this period. Burroughs's position as a leader in the church made him an unusual target for witchcraft accusations, but it also demonstrates the unusual circumstances of Salem. He represents a group that was rarely accused of these crimes in colonial times, yet all levels of society were implicated in Salem, and no individual or position was immune from condemnation or even death.

Burroughs Before His Time in Salem

George Burroughs was born around 1651 in Virginia to Nathaniel and Rebecca Burroughs and was their only child.⁵⁷⁰ His father was from Limehouse in Stepney Middlesex County, England, and was the son of the Reverend George Burroughs (1579-1653) who obtained his LLB at Trinity Hall in 1600.⁵⁷¹ Genealogical records reveal the

⁵⁷⁰ Robinson, 323.

⁵⁷¹ Upton, 11.

Burroughs family's noteworthy past, including being descendants of royalty. According to research by Gilbert Upton and the Newman Family Society, Burroughs was a direct descendant of Malcolm II, King of Scots (1005-1034), and William the Conqueror.⁵⁷² Burroughs's mother, Rebecca Stiles, married his father around 1649 in England.⁵⁷³ His family moved to Maryland in 1651 or 1652 and settled on the Patuxent River, and although the exact reason for their immigration is not known, it is believed they moved for the rich farmland, where they began to grow crops.⁵⁷⁴ Nathaniel Burroughs served as a juror, and in cases involving tobacco, he is found in the records as both a plaintiff and defendant during the 1650s-1660s.⁵⁷⁵ It is believed that Nathaniel worked as a traveling merchant and consequently did business in Massachusetts as well as Maryland, and probably owned residences in both locations, while the records show that Rebecca joined the congregational church in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1657.⁵⁷⁶ Living with his mother in Roxbury, George attended the local school. After completing school in Roxbury, he was accepted to attend Harvard in 1666 and graduated in 1670.⁵⁷⁷ As was customary for the time, Burroughs would have taken his classes in Latin, with some Greek and Hebrew also spoken. As a student of higher learning, George's exams were all oral, and were held in the morning from 9-11 and in the afternoon from 1-3 either in June or July.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷² Ibid.; unknown, "The Reverend George Burroughs (1652-1692)," (Wells, Maine: Newman Family Society, 1992).

⁵⁷³ Upton, 11.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 11-12.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Schiff, 151.

⁵⁷⁸ Upton, 24.

Shortly after graduation, he served as assistant pastor to Reverend John Wheelwright in Wells, Maine.⁵⁷⁹

Rebecca Burroughs returned to England on November 29, 1672 for unknown reasons.⁵⁸⁰ Her move back to England meant that she was not present to witness her only child, George marry Hannah Fisher around 1673 in Roxbury. It is believed that Hannah was the daughter of Lieutenant Joshua Fisher and Mary Aldis of Dedham, Massachusetts.⁵⁸¹ Burroughs and Hannah had their first daughter, Rebecca, baptized in the First Church of Roxbury on February 12, 1674. Two months later on April 12, 1674, George Burroughs became a member of the congregation.⁵⁸²

Burroughs went on to spend most of his career as a minister on the Maine frontier, serving the citizens of Falmouth (also known as Casco), Black Point (Scarborough), and Wells.⁵⁸³ Burroughs accepted a position as the minister in Falmouth, Maine in 1674.⁵⁸⁴ At the time, Maine was attracting settlers but still had a contentious time with the Native American inhabitants, and thus had some difficulty in attracting ministers to its distant locales. Burroughs was well-received in Maine. The people of Falmouth welcomed him as their new spiritual guide, and shortly after his arrival he received 200 acres of land

⁵⁷⁹ Hope M. Shelley and Wells 350th Celebration History Committee, *My Name Is Wells I Am the Town* (United States: Penobscot Press, 2002), 12.

⁵⁸⁰ Upton, 11-12.

⁵⁸¹ Robin Mason "Witches of Massachusetts Bay", 2019, <https://www.witchesmassbay.com/2019/10/27/reconstructing-rev-george-burroughs-genealogy/>. July 10, 2020.

⁵⁸² Upton, 25.

⁵⁸³ Mary Beth Norton, "George Burroughs and the Girls from Casco: The Maine Roots of Salem Witchcraft," *Maine History* 40, no. 4: 259; Emerson W. Baker "OUBlog", 2014, https://blog.oup.com/2014/08/george-burroughs-salems-perfect-witch/?utm_source=twitter. 2. July 21, 2017.

⁵⁸⁴ Upton, 25.

where he would construct his home.⁵⁸⁵ Being on the frontier, the town lacked many of the resources found in large communities such as Salem and Boston. The church was not formally organized through covenant or ordination. With Burroughs not ordained, he was unable to administer the sacraments of baptism and communion to the residents,⁵⁸⁶ but, he served as their spiritual guide and inspiration to live a just life as described in the Bible. Burroughs faithfully served as the minister of Falmouth/Casco from 1674-1676.⁵⁸⁷ He later returned in 1683 and remained there until 1689, when he fled due to the danger posed by the Native Americans.⁵⁸⁸

In 1675, King Philip's War, also called the First Indian War, the Great Narragansett War or Metacom's Rebellion, broke out in Massachusetts and spread north to the Maine frontier and the area surrounding Casco. The war pitted angry Native Americans against the unrelenting push inland by the colonists. As the fighting intensified, Burroughs used his leadership position as minister to lead residents to safety. On August 11, 1676 he led a group of settlers to Munjoy's Garrison and eventually to James Andrew's Island (now Bang Island) at the mouth of the Casco Bay.⁵⁸⁹ During the war, one of the groups that traveled with Burroughs to escape the attack of the Wabanaki during King Philip's War was the Lewis family, consisting of Philip Lewis and his wife, and their daughter Mercy.⁵⁹⁰ The Lewis family continued with Burroughs until 1689, when Philip and his wife were killed during a battle with the Native Americans orphaning

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ray, 134.

⁵⁸⁹ Upton, 28; Schiff, 152.

⁵⁹⁰ Norton, "George Burroughs and the Girls from Casco," 268.

then 15-year-old Mercy. Mercy Lewis was taken in by Burroughs and his family for several months but would later accuse Burroughs of witchcraft during the trials. James Andrew's Island served as their refuge for nine days during which time they subsisted on fish and berries. They left the island with Henry Joseley to take cover in his garrison at Black Point before Burroughs and others made the journey back to the safety of Massachusetts.⁵⁹¹

From Salem to Maine, and Back Again

With his newfound safety in Massachusetts, Burroughs needed to find a job to support his growing family. He remained in Salisbury, Massachusetts for four years and did some preaching, working as an assistant to Pastor John Wheelwright from 1679-1680, but he still did not become ordained.⁵⁹² His daughter Hannah was born April 27, 1680, while in Salisbury. In November 1680, Burroughs received a call to minister in a rural area known as Salem Village, Massachusetts, only 25-30 miles from his home in Salisbury.⁵⁹³

The previous minister, James Bayley, had left after not being paid his salary due to fourteen residents not paying their taxes as well as being caught up in dispute between members of the Putnam family.⁵⁹⁴ The Village had hired Bayley, a native of Newbury,

⁵⁹¹ Upton, 29.

⁵⁹² Ibid.; Shelley and Committee, 22. While the book by Ms. Shelley states 1669, an email inquiry to her(10/10/2017), resulted in her stating it was a misprint in the book and should actually be 1679.

⁵⁹³ Upton, 31.

⁵⁹⁴ Robinson, 323; Ray, 137; Hoffer, 27-28; Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 81.

Massachusetts, a non-ordained Harvard graduate on November 11, 1672.⁵⁹⁵ Although the Village had been granted the right to form a meetinghouse and hire a minister, the Village freeman rather than the “saints” chose to hire Bayley. This assumption of power would lead to a conflict within the community. The Village wanted to ensure the minister was actually ordained as only an ordained minister could administer communion or baptize babies and this would be part of what would cause Bayley to leave Salem Village. In order for Burroughs to obtain steady work again, he accepted the job as minister to Salem Village in 1681 after a trial period.⁵⁹⁶

The church in this village was newly established. In the years prior, the inhabitants of Salem Village had been pushing to create their own house of worship. In March 1672, the farmers had asked the General Court for permission to construct a meetinghouse and the right to hire their own minister.⁵⁹⁷ In the same month, Salem Town granted their request with one constraint. The farmers could form their own parish and would be exempted from paying church taxes to the town, as that money would be necessary to support their own center for worship. However, they had to continue to pay all other taxes levied by the town,⁵⁹⁸ and the church would remain under the control of Salem Town until 1752. The Village moved forward with their mission to construct their new meetinghouse. In November 1672, after electing a committee and drawing up the plans, they hired their first minister⁵⁹⁹ and began to seek a location for the church

⁵⁹⁵ Hoffer, 27.

⁵⁹⁶ Robinson, 323; Ray, 137; Hoffer, 27-28; Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 81.

⁵⁹⁷ Upton, 31.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 32.

building. In 1673, Joseph Hutchinson donated the land for the construction of the meetinghouse as well as that of a parsonage for the minister,⁶⁰⁰ and it was determined through a vote that this land would always remain a home for the minister and should never be sold to one individual. For membership, the community determined that those in the community who did not meet the definition of a saint were not permitted to be members of the congregation. They were expected to pay taxes to support the ministry and attend services regularly, but since they were not of the elect, they were denied the right to take communion.⁶⁰¹

On November 25, 1680, George Burroughs negotiated his contract for his services to Salem Village. His initial salary was to be 93.63 pounds, with half being money or two-thirds “in or as in money” for the first year, which is an estimated equivalent of \$21,000 today.⁶⁰² Thereafter he was to receive sixty pounds, one-third in cash, rye, barley, and malt at three shillings per bushel, Indian corn at 2 shillings per bushel, beef at 3 ½ pence per pound, pork at 2 pence per pound, and butter at 1 pence per pound.⁶⁰³

After Burroughs accepted the job as minister, he had to relocate his family to the area. However, when they arrived, the parsonage was in an unlivable condition, so he and wife and two children resided with Captain John and Rebecca Putnam for nine

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 34; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁶⁰³ *A Book of Record of the Severall Publique Transactions of the Inhabitants of Salem Village Vulgarly Called the Farmes 1672-1713*. The Historical Collections of the Danvers Historical Society, 1924-1931 (Danvers, MA: Danvers Historical Society, 1931); William Willis, *History of Portland, from 1632-1864*, 2nd ed. (Portland: Bailey & Noyes, 1865), 246.

months while the parsonage was being rehabilitated.⁶⁰⁴ The village appeared to embrace Burroughs and the message he was sending through his ministry. In December 1681, in an attempt to ensure he would remain among them for some time, he was asked to move in among them. He replied that he would live among the villagers with the following stipulations: that he would settle with the intent to live and die among them and if a disagreement should occur, both sides would agree to counsel for an amicable settlement.⁶⁰⁵ Burroughs clearly demonstrated that he was committed to their community and sought to ensure that if any uncomfortable situations arose, the entire group could mediate an acceptable solution for all stakeholders.

Early in 1681, George's third daughter Elizabeth was born, and later that year in September 1681, his wife Hannah passed away. The Village had been slow in paying Burroughs for his services, and as such, he could not afford to give his wife a proper funeral. In order to pay for the funeral expenses, he borrowed money from John Putnam.⁶⁰⁶ Burroughs married again soon after, in 1682 in Salem Village. His new wife was Sarah Ruck Hathorne, widow of Captain William Hathorne Jr and sister in-law of magistrate John Hathorne.⁶⁰⁷ In April 1682 Burroughs was accused of paying more attention to his preaching than the well-being of the entire congregation.⁶⁰⁸ By March 1683, Burroughs was having a difficult time supporting his family, because the village was now severely behind in their payments to him. The drama that had begun under the

⁶⁰⁴ Upton, 34.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Robinson, 323; Upton, 35.

⁶⁰⁸ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 128.

tenure of Bayley continued into the term of Burroughs. As he was not receiving his negotiated salary, he quit meeting with the congregation and began looking for a new position. Life had calmed down on the Maine frontier, and when his previous religious community in Casco, Maine offered him a position in April 1683, he elected to return with his wife and three daughters.⁶⁰⁹ The Casco community was so anxious to have their former minister return that citizens collected money to pay for his return to the Maine frontier and for repairs to the meetinghouse.

His family was well received upon their return, but back in Massachusetts, the residents of Salem Village felt that Burroughs had abandoned his congregation. The Salem residents sought assistance from the General Court, and Burroughs returned to the village on May 2, 1683, where he attended a public meeting to explain why he had left the community and to settle the issue of his salary that was in arrears. While Burroughs was at the meeting, Captain John Putnam had him arrested.⁶¹⁰ In June 1683, John Putnam sued Burroughs for debt incurred largely from the expenses associated with the funeral of his wife, Hannah.⁶¹¹ After the evidence was presented, it was determined that the debt had occurred due to the funeral and the community not paying his salary. Nathaniel Ingersoll, a church deacon, demonstrated that the debt Putnam was referring to had actually been paid.⁶¹² The whole situation caused embarrassment for John Putnam, which he did not forget, as his family had risen to prominence in the area with the land

⁶⁰⁹ Upton, 35,39.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 35.

⁶¹¹ Shelley and Committee, 12-13.

⁶¹² Ibid., 13.

his father had purchased back in 1647. Burroughs was able to leave town and return to Maine.

The Maine tax list from October 7, 1683, details that Richard Powsland and Anthony Grackett contributed money to Burroughs's salary, passage from Salem, and boards and nails for his home once settled back in Maine.⁶¹³ A new minister's house was to be constructed on the two hundred acres that had been given to Burroughs before the war, land which was situated in the center of town. However, in June 1683, with peace returned and individuals electing to come back to the community, the town asked him to swap his land for one hundred acres less centrally located. Burroughs agreed, and replied, "as for the land already taken away, we were welcome to it, and if twenty acres of that fifty above expressed would pleasure us, he freely gave it to use, not desiring any land anywhere else, nor anything else in consideration thereof."⁶¹⁴ Burroughs was content in the community and was willing to do what was needed to help the community flourish even if it meant giving up one tract of land for another.

Unfortunately for Burroughs and his family, King William's War began in 1689. The war was an extension of the War of the Grand Alliance between Great Britain and France over who should take over the Hapsburg throne in Spain. The war carried over to the colonies with the settlers and their Native American allies fighting against each other. The fighting spread to Casco, where Massachusetts's officials had sent 250 men under the command of Major Benjamin Church. While Church was battling the Native Americans, Burroughs did not hesitate to involve himself in the fight and enter battle in

⁶¹³ Upton, 38-39.

⁶¹⁴ Willis, 245.

the face of danger on behalf of his community, which earned him Major Church's approval. Church sent a notice to Boston on September 22 commending Burroughs: "As for the minister of this place, I am well satisfied with him, being present with us yesterday during the fight."⁶¹⁵ Burroughs did not shy away from danger; rather, he stood up to defend his congregation and what he believed right. As a man of the cloth, he was not afraid to fight for those around him. The battle did not leave the community unharmed. During the fighting, Philip Lewis and his wife were killed, orphaning a fifteen old daughter, Mercy. Mercy was taken in by the Burroughs family to work as a servant, although she only remained with the family for a few months.⁶¹⁶

In the spring of 1690, Burroughs and his seven children moved from Casco to Wells, Maine.⁶¹⁷ This community was better suited to hold off Native American attacks, which was important for Burroughs at this stage in his life. Sarah, his wife, had recently passed away during the winter of 1689 and he was one of only two ministers left in Maine. However, life in Wells didn't begin the way he envisioned. On May 18, 1690, the Native Americans attacked Wells and killed several inhabitants. Burroughs again took charge for the community in their time of crisis. While held up at Storer's Garrison, he demonstrated why he was respected on the frontier. According to Edward Bourne, a Wells historian, "being a strong man and accustomed to victory in any attempts made upon things animate or inanimate, he had acquired a self-confidence and courage which

⁶¹⁵ Upton, 42.

⁶¹⁶ Norton, "George Burroughs and the Girls from Casco," 269.

⁶¹⁷ Upton, 42.

fitted him for any emergency. He was the man needed for the hour.”⁶¹⁸ News of his desire and dedication to the town spread that he was not only a minister, but also a capable leader. This reputation allowed him to find his third wife, Mary, in 1690, with whom he had one daughter also named Mary.⁶¹⁹

The calm did not last, and continued conflict between the colonists and the Native Americans caused Burroughs to reach out to other colonialists. On October 28, 1691, he and other leaders asked Boston for more help:

Whereas it hath pleased God (both formerly and now) to let loose the heathen upon us by holding us off from our improvements, keeping us in close garrison and daily lying in wait to take any that go forth, whereby we are brought very low... The corn raised in the town is [not] judged enough to keep the inhabitants themselves one half year, and our stocks of cattle and swine are very much diminished. We therefore humbly request your honors to continue soldiers among us and appoint a commander over them, and what number shall be judged meet to remain with us for winter that provisions, corn and clothing suitable for them be seasonably sent, also one hogshead of salt, all ours being spent; also [the] present supply in what was sent before is almost gone. We had a youth seventeen years of age last Saturday carried away, who went (not above gunshot) from Lieut. Storer’s garrison to fetch a little wood in his arms. We have desired our loving friends, Capt. John Littlefield and ensign John Hill, to present this to your honors, who can give a further account of our condition.⁶²⁰

Given his status as the minister and a leader of the community, Burroughs is believed to be the author and first signer of the document.⁶²¹ The letter to the leaders of Boston shows his dedication to the community and that he knew that it would take outside help if they were going to be successful against the Native Americans. He

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 44; Edward Bourne, *The History of Wells and Kennebunk* (Portland, Maine: B. Thurston & Company, 1875), 171.

⁶¹⁹ Upton, 45.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 46-47.

⁶²¹ Ibid., 47.

remained in Maine and served as their spiritual leader and community defender on the Maine frontier for a total of ten years without being ordained.

Burroughs the Accused and Condemned

By 1692, witch hysteria had taken over Salem, and the community was anxious to rid themselves of anyone who wished them harm and return to the community they had once been. Ann Putnam Jr. had been experiencing fits, and on April 20, 1692—nine years after her great-uncle John Putnam had brought Burroughs to court—she named her tormenter to be the specter of George Burroughs.⁶²² In her deposition Ann stated:

Oh dreadful, dreadful! Here is a minister come! What! are ministers witches too? Whence came you, and what is your name? for I will complain of you, though you be a minister, if you be a wizard...he tempted me to write in his book, which I refused... Tell me your name, that I may know who you are. ... he told me that his name was George Burroughs, and that he had had three wives, and that he had bewitched the two first of them to death; and that he killed Mrs. Lawson, because she was so unwilling to go from the Village, and also killed Mr. Lawson's child because he went to the eastward with, Sir Edmon, and preached so the soldiers; and that he had bewitched a great many solders to death at the eastward when Sir Edmon was there; and that he had made Abigail Hobbs a witch, and several witches more....He also told me that he was above a witch. HE was a conjurer.⁶²³

As Ann was only twelve years old and a female, her father attested that her testimony was factual and that he was aware of everything she had stated. At the conclusion of the testimony by the girls, the matter was turned over to the governor and

⁶²² Norton, "George Burroughs and the Girls from Casco," 260.

⁶²³ Upham, 419.

council in Boston.⁶²⁴ The accusations put forth were more serious than any other case as a minister was now accused. Upon listening to the testimonies of Ann and the others, the Boston council issued an arrest warrant for George Burroughs on April 30, 1692.⁶²⁵ On May 2, 1692, John Partridge, Field Marshall for the provinces of Maine and New Hampshire, arrived with a small group of men at Burroughs's home in Wells and placed him under arrest.⁶²⁶ At the time of his arrest, he was just sitting down for dinner with his wife and seven children under the age of 17.⁶²⁷ Burroughs left his home willingly and arrived in Salem on May 4.⁶²⁸ When he arrived in Salem, all the jail space was occupied, so he was kept prisoner on the second floor of Thomas Beadle's home, where he remained until May 9, the day of his preliminary hearing.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁴ Upton, 80.

⁶²⁵ Upham, 417.

⁶²⁶ Upton, 49.

⁶²⁷ Schiff, 137.

⁶²⁸ Robinson, 179.

⁶²⁹ Upton, 81.



Figure 4: Map of route taken by Field Marshall John Partridge with his prisoner, George Burroughs. Provided by Hope Shelley, Wells, Maine – Town Historian and photo taken by Melissa Lunney

For his preliminary hearing, in addition to judges Hathorne and Corwin, William Staughton and Samuel Sewall were present, and the hearing was conducted in private. As was custom at the time, those who stood accused of crimes of this magnitude were denied representation, so Burroughs was left to serve as his own council.⁶³⁰ Witchcraft wasn't the only matter up for discussion at his preliminary hearing. It was concerning to the magistrates that Burroughs could not remember when he last partook in the Lords Supper and only one of his children had been baptized—this was particularly troubling given that he was a man of God. This coupled with the fact that in all the years he had been preaching, he had never become ordained, created suspicion that Burroughs might

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 82.

secretly be a practicing Baptist.⁶³¹ This was a damning suggestion; the commonwealth had banned Baptists in the past.

Once the men had finished examining Burroughs in private, he entered the room where his accusers were waiting. Burroughs was a high-profile community member and given his occupation, the court wanted to make sure they had enough evidence, Anthony Checkley lined up about thirty individuals to provide depositions or testify against him.⁶³² Burroughs was questioned in open court and his accusers, Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Ann Putnam Jr. all appeared to suffer fits both when he was brought in and when his eyes met theirs.⁶³³ Susannah Sheldon who has a small child survived King Philip's War and had recently lost her dad had begun to have visions. She testified first stating, "Burroughs two wives appeared in their winding sheets, & said knockt down all(or most) of the afflicted, w^o stood behind him..." In the same examination Susannah Sheldon and Ann Putnam Jr. went onto say that he brought each of them the book and wanted them to write in it. The testimony did not end on that day. On May 11, Abigail Hobbs, stepdaughter of Deliverance Hobbs affirmed that "George Burroughs in his Shape appeared to her & urged her to set her hand to the Book, which she did; & afterwards in his own person he acknowledge to her, that he had made her set her hand to the Book."⁶³⁴ The accusers' fits became so bad they had to be removed from the room.

⁶³¹ Baker "George Burroughs: Salem's Perfect Witch". 3.

⁶³² *Storm of Witchcraft*, 35.

⁶³³ Upton, 83.

⁶³⁴ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 240-42.

The girls eventually provided their testimonies stating how Burroughs had impacted them. Susannah Sheldon and Ann Putnam Jr. both provided testimony that was nearly impossible to refute: that the ghosts of Burroughs's first two wives had spoken to them and stated he had been responsible for their deaths. Although the apparitions were not present and therefore could not be cross-examined, the courts of the day considered these claims.

The testimony became more damning for Burroughs when Deliverance and Abigail Hobbs spoke. Both Deliverance and her daughter Abigail had been charged with witchcraft on April 18, 1692, and had also been held in prison around the same time as Burroughs. In her confession, Abigail described meeting the devil in Casco Bay.⁶³⁵ The fact that she mentioned Casco Bay broadened the scope of area impacted by the trials and appeared to corroborate the others' accusations because she had lived there along with Burroughs. In her initial testimony on April 22nd, Deliverance did not name Burroughs, but instead described "a tall black man with a high crowned hat in witchcraft activities."⁶³⁶ While Burroughs was not a tall man, the description of a man in a crowned hat fit the image at the time for a minister. Additionally, listening to those who had apprehended Burroughs gave her information to embellish her story while she waited in jail. However, it is surmised by Upham that after some time in chains, she added Burroughs's name to the story.⁶³⁷ At the conclusion of the preliminary examination on May 9, the magistrates made their recommendation and Burroughs was held on the

⁶³⁵ Upton, 85.

⁶³⁶ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 210-13.

⁶³⁷ Upton, 86.

charge of witchcraft. He was to be transferred to jail in Boston to await his trial, which was scheduled for August 5, 1692.

Over the summer as Burroughs waited for his hearing, the Salem Witch Trials continued to grow and spread. Cotton Mather wrote in his diary on August 5:

Our Good God is working of Miracles. Five Witches were Lately Executed, imprudently demanding of God, a Miraculous Vindication of their Innocency. Immediately upon this, Our God Miraculously sent in Five Andover Witches, who made a most surprising, amazing Confession of all their Villainies and declared the Five newly executed to have been of their Company, discovering many more; but all agreeing in Burroughs being their Ringleader, who, I suppose, this Day received his trial in Salem, whither a Vast Concourse of people is gone; My Father, this morning among the Rest.⁶³⁸

Like Mather, many in the Salem community was confident that the trials were successfully rooting out the cause of the witchcraft and seemed to agree that Burroughs was heavily involved.

Burroughs also had faith in the system and did not believe the courts would find him guilty as men were rarely tried with severity and other ministers like Francis Dane, who had been accused had not faced consequences. He had supporters who visited him while he was in custody, and he believed the truth would come out and he would be freed. Unlike in many of the previous trials, due to his education and position in society, Burroughs took an active role in the trial, responding to the accusations.

In order to convict a clergyman on charges of being a witchcraft ringleader, the prosecution knew they would need numerous witnesses. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, by the time of his trial, they had amassed a list of more than thirty who would

⁶³⁸ Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather 1681-1708*, vol. 7, Massachusetts Historical Society Collection (Boston: The Plimpton Press, 1910), 142.

testify on spectral evidence, ghost evidence, domestic abuse, and his alleged supernatural strength.⁶³⁹ In addition to having witnesses to testify against him, a jury needed to be selected to listen to the charges. The jury selected for that day of trials was composed of freemen, as property qualification was not in place yet. Church members were more easily swayed by the judges when it came to religious matters.⁶⁴⁰ The Puritan religion and their interpretation of the Bible did not allow for the possibility of witchcraft and therefore it needed to be rooted out.

In Mather's account on the eve of Burroughs's trial in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, the accusers claimed that his specter had bitten them, and they displayed teeth marks that were said to align with the teeth of Burroughs.⁶⁴¹ The August 5 trial for Burroughs began with the prosecution reading the sworn depositions of the afflicted girls.⁶⁴² The statements claimed that Burroughs's specter had threatened and abused them, and that he made some of them promise to sign his black book.⁶⁴³ To drive home their claim that Burroughs was a leader of the witches, the prosecution called eight or more confessed witches to the stand. These witnesses accused Burroughs of presiding over the meeting near the home of Reverend Parris and summoning witches by sounding a trumpet.⁶⁴⁴ Deliverance Hobbs confessed, "Mr Burroughs was the Preacher, and prest them to bewitch all in the village...He administered the sacrament unto them... with Red

⁶³⁹ Upton, 94.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 95; Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 122.

⁶⁴² Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 529-32.

⁶⁴³ Upton, 94-95; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 242-46.

⁶⁴⁴ Upton, 98.

Bread, and Red Wine Like Blood.”⁶⁴⁵ The testimony provided by these witnesses accused Burroughs of presiding over the meeting near the home of Reverend Parris and summoning witches by sounding a trumpet.⁶⁴⁶ They went on to testify that at least twenty-five people attended this meeting.

While Burroughs was on trial for the recent accusations of witchcraft, just as in the cases of others accused, events from his past would also be brought into the proceedings. Testimony about Burroughs’s marital relationships added fuel to the fire. Many of those who spoke during the trial also said that Burroughs would not allow his wives to discuss him with others or send letters to their families without him first approving what they had written.⁶⁴⁷ This accusation of censorship led to speculation that he had abused his wives. Although women had few rights in society, family was an important component of the Puritan lifestyle when it came to raising children and staying on a righteous path toward salvation.

A third category of evidence leveled against Burroughs in his trial was the sheer amount of physical strength he had built up from living and working on the frontier for so many years. The strength he exhibited was amplified and used against him in his trial. It was believed that the amount of strength he had was not humanly possible and had been obtained through some collusion with the dark arts. For example, some described how easily he was able to move cider and molasses barrels. In testimony before the court, Thomas Greenslit said he “had seen Burroughs lift and hold out a gun with a six-foot

⁶⁴⁵ Latner, 112.

⁶⁴⁶ Upton, 98.

⁶⁴⁷ Baker “George Burroughs: Salem's Perfect Witch”. 3.

barrel by putting the forefinger of his right hand in the muzzle and holding it out at arm's length with only that finger."⁶⁴⁸ This testimony survives in two versions. The first was dated August 2nd. There is a second version that is dated September 15, which was after the hanging of Burroughs. Historians have been left to debate why two versions and two different dates. According to the notes in Rosenthal's work the testimony could have been provided as a means of saving his mother Ann Pudeater who was eventually executed on September 22nd.

Although most of those who testified made claims against Burroughs and sought his conviction, there were some who sided with Burroughs. Residents from the Maine frontier believed he was a dedicated and conscientious minister who would not neglect his duties.⁶⁴⁹ He had come to their spiritual aid when others would not consider moving to such an inhospitable area, and Burroughs had fought alongside them during the wars against the Indigenous people. Many residents also supported Burroughs because when Mercy Lewis needed a place to live after her family had been killed, he took her in.

In a last attempt to prove his innocence, Burroughs presented a paper to the jury. The paper stated "there were never witches who, having made a compact with the devil, could torment other people at a distance."⁶⁵⁰ The use of this logic would support the idea that Burroughs could not have tormented anyone while he was away in Maine or even in prison. The court believed the quote came from a book by Thomas Ady who in 1656 had written *A Candle in the Dark*.⁶⁵¹ The court asked Burroughs where he had gotten the

⁶⁴⁸ Upton, 97; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 656.

⁶⁴⁹ Upton, 83.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Ady quote, and he said it had come from a manuscript he received from a gentleman.⁶⁵²

The premise of the book challenged the idea that witches could enter a contract with the devil to inflict harm on others. Ady believed that those accused of witchcraft were magicians and challenged the claim that witchcraft was found in the Bible.

When the trial came to an end, more people had testified against Burroughs than any of the others that stood accused.⁶⁵³ The magnitude of the trial of a minister drew the support of many who felt that a conviction against a man of this standing would bring the events of Salem to a close. Burroughs was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged on August 19, 1692. Before he was taken to the gallows, Margaret Jacobs recanted her testimony that had sent both Burroughs and her Grandfather George Jacobs Sr. to the gallows. She met with Burroughs on August 18 after providing the following declaration:

...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 would carry me away for telling such horrid lies. I was, may it please the court, sworn it 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, as altogether 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, choosing rather death with a quiet conscience, that to life with such horror, which I could not suffer...⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 129.

⁶⁵³ Schiff, 399.

⁶⁵⁴ Upton, 102.

Upon hearing of her retraction and her visit to him in prison, Burroughs prayed with her and stated that he forgave her of her sin. Despite her retraction of her testimony, it was too little and too late to make a difference in the eyes of the court. In addition to sending both men to the gallows she was tried and acquitted for witchcraft in January. However, she did not have the funds to be released from jail and would remain there until May 1693 when someone paid her fees.

On August 19, Burroughs, along with George Jacobs, John Proctor, John Willard, and Martha Carrier, were loaded into a cart and taken through the streets of Salem on their way to Gallows Hill. Just before he was set to hang, Burroughs “was upon the ladder, he made a speech for the clearing of his innocency, with such solemn and serious expressions, as were to the admiration of all present; his prayer) which he concluded by repeating the Lord’s prayer) was so well worded and uttered with such composedness, as such (at least seeming) fervency of spirit, as was very affecting, and drew tears from many, so that it seemed to come that the spectators would hinder the execution.”⁶⁵⁵ This caused a commotion among the spectators, as it had been understood that one who flirted with the devil would not have this ability. However, Cotton Mather quickly assured the crowd that the devil was still coaching Burroughs, and that “Burroughs was no ordained minister, and partly to possess the people of his guild, saying that the devil has often been transformed into an angel of light...”⁶⁵⁶ Upon his death, Burroughs was cut down and dragged to a common grave. As his body was prepared to be discarded between the rocks, his clothing was removed and replaced with older, tattered garments. Schiff states

⁶⁵⁵ Calef, 223.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

that only “one of his hands and chin, and a foot of one [of] them being left uncovered.”⁶⁵⁷

This disrespect toward the human body was not common, especially toward a minister, and shows the contempt and disgust that many felt toward those who had disrupted the peace of their community.

The Aftermath of the Burroughs Execution

At the time of his execution on August 19, Burroughs left behind his wife Mary and eight children.⁶⁵⁸ His trial exemplifies the one-sidedness of the legal system at this time in history. As an individual on trial, by law he had no right to legal counsel, no right to bail, and no right to testify or provide sworn testimony from witnesses, all of which exist in the present-day U.S. legal system.⁶⁵⁹ Burroughs had gone into his trial as a man of faith, believing that the truth would set him free. Other ministers such as Francis Dane and Samuel Willard had been accused but not much had come from the accusations.⁶⁶⁰ However, in the Puritan justice system, his beliefs proved of little significance in a system that was already stacked against him.

Given the times, his widow could not support eight children on her own. Friends took in the children from his first marriage, Rebecca, Hannah, and Elizabeth, after his death. Charles, George, Jeremiah, and Josiah, all between the ages of four and ten, were taken in by their maternal grandfather John Ruck of Salem, whom the Salem Probate

⁶⁵⁷ Schiff, 301.

⁶⁵⁸ Upton, 115.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁶⁰ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 130.

Court made their guardian in June 1693.⁶⁶¹ Mary Burroughs did not remain a widow for long. She married Michael Homer on July 13, 1693, in a service performed by Cotton Mather.⁶⁶² For unknown reasons, Mary Burroughs married again on February 5, 1699, to Christopher Hall Jr. of Cambridge.⁶⁶³

George Burroughs's children did not accept the fate of their father quietly. They were among many who would file claims to the General Court for restitution at the conclusion of the trials. On September 13, 1710, Charles, a son Burroughs had with his second wife Sarah, submitted a claim for fifty pounds, although he estimated the loss of the estate and damages to be over one hundred:⁶⁶⁴

To the Honoured Comitte apointed by y^e Gennarell Court to Inquire into y^e Names of Such as may be Meet for takeing of y^e attai(nder for y^e Making Some Restitucon & these Humbly & Sorroufully Shew that our Dear & Honou[d]rd father[M^r] George Burrough was apprehened In apriel – 1692 at wells & Imprisoned Seuerall Monthes in Bostone & Salem Goeles and at last Condem{en}ed & Executed for whichcraft which we haue all y^e reason in y^e world to bleue he was innocent of by his Carefull Chatecizing his Children & upholding religion in his family and by his Solomn & Savory written In[s]tructions from prison we were Left a parsell of Small Children of us helpless & a mother in Law with one Small Child of her owne to take care of whereby she was not So Capable to take care of us by all which our fathers Small Estate was most if it Lost & Expended and we Scattered we cannot tell Certainly what y^e lose may be but y^e Least we can Judge by best information was f[if]ty poundes besides y^e damage that hath accrued to us many wa[e]s thereby is Some hundreds of pounds wee Earnestly pray y^t y^e attai(nder may be taken of & if you please y^e fifty poundes may be restored.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶¹ Upton, 115; Robinson, 325.

⁶⁶² Upton, 115.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 863.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

According to Rosenthal et al's *Records of the Salem Witch Hunt*, on September 14, 1710, a committee that had analyzed the records from the trials and the claims submitted provided their decision. The committee recommended the attainder for Burroughs and many others be removed. The committee recommended eight pounds, which was the equivalent of \$1550 today,⁶⁶⁶ be paid to the Burroughs family, which was part of the total 578 pounds the committee recommended.⁶⁶⁷ Although he was a man of prominence within the community, this amount was similar to what many other families received.

On October 17, 1711, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay handed out an Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs and others for Witchcraft.

The Influence and Energy of the Evil Spirits so great at that time acting in and upon those who were the principal Accusers and Witnesses proceeding so far as to cause a Prosecution to be had of persons of known and good Reputation; which caused a great Disatisfaction and a Stop to be put thereunto until their Majesty's pleasure should be known therein.

And upon a Representation thereof accordingly made Her late Majesty Queen Mary the Second of blessed Memory by Her Royal Letter given at Her Court at Whitehall the fifteenth of April 1693. Was Graciously pleased to approve the care and Circumspection therein; and to Will and require that in all proceedings ag^t persons Accused for Witchcraft, or being possessed by the devil, the greatest Moderation and all due Circumspection be used,...

Be it Declared and Enacted by his Excellency the Governo^{e(s)} Council and Representatives in General Court assembled and by the Authority of the same That the several Convictions Judgements(s) and Attainders against the said George Burroughs... ad every one of them Be and hereby are Reversed made an(d) to be Null and void to all Intents, Constructions and purposes, as if no such Convictions, Judgments or Attainders had ever had or given. And that no penalties or fforfeitures of

⁶⁶⁶ "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁶⁶⁷ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 885-886; Nye, <https://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>.

Goods or Chattels be by the said Judgments and Attainders of either of them had or Incurr'd.⁶⁶⁸

This document allowed the families the chance to attempt to return to their previous way of life, as the names of their loved ones were now cleared. However, it also had a stipulation that the families could not sue the sheriff, constable, jailers, or other officers involved with the trials. This stipulation made it difficult for families to recoup property that had been forfeited or confiscated during the trials. It did not take Governor Dudley long to follow through on the measure passed by the court, and on December 17, 1711, he ordered that the Burroughs family and others be compensated for their loss. The family of George Burroughs was awarded fifty pounds, or \$9722 in today's value.⁶⁶⁹ Only the family of John Proctor and George Jacobs received more.⁶⁷⁰ Many who received restitution in the aftermath of the trials appointed trusted individuals to receive their funds. On January 22, 1712, George Burroughs Jr. asked the court to deliver his payment to Captain John Appleton.⁶⁷¹

The financial award did not end the claims for the Burroughs. As many of his children were now adults and were from different mothers, the court became involved once again. On January 3, 1712, a committee appointed by the General Court ruled that of the fifty pounds approved, Mary the widow would receive 20%, or 10 pounds, and the remaining funds were to be divided among the children in equal shares.⁶⁷² The children's

⁶⁶⁸ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 888-89.

⁶⁶⁹ "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁶⁷⁰ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 892.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 898.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, 893; Upton, 117.

shares ended up being approximately four pounds each. There was a remainder of approximately six pounds of the original 50, which the court determined should be equally distributed to all the children from the first two marriages⁶⁷³. The seven surviving children were not happy with the amount they received for the loss of their father, and the children from the first two marriages filed a petition with the court on December 16, 1712, to receive more funds. In the petition, Charles spoke on behalf of the other children, recounting that once his father had been arrested, his stepmother took the property for herself and daughter without regard for the children from his previous relationships. Charles described the library his father had owned and how Mary sold it to support her and her daughter without regard for the other children.⁶⁷⁴ Charles asserted that the other children were left to fend for themselves after their father's death. The point he argued could be considered significant; at this time in history, when children reached the age for marriage, part of their appeal was the property they had to offer. Mary left the children with nothing to show for themselves and no way to support themselves other than the memory of their dad, which could not sustain them in society.

Burroughs's daughter Rebecca sent a letter to the court on April 3, 1713. In her letter she asked the court to pay her portion of the settlement to her brother George.⁶⁷⁵ George Jr. was not the only Burroughs child to appeal to the court. On April 8, 1713, the court received another petition for restitution, this one from Peter Thomas on behalf of his wife Elizabeth, George Burroughs's daughter. This petition corroborated Charles's

⁶⁷³ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 914.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 912.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 913.

account of their stepmother selling the library, and friends looking after the children. The Burroughs children believed that initial compensation of approximately four pounds each was not enough for the loss they had endured. The children requested that any amount the court deemed appropriate should be delivered to their brother George.⁶⁷⁶

All of Burroughs's children became adults and married, except for Josiah and Jeremiah who suffered from mental fits.⁶⁷⁷ George Burroughs Jr. moved to Ipswich after the trials; Rebecca Tolman settled in Boston; Hannah married Jabez Fox and moved to Bartons Point, Boston; Elizabeth married Peter Thomas of Boston; and daughter Mary was wed in Attleborough.⁶⁷⁸

The trauma of the Witch Trials and a desire to right a wrong did not end with the surviving children of George Burroughs; as late as 1750, his family members were still filing petitions. In March 1750, Thomas Newman and others filed a memorial and petition for George Burroughs. The document asked the governor to act on a report filed during the previous June. There is no record regarding exactly what the previous report sought and no record that the court acted on this petition.⁶⁷⁹

Conclusion

George Burroughs was a strong, independent man who was ensnared by the hysteria surrounding the community and their relationship with the devil. Burroughs was

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., 914.

⁶⁷⁷ Upton, 115.

⁶⁷⁸ Willis, 247; Robinson, 325.

⁶⁷⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 919; Upton, 118.

well respected in the community, as evidenced by his initial appointments in Maine and subsequent return to the Salem community. He was a man with a strong desire to protect his flock which he clearly demonstrated during the various skirmishes with Native Americans on the Maine frontier. While there were those who felt he had slighted the community of Salem when he returned to Maine, he had been brought into a contentious power struggle between the stakeholders, many of whom had differing views on the direction the congregation should go. Burroughs was hired to provide a service to the community and when the community failed in its obligations regarding his salary, he chose to limit the amount of his service. While some in the community felt that he was shirking his responsibilities, he responded as anyone who was not paid their salary.

The Puritans were devoted to their faith and believed following their beliefs would allow them to receive salvation. The minister's responsibility was to guide the congregation towards that salvation, and if the minister was derelict in the execution of those duties, they felt betrayed. The perception of a dereliction of duty by Burroughs, and the rampant fear of the devil infiltrating the community provided the perfect storm for the accusers to make an example out of him and redirect the trajectory of their religious journey. The tragedy of George Burroughs shows that no one in Salem was immune from the hysteria, and even religious leaders were trampled under the weight of accusations and executions.

Chapter 7 – Philip English

Chapter Abstract

Philip English is a noteworthy player in the Salem Witch Trials due to his wealth and prominence in Essex County. Given his gender, political status as a selectman, and the wealth he brought to the community, he stands out as someone that would not fit the established mold of a witch as mentioned in prior chapters, and those advantages influenced not only the outcome of his trial, but also the amount of reparations he successfully sued for, and yet which he ultimately rejected. Prior to Salem, few men of his position were accused or convicted of witchcraft in Europe or the colonies. His status as a wealthy merchant, his actions when accused and subsequent legal battles with the community afterwards, show the extent of the uniqueness of the hysteria that occurred in Salem, and how anyone, regardless of status or position, was vulnerable to being ensnared by the trials. English would return to the community and would not settle silently back into his life. English wanted more than his name cleared; he sought justice for his possessions and business that had suffered at the hands of those who continued the quest to rid the community of the supposed witches.

An English History Lesson

Although the records tied to the events of Salem refer to him as Philip English, he was born Philippe L'Anglois on the island of Jersey off the coast of Normandy in

approximately 1651.⁶⁸⁰ Not much is known of his early years, but he arrived in Essex County around 1670.⁶⁸¹ After five years in Essex County, English wed Mary Hollingsworth, the only daughter of William and Eleanor Hollingsworth, on September 25, 1675.⁶⁸² Some saw the arrangement as not one of love but as an attempt by English to climb the economic ladder within the community. Both of Mary's parents were employed in the community: Eleanor ran a tavern called the Blue Anchor near Town House Square in the center of Salem Town while her husband worked as merchant.⁶⁸³ Although English brought his own trade and merchant contacts, it was estimated that the Hollingsworth family was worth nearly 10,000 pounds in 1670, the equivalent of well over 1.5 million dollars today.⁶⁸⁴

English would take after his father-in-law and would become a very successful merchant and make his fortune in trade in addition to acquiring Mary's father's shipping business and property. As a trader and merchant, he had brought money and established contracts with him from the Isle of Jersey and was able to maintain them in the new world. These trade contracts created a problem for Essex County. The Isle of Jersey had a charter dating back to the time of Richard II that "exempted it from all manner of Taxes, Imposts, and Customs, in all Cities, Market-Towns, and Ports of England." If that

⁶⁸⁰ Austin, <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>.

⁶⁸¹ Konig, 70.

⁶⁸² Austin, <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>; Bryan LeBeau, "Philip English and the Witchcraft Hysteria," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 15, no. 1 (1987): 1.

⁶⁸³ Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 53.

⁶⁸⁴ "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

wasn't enough, a second charter from the time of Edward IV "extended that right to all Places within the King's Dominions beyond the Seas."⁶⁸⁵ In order for the Massachusetts colony to survive, it needed taxes to be paid, while one of its wealthiest citizens had government documents in his hands that stated he was exempt from those taxes. This allowed English to grow his business and wealth much quicker than others, and the townspeople saw this with envy.

As will be addressed below, English believed and had papers which he felt supported his exemption from taxes paid by other citizens. Their frustration will be evident in a lawsuit against him for failure to collect taxes while serving as Constable. After 1680, English was earning enough money that he was able to hire his own shipmasters.⁶⁸⁶ He was employing commanders that could sail his ships to their markets and return with goods for him to sell or trade. English traded salt fish for manufactured goods from Europe and produce from the tropics, so his ships were seen all along the New England coast.⁶⁸⁷ By 1682, he had several vessels, including the *Susanna* and the *Repair*. The amount of trade he was conducting caused him to rank the third highest on the town assessed tax rolls, even though he wasn't paying those taxes.⁶⁸⁸

English and his wife Mary had been married for approximately two years when her wealthy father passed away. When it came time to settle his estate in 1677, Mary, as the only child, inherited a great deal from her successful father. This inheritance increased the distrust that already simmered between English and others in the county

⁶⁸⁵ Konig, 73.

⁶⁸⁶ LeBeau, 1.

⁶⁸⁷ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 143.

⁶⁸⁸ Hunter, 57.

due to his foreign birth, unpopular trading relationships, and litigious tendencies. Still fairly new to the community, English had already become a successful trader, and the inheritance only helped his business grow.

In addition to the distrust and ill will his marriage and trading endeavors caused in the community; his ancestry also increased his unpopularity. As an emigrant from the Jersey Isle, English did not blend in even after adopting an anglicized name. His French birth as well as being a native French speaker caused a degree of distrust among the settlers. This was particularly the case because Philip English chose to conduct his business and trade among the Wabanaki, a confederation of tribes in the region now known as Maine and southeastern Canada, who had allied with the French. Great Britain had been fighting the wars against the French and their Native allies in a struggle for control over portions of North America, the lucrative fur trade, as well as the part of Hudson Bay. During these wars, the Wabanaki allied with the French against the English, and this caused friction between the Native Americans and the colonists, especially after the Second Indian War in 1688.⁶⁸⁹ King Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes in 1686, which had allowed for freedom of worship, and many French Huguenots sought out the English colony as a new home in which to worship freely. Their religious differences brought fear into the already formed colony. In January 1691/92 the community instituted the following restriction put forth by the General Court: “no French person could take up the Residence or be in port or frontier towns without permission from authorities, nor could they set up shops or engage in any trade.”⁶⁹⁰ The inhabitants

⁶⁸⁹ Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 144.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

were worried that given the past situation with the Wabanaki, if more native Frenchmen arrived the situation could become unstable again.

This local distrust was also directed at English's employment policies; he hired numerous individuals from the Jersey Isle who worked for him as servants. The male servants worked for four years at sea while the women worked for seven years in Essex homes. By 1685 there were over twenty families from the Jersey Isle living in the Salem area.⁶⁹¹ By the time the restriction against the French was enacted, Philip English had been a fixture in the community for twenty years, but the restriction cast an increasing amount of suspicion his way.

English can be found in the *Salem Quarterly* record books as early as 1674 and remained in them throughout his life. It is estimated he was in court up to seventeen times, usually as a plaintiff and in at least 6 cases sued for debt.⁶⁹² As a merchant and trader, goods and money often moved in and out of his hands, and English often sued when he felt he had not been fairly compensated the value of the merchandise. Konig described individuals from the Isle of Jersey as having a "fondness for litigation" and quickly suing for payment of debt.⁶⁹³ In May 1674, English is recorded as having sued Richard Hollingsworth, his future wife's grandfather, for payment of debt. English had sold Hollingsworth a hogshead of brandy containing 84 gallons for 4 shillings per gallon, to be paid in fish. In the court record both Sarah Barret and Matthey Nixon testified to the

⁶⁹¹ Konig, 70.

⁶⁹² LeBeau, 13.

⁶⁹³ David Thomas Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French' Ethnic Frictions and Community Tensions in Seventeenth-Century Essex County, Massachusetts.," (Essex Institute Historical Collections, 1974), 173.

financial arrangement. Nixon, who was fifty years old, stated April 17, 1674, that “Hollingwood” had gone to sea and returned with an inadequate amount of fish.⁶⁹⁴ With the verdict in his favor, English waited to collect his money. On August 13, 1674, in order to satisfy the judgment in favor of English, papers were served to Hollingsworth’s wife. The verdict stated “all that is close within the stone wall at his house above it and the upper part of the orchard next to the hill”⁶⁹⁵ would be surrendered to English, which included Hollingsworth’s home as well as the land around it which he may have used for livestock. However, this judgment did not put the case of paying for brandy with fish to an end. On April 6, 1680, an execution of an order was carried out for the same debt,

by attachment of land of Hollingworth in his orchard, and his part of the house, except six feet ‘on the north end on the back sid of his part of his house & on y^e south end of it & a yard before his part of his house to y^e hieway: & y^e use of y^e poorch half of it for y^e use of his part of his house & half y^e poorch to ye of other halfe to ye use of Philip Engleshes his part of his house at y^e west end of this house: with y^e leanto for his part: all y^e trees & stone fence,’ and gave possession by turf and twig.⁶⁹⁶

Although English did not need the residence, he was determined to drive the point that debts must be paid, and he would take any financial settlement to prevent losing money on a transaction even if it meant taking family to court.

English’s shrewd business sense and high economic status within the community did allow him to be chosen to serve on a jury of inquest on March 17, 1675. He along with ten others looked into the death of Elisha Witte, who drowned when his boat sank

⁶⁹⁴ Harriet S. Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Boston: Essex Institute, 1916), 348.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁶⁹⁶ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," in *Salem Quarterly Court*, ed. George Francis Dow (Salem Quarterly Court: Essex Institute, 1921), 61.

after being overloaded.⁶⁹⁷ The record book does not contain another entry regarding the outcome of the inquiry into Witte's death. Although not able to determine the outcome of the inquiry, English's position as an outsider commanded a certain degree of respect given the amount of business he brought to the colony, and his reputation was further bolstered by being chosen to serve alongside other reputable members of the community in high profile positions of authority.

English was aware of his good fortune and provided opportunities to bring others over from the Jersey Isle. At age 24 in 1675, English agreed to take in boys from Jersey Island to his home in Salem.⁶⁹⁸ The island was struggling financially, and parents there were desperate to improve their own lives as well those of their children. Over time, English would support eight indentured servants from his previous homeland.⁶⁹⁹ One such person, Jane Masure, was scheduled to work for English until payment had been completed for the cost of her passage across the ocean. However, she did not make it to Boston. Her brother Benjamin hired attorney James Browne to take Philip English to court in September 1677. In the writ, English demanded 7 shillings from Benjamin Masure as payment for Jane. Masure argued that he should not be held liable for her passage because she lost her life at sea. Testimony was provided by sixteen-year-old Phillip Legroo: "Jane Margery came aboard their ketch, he asked her why she came to New England, and she replied that her brother Benjamin Margery had sent for her to come and that he would pay for her passage. She also said that she went to deponent's

⁶⁹⁷ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," 1917. 115.

⁶⁹⁸ Hunter, 49.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

father's house to meet with Mr. Philip English and agreed to go, her brother agreeing to pay 7li. for her passage, by letter, which she showed.⁷⁰⁰ The testimony against English continued with Jon Massure, Mary Morell, and Peeter Britton all speaking about English and his relationship with those from the Jersey Isle.

In the name of god be this,- Brother Benjamin These Two Small words are to acquaint you of my good health Thanks be to god & I pray god that it may be y^e same of you all o^r Friends of Jarse thanks be to god are in good health who recommend them well to you & to yo^r Brothers in generall to whom my humble baise mains, declaring to them y^e desire I haue of their prosperities, prayeing God dayley for them; as for yo^r sister Jane, she was bound to phillip English in my absence; at w^{ch}-I was troubled but I seing that shee must be imbarqued, did Furnish her very well with all sorts of necessaries for her Apparrell & gaue her a coffer in w^{ch} I putt seuerall small cloathes w^{ch} I sent to you for a Token not elce for present but that I remayne yo^r humble & obedient sister 'Rachell Luce widow of Edward Le messarier'".⁷⁰¹

Testimony continued from John Massure on September 1, 1677, who testified that his father in Jersey said he had bound Jeane Masere, sister of Benjamin Masere, a servant to Phillip English, then bound to New England. He also stated that he heard Philip English say that she was his servant. However, testimony from Peeter Britton stated Benjamin's sister said she would be free when she arrived in New England as her brother was paying her passage. Another woman, Mary Pary, testified on November 9th, 1677, that Jane was carrying a letter that said if her brother was no longer living when she arrived in New England, she was to be bound to Mr. English for six years.⁷⁰² English was determined to protect his investments regardless of the type of transaction. In this

⁷⁰⁰ Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," 1917. 346.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 347.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 346-48; "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," 1911.

case he lost to Benjamin Masure but appealed the verdict to the Court of Assistants and was assigned a future date.⁷⁰³

Although he achieved financial success, he still wasn't completely trusted by many in the Salem area due to his tendency to pursue aggressive litigation and judgements in his business dealings. Philip English was resolute to become a member of the community with the same amount of respect bestowed on those of English descent. He recognized the importance of the church and its meetinghouse as fixtures in the community and necessary to becoming accepted by those around him. As more individuals sought residence in the new world, he signed on to documentation stating a need for the erection of a new meetinghouse in 1680 to accommodate the growing community.⁷⁰⁴ Although English was of Anglican beliefs, rather than Puritan, he understood the importance of religion in daily life. Prior to 1692 he joined Salem's First Church, where he attended services on a regular basis, and his wife Mary was admitted to full communion in 1681.⁷⁰⁵ Following the norms of the community, he had six of his seven children baptized in the church.⁷⁰⁶ Starkey argues that although English tried to make all the right moves to be accepted within the community, he still disliked paying taxes for a church that was not his true vehicle of salvation,⁷⁰⁷ and he longed for an Anglican house of religion. His desire for an Anglican church was evident in the time he

⁷⁰³ "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," 1917. 355.

⁷⁰⁴ "Records and Files of Essex County," 1919. 403.

⁷⁰⁵ Austin, <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>.

⁷⁰⁶ LeBeau, 10.

⁷⁰⁷ Starkey, 146.

spent rowing across Salem Harbor to attend church services in Marblehead once St. Michaels was built in 1714.⁷⁰⁸

Many in the community did not trust English despite his support for the church, but it could not be argued the amount of success and trade he brought to the community. As Roach states, “he was quick to sue for debt, even when the debtor thought he had made arrangements to pay. Many locals distrusted his honesty.”⁷⁰⁹ Although it was common to settle conflict in court, English was a businessman and wanted to ensure that he received all that was due him. His sense of business and desire to always be compensated did not always sit well with others. This sentiment as shown earlier can be supported by the number of times he appeared in court.

Another example of someone who might have harbored ill feelings toward English was Edward Woodman. Woodman was taken to court by English in March 1684 for failure to pay 9 ½ months wages to his servant Thomas Nicholls.⁷¹⁰ The court ruled in favor of English. These are just a few examples of times that English was not afraid to take someone to court who he felt had wronged him.

Although a Frenchman, throughout the 1680s and early 1690s, English continued to make inroads in the Salem community. The church acknowledged his status of importance by assigning him a pew next to Stephen Sewall, who was a highly influential member of the community and would serve as clerk of court for the trials of 1692.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁸ Konig, *Law and Society*, 71.

⁷⁰⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 148.

⁷¹⁰ Harriet S. Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," *Salem Quarterly Court* 9 (1975): 197-98.

⁷¹¹ Schiff, 257.

English's prominence was also visible in the landholdings he had at the time. He was the landlord to the younger Ezekiel Cheever, whose father was an educator in Boston.⁷¹² In March 1682, English was elected a town selectman, one of four immigrants to hold the position before the trials in 1692.⁷¹³ His time in this elected position of power would unfortunately end a year later due to a lawsuit with the Board of Selectmen over tax collection, but his rise to power continued when he was elected the constable for the eastern part of town in 1683, where his duties included collecting taxes and keeping order in the neighborhood.⁷¹⁴ He was elected as a selectman again on March 8, 1692.⁷¹⁵ Within two months of his election, he would have to answer to charges of witchcraft.

With his position as Constable came the authority to collect taxes. In 1684, English was tasked with the job of collecting from native Jersey men. However, those from Jersey considered themselves exempt from the taxes as they were seldom at home due to the demands of their job at sea, and English did not force them to remit payment because he agreed with them. Many citizens saw this as an abuse of authority, so the town took matters into their own hands, taking a piece of English's land equal to the taxes owed and forcing him to buy his own land back at 18 pounds, 14 shillings and 6 pence.⁷¹⁶ Despite this, his position as a contributing member of the community continued to grow. In 1691, he was in the top 1% of the Salem taxpayers: after the ordeal of his

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ "Dirty Laundry and a Friend Save Philip English from the Salem Witch Trials," The New England Historical Society, <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/dirty-laundry-and-a-friend-save-philip-english-from-the-salem-witch-trials/>. 2016; LeBeau, 13; Hunter, 57.

⁷¹⁴ Hunter, , 55-56.

⁷¹⁵ LeBeau, 1-2.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., 12; Hunter, 56.

trial he dropped to the top 4% of taxpayers, and by 1700 when he was more established in his business once again, he was back in the top 1%.⁷¹⁷ According to LeBeau, by 1692 it was believed that English was the richest man on the New England coast. His wealth was visible in his large home staffed with 15-20 servants and an estate that consisted of fourteen buildings, twenty-one ships, a wharf, and a warehouse.⁷¹⁸ In addition to the wealth that was visible to those who lived in Essex County, his trading connections in France, Spain, Portugal, England, and the West Indies continued to line his pockets.⁷¹⁹

Philip English and the Witch Trials

The fact that the English family was accused in the Salem Witch Trials may seem unusual given his status and wealth in the community. The family did not fit the profile of who had been accused both before and after them; most people accused of witchcraft in the colonies were middle-aged women with low social status. The English family clearly was not of low status. Many of those accused had few or no children, yet Mary English had given birth to seven children. In addition, many of those accused had abrasive personalities or were involved in familial conflicts.⁷²⁰ However, when one considers other factors, such as his foreign birth, litigious nature, and history of suing family and friends for business purposes, the English family does in fact fit with the pattern of those accused of witchcraft.

⁷¹⁷ LeBeau, 10; Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 381.

⁷¹⁸ LeBeau, 1; Austin, <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>.

⁷¹⁹ Boyer and Nissenbaum, 131-32.

⁷²⁰ Hunter, 61.

If one was to delve into the family history, they would find among other things, the mother of Mary English, Eleanor Hollingsworth had previously been accused of witchcraft. The only conflict within the English family was Philip's legal suits against Mary's grandfather, and he was not one of the accusers. Although there is no way to know how much it factored into the accusation of Mary English, according to Norton and LeBeau, her mother Eleanor had previously been mentioned as being a witch in 1685, but at the time of Mary's accusation, her mother was deceased.⁷²¹ Prior to Philip being accused, Mary was accused by Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Walcott.⁷²² The warrant for Mary English was served after the family had retired to bed for the evening on April 21, 1692. As a family of higher status, they asked the sheriff to return in the morning after Mary had slept for the night. The sheriff complied and returned the following day. He was forced to wait while she finished giving her children directions for the day. As the jails were not equipped to handle the magnitude of people being brought in for questioning, and given her higher community status, Mary English was held in a room at the Cat and Wheel Tavern. The room that contained her was directly above the room used by the magistrates as an examination hall, which afforded her the opportunity to listen in on proceedings against others⁷²³—a tactic that could help her form her defense when it was her turn to be examined. On May 17, Susannah Sheldon provided testimony against Mary English along with others in court:

on the foarth[aa] day at night Came goody olliver and m'r english and good man Cor[=Corey] and a blak man with a hicrouned hatt with books in their hands goody olliver bad mee touch her booke i would not i did not

⁷²¹ LeBeau, 11; Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 137.

⁷²² LeBeau, 2.

⁷²³ Ibid.

know her name shee told me her name was goody olliver and bid me touch her booke now i bid her tel mee how long shee had been a witch shee told mee shee told mee s[=she] had been a witch above twenti years then their Came a streked snake creeping over her shoulder and crep into her bosom mrs english had a yelo bird in her bosom and good man Core had two tircels hang to his Coat and hee opened his bosom and put his turcls to his bres {t} and gave them suck then good man core and goody olliver kneeled doune beefoar the blak man and went to prayer and then the blak man told mee goody olliver had been a witch twenti years and a [] half then they all set to biteing mee and so went away the next day Came good man Core mrs english in the morning and told mee i should not eat no vittals i took a spoon and put on spoonful in my mouth and good man Core gave mee a blow on the ear and allmoast choaked mee then he laughed at mee and told mee i would eat when he told mee i should not then he Clenched my hands that they Could not bee opened for more then a quarter of an our then Came phillip english and and told mee if i would touch his book hee would not bit mee but i refusid then hee did bite mee and went away

the sixth day at night Came goody olliver and mrs english good man Core and his wife goodwy Core s profered mee a book i refused it and asked her whear she lived she told mee she lived in boston prisson then shee puled out her brest and the blak man gave her a thing like a blake pig it had no haire on it and she put it to her breast and gave it suck and when it had sucked on brest shee put it the other and gave it suck their then shee gave it to the blak man then they went to praier to the blak man then goody olliver told me that shee had kiled foar women two of them wear the fosters wifes and john trasks wife and did not name the other then they did all bitt mee and went away

then the next day Cam goody Core Choaked mee and told mee i would not eat when my dame bid mee but now i should eat none⁷²⁴

Sheldon's testimony continued to compound matters for Mary English. Mary was in the company of Goody Oliver who had in Sheldon's words killed four women.

Additionally, LeBeau maintains in the same statement provided by Sheldon that English admitted to being a witch for twenty years.⁷²⁵

On April 30, 1692 a complaint was registered against Philip English for witchcraft against Mary Walcott, Mercy Lewis, Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, Eliz

⁷²⁴ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 279-81.

⁷²⁵ LeBeau, 4.

Hubert, and Susannah Sheldon.⁷²⁶ The fact that a complaint was registered against English on one hand is surprising given the family's economic and civil standing within the community, but on the other hand the possibility should have been looked for as his wife had already been accused. This complaint would cause Judges Hathorne and Corwin to issue a warrant for his arrest on the same day. Fearing the fate of the convicted that he had heard so much about, English fled to Boston and hid in the home of George Holland.⁷²⁷ While on the run, a second warrant was issued for him on May 6, 1692, this time from Boston instead of Salem. With her husband missing, Mary was left to face her accusers alone. A second complaint was lodged against her on May 12 for continuing to harm the same six girls, in addition to others.⁷²⁸ As complaints continued to mount against Mary English, another locale was sought to house her. Mary, George Jacobs, Giles Corey, Sarah Bishop, and Bridget Bishop were all transferred to a jail in Boston.⁷²⁹

With Mary English in custody, the accusations turned to her husband. Even with accusations against him, it is said that Philip English visited his wife daily while she was in prison in Boston.⁷³⁰ The ability to visit his wife while she was incarcerated demonstrates that the high economic status of English influenced the treatment of him and his family.

⁷²⁶ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 221.

⁷²⁷ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 101-2.

⁷²⁸ LeBeau, 3.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷³⁰ Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 174.

On May 17, 1692, in addition to testifying against Mary English, Susannah Sheldon testified against Philip.

The complaint of ssusanna Shelden against phillip english the {sd} Susanah Shelden being at meeting on the sabboth day being the 24 of aprill shee beeing afflicted in a very sad manner she saw phillip english step over his pew and pinshed her and a womand which Came from boston wich saith her name is good w^y when shee were coming home agains^t william shaws house their met her phillip english and a black man with a hy crowned hatt on his head and a book in his hand houlding the book to her and phillip english told her that black man were her god and if shee would touch that boock hee would not pinsh her no more nor no bodie els should on the next day phillip english came again and pinshed her and told her that if shee would not touch the book hee would kill her on the second day at night apered to her two women and a man and brought their books and bid her touct [=touch] them she told them shee would not she did not know wher they lived on of them told her they lived at the villadge and held the book to her again and bid her touch it shee told her shee did not know their nams on of them told her shee was old good man bucklyes wife and the other woman was her daughter mary and bid her touch the book she told no shee had not told her hou long shee had beene a witch then shee told her shee had been a witch ten years and then shee opened her brest and the black man gau her two litl things lik {e} yong cats and she pit them to her brest and suckled them they had no hair on them and had ears like a man then they ofered her their books and shee refused then then they pinsh her and the man struck her on the head and went away

on the third day their apeared a woman with out the dore sat lafeing at her and came into the house and hoped upandoun and profered her the book and told her if shee would touch it shee would not pinsh her shee told her s[=she] wud.not she did not kno her [=where] s liveed s told her she lived at Boston shee held her book to her again shee told her shee did not know her name shee told her her name was good wife whits

the same day came goody buckly and her daughter and brought books iwith [=in with] them and told her if shee would touch their books they would not pinsh her but shee refused then they pinshed her and went away

then i was siting on the inside of the dore sill and goody buckly came and stoped my mouth and Caried mee awai i know not how an near a mile and told mee that now shee had mee at her Command if i would not set my hand to her booke shee would kil mee then william Shaw beeing plowing in his fathers feild heard a fearfull Cry in a thicket of yong wod went to it

and found her in a terrible manner screaming and breaking of sticks and fighting in a violent manner.⁷³¹

Susannah Sheldon testified again on May 23. In her statement she said, “a dead man who told me his name was Joseph Rabson then he looked upon English and him that he murdered him and drowned him at the sea...” Sheldon went on to say “he told me that I must tell my neighbors and told me that I should not tell I had told it then English [=told] me that if I did he would cut my eaves of...”⁷³² Philip English was taken into custody on May 30 by Deputy Marshall Jacob Manning and returned to Salem on May 31.⁷³³ Once English arrived back in Salem, he was examined and held for torturing Mary Walcott and Elizabeth Booth in a complaint filed by Thomas Putnam.⁷³⁴ In addition to the testimony provided by the girls, William Beale of Marblehead made a variety of claims against English. Beale and the Hollingsworth family had a history as Beale and his wife had faced charges of adultery based on accusations by Eleanor Hollingsworth. Beale testified on August 2, 1692, “English had tried ‘in a fawning and flattering manner’ to buy his favorable testimony in a property dispute with Richard Read, and did not hide his anger at Beale’s refusal regarding property in the Hollingsworth family. Later in the year, when English had Read arrested, Beale not only testified on the latter’s behalf, but found and fetched another witness, Thomas Farrar Sr. of Lynn and during their ride Beale got a bloody

⁷³¹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 279-81.

⁷³² LeBeau, 3; Margo Burns, and Bernard Rosenthal, "Examination of the Records of the Salem Witch Trials," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2008); Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 309.

⁷³³ LeBeau, 3; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 146.

⁷³⁴ Schiff, 257.

nose which be believed was caused by English.”⁷³⁵ This laid a foundation of animosity between Beale and English. As in other cases, any event that was out of the ordinary was placed back in the public memory and tied to an act of witchcraft. In 1690, “as these two witnesses rode along Lynn Common when Beale’s nose suddenly gushed blood over his clothes and over his horse’s mane. Beale also claimed that later, when he was painfully ill in 1691, he saw the form of Philip English materialize in his sickroom. Beale survived this too, but his son, who had seemingly healed of smallpox, died the very morning of his father’s vision.”⁷³⁶ The testimony of Sheldon and Beale brought an indictment against English on January 12, 1693 and caused him to be held for trial. English was indicted for afflicting Elizabeth Booth and Mary Walcott.⁷³⁷ Testimony was once again provided that day by William Beale in front of the grand jury referencing his prior testimony about land owned by Richard Read and the subsequent nosebleed. It must be noted that in a present-day legal system, Beale’s testimony most likely would not have been accepted because he had been previously convicted in the Essex County Court of lying, assault, and swearing, in addition to the lack of evidence for magical attacks.⁷³⁸

The testimony continued against Mary and Philip English for seven months.⁷³⁹ On January 12, 1693, an indictment was brought against her based on testimony by

⁷³⁵ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 148; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 499-500.

⁷³⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 148.

⁷³⁷ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 774-75.

⁷³⁸ Hunter, 62.

⁷³⁹ LeBeau, 4.

Mercy Lewis her for afflicting Elizabeth Hubbard as well as a deposition.⁷⁴⁰ Mercy testified, "...M^{rs} English vrged mee to set my hand to a Booke & told mee sh would Afflict mee Dreadfully & kill mee if I did not, s^d also if I would but touch the Booke I should bee well, or else I should never..."⁷⁴¹ English and his wife were incarcerated together in Boston for nine weeks. He paid 4,000 pounds (\$650,000 today) to stay in the home of the Boston jailer rather than the squalid conditions of the jail.⁷⁴² The Englishes were the wealthiest of anyone accused of witchcraft,⁷⁴³ and the status of the couple and the money they fronted afforded them with a degree of freedom that others did not have. The couple were allowed out into the city during the day and had to return to the residence each evening. They were also allowed to continue to attend church services while awaiting their fate and were permitted to continue to visit with many of their friends and acquaintances. Reverends Samuel Willard and Joshua Moody often came by to offer advice and minister to them as well as accompany them to Boston's First Church. During one of the sermons, Moody preached from Matthew 10:23: "If they persecute you in one city, flee to another."⁷⁴⁴ Although Philip did not want to flee, it is believed Reverend Moody among others helped the Englishes escape the Boston jail and make it to New York.⁷⁴⁵ The decision to flee weighed heavily on the mind of English, as he was all too aware of

⁷⁴⁰ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 775-76.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 776.

⁷⁴² Schiff, 180; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁷⁴³ Hunter, 64.

⁷⁴⁴ LeBeau, 5.

⁷⁴⁵ Upton, 138.

the possible ramifications to his business enterprise if he left. According to law at the time, if one fled justice, their property could be forfeited as an admission of guilt for not standing trial against the charges. For a man of such great wealth, this risk would be life changing. The decision was not easy on English and as he contemplated his decision, the Reverends Moody and Willard told English “if he could not carry his wife away, they would.”⁷⁴⁶ On August 21, the Sunday before their scheduled trials, under darkness, the Englishes made their escape to New York.⁷⁴⁷

While it was against the law of Massachusetts to confiscate property, it was not against English common law. The establishment of the Court of Oyer and Terminer on May 27, 1692 was given instructions by Governor Phips to “proceed according to the Law and Custom of England and of this their Ma^{ties} Province.”⁷⁴⁸ John Proctor and George Jacobs Sr., both accused of witchcraft, were considered felons under common law and thus in the view of Sheriff Corwin should have their goods seized. English and some others fell into a separate category as they “fled” justice, escaped prison, and hid in other locales. By fleeing before being tried, it was assumed there was a level of guilt and therefore forfeiture was warranted. Sheriff Corwin and his men arrived at English’s property and confiscated his possessions from both the home and his warehouses. The men took furniture, plates, wine, lumber, grain, cod, women’s shoes, thimbles, six swine, and a bob tailed cow.⁷⁴⁹ English was not happy

⁷⁴⁶ Starkey, 179.

⁷⁴⁷ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 246.

⁷⁴⁸ Brown, "Forfeitures," 91.

⁷⁴⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 247.

with losing his possessions to charges which he believed himself innocent of, and he sent a letter to Governor Phips on March 2, 1693 demanding the goods which Sheriff Corwin had illegally seized.⁷⁵⁰

On April 26, 1693, at the request of Philip English, Governor Phips sent a second letter to Sheriff Corwin. The governor requested that the seized belongings should be returned to their owner.⁷⁵¹ By May 1693, Governor Phips had finally put an end to the trials, with the announcement that those still in jail were allowed their freedom once they had paid any outstanding expenses from their incarceration. With the announcement that the trials were over, Philip and Mary English were free to come out of hiding and returned to Salem in the summer of 1693. According to their granddaughter, Susannah Hathorne, “the English were welcomed back by Reverend Nicolas Noyes to bonfires and a day of thanksgiving.”⁷⁵² However, the joy quickly changed upon the realization of what the Englishes were truly returning home to. Roach writes, “Philip found his wharves empty of vessels, his pastures bare of sheep, and his warehouses stocked with a single hogshead of salt (overlooked under a pile of wood shavings). Their great house was stripped, from the wine in the cellar to the thimbles in the corner shop. The family portraits were missing from the parlor and the bob-tailed cow from the yard.”⁷⁵³ English had known fleeing would jeopardize his home and finances but had not expected to return to this type of financial and property devastation, along with invasion into his personal life. He had been an

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 386.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 399.

⁷⁵² LeBeau, 6.

⁷⁵³ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 402-03.

upstanding community member and hoped his possessions would have been looked after. In addition, Mary, who had been ill from her time in jail, never fully recovered, and died within a year of returning to her home while giving birth to their son, Ebenezer.⁷⁵⁴

Rebuilding and Recovering from the Trials

Despite these losses, English quickly began to rebuild his reputation and business using the contacts and social capital maintained from his years in the trade industry. As his presence and power in the community continued to climb, his financial success placed him back on the tax rolls. In 1699 he was the fifth highest assessed.⁷⁵⁵ Between the years of 1694 and 1699 he once again took an active role within Salem Town. English served as a member of a watch committee, as a juror on different courts, and as a surveyor of highways. His service was not just at the local level. In 1700 he was elected selectman and also elected as a representative to the Massachusetts General Court for one term.⁷⁵⁶ English was elected a selectman again in 1701, but legal trouble within the community took him out of political service for a few years.⁷⁵⁷ Over time, his business returned to its levels prior to the trials. As he rebuilt his life and the children grew up, the business became a family affair. He employed Philip Jr. and William as ship captains, although Phillip Jr. gave

⁷⁵⁴ LeBeau, 6.

⁷⁵⁵ Hunter, 67.

⁷⁵⁶ LeBeau, 8; Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 383.

⁷⁵⁷ LeBeau, 8.

up the helm and returned to town to run the Blue Anchor Tavern, another family enterprise.⁷⁵⁸ By 1700, English was once again one of the town's largest property owners. He was the owner of seven large lots, four of which had access to Salem Harbor; some held houses, and one lot held a storehouse, wharf, and tavern.⁷⁵⁹

After the trials were over, Philip English was a free man and member of the community once again, but he held a grudge towards those who had wronged him and blamed the leaders of the Puritan church for the loss of life during the trials. He began to appear in court and jail more often for withholding his church taxes. He believed the church in Salem was the "devil's church" and discontinued attending services in the meetinghouse.⁷⁶⁰ If refusing to attend services were not already frowned upon, English called Reverend Nicholas Noyes a murderer. English was again showing his frustration with a community he had called home, but that had caused him near financial ruin and could have cost his and his wife's lives during the trials.⁷⁶¹

English began his quest for justice for his stolen property soon after the trials had ended, in 1694. He filed suit against Sheriff Corwin for the seizure of his property. Hoffer argues that Corwin had seized the property of the Englishes prior to their indictment, thus making his actions unlawful.⁷⁶² The Superior Court ruled against English, stating Corwin had acted on orders from Deputy Governor

⁷⁵⁸ Hunter, 68.

⁷⁵⁹ LeBeau, 9-10.

⁷⁶⁰ Schiff, 378.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Hoffer, 124.

Stoughton and the items were subject to forfeiture due to fleeing from the courts, thus Corwin and his descendants were free from attempts to recoup losses from the Witch Trials.⁷⁶³ For English, the desire to recoup what had been taken from him continued to burn. Not ready to give up on his losses, English took Corwin to court again in January 1696, suing him for a cow and swine that he had seized in August 1692. English's cow had a distinctive look and he had seen it in Corwin's yard, making it an easy case for him to pursue.⁷⁶⁴ The warrant read, "Corwin or others employed by him had taken from or near about the dwelling house of said English a certain cow with a bob tail, dark colored, and five swine, viz. a large sow and four shoats."⁷⁶⁵ The case resulted in Corwin being jailed for a short while for failure to post bond.⁷⁶⁶

In 1697, Corwin passed away. English believed strongly in honor and expected others to honor their debts. As he had not received compensation for his seized property through legal channels, he took a different route. English had a suit pending in court against the estate of Sheriff Corwin. In order to satisfy the debt that was owed, he threatened to take Corwin's body until the matter was settled. Not wanting the body to go to English, the family had to keep it on the property until matters could be resolved.⁷⁶⁷ Corwin's widow, in order to bury her recently

⁷⁶³ LeBeau, 6; Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 251.

⁷⁶⁴ Schiff, 378.

⁷⁶⁵ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 520.

⁷⁶⁶ Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 251.

⁷⁶⁷ Hansen, 212.

deceased husband, supposedly gave English some family linens and family silver plates as payment.⁷⁶⁸

Having the financial means that many others of the community did not, he did not hesitate to join in along with others in trying to correct the wrongs of the trials. On May 25, 1709, English and twenty-one others petitioned the general court to restore their reputations and estates.⁷⁶⁹ As a man of high economic and social stature, Philip English had been able to resume much of his business; however, for many others, the struggles continued after being set free. The courts had left attainders on many of their names, which essentially made them dead in the eyes of the court system. Spouses with an attainder attached to their names were not able to get benefits of those who had perished or take part in any legal transactions. The court eventually worked to remove the attainders with the pressure of the petitions.

On September 13, 1709 English submitted a letter to the committee outlining once again his losses from the trials. The letter detailed the amounts he felt had been taken. He estimated the value of the items taken by Corwin to be 1183.23 pounds (worth almost \$200,000 today) including goods worth 736 pounds from his four warehouses, 184 pounds from his wharf, and 262 pounds from his house.⁷⁷⁰ The General Court took no action on his request. When funds of 578 pounds were allocated to the community in December 1711, he was left off the rolls of those to be compensated. Not one to give in, and stubbornly determined to receive what he

⁷⁶⁸ Ray, 176.

⁷⁶⁹ Hansen, 217.

⁷⁷⁰ LeBeau, 7; "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

thought entitled to, he petitioned the courts again in June 1717. The courts appointed a special committee to investigate the claims being made by English. The committee met from November 1717 until November 1718.⁷⁷¹ The courts allocated only two hundred pounds for his losses.⁷⁷² English took this as an insult in comparison to the 1183.23 pounds he had requested and refused the funds. The money would eventually be paid to his estate upon his death.

English again followed the calling of the community and began serving as a juryman for the provincial Superior Court and county, as a town surveyor of highways, and as a town committeeman on land claims during the years of 1708-1713.⁷⁷³ Given his business mind and fortitude, English more than likely looked at these positions as a potential business investment. By continuing to serve the community in various capacities, he was able to accumulate clout and continue to grow his business holdings. He had the latest knowledge about land transactions and pending court cases in order to possibly use them for financial/business gain. By 1714, English had reestablished trade with ports he had dealt with prior to 1692.⁷⁷⁴ English had been running his business with the help of his second son named William. However, upon William's death, he turned to John Touzel, the husband of his daughter Susanna.⁷⁷⁵ Susanna had profited from being the daughter of English and was in possession of seven acres of property, the family tavern and wharf.

⁷⁷¹ 7-8.

⁷⁷² Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 251; Winthrop et al., 294.

⁷⁷³ LeBeau, 9.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Hunter, 68.

Although he tried to be an upstanding member of the community, like many of that time, he found himself in court once again. In 1714 he was fined for being out after sunset in a public house on a Saturday night.⁷⁷⁶ There is nothing mentioned in the records regarding what made this an event worthy of financial repercussions. He was also making more claims against those in the community, even though they didn't always have a connection to his business transactions. In August 1722, English was the subject of an indictment for claiming in public that Noyes had murdered John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse. English went on to state that "he would no longer go to Noyes' church or any other infested by Puritans."⁷⁷⁷ English pled 'not guilty' to slander; however, the courts found him guilty and fined him twenty shillings plus court costs for disrespecting a member of the clergy. However, the Superior Court of Judicature overturned his fine in December.⁷⁷⁸

The problems only continued for English in 1724. January 29, 1724, English was in court once again. This time he was charged with "behaving contemptuously and abusively to the majesties' justices in court assembled with vile language;" he was found guilty and ordered to pay twenty pounds security bond until the court reconvened in June.⁷⁷⁹ Speaking ill of the crown was not his last run-in with the courts. He also refused to pay his church taxes in February 1724. For the refusal he was jailed briefly in 1725.⁷⁸⁰ This pattern of actions and comments did not go

⁷⁷⁶ LeBeau, 9.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

unnoticed by the community; he was not reelected to office after 1725.⁷⁸¹ The town noticed English's recent bouts of clouded judgment and pressure from the community forced him to turn over his business to his son-in-law John Touzel in 1727. Additionally, as a man with failing mental faculties, he moved in with his daughter Susanna and her husband John. He paid them twenty shillings per week for room, board, and laundry.⁷⁸² It is unclear what happened during the time English lived with Susanna and her husband that caused Touzel to take English to court over an 85-pound debt. John ultimately kicked him out and English moved in with his son Philip Jr.⁷⁸³

The Death of English and the Impact of His Legacy

On July 3, 1732 the Salem Town Selectmen ruled Philip English was no longer capable of managing his own affairs due to declining mental acuity.⁷⁸⁴ The selectmen met and appointed Thomas Manning of Ipswich and Phillip English Jr. as his representatives. The action, although initiated in 1732, did not become reality until 1734.⁷⁸⁵

English had done his best during his time in Salem to become one of the accepted members of the community, even though his religion, accent, and some of

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸² Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 384.

⁷⁸³ Hunter, 69.

⁷⁸⁴ LeBeau, 10.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.; Hunter, 69.

his beliefs stood in contrast to that of the Puritan way of life. Although his preferred religion was Anglican, as a member of the community he had become involved with the Puritan church of Salem. While he did not always have the opportunity to practice his own religion in Salem, he held onto his Anglican beliefs. In 1714, English had a chance to return to his own religious roots when St. Michaels Church opened in Marblehead. He attended the Anglican church weekly until Salem passed a law forbidding travel more than five miles for church services.⁷⁸⁶ In an effort to bring the Anglican Church closer to his home, in 1732/33 English donated land for an Anglican church to be constructed in Salem near the Town House Square.⁷⁸⁷ St. Peters Church would open in 1734.

Philip English passed away on March 10, 1736. At the time of his death his estate was worth 2442 pounds (worth more than \$400,000 today)⁷⁸⁸. Additionally, he owned five houses on ten parcels of land and a small island in Salem Harbor.⁷⁸⁹ He was buried in the yard of St. Peters Anglican Church.⁷⁹⁰ As affairs were finalized, the two hundred pounds he had been awarded for his losses in 1692 were awarded to his estate.⁷⁹¹ After the passing of English, many stories were shared regarding his beliefs and feelings for those who had taken part in his accusations and incarceration on the charges of witchcraft. One story shared with Nathaniel

⁷⁸⁶ LeBeau, 8.

⁷⁸⁷ Hunter, 68.

⁷⁸⁸ "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1270 to Present", <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/>.

⁷⁸⁹ LeBeau, 10.

⁷⁹⁰ Hunter, 106.

⁷⁹¹ Starkey, 268.

Hawthorne by his cousin, Eben, who was a descendant of both the English and Hathorne lines, was this: “English forgave Hathorne on his death bed, but went on to say, ‘If I get well, I’ll be damned if I forgive him.’”⁷⁹²

Philip English was a complicated man, with a complex relationship with the other colonists. His French ancestry and Anglican beliefs differed from the rest of the colonists, yet his wealth and success as a merchant made him prosperous. Prosperousness that for some was leading to a change from the agrarian lifestyle that had made some rich to a rising merchant class that worked closely with the artisans.⁷⁹³ His accusation stands apart during the trials in some ways, because he was wealthy and had also served in a governmental capacity as a selectman and constable, but it also fits the pattern of the accused by being an outsider and different. English represented the paradox of the Witch Trials, a male outsider who was distrusted by the community as he was the leader of a group of Jerseymen who still spoke French and held on to their cultural beliefs, but also one who escaped prosecution, successfully recovered his seized property and wealth, and continued to wield strong influence in the community for years afterwards.

⁷⁹² Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 580.

⁷⁹³ LeBeau, 11.

Chapter 8 – The Repercussions of Gender and Reparations After the Trials

The Background of Gender and Reparations in Puritan Times

The trials that took place in 1692 were not without controversy. While many were accused of being involved in witchcraft and some were condemned, the aftermath of the trials left family members seeking answers and restitution for the wrongs that had been done to their families. Reparations is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “The making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged.” The amends are often thought of as monetary but can also be non-monetary compensation for reputation and social status. In Salem, the reparations were both monetary and spiritual, with payment by the state to repair financial losses, as well as apologies, attainders annulled, and revocation of ex-communication. Engerman notes that the “concept of reparations—payments made for damages inflicted by one individual upon another—have long been regarded as appropriate social policy.”⁷⁹⁴ While the concept of reparations was not new when it came to those of British descent, it was new in this context. There are legal cases of reparations that go back to Anglo-Saxon times. In those times payments were made for loss of livestock and material goods.⁷⁹⁵ Reparations in Salem could be paid to the actual person who suffered, or often to the descendants, helping the families and community as a whole recover and heal.

⁷⁹⁴ Engerman, 593.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 594.

As noted in chapters 2 and 3 women stood accused in far greater proportion than men. It was often believed that women sinned more and were weaker to temptation. Women were often tasked with helping deliver children and as such if a child was born deformed or died shortly after, the woman who helped deliver the child sometimes stood accused of having a part in the unfavorable outcome. In *Entertaining Satan*, John Demos found Salem women were accused approximately 4 times more often than men, and of the 22 men who were accused, nine were spouses of a female that had been accused, while four more were accused as part of a neighborhood or family quarrel.⁷⁹⁶ Gender was an obvious factor, as 73% of those accused in Salem were women according to Demos in *Entertaining Satan*, and the majority of those executed were women.⁷⁹⁷ The first question is, are there specific gender disparities in relation to reparations when the data is analyzed, and how does this reflect the societal factors present in Salem? And second, what about Salem necessitated the change in reparations to include spiritual and non-monetary apologies, which had not been achieved at any time prior?

Reparations After the Trials in Salem

As families' pain led the Salem community to reconsider the integrity of the trials and cast new doubt on spectral evidence, the door to apology and restitution was opened. The Massachusetts General Court set aside January 14, 1697, as a day for fasting and reflection on the events that had transpired in Salem, and on that day twelve of the jurors

⁷⁹⁶ Demos, 60,62.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., 61.

signed a Declaration of Regret for their involvement in the events of 1692. Those dozen men who had served on the juries during the trials issued a public apology for condemning persons, admitted they were mistaken and asked for forgiveness. Their Declaration claims, "... we were sadly deluded and mistaken...and do therefore humbly beg for foregiveness...", and "We do heartily ask forgiveness of you all, whom we have justly offended..."⁷⁹⁸ These men had been entrusted to execute to the best of their ability the virtues of the law, but now were worried about the use of spectral evidence. Their admission to being mistaken as well as asking for forgiveness had opened the door to apologies and restitution.

The first request asking for wrongs to be corrected was presented in May 1709, and the early form of reparations for the injustices that had been carried out in the name of flawed justice based on the irrational allowance of spectral evidence which could not be refuted. The text of this early petition for reparations which was presented in May 1709 reads as follows:

To his Excelency the Gouenor and y^e Honorable Counsell and Generall Asembly for y^e Prouince of ye Massatusetts Bay in New England Conuend at Boston May 25 1709.

The Humble Adress and motion of Several of y^e Inhabitants of y^e sd Prouince some of which had their near Relations Either Parents or others who suffered Death in y^e Dark and Doleful times y^t past over this prouince in y^e Year 1692 under y^e supposition and in y^e Gloumy Day by some (thought prou,d) of Being Guilty of witchcraft w^{ch} we haue all y^e world to hope and belieue they were Inocent off. And others of us y^t Either our selues of some of our Relations haue Been Imprions'd impared and Blasted in our Reputations and Estates by Reson of y^e same, its not our Intent Neither Do we Reflect on y^e Judges or Jurors Concern^d in those Sorrowfull tryalls whome we hope Did y^t w^{ch} they thought was Right in y^e hour of Darkness. But y^t w^{ch} we moue and pray for is y^t You Would Pleas to pass some sutable Act as In Your Wisdom You may think meet

⁷⁹⁸ Upham, 641-42.

and proper y^t shall (so far as may be) Restore y^e Reputation to y^e Posterity of y^e suffurrers and Remunerate them as to what they have been Damnified in their Estates thereby we Do no Without Remors and greif Recount these sorrowfull things But we Humbly Conceiue y^t we are Bound in Conscience and Duty to god and to ourselues Relatiues and posterity and Country Humbly to make this Motion praying God to Direct You in this and all Your Weighty Consultations.⁷⁹⁹

It was debated and passed on Friday June 10, 1709, but for reasons unknown it was dropped and reintroduced in the October session where it was sent to the representatives to determine the action to be taken. In the records from June 27, 1710, the bill appears again and had passed both and was left for the committee to insert the names and damages into the bill.⁸⁰⁰

By today's standards, the monetary amount awarded less than twenty years after the trials would appear a quick resolution. However, Upham writes that during the time period, many of those who lived through the events regarded them "with solemn awe and profound sorrow, and shunned the mention, and even the remembrance, of its details, thus preventing reparations for the wrongs."⁸⁰¹ This attempt of the community to shed the collective memory of their series of hasty executions possibly slowed the healing process. By pushing the events aside there was not time to address what had transpired and for neighbors to talk through the events and work together as a community to move forward. The community needed to move beyond choosing sides and come together in order to heal.

⁷⁹⁹ Goodell, "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts," 1884. 11; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 854.

⁸⁰⁰ Goodell, "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts," 1884. 10.

⁸⁰¹ Upham, 636.

According to records, in an atypical move the government elected to pay restitution to families, when approximately forty-six petitions were made. As noted above, the petitions not only requested monetary compensation, but also apologies and restitution of social and spiritual status in the community.

The first petitions were filed on September 8, 1710, and the last on September 13, 1710, with the exception of the family of Philip English refusing to accept payment and the Burroughs family continuing to seek damages much later in time. Hanson and Hanson make the claim “every moment of American history evinces vast disparities of wealth, power, and privilege among groups identified by salient characteristics such as race and gender.”⁸⁰² The disparity of wealth, power, and privilege was able to show itself with the English and Burroughs families. The English family having been one of the wealthiest in the colony demonstrates they thought they deserved more due to the amount taken from them, not to mention the fact they were able to avoid being held in the jail while awaiting their trials. While Burroughs did have an elevated status as a minister, the claims ultimately made by his family were different as they were trying to ensure the children were treated well after their stepmother kept the amount awarded and sold off their father’s possessions.

With the bill finally through the sessions, a committee was appointed to travel to Salem and obtain the names of those eligible for restitution. The appointed committee met at Pratts Tavern on September 13, 1711, to prepare a “list of the names of the persons attainted and of ascertaining the amount of compensation that would be satisfactory to the

⁸⁰² Hanson and Hanson, 415.

claimants, so far advanced that they were able to agree upon and sign a report the next day.”⁸⁰³ The committee met with and listened to numerous claims. As they were meeting with families, they sorted the claims into three categories: those who had family members executed, those condemned but not executed, and those imprisoned but not condemned. The committee elected to pay damages to those who had family executed and to those condemned but not those whose only claim was imprisonment.⁸⁰⁴ The decision to only compensate those that endured more than imprisonment might seem unfair, and it was. However, reputation and a clear path to salvation were very important to the individuals and families, and the government’s decision to correct the wrong of those condemned would in the Puritan mind have cleared their names and opened the path they desired. On Wednesday, October 17, 1711, all were pardoned of wrongdoing who had been indicted, convicted, and attained.⁸⁰⁵ The Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al, for Witchcraft cleared the way for the moneys to be disbursed, and for many, having the attainder removed from the name of their loved ones allowed families to get rights back which had been taken away.

The reparation act passed and paperwork asking for a draw from the treasury was signed by Governor Dudley on December 17, 1711.⁸⁰⁶ The purpose of the reparations

⁸⁰³ Goodell, "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts," 1884. 11.

⁸⁰⁴ Winthrop et al., 289.

⁸⁰⁵ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 200; *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 888-89.

⁸⁰⁶ Abner C. Goodell jr., "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts, Containing Additional Evidence of the Passage of the Act of 1711 for Reversing the Attainders of Witches; Also, Affirming the Legality of the Special Court of Oyer and Terminer of 1692; with a Heliotype Plate of the Act of 1711, as Printed in 1716, an Appendix of Documents Etc.," (Cambridge 1884), 14.

was an acknowledgement of guilt about past actions.⁸⁰⁷ The government of Massachusetts had agreed earlier in 1711 to compensate families from the Salem area. As families sought to correct a wrong, reparations were to go to the “living who suffered or the descendants of those who suffered in the past.”⁸⁰⁸ The majority of those who lost their lives were women, but as shown in Table 4 nearly 3 times as many males sought compensation after the trials (14 male requestors vs. 5 female requestors, plus two with both male and female requestors). Additionally, the amounts received by the families were also heavily skewed in favor of the men, with each male victim’s family receiving over 3 times as much, 35 pounds for each man, versus 11 pounds per woman. These statistics correlate for two reasons: those who sought damages were mainly the husbands and children of those directly impacted by the trials, along with several of those who were accused, and because any married woman’s property lawfully belonged to her husband, the men were the ones whose wealth was impacted by the trials and thus sought and received payment for damages.

⁸⁰⁷ Engerman, 597.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 593.

Table 4: Requests for Restitution and Compensation of Victims and Families by the Massachusetts Colony¹

Date	Title of Petition	what it is asking for	Status	Amount Ordered for Payment by Gov. Dudley
9/8/1710	Petition of Isaac Esty Sr. for Restitution for Mary Esty	20 pounds	Executed	20
9/9/1710	Petition of Mary How and Abigail How for Restitution for Elizabeth How	20 pounds but will take 12	Executed	12
9/11/1710	Petition of Jane True and Henry True for restitution for Mary Bradbury	20 pounds	Condemned	20
9/11/1710	Petition of Ephraim Wilds for Restitution for Sarah Wilds	20 pounds but will take 14	Executed	14
9/12/1710	Petition of Rebecca Eames for Restitution	10 pounds	Condemned	10
9/13/1710	Petition of Charles Burroughs for Restitution for George Burroughs	50 pounds	Executed	50
9/13/1710	Petition of Thomas Carrier Sr. for Restitution for Martha Carrier	7 pounds 6 shillings	Executed	7.6
9/13/1710	Petition of John Moulton for Restitution for Martha Cory and Giles Cory	paid Sherriff 11 pounds, 3 shillings, and said expenses not less than 10 pounds= 21 pounds	Executed	21
9/13/1710	Petition of Abigail Faulkner Sr for Restitution	20 pounds	Condemned	20
9/13/1710	Petition of Abraham Foster for Restitution for Ann Foster	6 pounds 10 shillings	Condemned	6.10
9/13/1710	Petition of William Good for Restitution for Sarah Good, Dorothy Good, and Infant	no amount requested but states to allow 30 pounds	Executed	30
9/13/1710	Petition of John King and Annis King for restitution for Dorcas Hoar (2nd petition)	21 pounds 17 shillings	Condemned	21.17
9/13/1710	Petition of William Hobbs for Restitution for Abigail Hobbs	10 pounds	Condemned	10

Date	Title of Petition	what it is asking for	Status	Amount Ordered for Payment by Gov. Dudley
9/13/1710	Petitions of George Jacobs for Restitution for George Jacobs Sr., Rebecca Jacobs, and Margaret Jacobs	79 pounds 13 shillings	Executed	79
9/13/1710	Petition of Lawrence Lacey for Restitution for Mary Lacey Sr	8 pounds 10 shillings	Condemned	8.10
9/13/1710	Petition of John Marston for Restitution for Mary Marston	4 pounds, 19 shillings, 4 pence	imprisoned not condemned	paid 2.14 only for the amount paid to the prison keeper and court charges not for her keep
9/13/1710	Petition of Samuel Nurse Jr. for Restitution for Rebecca Nurse	wanted 40 pounds but would settle for 25 if attainder removed	Executed	25
9/13/1710	Petition of John Parker and Joseph Parker for Restitution for Mary Parker	8 pounds 46 shillings (also included Sarah Parker had originally requested in 1692)	Executed	8
9/13/1710	Petition of Mary Post for Restitution	wanted 14 but would settle for 8 pounds 14 shillings	Condemned	8.14
9/13/1710	Petition of Samuel Wardwell Jr. for Restitution for Sarah and Samuel Wardwell	36 pounds, 15 shillings	Executed	36.15
9/13/1710	Petition of Margaret Willard Towne for Restitution for John Willard	20 pounds	Executed	20
	John Proctor & wife	4/19/1697 court restore Elizabeth rights and returned dowry	Executed	150

¹Data compiled from Rosenthal et al.

With the amount to be disbursed set at 578.12 pounds, compensation was distributed in January and February 1712.⁸⁰⁹ Although the amount to be distributed was less than what had been requested, the amount was still significant in that it exceeded 2.5% of the total tax intake from the previous year.⁸¹⁰ An amount this significant greatly impacted the money that was viewed as necessary to keep the colony out of harm's way. The amount of compensation that families had requested varied as well as the amounts they were willing to accept. In the end, some families opted to accept the smaller amounts they were offered, as they believed clearing the names of their loved ones was of utmost importance. Many were more concerned about eternal damnation due to excommunication than their financial situation.⁸¹¹ Of those who agreed to accept payment, many appointed businessman and judge Samuel Sewall to collect their money from the treasury for them.⁸¹² It made sense for Sewall to collect the money as if there were any questions as to whether they were entitled or questions regarding the trials, he had the most detailed records, and was most familiar with the trials and the individual outcomes.

Over 150 individuals were accused of playing a role in witchcraft. Of those, 46 individuals and/or their families made requests to receive compensation for the hardship the trials had placed on their families. As the committee met to determine who would receive money, they accepted the requests of 23 petitioners. Of those who were approved to receive funds on behalf of their family members that had either been condemned or condemned and

⁸⁰⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 570.

⁸¹⁰ Winthrop et al., 291-92.

⁸¹¹ Abner C. Goodell jr., "Reasons for Concluding That the Act of 1711, Reversing the Attainders of the Persons Convicted of Witchcraft in Massachusetts in the Year 1692, Became a Law Being a Reply to Supplementary Notes, Etc, by George H. Moore, Lld," (Cambridge 1884), 15.

⁸¹² Winthrop et al., 288.

executed, sixteen were men, and one request was submitted by two children, one male and one female. Only six of the petitions were submitted by women, which is not surprising given the place of women in society, with rules such as coverture in place which prevented women from acting as their own representative or managing their own finances.

While 78% of those accused were women, only 65% of those executed were women (13 of 20 executed). Even when including the four individuals who died in jail while awaiting their fate, this number is approximately the same: 67%. This contrasts with the percentage of females accused of witchcraft in both Britain and the rest of the colonies as shown in chapter 3 by the table on page 16. In the other colonies and the home country, females were accused and executed at much higher rates, and Salem was the outlier. This could be attributed to the fact that fewer women lived in the colonies; however, the role women played in the colonies was more consuming of their time than those of the old world. Back in England as well as the continent, communities were more established and not on the frontier. Women had so much more to do each day in this new environment they did not have as much time to accuse and call out others.

As mentioned earlier, The Order for Payment of Damages was signed, on December 17, 1711, by Governor Joseph Dudley which acknowledged the accepted report of the committee and was approved by the General Assembly. The order stipulated:

The whole amounting vnto Five hundred Seventy Eight poundes & Twelue Shillings. I doe by & with the advice & consent of Her Maj^{ties} Council hereby order you to pay y^e aboue Sum of fiue hundred Seenty Eight poundes & Twelue Shillings to Stephen Sewall Esq^r who together with y^e Gentlemen of y^e Comitte that Estimated and Reported y^e Said Damages are desired & directed to distribute y^e Same in proportion as aboue to Such of y^e Said persons as are Liuing & to those that legaly represent them that are dead according as ye law directs for which this Shall be your Warrant.⁸¹³

⁸¹³ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 892.

While there is no record that survives that indicates why Sewall was chosen it would appear, he was chosen out of convenience because he had many of the records from the trials still in his possession. He had the access to the files to help prove the families had been impacted and to provide support for compensation they sought.

Profiles of Families Receiving Reparations

Prior to Salem, most reparations consisted solely of monetary compensation, and in the case of Salem, reparations consisted of money to pay damages and bills left behind due to time spent in jail and caring for family members incarcerated and unable to contribute to the family. The amounts awarded to families ranged from six pounds ten pence to one hundred fifty pounds. The differences are great and are generally accounted for based on the position and occupation of the family within the community; citizens with lower financial and social status received less than those with positions of power or respect within the town. In the past, payments were sometimes made on a fixed scale, while at other times negotiations transpired that determined varying amounts based on reputation, property, economic interest and pain and suffering.⁸¹⁴ For example, the lowest amount authorized was paid out to Abraham Foster for his mother Ann. Ann had been married to Andrew Foster, one of the founders of Andover.⁸¹⁵ After the death of her husband, as standard for the time, her son Abraham had inherited most of the property Andrew had left behind. Abraham gained nine acres of meadow in addition to forty acres.⁸¹⁶ The

⁸¹⁴ Engerman, 594.

⁸¹⁵ "Founding Families of 'Cochichawick Plantation'," North Andover Historical Society, <https://www.northandoverhistoricalsociety.org/new-page-3>.

⁸¹⁶ Tapley, "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County," 513.

land came with the stipulation that Ann be able to continue to reside on the property and have access to the cows. When Abraham sought reparation for his mother, who had died after twenty-one weeks in prison, he only sought repayment of the fees he paid to sustain her while in jail, which amounted to four pounds, and an additional two pounds ten pence for the cost of retrieving her body.⁸¹⁷

Reparations don't only include monetary compensation, they can also involve the restoration of reputations and clearing of wrongful guilty verdicts. It cannot be denied that the world of the 17th century was one of the patriarchies. Men had been in roles that placed them in command of much of what transpired for society to function. Men who had been accused and condemned lost an aspect of the power they held prior to the trials. As Joan Scott argued in *Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*, "gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."⁸¹⁸ As men were condemned and executed, the patriarchal power was reduced, and the process of reparations and reversals of attainders was a method of reestablishing the gender power dynamic in the society.

The Foster family was an exception to most of the others that sought damages; families often wanted the name of the loved one cleared as well as funds to replace income or property that had been lost due to the trials. The Corey family sought reparation funds for the loss of both parents. Giles had died under the weight of rocks for failure to plead while his wife Martha died by hanging. Corey had been hardworking throughout his life as demonstrated by the property he had amassed. Although Giles Corey is often found in the county records as party to various

⁸¹⁷ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 344; Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 870.

⁸¹⁸ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1067.

lawsuits, he often came out on top not caring about the opinions of others in the community. He owned land near the Ipswich River and had a farm of more than one hundred acres.⁸¹⁹ Prior to suffering *peine forte et dure*, Giles drew up a new will while in the Ipswich jail, leaving all his possessions to two of his sons-in-law, John Moulton of Salem and William Cleeves of Beverly.⁸²⁰ Moulton filed his petition for restitution on behalf of the family on September 13, 1710. In the petition Moulton claimed that over the four months of incarceration Giles and Martha were often moved between the jails of Salem, Ipswich and Boston. The movement between the jails along with the unusual method of death for Giles and the hanging of Martha contributed to the suffering of the family. Additionally, Moulton referenced the threat of confiscation of property by Sheriff Corwin and claimed that the family had to sell livestock and property at low prices in order to care for their parents in prison:

...after our fathers death the shi{r}fe threatened to sizes our fathers Estate and for feare tharof wee Complied with him and paid him Eleauen pound six shillings in monie by all which wee haue bee grealy damnified & impouwer(shed) by being Exposed to sell Creaturs and other things for little more then half the worth of them to get the monie to pay as afores^d and to maintaine our father & {mother} in prison...⁸²¹

The combination of the sheriff's extortion and the loss of income due to Giles Corey being unable to work put additional stress and hardship on the family as they worked to make ends meet. The Corey family did end the petition with a statement that they knew their expenses had been at least ten pounds, but they would accept what was deemed appropriate by the committee provided it was at least that much. The committee listened to Moulton and the Corey heirs and recommended twenty-one pounds on September 14. William Cleeves accepted eleven pounds in

⁸¹⁹ Upham, 121-23.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, 544.

⁸²¹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 865.

February 1712.⁸²² It would seem that the family received their funds, as there is no other mention of waiting for compensation. However, as Martha had been married prior to Giles, her son Thomas Rich filed another claim in 1724. Thomas Rich claimed that he had lost out on property worth sixty pounds that had been left to his mother by his late father due to the confiscation of property by Sheriff Corwin. He filed a claim for fifty pounds which was approved and taken from the treasury.⁸²³

The Burroughs family was left in Maine without their father and a stepmother that didn't want anything to do with the children. When the opportunity presented itself for families to seek financial justice, they made a claim. On September 13, 1710 Charles Burroughs filed on behalf of himself and siblings to seek restitution for the loss of George Burroughs. Reverend Burroughs had been carted from Wells, Maine to Salem to face his accusers. With George no longer present to help care for the children, his land was lost, and the children spread among others to be raised as Mary, their stepmother, moved on without him. Charles Burroughs, the eldest of his children, requested, "Least we can Judge by best information was fifty poundes besides y^e damage that hath acrued to us many way{e}s thereby is some hundreds of pounds wee Earnestly pray y^t y^e attainer may be taken of & if you please y^e fifty pounds may be restored."⁸²⁴ Charles Burroughs had no idea how much the family had actually lost while his father was in prison but knew that he must recoup a significant amount if his siblings were to be taken care of. After the committee had finished meeting, they recommended the payment of fifty pounds.

⁸²² Ibid., 906.

⁸²³ Ibid., 917.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., 863.

The payment of the amounts above, can also be tied to how social rank within the society was tied to accusations. The accused, as Paul Moyer points out, were often from the lowest social standing with some from the middle class and a few from the upper class.⁸²⁵ Reparations for what had happened in 1692 did not only involve financial measures. Names and reputations had been tarnished. A minister's name being associated with the Witch Trials and as one of their leaders caused incredible hardship for the family to resume a normal life. The Reverend Burroughs was included in the Act to Reverse the Attainders on October 17, 1711. The reversal cleared the way for the family and ensured no more damages or claims would be sought of the Court. With the blessing of Queen Mary, the payments began, and Governor Dudley ordered on December 17, 1711, that the Burroughs family be paid fifty pounds.⁸²⁶ The award of fifty pounds to the Burroughs children came with a unique challenge. The committee appointed by the General Court voted to divide the funds between his wife and the children, with Mary receiving ten pounds, and the rest distributed among all his children equally. When the disbursement was completed, each child should have received approximately four pounds, and a remainder of about six pounds. On January 3, 1712, the committee determined the remaining six pounds be divided equally among the children of Burroughs.⁸²⁷ The committee led by Peter Thomas authorized the payment on January 16, 1712.

Four of Burroughs's seven children elected to have their portions all paid to their brother Charles.⁸²⁸ George Burroughs Jr. was not one of these four, and he instead petitioned the court a

⁸²⁵ Paul B. Moyer, *Detestable and Wicked Arts* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2020), 80.

⁸²⁶ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 892.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, 893.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, 896.

week later on January 22 and requested that his money be delivered to Colonel John Appleton.⁸²⁹ Although the children of Reverend Burroughs received some of the funds allocated by the court, they felt given all their family had been through that they were entitled to further compensation. The property that should have been reserved for them had been sold by their stepmother and the children, aged between 2 and 18 years old, had been left destitute and struggling to fend for themselves. The children voiced their frustration at this when they petitioned the court again in December of 1712. This petition did not do anything to advance the cause or alleviate the stress placed on the children. They again petitioned the courts in April 1713 seeking compensation.⁸³⁰ This petition, like the previous, did not ask for a specific amount of money, and both petitions went unanswered.

Male Representation in the Reparations

Although 22 men were accused in the trials of 1692 only 7 were actually taken to trial, but the number probably would have been 8 had Giles Corey not stood mute. George Jacobs Sr. was a farmer and a respectable member of the community, who had enough financial means to have employed a servant named Sarah Churchill. At nearly eighty and unable to read, he dictated his will on January 29, 1692.⁸³¹ As time ticked closer to his impending execution, he made some changes in his will, leaving his homestead to his wife Mary, as George Jr. was in hiding. Once she passed away the land would go to him. Even though his sixteen-year-old

⁸²⁹ Ibid., 904.

⁸³⁰ Ibid., 914.

⁸³¹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 11.

granddaughter Margaret had been the one to accuse him of witchcraft and contributed to him being found guilty, because she recanted her confession and admitted her wrongdoing, he forgave her and had the person writing the will added a line giving Margaret ten pounds in silver.⁸³²

The reality of the trials for many was if one family member had been accused there was a greater likelihood of another member being accused. George's accuser and granddaughter Margaret admitted that she had accused George in order to save her own life. Prior to George's hanging, but after he had been arrested and charged with witchcraft, Margaret recanted her testimony. She wrote to the Superior Court:

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, make me in so much horror what 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.⁸³³

After the hanging of her grandfather and knowing she might soon meet the same fate, Margaret took the time to write a letter from prison hoping for "a joyous and happy meeting in Heaven."⁸³⁴ Margaret did not have much family support while imprisoned, as her father George Jr. and her uncle Daniel Andrews had fled the country once they were accused in May.⁸³⁵

When the trials had concluded, George Jacobs Jr. deemed it safe to return to the area. He petitioned the courts with an itemized list for seventy-nine pounds to cover the goods seized by Sheriff Corwin and for the distress on his wife Rebecca and daughter Margaret for their

⁸³² Ibid., 237.

⁸³³ Hansen, 149; Francis, 138.

⁸³⁴ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 245.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

imprisonment.⁸³⁶ The committee approved the request of George Jr. The receipts from February 19, 1712 show that George Jacobs Jr., Anne Andrews, and John Foster all signed for their portion of the seventy-nine pounds.⁸³⁷

John Willard was only in his twenties and was married to Margaret Knight, a granddaughter of Bray Wilkins. He was considered an outsider by many because he was not a farmer in the community. In 1690, Willard along with two others bought land along Salem Village's northern border from the widow of George Corwin to divide into parcels in hope of making a profit.⁸³⁸ Willard was one among many who had helped the Putnam family deal with Ann Putnam Jr's afflictions and had served as a deputy constable. He supported the Witch Trials at the beginning before eventually being accused. Willard was brought before his accusers on May 19, and just as in other cases, all the accusers cried out when he entered the room. Willard proclaimed his innocence, stating he had fled in fear, and tried to recite the Lord's Prayer to prove his innocence before the magistrates but failed in recitation five times.⁸³⁹ Willard was hanged by the government on August 19. Margaret Willard remarried after the loss of her husband and petitioned the courts from the town of Topsfield on September 13, 1710. She recalled in her petition that he had been imprisoned for nearly six months and she was charged with taking care of his needs while in jail. She claimed that she wanted thirty pounds in damages but would settle for twenty.⁸⁴⁰ The records show the money was approved by Governor Dudley on December 17, 1711.⁸⁴¹ William Town received the money for his wife Margaret Willard

⁸³⁶ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 874-775.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, 906-07.

⁸³⁸ Foulds, 120.

⁸³⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 135.

⁸⁴⁰ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 883-84.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 892.

Town and their daughter Margaret on March 6 and daughter Hannah accepted her funds on April 5.⁸⁴²

Profession alone was enough to attract attention for the next man convicted of witchcraft. Samuel Wardwell was originally from New Hampshire and made his living as a farmer, carpenter, and fortune teller in Andover.⁸⁴³ On August 31, 1692 Wardwell was arrested for spectral tormenting of others. Just as in other cases, his wife and two oldest children, nineteen-year-old Mercy and twenty-one-year-old Sarah Hawkes, were eventually arrested for torturing Martha Sprague and Rose Foster, leaving the remaining five children to fend for themselves.⁸⁴⁴ Wardwell was found guilty on September 14, and even though he recanted his confession on September 13, was sentenced to death on September 17, 1692.⁸⁴⁵ Samuel Wardwell was taken by cart for hanging, and prior to his execution he tried to profess his innocence, but was unable to articulate his words due to smoke from the executioner's pipe.⁸⁴⁶ With Samuel dead and his wife and older two children in jail, the remaining children were sent to foster homes on September 27.⁸⁴⁷

The Wardwell family began their quest for justice on March 2, 1703 along with several other families, signing a joint petition to have Samuel Wardwell's name cleared due to mistakes and errors in the trials.⁸⁴⁸ With multiple members of the same family accused and imprisoned, a great expense had been paid for their upkeep. Additionally, with both parents and oldest siblings

⁸⁴² Ibid., 906-09.

⁸⁴³ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 231.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., 259-60.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., 289,95; Francis, 147.

⁸⁴⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 300.

⁸⁴⁷ Foulds, 115.

⁸⁴⁸ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 848-49.

all in jail, that left five children without a working adult. After the mother and siblings were released, Samuel Wardwell Jr. filed a petition seeking restitution for Samuel and Sarah Wardwell on September 13, 1710. In his first petition seeking compensation for the items seized by the Sheriff, Wardwell Jr. asked for thirty-six pounds and fifteen pence to replace five cows, a heifer, a yearling, a horse, nine hogs, eight loads of hay, carpenter tools, and six acres of corn.⁸⁴⁹ Most of the items seized by the Sheriff would have helped to sustain the five children that were left behind during the time of the parent's incarceration. The committee determined the Wardwell family should receive thirty-six pounds and fifteen pence on Friday, September 28, 1711.⁸⁵⁰ Samuel Wardwell Jr. claimed the money on behalf of the family, but his quest to right a wrong was still not complete. He filed another petition on February 19, 1711 seeking the removal of the attainder on his mother Sarah, as well as restitution for her time in jail. In this petition he sought compensation for losses during her time in jail, claiming the family had only mentioned his father in the prior petition.⁸⁵¹

Each of the families who sought restitution for the damage inflicted on them during the trials wanted financial and social justice for their loved ones. But it is clear that families with only female victims requested and were awarded far lower amounts than those with male victims. Because of the social structure of the time, it is understandable that men were more valued than women, but the reparations provide the opportunity to quantify those differences and specify how much of an influence social standing affected the sums. These cases, along with

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 883.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 886-88.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 903.

those of Giles Corey, George Burroughs, Philip English and the rest demonstrate the inequity in the petitioner's restitutions based on gender and social position.

Historical Conclusions About Gender in the Reparation Decisions

The fact that families sought restitution for a wrong carried out by the justice system should not be a surprise when viewed through the lens of the twenty-first century. However, for most looking back at the event it often comes as a surprise that money was awarded for an event so early in our history. The fact that money was awarded was not new. In fact, according to Engerman in *Apologies, Regrets, and Reparations*, “in earlier times, payment of reparations was believed to be the responsibility only of the originator of the actions.”⁸⁵² Under this premise, the girls and judges should have been responsible for the compensation due the families after the trials. However, the reparation amounts that were awarded would have been financially difficult for some families. In addition, it became impossible for the disrupted families to recover damages from the officials involved in the trials because, as Rosenthal points out, the General Court established “that no Sheriffe, Constable, Goaler or any other officer shall be Liable to any prosecution in the Law for anything they then Legally did in the Execution of their respective offices.”⁸⁵³ The General Court passed this declaration in May 1694 aware that once the events of 1692 passed that families would want those responsible to be held accountable for their actions which had led to families being forever changed. The passage of this text amounted to the

⁸⁵² Engerman, 593.

⁸⁵³ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 185.

Massachusetts colony giving a pardon to Sheriff Corwin, all constables that arrested the accused, as well as the judges that listened to and acted on testimony.

The loss of one's reputation, as well as forfeiture of goods and income, was a serious matter for those living in this time period. History clearly points to more women being accused than men. However, when it comes to remuneration for loss, those families that lost a male clearly were compensated more than those who had lost a female. Some families settled for as little as two pounds while others received one hundred fifty pounds. This difference can be attributed to their role and status within the community and the inherent gender bias that was the institutionalized norm for this time in history. There is no question that families that lost a male were compensated more. The families that lost a male to the trials received anywhere from twenty pounds up to one hundred fifty pounds, averaging fifty-nine pounds each. This sum does not consider the additional money that the son of Martha Corey would petition for and receive, nor the money that was offered to the English family, which they rejected but was paid out anyway. The families that sought compensation for the loss of a female or child averaged just under fourteen pounds each.

Although many of those involved in the trials admitted to the lapses in judgement, and the colony admitted mistakes in all the cases, the value of the individual as seen by the courts was different. The value of life was dependent on the gender of the individual that had been lost as well as their standing in the community. The amounts awarded to the English, Burroughs, and Proctor families demonstrate their higher status and the gender of the individuals wronged was valued more than most others. It is not an easy matter to place a value on the life of any one person, but all those lost were valuable to those around them. These findings as shown in the

table from this chapter point to a clear difference in the value of life and sex during this time period, and specific analysis of the funds allocated to families helps put a value on this bias.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

This study sought to further the understanding of the percentage of men accused of witchcraft in the trials of 1692 and quantify the difference in reparations and compensation between the genders in families affected by the trials. The bulk of studies on the events that transpired in Salem in 1692 largely focus on the accusations made by girls against various women of the community and tend to follow the accepted conception that witches were mainly female. While Demos and Karlsen do include men in their research, the influence of males and the bias associated with gender has largely been neglected in the historiography.

Using the Essex County records, *Records of the Salem Witch Trials* by Rosenthal, as well as numerous secondary sources, I have attempted to show how men were a larger part of the story than past scholarship has alluded to, and that the impact in Salem was outsized compared to similar events in England and other parts of the colonies. Taking the records from Essex County as well as the transcription completed by Rosenthal, I have provided evidence into why men were accused and ultimately executed in Salem at higher percentages and have shown that their families were compensated at higher rates compared to those of female victims.

In the seventeenth century, many including those of the Puritan faith needed an explanation for why certain events with no recognizable cause transpired, both in nature and everyday life. In an attempt to understand what was occurring around them, they based this need for understanding on the concept of witchcraft found in the Bible. The time period was part of the Enlightenment, but not everyone had wrapped their mind around those ideals, and thus the colonists still looked to the Bible for such explanations. Theologians as well as doctors who were unable to explain an unknown occurrence or event often turned to what they knew best: an

accusation of witchcraft. Witchcraft was used to explain varied phenomenon such as adverse weather events, crop failures, problems with childbirth, misbehaving children in general, and just about anything else out of the ordinary. As early historians have noted, the answer to all these inexplicable events was found in the Bible. As mentioned, Moses used the feminine form of Hebrew, which in English translated to witch woman. Additionally, Puritans read Genesis and knew about Eve's inability to avoid temptation and her eventual fall because of the devil.

Over the years, these beliefs would lead to the image of the diabolical witch emerging in popular culture by the end of the fifteenth century.⁸⁵⁴ While the image was most often portrayed as female, there are a few examples of male witches during this time period. In 1616, a pamphlet was published quoting the vicar of King's Lynn, "but men also on whose behalf, no exception can be laid."⁸⁵⁵ Even before the words above were uttered, a wood cut that can be traced back to Ulrich Molitor in 1488 depicted a male witch.⁸⁵⁶ Even though men were seen as capable of being witches, it was not as frequent or widespread a belief. Over time, the image of what a witch was evolved, more than likely as a result of the printing press. Even as early as 1580, most still stated that the majority of those who practiced witchcraft were female, although French political theorist Jean Bodin in his *De las Demonomanie Des Sorciers* did acknowledge men were capable of witchcraft.⁸⁵⁷ He discussed the type of magic that men were likely to participate in as well as their role in the Sabbat. M. William Perkins published his *Discourse of the Damned Art*

⁸⁵⁴ Richard Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 159; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 194; Godbeer, "Witchcraft in British America," 159.

⁸⁵⁵ Gaskill, 160.

⁸⁵⁶ Apps and Gow, 199.

⁸⁵⁷ Schulte, 108.

of Witchcraft in the early seventeenth century with the purpose of defining a witch, with chapter five stating a witch was a person in “open or secret league, wittingly and willingly concerteth to use the aide and assistance of the Devil, in the working of Wonders.”⁸⁵⁸ This early publication specified that a witch was an individual, and Perkins attributed witchcraft not to women only but to potentially anyone who was found to be working with the devil.

Most often, men in Puritan New England and in the home country of England were accused of witchcraft less often than women, and often the reason they were accused was because of their relationship with a woman who also stood accused. However, as shown in the records from Europe as well as in the case of George Burroughs, having a female family member was not always necessary in order to be accused. The case of George Burroughs stands out for him being a minister and respected member of society. While he had supporters, there were some within the community who blamed him for the feelings of contention among the congregation and others who were upset that he had borrowed money from the Putnam family to pay for his wife’s funeral. However, numerous accusations and testimonies indicated he was a suspected ringleader of many of those accused of witchcraft within Essex County.

Up until Salem, the percentage of men on trial stood between 22 and 24 percent. However, in Salem the rate of men put on trial and executed for witchcraft was around 30 percent. So, while more women were executed for their roles, a far higher percentage of victims were men than the historical average for the English colonies. Research also shows that accused men often were not punished as severely as women, and often ministers such as Francis Dane did not have to worry about conviction. In the case of Salem this was not the case. George

⁸⁵⁸ Perkins, Pickering, and McManus-Young, 92.

Burroughs did not believe he had anything to worry about because he was a man of God; however, with thirty individuals lined up to speak against him, his assumption of innocence wasn't enough. The panic and desire to eliminate those who were harming the community had gotten out of control and reason was often ignored.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One

In Chapter One, I describe the origin of witchcraft in England as largely based on the Bible and the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works asserted eternal happiness to Adam and Eve if they fully obeyed God's will.⁸⁵⁹ However, according to Biblical teachings, they did not obey God's will, and consequently humanity was left to suffer for their actions for the rest of time. The Puritans did not want to disappoint God and believed they should do all that was within their means and ability in order to have any hope of achieving salvation. Puritans also subscribed to the belief in the Covenant of Grace which allowed individuals an opportunity at redemption through repentance.⁸⁶⁰ By scrutinizing all aspects of their lives for failures of faith and lapses in belief, it was felt they might still have the opportunity to achieve salvation. Part of the route to achieving salvation was reading and interpreting the Bible correctly. The Puritans were worried about the changes in England that were transpiring under James I. These included his changes to the Bible as well as the continued employment of ministers who had, in the Puritan view, lacked a clear understanding of the Bible and its message because of not

⁸⁵⁹ Bremer, 18.

⁸⁶⁰ Carden, 73.

graduating from Oxford or Cambridge. As Morgan stated, the Puritans looked to the New World to “not merely to save their souls but to establish a ‘visible’ kingdom of God, a society where a smooth, honest, civil life would prevail in family, church, and state.”⁸⁶¹ As the Puritans left England to cross the Atlantic, they brought their beliefs and specific interpretations of the Bible with them, and thus the concept of witchcraft moved as well.

Under the leadership of John Winthrop, Puritans worked toward fulfilling their goal of a safe place to practice their beliefs. They looked to create a community that would work together to reach salvation. For the community to thrive, they relied on the Covenant of Works, and the behavior of all who resided in the community would impact the success or failure of the community. Everyone worked toward that success, because if disaster occurred it was assumed to be the result of their collective sins and failure to avoid temptation. As the community became established, Winthrop delivered a speech that would come to symbolize some of the actions of the trials. Winthrop explained, “In all ties, some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie, others meane and in subjection.”⁸⁶² The Puritans followed this exhortation completely, with each gender and individual having specific roles to play, and none were expected to do more or less than that. At this early stage of setting up the community, the view that all individuals have a place in society and should remain in the station they have been ascribed to was widespread and well accepted. As the trials manifested, the social status of the individual would come into play, with men like Giles Corey having moved out of what was his perceived place in the community by purchasing land to increase his holdings within Salem, and as such was a target for an accusation of witchcraft.

⁸⁶¹ Morgan, *Puritan Fanuly*, 3.

⁸⁶² Norton, *Mothers and Fathers*, 9.

The construction of a religious meeting house in the center of town served to ensure religion was an integral part of the community and easily accessible to all. The church also established a hierarchy of leaders such as the pastor, teacher, elders, and deacons, all of whom helped individuals reach salvation.⁸⁶³ Schools were necessary to educate children and to help train the next generation of ministers and leaders. Education was so highly regarded that Massachusetts passed a school law in 1647 that required all towns with at least 50 families to establish a school to “teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read” so that they could all read the Bible and avoid the temptation of Satan.⁸⁶⁴ Reading was important to the Puritans in order to understand the words printed in the Bible. They believed that in order to do what was right, they had to adhere to what the Bible said and that could only be accomplished by a learned man. The father of the family was expected to take the sermons given in the meetinghouse and help his family understand and practice the messages of faith, and if a father failed in this endeavor it could lead to a wife or child’s misbehavior.

Chapter Two

As shown in Chapter Two, gender bias came into play during the trials. As was the norm at the time, women had very few rights, but many responsibilities. Nonetheless, there were exceptions in the colonies, as men were sometimes gone for extended periods of time, with husbands gone for guard duty, sailing, or fighting in the conflicts with the Native inhabitants. While there was a start of a change, overall women were still considered chattels of the men in

⁸⁶³ Stout, 19.

⁸⁶⁴ Hall, 38.

their life and expected to be docile and obedient.⁸⁶⁵ While the women who traveled to the colonies were largely expected to be seen and not heard, it is important to note that far more men initially were present in the colonies. From the years 1621 to 1651 there were four times as many men as women in New England.⁸⁶⁶ This was due to the fact that the trip across the Atlantic was expensive and dangerous, and not something a woman could easily handle.

As time passed and more women made their way across the Atlantic, they were likely to join the church and become members. Women were viewed as weaker and greater sinners, thus needing to develop a stronger relationship with God. It was viewed at the time that women took longer to repent for their sins and move on from their guilt, and once a woman recognized her weaknesses and worked to correct them, she would be more successful in keeping the devil away. Women believed confession and repentance was their way of achieving salvation, and this belief motivated women who were accused during the trials to confess so quickly. The belief had been indoctrinated in them that they were more liable to sin than men and not always aware of all that they had done incorrectly. Knowing the community covenants and the desire to protect everyone, the calling out of the wrongs was an honest attempt to save the souls of so many.

What is surprising here, given the amount of male supervision over other aspects of their lives, is that women faced accusations of witchcraft more often. I propose that the higher incidences can be attributed to the limited freedom they were given, and the beliefs imposed by society about a woman's sinful nature. When given the chance to be away from male power, women were free to voice their opinions and share gossip, potentially placing themselves in spiritually perilous situations. The opportunity for women to voice their dislikes, whether it was

⁸⁶⁵ Pelka, 7.

⁸⁶⁶ Berkin, 25.

through actual speech or mutterings under the breath, was frowned upon in public, and limitation of such expression was clearly supported by Cotton Mather. Mather had issued the reminder “I will take heed...that I sin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle.”⁸⁶⁷ A prime example of what Mather warned against was when Bridget Bishop spoke harsh words about her neighbors and was heard verbally harassing others in public, which came back to haunt her when it was used to support the claims of her bewitching members of the community.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, women had expanded some of their roles, with some renting out rooms, teaching school, and running inns and taverns, as was the case with Bridget Bishop.⁸⁶⁸ The thought of women in control and owning businesses did contribute to accusations against them, but could also have fueled accusations against women’s husbands for not keeping their wives’ actions under male domination. This led to increasing scrutiny of women who were widowed or single. At the onset of the trials, the first accusations were leveled against women who fit the female stereotype. Many of the accused women were widowed and over the age of forty. These women, being beyond childbearing age, were no longer seen as productive to society, and if they had been widowed and did not have a son, they may have had a connection to land or money that caused them to be in roles not normally prescribed to their gender. This change of place within society was a change that caused discomfort for some men.

In Salem, men made 25 percent of the witchcraft accusations.⁸⁶⁹ In the new land, with women starting to exert more influence in society because of the men being gone for a variety of issues, men began to feel threatened. In the past, if a contract needed attention, men had always

⁸⁶⁷ Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England," 25.

⁸⁶⁸ Goss, 139.

⁸⁶⁹ King and Mixon jr, 682.

dealt with one another, yet now there were instances of women making decisions that could impact many individuals. The men of the time were not sure how to handle this reversal. In order to keep women in their inferior positions, and to account for choices made when the outcome wasn't what a man envisioned, an accusation of witchcraft was used to explain it.

The number of accusations and convictions in Salem were an anomaly compared to the rest of the colonies as well as in the home country, and the higher number of men accused in New England should be attributed to being in a new environment. As Karlsen shows, men comprised only 22 percent of those accused of witchcraft between 1620 and 1725, and Demos documented that of the seventy-five men accused during that period, at least half were related to a woman who had been accused.⁸⁷⁰ The numbers also reflect that men were more often accused of witchcraft in New England than in Europe, where men were only 15 percent of those accused.⁸⁷¹

Chapter Three

Looking back at history in Chapter Three, it should not be surprising that the image of a female witch became so popular. Those in New England dealt with what Richard Godbeer stated were the three components of an allegation of witchcraft:

1. The inability to explain or control illnesses or other forms of misfortune
2. A deep belief that supernatural forces could be used to inflict harm
3. The personal nature of human interactions.⁸⁷²

⁸⁷⁰ Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 127.

⁸⁷¹ Pelka, 7.

⁸⁷² Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, 15.

These three components are visible in each accusation of witchcraft, especially those against men. Burroughs, for example, was accused of prohibiting his previous wives from contacting their families, and the physical strength he lent to the cause of the Indian wars in Maine probably polarized Burroughs in the eyes of some colonists. Giles Corey and Phillip English had reputations of being litigious, which may have motivated accusers who already saw them as criminals who had unfairly snuck through court in the past. Malcom Gaskill found that male witches were often those who got into conflict with their neighbors and competed for power, resources and space,⁸⁷³ as in the cases of Corey, Burroughs and English. Corey and English both acquired more land and moved up the economic ladder, which was being perceived as a threat to the natural order. While Burroughs was a leader in the community, some felt that he had abandoned them before his contract expired.

While there are sources which throughout history have supported the concept that witches could be men, this did not mean it was common for men to be convicted and executed for witchcraft, especially in New England. It was not until August 19, 1692 in Salem that a man in the colonies hanged for the crime. On that day, four men were taken to the gallows: John Proctor, George Burroughs, George Jacobs, and John Willard. By the time the trials concluded, men made up 20 percent of those who had perished overall and 26 percent of those who had hanged. As the table in Chapter Three showed, the percentage of men accused of witchcraft between 1500 and 1750 varied considerably depending on where one resided. The percentages ranged from a low of 14 percent in Great Britain and Eastern Europe to a high of 53 percent in France. Compared to other British-controlled areas, Salem stands out as having a significantly higher

⁸⁷³ Kent, 7-8.

percentage of males accused and convicted. While Britain had only 14 percent of accusations against males, and New England as a whole about 15 percent, Salem's ratio is over 40 percent higher. With these percentages, one has to look for an explanation for the differences. While it might appear to be religious based with Catholics and Protestants vying for power, the percentages came down to how the cases were handled. In the case of Great Britain, guilt was determined with the help of a jury, while on-the-continent depositions were used more in the process of determining guilt. This rising percentage of accusations against men culminated in Salem, which saw a nearly 40 percent increase in those executed. As Morgan pointed out, 67 percent more individuals were executed during the Witch Trials than during the entire prior history of New England.⁸⁷⁴

Chapter Four

The laws in Massachusetts differed from those of England when it came to committing a felony. In England, those that committed a felony were subject to having their property confiscated and inheritance for their children taken by the crown.⁸⁷⁵ Unlike the situation in their native land, the Massachusetts Colony had passed the Body of Liberties, which removed witchcraft from the list of crimes for which property could be seized. Ignoring this distinction, Sheriff George Corwin moved ahead with the confiscation of property belonging to those convicted of witchcraft. The property that was stolen would figure into the amounts awarded to families at the conclusion of the trials and lends itself to the concept that a man was worth more

⁸⁷⁴ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Heros* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 115.

⁸⁷⁵ Gragg, 128.

than a woman, as property could not traditionally be owned by women. If Corwin had truly followed the English law, then the only property he could have legally confiscated would have been the property of families where both the man and the women had been convicted. The one piece that did make life easier for those in New England who had property seized was the concept that land could not be taken. So, in the end, families still had something from which to generate income, although not necessarily the tools needed to be successful. In the case of Phillip English, property was taken that totaled over one thousand pounds. However, it can be argued that in English's case, his property was eligible for confiscation because he and his wife had fled to New York to avoid trial.

Corwin seemed to be in a hurry to get to the property of some of those accused. In the case of John and Elizabeth Proctor, he seized everything he was able to get his hands on not just the household items, but also the cattle, which he sold below their value, and he emptied and took food from pots that had been used to prepare meals, leaving the children in a position to have to fend for themselves.⁸⁷⁶

The type of questioning utilized during the trials operated under the accepted belief that witches did exist. With this type of belief at the core of society, the goal of the trials was to cleanse the land. As shown with the acceptance of spectral evidence, guilt could be easily achieved, as there was no way to refute the evidence. With little chance of getting out of the charges, those accused waited in jail. While incarcerated they were assessed for their care. The maintenance of time in jail was approximately five shillings per week. If a family's main source of income was incarcerated and they had endured the seizure of goods by the sheriff, the ability

⁸⁷⁶ Calef, 224.

to pay the fees was a definite hardship. The costs were equivalent to over fifteen thousand dollars modern-day, when adjusted for inflation. Given the amount they had to pay to keep their loved ones alive in jail, it only makes sense that as more and more individuals began to question the trials, families would want to recoup their expenses.

In 1696, many who had served on juries issued a public apology, the Declaration of Regret, for their role in the trials. This action of admitting they had made mistakes and desired forgiveness set the scene for future events and the possibility of bringing a community back together. Not to be outdone, on January 14, 1697 Justice Samuel Sewall apologized for his role in the trials. Sewall had taken time in the five years since the last guilty verdict to realize that he had erred in his judgement. He had been caught in the moment and now wanted to be forgiven for his deeds. Although the Puritan community would have agreed that Sewall had contributed to the loss of life, they would have forgiven him if they wanted to reach salvation.

Apology from some justices and ministers was a start, but to have one of the instigators apologize was significant. As mentioned in Chapter six Margaret Jacobs had recanted her testimony, albeit too late to save the lives of her grandfather and Reverend Burroughs. Ann Putnam also came forward and spoke with Reverend Green about her role and sought forgiveness. Because her testimony was one of the factors that had led to executions, rather than accept her request, Reverend Green went to Francis Nurse, who represented the families who had suffered the most. The fact that Nurse was willing to forgive the accusers demonstrated the community's desire to move on and forgive others of their mistakes. Ann Putnam formally made her apology before the congregation on August 25, 1706.⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷⁷ Upham, 672.

In 1697, Reverend John Hale wrote *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft*, in which he was one of the first involved in the trials to admit the trials had been a mistake. Although it was not published until 1702, Hale had been at the trials since the beginning. His admission as a member of the clergy and one that had testified against Sarah Good carried a great deal of weight. The thought of a minister acknowledging the miscarriage of justice signified the magnitude of a mistake carried out by the colony. With his admission, along with Parris's eventual apology, the residents had a path to damages. Although not normal, these admissions and acknowledged errors helped families in their quest for the eventual reparations.

Chapter Five

Giles Corey is one of the most well-known male names of the trials. Corey's name often comes to the forefront of trial names thanks to Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Corey provides a valuable insight into what the trials were like for the everyday people of the community. Like so many within the Puritan settlement, Corey was watched by those around him. As previously mentioned, Puritans were not just concerned with their individual acts but also those of others within the community. They feared the actions of others could influence their chance of obtaining salvation.

Throughout his life Corey worked hard to improve his station within the community. He worked his land, helped others, served his duty as a jury member and his shifts as a watchman. As Upham pointed out, Corey had amassed 150 acres in southeastern Salem by 1663.⁸⁷⁸ While

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid., liii.

Corey did acquire land and marry Martha Rich who was a respected member of the community, trouble nevertheless followed him. While there were court dates for issues with watch duty, failure to pay a debt in 1670, defamation against John Proctor, it was his curiosity about the trials got the better of him. After his wife Martha had been arrested, he shared how he had difficulty saying his prayers, but once Martha came near him, he was able to remember and recite them.⁸⁷⁹ This statement along with accusations from several of the girls was enough to lead to his arrest for witchcraft.

Although many would have argued at the time, that Corey was not educated and just a poor man, his intellect was clearly demonstrated when he recorded his will while in prison on July 25, 1692.⁸⁸⁰ The will decreed his property would be given to his sons-in-law William Cleaves and John Moulton. This shrewd decision allowed the land he had acquired to be retained rather than confiscated by the sheriff. Throughout his life, Corey remained true to himself and his convictions. His strong beliefs are what led to his refusal to enter a plea and subsequent death from *peine forte et dure*. He stands out as a victim for drastically improving his place within the community as evidenced by the land he amassed and also demonstrates the chance of being called out as a witch by association with a female that had been accused.

Chapter Six

Although he was considered to be one of the ringleaders of the Salem witches, George Burroughs was anything but a ringleader. He was known in Maine as a minister that truly cared

⁸⁷⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 155.

⁸⁸⁰ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 98.

about his congregants and went to great lengths to save them during conflicts with the Native Americans on the Maine Frontier. Burroughs had begun his career in Maine but eventually took the job in Salem in order to provide safety for his family. Burroughs was clearly concerned about the welfare of his family as he worked to negotiate his salary, as well as his refusal to move his family into a parsonage that was unlivable. Once settled in the community, he made his intentions clear, stating he wished to live and die among them and wanted both sides to work together to solve any conflicts. While Burroughs clearly believed in his role as their spiritual guide, the lack of payment of his salary and the loss of his wife contributed to his decision to accept a position elsewhere. The fact that he left the community did not sit well with many and consequently was one of the issues that would ultimately lead to him being accused of witchcraft.

In April 1692, Ann Putnam, the great-niece of John Putnam, deposed George Burroughs was greater than a witch and was in fact the conjurer.⁸⁸¹ Along with testimony from the other girls, this testimony was enough to cause the issuance of the arrest warrant that led to Burroughs being arrested at his home in Maine on May 2, 1692.⁸⁸² Although Burroughs had clearly demonstrated concern for his community and flock, the fact that he had not baptized his children did not sit well in a community that exhibited such strong religious convictions.

Burroughs held strong personal beliefs and put his faith in the justice system that they would not find a minister guilty of such outrageous acts. Other ministers had been named but none had been found guilty. Burroughs also had many that would speak out for him by referencing his dedication to assisting them during times of conflict on the Maine frontier, but

⁸⁸¹ Charles Upham, *Salem Witchcraft* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000), 419.

⁸⁸² Upton, 49.

the prosecution knew they would need witnesses and their list of thirty clearly was too much for Burroughs to counter. Like so many of the other trials, witnesses that testified brought up events not from the recent past but from long before. such as not letting his wives send letters to their families.⁸⁸³ In addition to the testimony regarding censoring his wives, testimony was also supplied that he had super-human strength which could have only been acquired through an act with the devil.

Burroughs, cognizant of the direction his trial had taken, tried one last effort to prove his innocence. He used a quote from Thomas Ady, “there were never witches who, having made a compact with the devil, could torment other people at a distance.”⁸⁸⁴ Burroughs hoped this quote would help clear his name, but the courts did not accept it. At the end of the testimony, Burroughs was found guilty and sentenced to hang for his crimes. The night before he was scheduled to hang, Margaret Jacobs who had testified against him, came to him to admit her testimony against him and her grandfather had been a mistake. She sought his forgiveness, which he provided as he prayed with her. For a man that was about to die in no small part due to her confession, he showed composure and courage to pray and forgive her for her role in his trial.

George Burroughs’ family suffered greatly from his arrest and subsequent death especially after their stepmother refused to care for them. The court recognized his children had suffered and given his status as a minister in the community paid more in reparations to them than many of the other families. His family was awarded 50 pounds for their loss with only the families of John Proctor, George Jacobs and Philip English receiving more. Burroughs was a

⁸⁸³ Baker “George Burroughs: Salem's Perfect Witch”. 3.

⁸⁸⁴ Upton, 100.

man of faith and one that should not have faced the gallows, however the animosity in the community proved that even a man of the cloth was not exempt from the accusations.

Chapter Seven

Philip English was a man caught between two worlds, as a man of French descent that was trying to make a successful living in Salem. He had done well as a merchant both independently and through his marriage to Mary Hollingsworth, but that wealth was a problem for some as he believed he was exempt from paying taxes based on the charter from the fourteenth century during the time of Richard II that exempted him from taxes and customs in English ports not to mention the extension put in place by Edward IV.⁸⁸⁵ In addition to the issue of taxes, being French meant he was not a Puritan by faith but rather adhered to more Anglican beliefs which the Puritans were unaccepting. While he did not subscribe to the same religious beliefs, he understood the importance of religion to those in the Salem community. He joined Salem's First Church where he attended services regularly and where his children were baptized.⁸⁸⁶ The community recognized his status and gave him a pew next to Stephen Sewall in the church.⁸⁸⁷

⁸⁸⁵ Konig, "A New Look at the Essex 'French' Ethnic Frictions and Community Tensions in Seventeenth-Century Essex County, Massachusetts.," 1974. 70.

⁸⁸⁶ Austin, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/english.html>. 2.

⁸⁸⁷ Schiff, 257.

In addition to his place at church, he was respected enough to be a town selectman in 1682.⁸⁸⁸ His selection as an official in the community showed they recognized his place as an upstanding member of the community, but it eventually caused controversy when he neglected to collect taxes from those who were also from the Jersey Isle, showing his belief that he and his fellow Jerseymen were in fact exempt from taxes. While he still believed he was exempt from taxes, he did contribute and pay his share and by 1691 was in the top 1% of all Salem taxpayers.⁸⁸⁹

As a member of the community, he worked hard to improve his business and much like Giles Corey believed he should not shy away from situations where he felt he was being mistreated, as well as where he could help others. He was not afraid to use the courts to his business advantage, as when he used the courts to recoup debt from Richard Hollingworth, the grandfather of his future wife Margaret. But English also worked to help improve the lives of others from the Jersey Isle. He hired many former countrymen to work for him and often sponsored their passage to the new world.

English being so well respected stood out as someone that should not have been accused of witchcraft. However, following the concept of guilt by association with certain women, there was a way to connect him as a potential witch. The mother of his wife, Eleanor Hollingsworth had in prior years been accused of witchcraft. However, she was deceased at the time that Mary was accused by Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Walcott.⁸⁹⁰ As in so many other

⁸⁸⁸ "Dirty Laundry and a Friend Save Philip English from the Salem Witch Trials", <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/dirty-laundry-and-a-friend-save-philip-english-from-the-salem-witch-trials/>.

⁸⁸⁹ LeBeau, 10; Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 381.

⁸⁹⁰ LeBeau, 11; Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 137.

instances, the net spread over him on April 30, 1692. Susannah Shelton provided initial testimony against both Mary and Phillip. However as shown in chapter seven the testimony continued for seven months.

As a wealthier member of the community, English was able to pay a considerable amount of money to avoid spending time in jail and essentially enjoyed house arrest at the home of the Boston jailer. With the wealth they had amassed they were able to have freedom not afforded to others who had been accused. Mr. and Mrs. English were able to move about Boston during the day and attend church services. The only requirement was they return to the home of the jailer each night.⁸⁹¹ It would be their friends Samuel Willard and Joshua Moody who would encourage them to flee the colony and head to New York. The fact they fled gave Sheriff Corwin permission to seize their property due to the belief that only guilty parties would flee the law. English was not happy about his property being seized and through a letter sent to Governor Phips requested his items be returned. Governor Phips agreed and sent a second letter to Sheriff Corwin on April 26, 1693 requesting the possessions be returned.⁸⁹² The reality for the English family was that although they returned home, everything had been taken. After having endured life during the trials and returning to a home nothing like what that had in the past, Mary died within in year of her return.

The events that had transpired left a bitter taste for English. He was determined to have the wrong corrected and refused to settle for anything less. While he was able to rebuild his reputation and business, he wanted to be financially compensated for the losses he and his family had endured during the trials. He began the quest in 1694 with his suit against Sheriff Corwin

⁸⁹¹ Schiff, 180.

⁸⁹² Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 399.

however the courts ruled that Corwin was doing his job and had acted on orders from Deputy Stoughton.⁸⁹³

Philip English was not someone that took adversity and challenges lightly, and he was a man whose social status and wealth should have put him above the accusations of witchcraft. Yet, even he was accused, as was his wife. These three men, Giles Corey, George Burroughs, and Philip English represent the many lives overturned by the trials, and how social status, position, or wealth could put them out of reach of the insidious accusations.

Chapter Eight

After the trials ended, it was difficult to move forward. Some residents harbored ill feelings toward neighbors and family who had been caught up in the hysteria. A way to move past what had occurred needed to be found. Once Parris finally stepped down in 1695, a new minister was found to lead the congregation. Reverend Joseph Green accepted the position to become the next minister in Salem. Under Green, membership increased, and he performed numerous baptisms. One of the first actions he took was the building of a new meeting house. The previous meeting house had been the focus of so much that had transpired, and he believed a new home could help the community to heal. A committee of accusers and accused was established to help with securing a new location. Both groups working for the greater good of the community was a first step in healing and moving forward.

⁸⁹³ LeBeau, 6; Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 251.

In 1694, the court took action limiting the actions the families in Salem were able to take against those who had participated in the trials. The court led by Stoughton prohibited Corwin and his heirs from any liability while he had served as Sheriff.⁸⁹⁴ This motion was in addition to action that prevented families from seeking damages against the justices. The families began the quest to right the wrong on May 27, 1696 with a petition from Elizabeth Proctor.⁸⁹⁵ While she had avoided execution, her husband had not. As a widow, she sought access to his estate so that she could take care of her family. In July 1701, Elizabeth Proctor won her claim, and the attainder on her name as well as that of her husband was lifted. This action, which was necessary for families to return to normal, allowed men and women the required legal and religious appeasement to recover their reputations in the church. The fact that mostly women had been accused was in many ways better for families, as men were those who conducted business on a daily basis. If an attainder was placed on a woman, in the eyes of Puritans at the time, it only impeded her progression to salvation. This was a major hindrance, but life could continue for the family. In the case of a man such as Proctor or Burroughs, having an attainder made it much more difficult to function. With a husband effectively being dead, his wife and/or children were left with very few options to conduct business affairs.

While Proctor got her win in 1701, it was not until 1702 that the General Court ruled the trials had been unlawful.⁸⁹⁶ This action allowed the families to start reclaiming what had been taken from them. The petition from twenty residents filed with the General Court in March 1703 was an important step, and with the trials being declared unlawful, the monies that had been paid

⁸⁹⁴ Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, 200.

⁸⁹⁵ Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 844-45.

⁸⁹⁶ Blumberg, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-brief-history-of-the-salem-witch-trials-175162489/>.

should have been refunded. With Cotton Mather advocating for more than a reversal of attainders, English led the charge. He submitted his petition asking to “Renumerate them as to what have been Damnified in their Estate thereby we Do not Without Remorse and greif Recount these sorrowfull things...”⁸⁹⁷ Before the government actually recompensated the victims with any money, they continued to clear names and reverse attainders. Although the trials had been declared unlawful, the government did not officially acknowledge the wrong until 1711; even then, they did not accept the blame.⁸⁹⁸ Although the government of Massachusetts had allowed the trials to proceed, they were not the ones who had handed down the verdicts. In 1711, in response to petitions, the state effectively mandated the reversal of attainders and the return of goods that had been seized by the sheriff during the trials. The committee thus established determined that a total of 578 pounds were to be divided up between the families and the amount each received was based on the individual claims of the families of those who had lost their lives or who had been condemned. The families that had loved ones who had been imprisoned but never received a guilty sentence were left out of the funds available.

As shown in the table found in Chapter Four, the amounts received by families ranged from just under five pounds to 150 pounds, but these amounts do not include the money awarded to Philip English. His account was wholly separate, as neither he or his wife died, and both had fled Salem to avoid the trials. The amounts awarded to men ranged from twenty to fifty pounds, while the rates for women ranged from four pounds up to fifteen pounds.⁸⁹⁹ It should not be

⁸⁹⁷ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 853.

⁸⁹⁸ Adams, 25.

⁸⁹⁹ Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 847-92.

surprising that families that had lost a male figure received more financially due to the structure of society at the time, and the analysis of the records clearly supported this claim.

Implications and Impact of Gender Bias on Reparations After the Salem Witch Trials

Engerman wrote that reparations “have long been regarded as appropriate social policy.”⁹⁰⁰ Puritans’ belief wholeheartedly align with the view of Engerman; in a community that sought to live in order to please God and do right to those around them, it only made sense for them to take care of those who had been hurt through the actions of the Witch Trials. The goals of reparations, as mentioned in Chapter Four, have five forms: investigation in order to determine what actually transpired, apologies, civil rights legislation, cash payments to groups, and finally cash payments to individuals.⁹⁰¹ Based on my research, in their efforts to move forward and right the wrong, the community of Salem and the Massachusetts colony went through all these steps. Through their committee that traveled to Salem, the government met the first step by seeking out information on individuals and the claims by family members. The government and many individuals involved in the trials issued apologies and admitted the trials had been a mistake. The third form was met when they passed legislation to ensure something of this magnitude would not occur again, and finally, they agreed to make payments to the families who had endured so much. For the most part, those who had been caught up in all that happened announced they had been overwhelmed and succumbed to the pressures to rid the community of witches. They had fallen for the stories without taking time to really think for themselves.

⁹⁰⁰ Engerman, 593.

⁹⁰¹ Brophy, 836.

However, once the leaders and government recognized what they had done, they set out to correct the wrongs, and rather than hide behind their mistakes, they owned it and did what they felt was best to attempt to help families move forward. They listened and moved forward the best way they could by trying to compensate families. Although money could not bring back any of those who had been lost, it was an avenue to help families get back on their feet.

The committee worked to appropriately compensate the victims and their families, and sorted claims into three categories: executed, condemned but not executed, and imprisoned but not condemned.⁹⁰² As with any situation, they had to make the hard decision of who to compensate and how much, and with salvation at stake in the religious community, the committee only gave compensation to those who had “condemned” attached to their names. Reputation and the road to salvation was just as critical to the community as the lives lost, as families needed to know their loved ones were taken care of in the afterlife and the removal of the attainder along with the clearing of their name set the path for moving forward. By October 1711, all those who had been indicted and condemned had been pardoned, which set in motion the Reparation Act signed by Governor Dudley on December 17, 1711, with compensation beginning in January 1712.⁹⁰³ Although nearly twenty years had passed, the Commonwealth continued down the path of righting the wrongs that had been done to the victims of Salem.

This paper explored the disparities in reparations paid to victims and the families of the Salem Witch Trials. Because families that lost a male loved one and were of higher standing in the community received more money from the Commonwealth, their status consequently earned their families more compensation, while those seeking money for the loss of a female family

⁹⁰² Goodell, "Further Notes on the History of Witchcraft in Massachusetts," 1884. 11.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 14.

member recouped less. By the late seventeenth century, reparations were moving from a monetary restoration of financial losses to restoration of reputation and acknowledgement as well as apology by the persecutors. In addition, the number of men accused and convicted in Salem is an aberration from the rest of New England at the time, as well as in England. As has been demonstrated, Salem was the first significant case in which reparations were used to value social standing, not just material losses, and thus those with higher overall standing in the community were compensated at a far higher rate. Men such as Burroughs and English, not to mention Proctor and Corey, had contributed a great deal to the community and were seen as leaders.

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