



The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

## RELIGIOUS DISSENT

A Supplement to

Settlement of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies of New England



Grade 5

United States History and Geography

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### I. Standards Assessed

#### History-Social Science Content Standards

5.4

- (2) Identify the major individuals and groups responsible for the founding of the various colonies and the reasons for their founding. . . . (e.g. Roger Williams)
- (3) Describe the religious aspects of the earliest colonies (e.g., Puritanism in Massachusetts...)

#### History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards

##### *Historical Interpretation*

- (1) Students summarize the key events of the era they are studying and explain the historical contexts of those events.
- (3) Students identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.

#### English-Language Arts Content Standards

##### *Reading*

- 2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.
- 2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

*Speaking*

2.2 Deliver informative presentations about an important idea, issue, or event....

**English-Language Development Standards (Level 4)***Reading Fluency*

- (4) Use standard dictionary to find the meanings of known vocabulary.
- (6) Use decoding skills and knowledge of academic and social vocabulary to achieve independent reading.
- (8) Read increasingly complex narrative and expository texts aloud with appropriate pacing, intonation and expression.

*Reading Comprehension*

- (1) Describe main ideas and supporting details of a text.
- (6) Distinguish between explicit examples of fact, opinions, inference, and cause/effect in texts.

**II. Teacher Background Information**

Puritans came to America to escape religious persecution. When they arrived they established churches and expected everyone to conform to their religious beliefs. Non-Puritans were harassed and driven from the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies. Even Puritan ministers who questioned the authority of other ministers were banished.

Anne Hutchinson, the daughter of a minister who had been briefly jailed for his religious beliefs, was deeply concerned about religion. Shortly after migrating to the Massachusetts Bay Colony she invited women to come to her home to discuss religion. These meetings became very popular and a number of men also began to attend. Anne often disagreed with the teachings of some ministers who she claimed depended too heavily on the Covenant of Works that promised salvation if one obeyed moral law. She adhered to the teachings of the Rev. John Cotton who seemed to place more emphasis on the Covenant of Grace that required an active faith and softened the Calvinist doctrine of predestination.

Anne was called before the General Court of the colony and questioned by Governor John Winthrop and a panel of ministers and government leaders. During the trial Anne testified that she had a revelation, anathema to Puritans. The Court concluded that Anne was guilty of heresy and sedition and banished her from the colony. She settled in Rhode Island, a colony founded by Roger Williams, another religious dissenter, who had been expelled from Massachusetts. After New York became an English colony, Anne moved to Long Island where she was killed during an Indian attack.

Over the next half century some Puritans became lax in their religious practices. Many found the strict adherence to earlier practices difficult and no longer sought to be full

members of Puritan congregations. Some Puritan ministers viewed every setback as a sign of God's disfavor. An Indian victory over a colonial militia in the 1680s was taken as a sign that Puritans must mend their ways. Secular disputes that developed between wealthy merchants and farmers also triggered religious wrangling.

In 1692 a group of young girls in Salem Village were believed to be tormented by witches. The communities around Boston were convinced that witches were among them and a general court was called to hear accusations of witchcraft. Within a few months 140 persons were accused of witchcraft. The court agreed to admit spectral evidence from witnesses who testified that the spirits of the accused tormented them. Nineteen were hanged and one elderly man pressed to death. Several others died in prison. Finally some ministers, including the highly respected Increase Mather, spoke out against the trials and the admission of spectral evidence. In 1693 he wrote,

...It is tempting of God when men put the innocency of their fellow creatures upon such trials; to desire the Almighty to show a miracle to clear the innocent or to convict the guilty is a most presumptuous tempting of Him.... This notwithstanding I will add: It were better that ten suspected witches should escape than one innocent person should be condemned.

In 1697 the presiding judge at the trials, Samuel Sewall, publicly repented for his role in the witchcraft trials.

The trial of Anne Hutchinson and the witchcraft trials of Salem Village are examples of the lack of tolerance in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Hutchinson trial reveals how the desire for conformity can result in the disregard for persons with differing views. The trials at Salem Village testify to the affect of mass hysteria. The Hutchinson trial at Newton and the witch trials at Salem Village hold a number of lessons for us today including respect of diversity, civility, and the importance to insure fairness in our judicial system.

### III. Materials Needed

#### Student Readings

Text book or encyclopedia readings on Roger Williams

Student Handout, "The Trial of Anne Hutchinson" (Reader's Theater)

Background Information on Salem Village

#### Group Readings

Group 1: Tituba, Sarah Osborne, and Sarah Good

Group 2: Sarah Cloyce, Rebecca Nurse, Mary Easty, and Doreas Good

Group 3: John and Elizabeth Proctor, Rev. George Burroughs, and Giles and Martha Corey

#### IV. Lesson Activities

##### Note to Teacher

This lesson involves religious dissent in Puritan New England. It should be taught in its historical context. Students should understand the role of religion in Puritan New England and caution should be taken to insure that religious convictions are not mocked or in any way ridiculed.

1. Introduce the lesson with a discussion of “dissent.” Have students look up the meaning of the word in a dictionary and write a definition in their own words. Ask the class to list the names of individuals or groups that would be considered “dissenters” today. Do people in the United States have the right to dissent?

Have students read from their textbooks about religious dissenters in early American history. Focus on the story of the Puritan minister Roger Williams who was expelled from Massachusetts because of his religious and political beliefs. How important is religious toleration? How have Roger Williams’ beliefs become part of our government today?

2. Tell the class that they will be taking part in a dramatization of the trial of Anne Hutchinson, another religious dissenter. If students are unfamiliar with performing a reader’s theater explain that they will be assigned certain speaking and non-speaking roles in this play. Those with speaking roles need only to read over their lines once or twice before the performance. Students with non-speaking roles will act as people in the courtroom or take on the role of members of the General Court.

The cast of characters includes 12 speaking roles. You may wish to have a different student assume the roles of these characters in different “acts” which would increase the speaking roles to 16. Other members of the class could be assigned non-speaking roles and serve on the court that tried Anne Hutchinson. Still others could be in the court room as both Hutchinson friends and foes and ad lib support or opposition to what is being said. In this way every student in the class would become part of the reader’s theater skit.

It is important to recognize that Anne Hutchinson sealed her fate during the trial when she claimed to have a direct revelation from God. The idea that God spoke directly to her was a violation of Puritan teaching. Puritans believed that such revelation had ended with the Bible.

3. After the presentation of the reader’s theater discuss the issues that were brought out in the trial.
  - Why were the Puritans so concerned about the teachings of Anne Hutchinson?
  - How did they deal with dissenters?
  - What lessons can we learn from the story of Anne Hutchinson?

4. Set the stage for reading about the witchcraft trials in Salem Village about a half-century after Anne Hutchinson had been banished from Massachusetts. Either read the background information on Salem Village (page 15) to the class or relate the information in a story-telling activity.

Divide the class into three groups and give each a different reading (pages 18, 19, and 20). Tell each group to read and discuss the cases and report back to the class about their readings. You might wish to have each group prepare a brief skit in which they act out the trial of the accused witches in their respective readings.

5. Conduct a general class discussion on the trials at Salem Village. Ask questions such as:
  - What may have been the cause or causes for the witchcraft trials in Salem Village?
  - What are the lessons we can learn from these trials?
  - How do we in the United States today insure that trials are fair?
  - Could anything like the witchcraft trials happen today? Explain.

Tell the class that 140 people were accused of being witches. Nineteen people were hanged and one person was pressed to death. As many as thirteen people may have died in prison. Several people who took part in the trials later apologized for what they had done. In some cases people who were later declared innocent had to remain in prison until they could pay their jail expenses. After being released from jail, Sarah Cloyce spent the rest of her life trying to clear the name of her two sisters who had been hanged for being witches.

Ask students if they can define “hysteria.” Brainstorm some aspects of hysteria from history or from current events.

- Can panic cause people to do things they would not ordinarily do?
- Can peer pressure cause people to testify to things that are not true?

## Reader's Theater

### THE TRIAL OF ANNE HUTCHINSON

Mrs. Anne Hutchinson was called before the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony at Newton, Massachusetts in 1637. The General Court was the highest authority in the colony. Anne was charged with expressing religious beliefs that differed from the basic teachings of most Puritan ministers.

#### Cast of Characters in order of appearance:

#### Act I

1. Narrator 1
2. Narrator 2
3. Narrator 3
4. Anne Hutchinson
5. Rev. Zachariah Symmes
6. William Hutchinson

#### Act III

1. Rev. John Wilson<sup>2</sup>
2. Joseph Weld<sup>3</sup>
3. Mrs. Wilson<sup>4</sup>

#### Act II

1. Narrator 1
2. Narrator 2
3. Narrator 3
4. Anne Hutchinson
5. Boston Woman<sup>1</sup>
6. Governor John Winthrop
7. Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley

<sup>1</sup> Fictitious character

<sup>2</sup> Rev. John Wilson was a pastor of a church in Boston and a member of the court that convicted Anne.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Weld was Anne's jailer after the trial. His brother was a minister and one of Anne's strongest opponents.

The discussion of Anne's death on the street in Boston is fictitious.

<sup>4</sup> Fictitious character

#### Vocabulary

<b>Anglican Church</b>	commonly called the Church of England; everyone in England was expected to be a member of this church and was forced to pay for the support of the church
<b>banish</b>	to send someone away and order them not to return
<b>clergy</b>	preacher; minister of a church
<b>covenant</b>	agreement; a contract
<b>heretic</b>	one who believes something against the teachings of a church
<b>profess</b>	to state one's beliefs
<b>revelation</b>	something that is disclosed by God to a person
<b>sedition</b>	speaking out against the government or the church

## ACT I

Scene 1*—A village outside of London, England*

**Narrator 1** Our story begins in England in 1591 with the birth of Anne Marbury. Her father was a minister. The year before Anne was born her father was sent to jail for criticizing some of the practices of the leaders of the Anglican Church. After he was released he was not permitted to preach and he became a farmer for a time. A few years later Rev. Marbury was given permission to preach again.

**Narrator 2** But, the bishops of the church did not trust him. Some people were afraid to attend his services. This disturbed Anne who believed that it was wrong to punish her father for what he believed to be true.

**Narrator 3** As a young girl, Anne was always interested in religious discussions in her father's home. She often sat silently in a corner of the room and listened to the discussions of ministers invited to her father's home. But, when the guests left, Anne always seemed to have hundreds of questions for her father about what had been said.

**Narrator 2** In 1612, a few years after her father died, Anne married William Hutchinson, a merchant. Anne became interested in the teachings of Puritan ministers and in time she and William decided to become members of the church. This was a time when many Puritans were forced to hold meetings in secret.



John Cotton

**Narrator 3** The family began to attend services conducted by the Reverend John Cotton, a Puritan minister. Rev. Cotton's sermons disturbed church leaders. An order was issued for his arrest. He went into hiding to escape arrest. In 1633 he left England to join the Puritans who had established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in North America.

**Narrator 1** Anne convinced her husband that the family should follow Rev. Cotton to America. In 1634 Anne and William boarded a ship in London with 10 of their 11 children. Their oldest son, Edward, had sailed to America with an uncle a few months earlier.

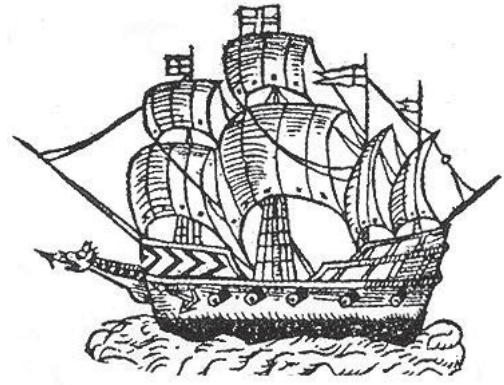
## ACT I

Scene 2

## —Aboard the Ship Griffin

**Narrator 1** The Hutchinson family boarded the *Griffin*. There were more than 100 passengers and almost 50 crew members on the small ship. A herd of 100 cows was also brought on board the ship.

**Narrator 2** Crossing the ocean was not easy. It took three months to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Sometimes there were storms and many of the passengers became seasick. At other times the winds did not blow and the ship could not sail.



**Narrator 3** One of the persons traveling to America was a Puritan minister by the name of Zechariah Symmes. He held services on the ship for the passengers. Anne did not always agree with what the Rev. Symmes preached. She would hold meetings on deck and explain her religious beliefs.

**Anne Hutchinson** On Sunday Rev. Symmes said that the children who died on the ship last week were punished by God for their sins. How can this be? They are only infants and do not know right from wrong.

**Rev. Symmes** Mr. Hutchinson, you need to tell your wife to stop criticizing my sermons. She must learn to listen and learn. She has never gone to school and does not know what she is talking about. She is a bad influence on her children and to the good Puritans on board this ship.

**Mr. Hutchinson** Anne's father was a minister and he taught her to read the Bible. She is a good Christian woman. I'm sure you have heard of Rev. John Cotton. We attended his church in London. Anne would meet with him and discuss religion. In fact, she talked me into sailing to America to follow Mr. Cotton so that we could attend his services.

**Rev. Symmes** I say again sir, you must control your wife. A woman's place is to listen and not to preach sermons. She must show respect for men who have studied the Bible. You are a wealthy businessman and will be given good land when you arrive in America. It would be a shame to lose your place in the community because of your wife. Sir, it is your job as a husband and a father to make her...



**William Hutchinson** Sir, that's enough. I respect you as a minister but I disagree with you. Anne is a good wife and mother. She has studied under her father and Rev. Cotton and, I dare say, she knows as much as you. She has every right to talk to others about matters of religion.

**Rev. Symmes** You will be sorry for speaking to me in this way. You and your wife had better learn respect for the clergy.

**Narrator 3** The *Griffin* landed at Boston in the Massachusetts Bay Colony on September 18, 1834. The Hutchinson family rejoiced. They had finally arrived in a new world where they could practice their religion without fear.

**Anne Hutchinson** Will, what a pleasure it will be to raise our children in this great "City Upon a Hill" where everyone treats others fairly. We can all worship God in peace.



Seal of the  
Massachusetts  
Bay Colony

**William Hutchinson** Anne, we are beginning a new life in this great land. But, you must always remember that there are some Puritans who do not respect a person's right to believe anything different than what they believe. Don't forget Mr. Symmes. He can cause trouble.

**Anne Hutchinson** What trouble can he cause? We will join our dear friend Mr. Cotton's church in Boston and raise our children as good Christians.

## ACT I

### Scene 3

#### —Church Meeting in Boston

**Narrator 1** In order to become a new member of a church you first had to apply for membership and declare your faith. If any of the church leaders objected you could not become a member.

**Narrator 2** I fear Anne is going to have some trouble. Look at who is one of the church leaders!

**Rev. Symmes** I object! Anne Hutchinson is not a true believer. She must not be permitted to become a member of this church.

**Narrator 3** Although Rev. Symmes objected, Anne was asked to profess her faith. Other leaders of the church questioned her about her beliefs. She answered their questions and the ministers of the church overruled Rev. Symmes. They found Anne to be a true believer. She was permitted to become a member of the church.

## Act II

Scene 1—*The Hutchinson Home*

- Narrator 1** Anne soon became a much respected woman in Boston. She nursed the sick and helped deliver many babies. She invited women to her home. During these meetings the women discussed how to care for the sick and ways to raise their children.
- Narrator 2** But, that was not all that was discussed. Anne would explain the meaning of the sermon that the minister preached in church. Anne became extremely popular. Sometimes women from outside Boston would come to hear what Anne had to say about religion.
- Narrator 3** Men also began to come to the meetings. So many people crowded into the Hutchinson home that Anne had to hold meetings twice a week.
- Anne Hutchinson** I think the minister should have talked to us on Sunday about the Covenant of Grace. People can be saved and will go to heaven if they have faith in God. Some of our ministers do not accept this Covenant of Grace. They believe in a Covenant of Works. They believe that the only way to get to heaven is to follow the rules from the Bible.
- Boston Woman** But, we must follow the rules of the Bible. We all know that to be true.
- Anne Hutchinson** Yes, but some of our ministers believe that they are the only ones that know what these rules are and that we have to obey them in order to follow this Covenant of Works. Our dear friend John Cotton teaches us about “absolute grace.” God’s grace is given completely to the elect and that is what is needed to get to heaven.
- Boston Woman** Our ministers say that at birth some of us are among the saved and others are not. Those of us who are among the saved will always follow the Covenant of Works. Our obedience is proof that we are the elect.
- Anne Hutchinson** You should listen carefully to Mr. Cotton’s sermons. He tells us that God knows, before a person is born, who will lead a good life and who will not. A person who misbehaves during life does not possess the Covenant of Grace and all the good works that he or she may do will not open the way to heaven.
- Boston Woman** I’m not sure that I really understand what you are saying. I think I need to discuss this with my husband. I will ask him to have our minister explain this Covenant of Grace you are talking about.

**Anne Hutchinson** We Puritans were driven out of England by ministers of the Anglican Church. Now, some of our ministers sound like they are becoming more like the Anglicans who preach only the Covenant of Works.

**Boston Woman** Anne, I don't think I had better come to your home again. I fear you are going to get us all into trouble with what you are saying.



## Act II

### Scene 2

—*The General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, November 1637*

**Narrator 1** Anne's brother-in-law, John Wheelwright, was a Puritan minister. He was one of Anne's loyal supporters. Other Puritan ministers in the colony opposed some of the teachings of Rev. Wheelwright. He was called before Puritan ministers in the colony and ordered to stop preaching. The governor of the colony, Henry Vane, one of Anne Hutchinson's admirers, came to John Wheelwright's defense.



Henry Vane  
Governor of  
Massachusetts Bay Colony,  
1636

**Narrator 2** Governor Vane was running for re-election at the time. He lost the election to the former governor John Winthrop. After the election Rev. Wheelwright was found guilty of teaching false beliefs and was ordered to leave the colony.

**Narrator 3** With a new governor in office and her brother-in-law sent away from Massachusetts, Anne had few important people to turn to for support.

**Narrator 1** An order has been issued for Anne Hutchinson to appear before the General Court. Governor Winthrop called the meeting of the court at Newton outside of Boston. Anne had a number of supporters in Boston but few in Newton.

**Narrator 3** On November 7, 1637, Anne appeared at court to defend herself. Her husband William and a few of her friends were at her side. She was ill and expecting the birth of her 14<sup>th</sup> child in a few months.



Trial of Mrs. Hutchinson

**Governor John Winthrop**

Mrs. Hutchinson, you are called here because you have troubled the peace of this colony and of the churches here. You are known to be a woman who held meetings in her own house that have been forbidden. You have acted in a way that is not fitting for a woman. We have called you here so that you will understand how things are in this colony. We hope that you will see the errors of your ways.

**Anne Hutchinson**

I am called here to answer your questions but so far I have not heard a direct question.

**Gov. Winthrop**

I have told you why you are called here and will tell you more charges against you.

**Anne Hutchinson**

Name one, sir.

**Gov. Winthrop**

You have broken the law of God and of the state.

**Anne Hutchinson**

How have I broken the law of God?

**Gov. Winthrop**

Why do you have meetings in your house every week?

**Anne Hutchinson**

Is it against the law for me to do so? It has been a practice among Puritans in England to hold meetings in their homes.

- Gov. Winthrop** Women have no right to teach religion. A woman has no right to be a leader in the church.
- Anne Hutchinson** Is it against the law for me to teach women? Then, why do you call me here to teach the court?
- Gov. Winthrop** We have not called you here to teach the court. You have caused people who come to your meetings to not listen to their ministers or leaders of the colony.
- Anne Hutchinson** Sir, I do not believe that to be so.
- Gov. Winthrop** You must stop having these meetings.
- Anne Hutchinson** You are wrong. God does not have such a rule.
- Gov. Winthrop** We are your judges. You can not judge us.
- Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley**  
You started causing trouble before you even arrived here three years ago. I was informed that you caused trouble on the ship before you landed in Boston. Once you arrived you corrupted the minds of women at your meetings.
- Anne Hutchinson** I pray, Sir, prove it.
- Governor Winthrop** Here are six ministers that say you have told people that they are not able ministers of the gospel.
- Anne Hutchinson** I did say that there was a difference between them and Mr. Cotton.
- Narrator 1** The Rev. John Cotton was called upon to testify. Although he tried to defend Anne he would not go so far to get himself in trouble with the court.
- Deputy Governor Dudley**  
Mrs. Hutchinson, you say that you honor the teachings of Mr. Cotton. Even he is not willing to tell this court that you know more than our honored ministers. What makes you think that you can contradict our leading ministers?
- Anne Hutchinson** Sir, I bless the Lord. He has let me see the difference between a ministry that is right and one that is wrong.
- Narrator 2** The governor and ministers in the court room were surprised by Anne's comment. They began to whisper to one another.
- Deputy Governor Dudley**  
Did the Lord speak to you?

**Anne Hutchinson** The Lord revealed it to me.

**Deputy Governor Dudley**

How? How did the Lord tell you this?

**Anne Hutchinson** By a voice to my soul.

**Governor Winthrop** Mrs. Hutchinson, are you saying that the Lord sent a voice to your soul? Or is this something you have come to accept on your own without the Lord's guidance?

**Anne Hutchinson** I will not deny that the Lord has spoken to me through my soul.

**Narrator 3** The judges and ministers of the court looked at one another in surprise. They began to talk to one another.

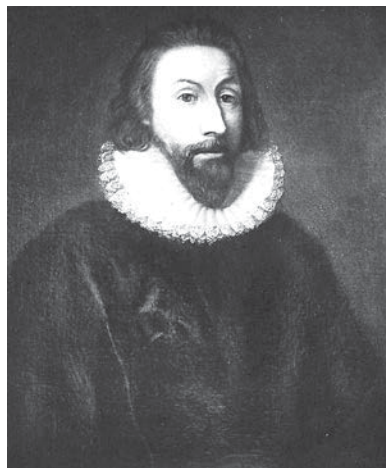
**Governor Winthrop** I believe that you are a troublesome person and a danger to all good people of this colony. I rule that you shall be banished from this land. Until such time that we send you away, you will be imprisoned. All on the court who agree, raise your hands.

**Narrator 1** Of the 49 men on the court all but three persons raised their hands.

**Governor Winthrop** You are convicted of heresy and sedition and will be banished from this land.

**Anne Hutchinson** I desire to know where I will be sent.

**Governor Winthrop** Say no more. The court has decided where you will be sent and you will learn soon enough.



John Winthrop

## Act III

—A street in Boston, 1643

- Rev. John Wilson     Mr. Weld did you know whatever happened to Anne Hutchinson?
- Joseph Weld         Yes. After she was found guilty by the court she was jailed at my place near Boston until she was sent to Rhode Island
- Mrs. Wilson         At the trial she was expecting a child. Mr. Weld, do you know what happened to the child?
- Joseph Weld         I heard that her child was deformed and died at birth after she was banished to Rhode Island.
- John Wilson         That is surely a sign from God for all the trouble she caused.
- Mrs. Wilson         Are the Hutchinsons still living in Rhode Island?
- Joseph Weld         No. The Hutchinsons with six of their children moved to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. William Hutchinson died last year and his wife and some of her children moved to another part of the Dutch settlement. I was told that Anne and some of her children were killed by Indians.
- Hugh Peters         We should rejoice. This is truly a sign from God.
- Narrator 1         Few of Anne's friends spoke about her for fear of what might happen to them. A few became Quakers but they were fined and driven out of the colony.
- Narrator 2         Some Quakers refused to leave the colony and they were jailed. Several were even put to death for their religious beliefs. One was Anne's friend Mary Dyer. She was an old Quaker woman who was hanged for expressing her religious beliefs.

*THE END*



## SALEM VILLAGE

There were over 600 people who lived in Salem in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Some of the people were fairly wealthy. They were merchants and businessmen who made their money from trade. Most of these families lived in the eastern section of the town near Massachusetts Bay. The other families made their living from farming and lived in the western section a few miles away. The farmers, led by the Putnam family, wanted to separate from Salem and formed a new community named Salem Village (years later the name was changed to Danvers). They believed that the wealthy people of Salem were more concerned about themselves and making money than about their Puritan religious beliefs.



The Town of Salem

There were a number of refugees settling near Salem. They were fleeing from an Indian war in New England. Many of the refugees and residents of Salem Village thought that this was the work of the devil and a punishment from God for some who did not practice their religion. The families of Salem Village decided to establish a church and hired a new minister. John Putnam, one of the most important men in Salem Village, recommended Rev. Samuel Parris.

Samuel Parris's father was a sugar planter and merchant in Barbados, an English island in the West Indies. Samuel had attended Harvard College in the Massachusetts Bay Colony but had returned to Barbados to take over his father's business. After a hurricane destroyed the business he moved to Boston. He could not make a living as a merchant and decided to become a minister. In 1688 he was hired by the new church Salem Village.

The Rev. Samuel Parris was married and had a nine year old daughter, Betty, and cared for a twelve year old orphaned niece, Abigail Williams. He had also brought a slave named Tituba with him from Barbados. The two young girls and several others in Salem Village would listen to Tituba tell stories about demons and animals that had strange powers. Tituba would also tell fortunes. Betty and Abigail became disturbed after one of the fortune telling sessions. Rev.



Parris believed the girls to be ill and called a doctor. The doctor examined them but could not find a reason for their strange behavior. He told Rev. Parris that they must be bewitched by the devil.

Puritans believed that witches made a deal with the devil in exchange for special powers. Therefore, anyone suspected of being a witch had to go before a court. Those who confessed would usually be jailed. Others who refused to plead guilty were tried. If convicted they could be jailed, sent out of the colony, or killed. Anyone who either confessed or was found guilty lost everything he owned. Their families could not inherit their wealth.

The witchcraft trials were to be held at a local tavern but when so many people showed up to witness the trial it was moved to the Salem Village Meeting House.



Tibuta and the children

## TITUBA, SARAH OSBORNE, AND SARAH GOOD

Betty Parris, the daughter of the Puritan minister in Salem Village, Ann Putnam and five other young girls were seated in the meeting hall. Betty had said that Tituba had bewitched her. The other girls said that two women in the village, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, were also witches. At the trial Tituba confessed to being a witch. No one knows why she confessed. Some think that she thought she would not be harmed if she confessed. Others believed that she confessed to telling fortunes.

Tituba told the members of the court that a man wearing black made her sign her name in the witches' book. The people in the court room said that the man in black must be the devil. Tituba said that the two other women the girls had mentioned also signed the book.

The girls screamed and tumbled on the floor of the meetinghouse. People believed that the girls acted this way because the accused women had looked at them. The court ruled that the girls' strange actions were caused by unseen spirits of the women on trial and could be taken as evidence. Both Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne denied being witches. They said that they had never harmed these girls.

Sarah Good was a homeless woman who went from door to door begging for food. When people did not give her food she would become angry and would mumble. People believed that her mumbled words were curses. Some claimed that after she was turned away without food some of their animals on the farm died. This was taken as proof that she was indeed a witch.

Sarah Osborne was an elderly woman who did not regularly attend church. This was surely evidence that she was a witch. She had been married to Robert Prince who had a farm next to that of Captain John Putnam, one of the important men in Salem Village. His daughter was one of the girls who said she was a witch. When Sarah's husband died she was to keep the land for their two young sons. But, when she married Alexander Osborne he took control of the property. This upset John Putnam. A few people believed that he wanted this property but they would not dare to speak. If they did, would they, too, be accused of witchcraft?

"This court sentences the slave Tituba to prison for confessing to be a witch. We believe that Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne lied when they denied that they were witches. We have all seen how these innocent young girls have been tormented by the spirits of these two women. They are truly witches and we sentence them to hang for their crime."

Sarah Osborne died in prison before her death sentence could be carried out. Sarah Good was taken to Gallows Hill where she was hanged.

## SARAH CLOYCE, REBECCA NURSE, MARY EASTY, AND DOREAS GOOD

The girls in Salem Village were seeing more and more witches. The village was filled with fear. Puritan ministers preached sermons about witchcraft and one visiting minister said in his sermon that it was better to accuse the innocent than to permit the guilty from going free.

Abigail William, Rev. Parris' niece, and eleven-year-old Ann Putnam accused Rebecca Nurse of witchcraft. Rebecca had once fought with one of the Puritan ministers over the boundary of her land. She was 71 years old and hard of hearing. She often did not answer when people spoke to her. Rebecca was a religious woman. She was ordered to stand trial. The two girls said that Rebecca's spirit attacked them. Ann Putnam's mother also testified that Rebecca's spirit tried to get her to sign the witches' book and when she refused she was pinched. Evidence was also presented that a neighbor died after she had argued with him. The jury found that Rebecca was not guilty. When the girls heard the verdict they began to shout and rolled around on the floor. The judge refused to accept the verdict and sent the jury back to review the evidence. This time the jury found Rebecca Nurse guilty.

Two of Rebecca's sisters, Sarah Cloyce and Mary Easty were also charged with witchcraft. Sarah Cloyce walked out of a church service when Rev. Parris preached a sermon on witchcraft. After she walked out of the service Ann Putnam suddenly pointed to the ceiling of the meeting hall and shouted "Look at Goodwife Cloyce sitting up on the beam." She was called before the court and found guilty. She was sentenced to hang. Less than two weeks later her sister Mary was found guilty of witchcraft.

"Doreas Good, the five-year-old daughter of Sarah Good—one of the first women to be found guilty of witchcraft, was also accused of being a witch. The same young girls that accused her mother of being a witch said that the spirit of young Doreas had bitten them. At her trial Doreas said that a little snake would suck blood from her finger. When examined there was a red spot on the tip of her finger. The jury found her guilty based on the testimony of the girls and the red spot on the little girl's finger.

Rebecca Nurse and Mary Easty were hanged on Gallows Hill. Sarah Cloyce survived but remained in jail for almost a year. Doreas Good was jailed for eight months. When released she was insane.

JOHN AND ELIZABETH PROCTOR, REV. GEORGE BURROUGHS,  
AND GILES AND MARTHA COREY

John Proctor was a rich landowner and owned a tavern in Salem Town. John thought the witchcraft trials were foolish and often said so. He was known to always say what was on his mind. He was the first man to be accused of being a witch or warlock at the Salem trials. Several young girls and Indian John, Rev. Parris's slave and husband of Tituba who had confessed to being a witch, testified that ghosts had appeared to them. They said that the ghosts told them that John Proctor was a witch who had murdered a number of people. In court John called the girls liars. He said Indian John, who worked for another tavern owner, had been told to accuse him. John demanded that he be sent to Boston to be tried. The court refused.

John's wife, Elizabeth, was also accused of being a witch. One of the girls said that Elizabeth had tried to force her to sign the witches' book. The court learned that Elizabeth's grandmother had once been suspected of being a witch. The jury found both John and Elizabeth Proctor guilty and sentenced them to death.

Rev. George Burroughs was married three times. After his first wife died he remarried. The family moved to Salem Village where he served as a Puritan minister. A year after settling in Salem Village his second wife died. After he had an argument with leading families in the church over his salary, he moved to Maine. At that time Maine was part of the Massachusetts colony. Mrs. Putnam accused Rev. Burroughs of bewitching soldiers during a war with the Indians. She said that he had arranged for the devil to help the Indians defeat the colonial army in battle. At the trial witnesses said that his two dead wives came to them in a dream. They said that he had killed them. The girls of Salem Village identified Rev. Burroughs as the ringleader of all the witches. The jury found him guilty.

Giles Corey, a man in his 80s, and his wife were both charged with being witches. Giles, like John Proctor, had criticized the trials. When he was ordered to court, he refused to stand trial. He believed that if he refused to be tried his land would not be taken from him and could go to his two sons-in-law. For refusing to stand trial he was ordered to be pressed to death under heavy stones. Giles was held in chains in jail for five months before being killed. His wife, Martha, was known as being a very religious person. She did not believe in witchcraft and was against the trials from the very beginning. She was found guilty based on testimony that her spirit had attacked the girls that testified against witches.



Giles Corey in Court

John Proctor and George Burroughs were hanged on Gallows Hill. Elizabeth Proctor was expect-

ing a child and the judges ruled that she should first give birth before carrying out the death sentence. By the time the child was born the trials had ended and Elizabeth was released from jail. Although pardoned, she was not permitted to claim any of her husband's property. Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing to stand trial and two days later his wife was hung.



East Church  
(In 1901 as the Salem Witch Museum)

## PRINT RESOURCES

Boraas, Tracey. *The Salem Witch Trials*. Capstone Press (Let Freedom Ring Series), 2004.

This book provides some background on Puritan beliefs and tells how two girls in the minister's house started a chain of events that led to the witchcraft trials.

Clark, Beth. *Anne Hutchinson: Religious Leader*. Chelsea House (Colonial Leaders Series), 2000.

This is an easy to read biography of the Puritan woman who faced trial and banishment for disagreeing with the religious leaders of the colony.

Fraustino, Lisa Rowe. *I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance Trembley, Witness to the Salem Witch Trials*. Scholastic (Dear America Series), 2004.

The trials are revealed through the eyes of a twelve-year-old girl. She describes the fears and doubts that arise when her friend is condemned as a witch.

Ilgenfritz, Elizabeth. *Anne Hutchinson*. Chelsea House (American Women of Achievement Series), 1991.

This is a detailed study of Anne Hutchinson including essential background information on Puritan beliefs and the events that led to her trial and banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Mangal, Méлина. *Let Freedom Ring! Anne Hutchinson: Religious Reformer*. Capstone Press, 2004.

This brief biography provides essential information about Anne Hutchinson's life and her trial and banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony because of her religious beliefs and practices.

Uschan, Michael V. *Salem Witch Trials*. Gareth Stevens Publishing (Landmark Events in American History Series), 2004.

*Salem Witch Trials* follows the beginnings of the witchcraft hysteria and describes the impact of these trials on the community.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

*Anne Hutchinson.*

Use “Trial of Anne Hutchinson” as a Google search for background information and complete and/or edited versions of the trial transcript.

*An Account of Events in Salem* by Douglas Linder

[http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SAL\\_ACCT.HTM](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SAL_ACCT.HTM)

This is a good website for teachers. It includes a number of “hot links” to relevant documents.

*Salem*, National Geographic

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/salem/>

This is an especially good interactive website on the witch trials at Salem Village.

*The Salem Witch Trial, 1692*, Eyewitness to History.

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/salem.htm>

This is a good introduction to the trials for teachers. The website provides some excerpts from the trial testimony.