



American Legends: The Salem Witch Trials

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*Includes descriptions of the trials and executions of the accused.

*Includes testimony from some of the cases and the petitions of some of the accused asking for clemency.

*Includes pictures depicting important people, places, and events.

*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"More than once it has been said, too, that the Salem witchcraft was the rock on which the theocracy shattered." – George Lincoln Burr

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

The sleepy town of Salem, Massachusetts was not unlike every other small village that dotted the countryside around Boston until 1692, when religious authorities held a series of hearings accusing dozens of people of witchcraft across a handful of towns outside of Boston, including Ipswich and Andover. However, since the most notorious trials were held in Salem, they have been known ever since as the Salem Witch Trials.

Today the Salem Witch Trials are often remembered as being a relic of a superstitious past, and Salem has transformed itself into a tourist haven and Halloween destination by capitalizing off the Salem Witch trials. But it was deadly serious in 1692, when 19 men and women found themselves taken to "Gallows Hill" and hanged for being witches. Another man who was over 80 years old was pressed to death for refusing to be tried for witchcraft. And from February 1692 - May 1693, hundreds of others were accused of witchcraft, and dozens of them were imprisoned for months until the mass hysteria finally died down.

The Salem Witch Trials are still taught to American schoolchildren, but much of the context is removed from the narrative, and important questions are often never posed. How did the Salem Witch Trials go on for over a year? Why did it happen in Salem? Why were the condemned people accused of witchcraft? American Legends: The Salem Witch Trials chronicles the history that led up to the infamous trials, and the legends and myths surrounding them. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Salem Witch Trials like you never have before, in no time at all.

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