

Which "Witch" Is Which?

Witch Hysteria started at the home of Mr Samuel Parris in Salem Village in the middle of winter in 1692. The people in Salem were **Puritans**. They believed very strongly in God and had strict rules about what they were allowed to do and what was a **sin**.

Mr. Parris had a slave, Tituba, who had been brought to America from Barbados, where she had first **belonged to** a woman who was a witch. Mr. Parris had a nine-year-old daughter, Betty and his **niece**, eleven-year-old Abigail who also lived with them.

The girls got **bored** with doing nothing during the long, cold winter, so they asked Tituba to tell them stories of her childhood. Tituba had learned some magic tricks from her **previous** owner, which totally **fascinated** the listeners. She could read **palms** and tell **fortunes**, which of course were **considered** sins in the Puritan world.

The girls **invited** their friend Ann to **join** them in these story **sessions** and when the word got around there were soon a number of older women between the ages of sixteen and forty-five, who also joined in to hear the **curious** stories.

Nobody knows for sure what happened during these sessions, but the two youngest girls soon started acting very **strangely**. They would **crawl** about the house, screaming, **barking** like dogs or **meowing** like cats. Tituba didn't know what to do.

Mr. Parris became worried about the girls and called in Doctor Griggs to **examine** them. Dr. Griggs didn't find anything **physically** wrong with the girls, so he said that they were **bewitched**.

Mr. Parris started questioning the girls. First they **accused** Tituba of having bewitched them, but then they also **mentioned** two poor women, who were very much disliked in the village: Sarah Osburne was an old woman who had married her servant and Sarah Good, who was a homeless beggar. These women had never **attended** the story sessions.



The three women, Tituba, Sarah Osburne and Sarah Good, were ordered to **appear** before the **magistrate**. When Tituba was questioned, she **admitted** that she had seen the **Devil** many times and **confessed** being a witch. She said that she had seen other witches that had come into her house. Two of these were Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne.

While Sarah Good was being questioned, the three young girls, Betty, Abigail and Ann were **witnesses** and sat on the front **seats**. They screamed out several times, as if they were **in pain**. They said that Sarah Good was torturing them. Sarah angrily **denied** that she was a witch or that she would ever have tortured the girls in any way.

Sarah Osburne was asked **similar** questions but she denied that she was a witch. No one believed her, just as they hadn't believed Sarah Good. They were both taken to **jail** in Boston. Osburne died of sickness and Good was later tried at **Court** and a jury found her guilty. She was **hanged** in Salem on July 19, 1692.



<http://www.salemweb.com/memorial/>

Tituba was kept in jail but never tried at Court, because she had already confessed that she had once been a witch. The Magistrates believed her when she said that she had given up black magic. She could have been **released** when the hysteria was over in 1693, but her owner, Mr. Parris **refused** to pay her jail costs. Later a **plantation** owner from Virginia bought her out and took her to Virginia, where she stayed until she died.

During the one and a half years of Witch Hysteria 20 people and one dog were tried and found **guilty** of being witches. Some were men, but most of them were women. Many more died in the cold, dark and **damp** jail waiting for their **trial**. Thirteen girls had acted as screaming witnesses. At the last Court session on April 25, in 1693, a long list of witch cases were all cleared and the **victims** found **innocent** and set free.

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SALEM.HTM>
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/salemwitchtrials/>
<http://www.salemwitchmuseum.com/education/index.shtml>

sb=somebody, sth=something

witch	a person who has magical powers
Puritan	an early day Christian who wanted a "pure" church
sin	things people do that are bad in God's eyes
belong to	to have sth and it's yours
niece	your sister's or brother's daughter
bored	you haven't got anything fun to do
previous	the one before or earlier
fascinate	to interest sb very much
palm	the softer side of your hand
fortune	what's going to happen to you in life
consider	to think in a certain way
invite	to ask sb to come to your house
join	to come together
session	a period of time when some people sit together to talk about sth
curious	strange, sth that you wonder about
strangely	in a funny way
crawl	to move with one's knees and hands on the floor
bark	what dogs do when they "talk"
meow	what cats do when they "talk"
examine	what doctors do to find if sth is wrong with you
physically	in the body
bewitched	under the power of a witch
accuse	to say that sb has done sth wrong
mention	to say
attend	to go to a place or a meeting where there are others
appear	to come to a place so that others can see you
magistrate	an important person in a town, a leader
admit	to agree that sth is true
Devil	the opposite of God
confess	to say: "I have done this wrong."
witness	sb who knows if you have done wrong or not
seat	a place where you can sit
in pain	feeling hurt, sth hurts in your body
deny	to say: "I have not done it."
similar	almost the same
jail	a prison, a place where you can't come out
Court	the place where the judge and jury decide if you have done sth wrong
hang	to kill sb by putting a rope around their neck and letting them drop
release	to let go
refuse	not wanting to do sth
plantation	a big farm
guilty	if you have done sth wrong, you are guilty
damp	a bit wet
trial	what happens in a Court
victim	sb who has been hurt
innocent	sb who hasn't done anything wrong