

# 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**.

A witch in Salem was a person who was thought to have sold his or her soul to the **Devil** in order to get some special **evil** powers with which he or she could torture other people. Witches were known to have **invisible** animals and other creatures following them. These could **suck nourishment** from the witch's body through **warts**. That's why witches even in today's stories often have warts.



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, Elizabeth and his **niece**, eleven-year-old Abigail was 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 **mentioned** the names of two poor women, who were very much disliked in the village, Sarah Osburne and Sarah Good. These women had never **attended** the story sessions. When Tituba was questioned, she **confessed** that she was a witch and that she had **received orders** from the Devil to change the girls' **behavior**. She also gave the names of the two Sarahs, who she said were as **guilty** as she was.

The three women, Tituba, Sarah Osburne and Sarah Good, were ordered to **appear** at the local **tabern**, where two **magistrates** would examine their **case**. However, there was such a large **crowd** of **villagers** wanting to watch the **hearings** that they had to move into the meetinghouse next door.

While Sarah Good was being questioned, the three young girls, Elizabeth, 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. This didn't help her much, because another witness, her husband William, also **testified** that she **treated** him very badly and that "she was an **enemy** to all good."

When Tituba was questioned, she **admitted** that she had seen the Devil many times and that she had been acting **on his command**. She said that she had seen other witches that had appeared to her and come into her house. Two of these were Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne. She **added** that Good had a yellow bird and Osburne had a yellow dog **amongst** other objects of black magic. The girls began to scream out in pain while she was testifying and Tituba **claimed** that Sarah Good was **tormenting** them. She said that she could see this, because the Devil had given her special **sight**.

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 **gave birth** to a boy while she was in jail. The boy died after a couple of days. Good was later tried at **Court** and a jury found her guilty. She was **hanged** in Salem on July 19, 1692.

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.

### June 10, 1692



Bridget Bishop  
"I am no witch.  
I am innocent.  
I know nothing of it."

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. Two of them were taken to several other towns to **hunt** down witches. Every time the girls claimed they saw a witch, the person was put **on trial**. At the end there were 50 people in jail, waiting to be tried, when the girls made their **fateful** mistake.

They accused **Governor** Phipp's wife of being a witch. Phipp **banned** the girls from the courtroom and set up a new **Superior** Court. Without the girls' screams there was no real **evidence** to find more people guilty. 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.

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
Devil	the opposite of God
evil	very bad, like the Devil's work
invisible	sth that nobody can see
suck	what babies do to get milk from their mother's breast
nourishment	food that we need to live
wart	a nasty, red, quite hard spot often on a witch's nose
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
confess	to say: "I have done this wrong."
receive	get
order	it tells you what to do and you must do it
behavior	the way sb does things
guilty	if you have done sth wrong, you are guilty
appear	to come to a place so that others can see you
tavern	an old type of cafeteria or restaurant
magistrate	an important person in a town, a leader
case	a question to discuss
crowd	a large group of people
villagers	people living close to each other in a village
hearing	when a person is questioned
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."
testify	to tell your own story in front of the judge and jury ( <i>vittna</i> )
treat	what you do to other people and how you are in front of them
enemy	sb who hates you
admit	to agree that sth is true
on command	you do sth because sb has told you to do so
add	to say more
amongst	and, on top of
claim	to try to make others believe what you're saying
torment	to make sb hurt, almost like torture
sight	sth you see
similar	almost the same
jail	a prison, a place where you can't come out
give* birth	to have a baby
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
damp	a bit wet
hunt	to find and kill animals for food
trial	what happens in a Court
fateful	sth that changes your life
Governor	the most important person in a village or town, the chief magistrate
ban	not to let sb in
superior	more important than any other
evidence	the things that show you have done sth wrong
victim	sb who has been hurt
innocent	sb who hasn't done anything wrong