

The Puritans

In 1608 a group of Puritan separatists, attempting to escape religious persecution, fled England for the Netherlands. They remained there until 1620, but, fearing that they were losing their cultural identity, they decided to settle in Delaware in the New World. A mixed group of Puritan emigrants (the "Pilgrims") and adventurers from England sailed to America on the Mayflower and landed, accidentally, on Cape Cod in November 1620. Within five months half of the original 101 colonists were dead. During the course of the early seventeenth century, however, increasing numbers of immigrants, many but by no means all of them Puritans, managed to establish a group of autonomous North American colonies, including Plymouth (1620), Massachusetts (1628), New Hampshire (1629), Connecticut (1633), Maine (1635), Rhode Island (1636), and New Haven (1638). Like their counterparts in Britain they were extreme Calvinistic Protestants who viewed the Reformation as a victory of true Christianity over Roman Catholicism. They believed that the Universe was God-centred, and that man, inherently sinful and corrupt, rescued from damnation (if indeed he was) only by arbitrary divine grace, was duty-bound to do God's will, which he could understand best by studying the Bible and the universe which God had created and which he controlled.

Their isolation in the New World, their introversion, the harshness and dangers of their new existence, their sense that they were a new Chosen People of God destined to found a New Jerusalem -- a New City of God in the midst of the wilderness -- insured that American Puritanism would remain more severe (and, frequently, more intellectually subtle and rigorous) than that which they had left behind. The American Puritan tended to interpret the Bible, which had supreme literary value because it was the perfect word of God, even more literally than did his British counterparts. Though many of the original American Puritans -- many of whom were both preachers and authors -- had attended English Universities, they tended to form religious oligarchies and sought to establish a purified church -- which meant the frequently harsh imposition of religious uniformity upon an unwilling populace.

It was to escape Puritan religious persecution that Roger Williams, a minister from Salem, established his colony in Rhode Island in 1636. The overt remnants of Puritanism did not die out in New England until well into the nineteenth century, and it echoes in American society today. In coming to the New World in the first place, Puritans altered the course of history, for better or for worse. There were approximately 4,000,000 English-speaking people in the entire world in 1603: less than four centuries later there are over seventy-five times that number.

[<http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/puritan2.html>] (2 May 2006)

The Puritans

The Puritans were a group of people who grew discontent in the Church of England and worked towards religious, moral and societal reforms. The writings and ideas of John Calvin, a leader in the Reformation, gave rise to Protestantism and were pivotal to the Christian revolt. They contended that The Church of England had become a product of political struggles and man-made doctrines. The Puritans were one branch of dissenters who decided that the Church of England was beyond reform. Escaping persecution from church leadership and the King, they came to America.

The Puritans believed that the Bible was God's true law, and that it provided a plan for living. The established church of the day described access to God as monastic and possible only within the confines of "church authority". Puritans stripped away the traditional trappings and formalities of Christianity which had been slowly building throughout the previous 1500 years. Theirs was an attempt to "purify" the church and their own lives.

What many of us remember about the Puritans is reflective of the modern definition of the term and not of the historical account. Point one, they were not a small group of people. In England many of their persuasion sat in Parliament. So great was the struggle that England's Civil War pitted the Puritans against the Crown Forces. Though the Puritans won the fight with Oliver Cromwell's leadership, their victory was short-lived; hence their displacement to America. Point two, the witchcraft trials did not appropriately define their methods of living for the 100+ years that they formed successful communities. What it did show was the danger that their self-imposed isolation had put them in.

Most of the Puritans settled in the New England area. As they immigrated and formed individual colonies, their numbers rose from 17,800 in 1640 to 106,000 in 1700. Religious exclusiveness was the foremost principle of their society. The spiritual beliefs that they held were strong. This strength held over to include community laws and customs. Since God was at the forefront of their minds, He was to motivate all of their actions. This premise worked both for them and against them.

The common unity strengthened the community. In a foreign land surrounded with the hardships of pioneer life, their spiritual bond made them sympathetic to each other's needs. Their overall survival techniques permeated the colonies and on the whole made them more successful in several areas beyond that of the colonies established to their south.

Each church congregation was to be individually responsible to God, as was each person. The New Testament was their model and their devotion so great that it permeated their entire society. People of opposing theological views were asked to leave the community or to be converted.

Their interpretation of scriptures was a harsh one. They emphasized a redemptive piety. In principle, they emphasized conversion and not repression. Conversion was a rejection of the "worldliness" of society and a strict adherence to Biblical principles. While repression was not encouraged in principle, it was evident in their actions. God could forgive anything, but man could forgive only by seeing a change in behaviour. Actions spoke louder than words, so actions had to be constantly controlled.

The doctrine of predestination kept all Puritans constantly working to do good in this life to be chosen for the next eternal one. God had already chosen who would be in heaven or hell, and each believer had no way of knowing which group they were in. Those who were wealthy were obviously blessed by God and were in good standing with Him. The Protestant work ethic was the belief that hard work was an honour to God which would lead to a prosperous reward. Any deviations from the normal way of Puritan life met with strict disapproval and discipline. Since the church elders were also political leaders, any church infraction was also a social one. There was no margin for error.

The devil was behind every evil deed. Constant watch needed to be kept in order to stay away from his clutches. Words of hell fire and brimstone flowed from the mouths of eloquent ministers as they warned of the persuasiveness of the devil's power. The sermons of Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan minister, show that delivery of these sermons became an art form. They were elegant, well formed, exegetical renditions of scriptures... with a healthy dose of fear woven throughout the fabric of the literary construction. Grammar children were quizzed on the material at school and at home. This constant subjection of the probability of an unseen danger led to a scandal of epidemic proportions.

In 1688, four young girls accused a laundry woman of "bewitching" them. What could have been stopped progressed into a community tragedy. The young women enjoyed the attention this story afforded them, but no doubt were afraid that their lies would be found out. In an effort to further punctuate their story, they lapsed into prolonged convulsions. Those who were "possessed by the devil" were forced to make confessions of their evil liaisons in order to protect their families and properties from harm. Those who denounced witchcraft (thereby calling the witnesses liars) were then accused themselves. In the frenzy to follow, by 1690 two hundred

persons were in jail, fifty in prison and twenty executed (along with 2 dogs). Cotton Mather, a leader of the group, quietly led the way in bringing this crisis to an end. The devotion they held in maintaining a religious society in isolation fuelled the fire of the witchcraft scandal.

Great pains were taken to warn their members and especially their children of the dangers of the world. Religiously motivated, they were exceptional in their time for their interest in the education of their children. Reading of the Bible was necessary to living a pious life. The education of the next generation was important to further “purify” the church and perfect social living.

Three English diversions were banned in their New England colonies; drama, religious music and erotic poetry. The first and last of these led to immorality. Music in worship created a “dreamy” state which was not conducive in listening to God. Since the people were not spending their time idly indulged in trivialities, they were left with two godly diversions.

The Bible stimulated their corporate intellect by promoting discussions of literature. Greek classics of Cicero, Virgil, Terence and Ovid were taught, as well as poetry and Latin verse. They were encouraged to create their own poetry, always religious in content.

For the first time in history, free schooling was offered for all children. Puritans formed the first formal school in 1635, called the Roxbury Latin School. Four years later, the first American College was established; Harvard in Cambridge. Children aged 6-8 attended a “Dame school” where the teacher, who was usually a widow, taught reading. “Ciphering” (math) and writing were low on the academic agenda.

In 1638, the first printing press arrived. By 1700, Boston became the second largest publishing centre of the English Empire. The Puritans were the first to write books for children, and to discuss the difficulties in communicating with them. At a time when other Americans were physically blazing trails through the forests, the Puritans efforts in areas of study were advancing our country intellectually.

Religion provided a stimulus and prelude for scientific thought. Of those Americans who were admitted into the scientific “Royal Society of London,” the vast majority were New England Puritans.

The large number of people who ascribed to the lifestyle of the Puritans did much to firmly establish a presence on American soil. Bound together, they established a community that maintained a healthy economy, established a school system, and focused an efficient eye on political concerns.

The moral character of England and America were shaped in part by the words and actions of this strong group of Christian believers called the Puritans.

[<http://www.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/puritans.html>] (2 May 2006)

The Colonies of New England

The New England Colonies started in 1620 because of the lack of religious freedom in England. The Pilgrims, a branch of the Puritans, came to America to practice their own beliefs. Later, when the Puritans came to America, they started a colony where everyone had to believe in the Bible and go to church. Such people who did not completely agree with the rules established by the Puritan leaders were called rebels. (A rebel is a person who does not agree with authority.) Rebels such as Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams were banned from the Puritan colonies and began colonies of their own. This led to the growth of the New England colonies. Today, the New England states are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

[<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/OakViewES/harris/97-98/america/colonization/colonies-ne/ne-intro.html>]
(2 May 2006)

Who settled the New England Colonies, and why:

The people who settled in the New England Colonies were the Separatist Puritans called Pilgrims. They came over in 1620 and landed at Plymouth. Their ship was called The Mayflower. They settled in what is now Massachusetts. The Puritans came in the seventeenth century and wanted to gain religious freedom for themselves. They settled in New England because they wanted to gain religious freedom, but the religious freedom they sought for was not given to others. New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut were founded later by other colonists.

Industries in the New England Colonies:

People in New England grew most of their own food. But their soil was too thin and rocky for them to grow cash crops. They made some of their clothing and produced many of their own supplies. But New Englanders had to buy cloth and tools and almost all of their luxury items from England. New England shipped lumber and furs in return. Later New England found another way to earn money. They started to catch fish. Fish and lumber were basically their main industries. They also sold slaves in the South. New England traders also made money by selling iron, pots, kettles, and tools in other colonies.

About the New England People:

Many people in New England believed in devils, witches, and evil forces. They believed that these things were everywhere. Devils and witches caused thunderstorms, strangling infants in their cradles, making people

sick, sinking ships, and ruining crops. People believed that devils won people over and made them witches.

Since the New England soil was too thin and rocky, they thought it was a sign from god for them to work harder. Their parents were strict and they wanted their children to study the Bible. When they were born their parents believed that they were born as devils and it was their job to train them and make them pure. The church of Plymouth Rock was the main place for the Puritans' meetings. The Puritans were called Puritans because they wanted to purify the Church of England.

[<http://www.esd.k12.ca.us/Cadwallader/Room%2020/Colonies/ne.html>] (2 May 2006)

The Salem Witch Trials 1692

What evil spirit have you familiarity with?

None.

Have you made no contract with the devil?

No.

Why do you hurt these children?

I do not hurt them. I scorn it.

Who do you imploy then to do it?

I imploy no body.

What creature do you imploy then?

No creature. I am falsely accused.

Dialogue based on the examination of Sarah Good by Judges Hathorne and Corwin, from The Salem Witchcraft Papers, Book II, p.355

A Chronology of Events

January 20

Nine-year-old Elizabeth Parris and eleven-year-old Abigail Williams began to exhibit strange behaviour, such as blasphemous screaming, convulsive seizures, trance-like states and mysterious spells. Within a short time, several other Salem girls began to demonstrate similar behaviour.

Mid-February

Unable to determine any physical cause for the symptoms and dreadful behaviour, physicians concluded that the girls were under the influence of Satan.

Late February

Prayer services and community fasting were conducted by Reverend Samuel Parris in hopes of relieving the evil forces that plagued them. In an effort to expose the “witches”, John Indian baked a witch cake made with rye meal and the afflicted girls’ urine. This counter-magic was meant to reveal the identities of the “witches” to the afflicted girls.

Pressured to identify the source of their affliction, the girls named three women, including Tituba, Parris’ Carib Indian slave, as witches. On February 29, warrants were issued for the arrests of Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne.

Although Osborne and Good maintained innocence, Tituba confessed to seeing the devil who appeared to her “sometimes like a hog (a pig) and sometimes like a great dog”. What’s more, Tituba testified that there was a conspiracy of witches at work in Salem.

March 1

Magistrates John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin examined Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne in the meeting house in Salem Village. Tituba confessed to practicing witchcraft.

Over the next weeks, other townspeople came forward and testified that they, too, had been harmed by or had seen strange apparitions of some of the community members. As the witch hunt continued, accusations were made against many different people.

Frequently denounced were women whose behaviour or economic circumstances were somehow disturbing to the social order and conventions of the time. Some of the accused had previous records of criminal activity, including witchcraft, but others were faithful churchgoers and people of high standing in the community.

March 12

Martha Corey is accused of witchcraft.

March 19

Rebecca Nurse was denounced as a witch.

March 21

Martha Corey was examined before Magistrates Hathorne and Corwin.

March 24

Rebecca Nurse was examined before Magistrates Hathorne and Corwin.

March 28

Elizabeth Proctor was denounced as a witch.

April 3

Sarah Cloyce, Rebecca Nurse's sister, was accused of witchcraft.

April 11

Elizabeth Proctor and Sarah Cloyce were examined before Hathorne, Corwin, Deputy Governor Thomas Danforth, and Captain Samuel Sewall. During this examination, John Proctor was also accused and imprisoned.

April 19

Abigail Hobbs, Bridget Bishop, Giles Corey, and Mary Warren were examined. Only Abigail Hobbs confessed.

William Hobbs

"I can deny it to my dying day."

April 22

Nehemiah Abbott, William and Deliverance Hobbs, Edward and Sarah Bishop, Mary Easty, Mary Black, Sarah Wildes, and Mary English were examined before Hathorne and Corwin. Only Nehemiah Abbott was cleared of charges.

May 2

Sarah Morey, Lydia Dustin, Susannah Martin, and Dorcas Hoar were examined by Hathorne and Corwin.

Dorcas Hoar

“I will speak the truth as long as I live.”

May 4

George Burroughs was arrested in Wells, Maine.

May 9

Burroughs was examined by Hathorne, Corwin, Sewall, and William Stoughton. One of the afflicted girls, Sarah Churchill, was also examined.

May 10

George Jacobs, Sr. and his granddaughter Margaret were examined before Hathorne and Corwin. Margaret confessed and testified that her grandfather and George Burroughs were both witches.

Sarah Osborne died in prison in Boston.

Margaret Jacobs

“... They told me if I would not confess I should be put down into the dungeon and would be hanged, but if I would confess I should save my life.”

May 14

Increase Mather returned from England, bringing with him a new charter and the new governor, Sir William Phips.

May 18

Mary Easty was released from prison. Yet, due to the outcries and protests of her accusers, she was arrested a second time.

May 27

Governor Phips set up a special Court of Oyer and Terminer comprised of seven judges to try the witchcraft cases. Appointed were Lieutenant Governor William Stoughton, Nathaniel Saltonstall, Bartholomew Gedney, Peter Sergeant, Samuel Sewall, Wait Still Winthrop, John Richards, John Hathorne, and Jonathan Corwin.

These magistrates based their judgments and evaluations on various kinds of intangible evidence, including direct confessions, supernatural attributes (such as “witchmarks”), and reactions of the afflicted girls. Spectral evidence, based on the assumption that the Devil could assume the “specter” of an innocent person, was relied upon despite its controversial nature.

May 31

Martha Carrier, John Alden, Wilmott Redd, Elizabeth Howe, and Phillip English were examined before Hathorne, Corwin, and Gedney.

June 2

Initial session of the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Bridget Bishop was the first to be pronounced guilty of witchcraft and condemned to death.

Early June

Soon after Bridget Bishop's trial, Nathaniel Saltonstall resigned from the court, dissatisfied with its proceedings.

June 10

Bridget Bishop was hanged in Salem, the first official execution of the Salem witch trials.

Bridget Bishop

“I am no witch. I am innocent. I know nothing of it.”

Following her death, accusations of witchcraft escalated, but the trials were not unopposed. Several townspeople signed petitions on behalf of accused people they believed to be innocent.

June 29-30

Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes, Sarah Good and Elizabeth Howe were tried for witchcraft and condemned.

Rebecca Nurse

“Oh Lord, help me! It is false. I am clear. For my life now lies in your hands...”

Mid-July

In an effort to expose the witches afflicting his life, Joseph Ballard of nearby Andover enlisted the aid of the accusing girls of Salem. This action marked the beginning of the Andover witch hunt.

July 19

Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Howe, Sarah Good, and Sarah Wildes were executed.

Elizabeth Howe

“If it was the last moment I was to live, God knows I am innocent...”

Susannah Martin

“I have no hand in witchcraft.”

August 2-6

George Jacobs, Sr., Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John and Elizabeth Proctor, and John Willard were tried for witchcraft and condemned.

Martha Carrier

“...I am wronged. It is a shameful thing that you should mind these folks that are out of their wits.”

August 19

George Jacobs, Sr., Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John Proctor, and John Willard were hanged on Gallows Hill.

George Jacobs

“Because I am falsely accused. I never did it.”

September 9

Martha Corey, Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Dorcas Hoar, and Mary Bradbury were tried and condemned.

Mary Bradbury

“I do plead not guilty. I am wholly innocent of such wickedness.”

September 17

Margaret Scott, Wilmott Redd, Samuel Wardwell, Mary Parker, Abigail Faulkner, Rebecca Eames, Mary Lacy, Ann Foster, and Abigail Hobbs were tried and condemned.

September 19

Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing a trial.

September 21

Dorcas Hoar was the first of those pleading innocent to confess. Her execution was delayed.

September 22

Martha Corey, Margaret Scott, Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Wilmott Redd, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker were hanged.

October 8

After 20 people had been executed in the Salem witch hunt, Thomas Brattle wrote a letter criticizing the witchcraft trials. This letter had great impact on Governor Phips, who ordered that reliance on spectral and intangible evidence no longer be allowed in trials.

October 29

Governor Phips dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer.

November 25

The General Court of the colony created the Superior Court to try the remaining witchcraft cases which took place in May, 1693. This time no one was convicted.

Mary Easty

"...if it be possible no more innocent blood be shed...

...I am clear of this sin."

[<http://www.salemweb.com/memorial>] (2 May 2006)

The Salem Witch Trials 1692

In January of 1692, the daughter and niece of Reverend Samuel Parris of Salem Village became ill. When they failed to improve, the village doctor, William Griggs, was called in. His diagnosis of bewitchment put into motion the forces that would ultimately result in the death by hanging of nineteen men and women. In addition, one man was crushed to death; seventeen others died in prison, and the lives of many were irrevocably changed.

Dr. William Griggs examines Betty Parris and declares her possessed by the Devil.

To understand the events of the Salem witch trials, it is necessary to examine the times in which accusations of witchcraft occurred. There were the ordinary stresses of 17th-century life in Massachusetts Bay Colony. A strong belief in the devil, factions among Salem Village fanatics and rivalry with nearby Salem Town, a recent small pox epidemic and the threat of attack by warring tribes created a fertile ground for fear and suspicion. Soon prisons were filled with more than 150 men and women from towns surrounding Salem. Their names had been "cried out" by tormented young girls as the cause of their pain. All would await trial for a crime punishable by death in 17th-century New England, the practice of witchcraft.

Trial of Rebecca Nurse

In June of 1692, the special Court of Oyer (to hear) and Terminer (to decide) sat in Salem to hear the cases of witchcraft. Presided over by Chief Justice William Stoughton, the court was made up of magistrates and jurors. The first to be tried was Bridget Bishop of Salem who was found guilty and was hanged on June 10. Thirteen women and five men from all stations of life followed her to the gallows on three successive hanging days before the court was disbanded by Governor William Phipps in October of that year. The Superior Court of Judicature, formed to replace the "witchcraft" court, did not allow spectral evidence. This belief in the power of the accused to use their invisible shapes or spectres to torture their victims had sealed the fates of those tried by the Court of Oyer and Terminer. The new court released those awaiting trial and pardoned those awaiting execution. In effect, the Salem witch trials were over.

As years passed, apologies were offered, and restitution was made to the victims' families. Historians and sociologists have examined this most complex episode in our history so that we may understand the issues of that time and apply our understanding to our own society. The parallels between the Salem witch trials and more modern examples of "witch hunting" like the McCarthy hearings of the 1950's, are remarkable.

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[<http://www.salemwitchmuseum.com/education/index.shtml>] (2 May 2006)

The Salem Witch Trials 1692

1876 illustration of the courtroom; the central figure is usually Mary Walcott "The city of heaven, provided for the saints, is well-walled and well-gated and well-guarded, so that no devils, nor their instruments, shall enter therein." -The Reverend Samuel Parris, September 1692 (Boyer).

The Salem witch trials, which began in 1692 (also known as the Salem witch hunt and the Salem witchcraft episode), resulted in a number of convictions and executions for witchcraft in Salem Village, Massachusetts. It was the result of a period of factional infighting and Puritan witch hysteria which led to the deaths of 19 people (mostly female but also male) and the imprisonment of scores more.

Background

In the village of Salem in 1692, Betty Parris and her cousin Abigail Williams fell victim to what was recorded as fits "beyond the power of Epileptic Fits or natural disease to effect." (citation needed) The girls claimed they were bewitched by other members of the community and possessed by the devil. Most of the accused were women or people who were convenient to have out of the way (citation needed).

The first three accused were Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and Tituba (Boyer 3). Good held the typical stereotype of a witch and had been suspected of engaging in malefic practices (citation needed). Osborne was a middle aged woman who was in a legal dispute for her diseased first husband's land with some important Puritans (citation needed). Tituba was the Carib Native American slave of Samuel Parris (a preacher in Salem Village) (Linder); though she is very often referred to as black in modern historical and fictional interpretations of the trials, there is no specific evidence of her ethnicity (citation needed).

These women were charged with witchcraft on March 1, 1692 and put in prison (Boyer 3). Other accusations followed: Dorcas Good, Rebecca Nurse, Abigail Hobbs, Deliverance Hobbs, Martha Corey, Elizabeth Proctor and John Proctor. As the number of accusations grew, the jail populations of Salem, Boston, and surrounding areas swelled, and a new problem surfaced: Without a legitimate form of government, there was no way to try these women (Boyer 6). None of them were tried until late May, when Governor Sir William Phips arrived and instituted a Court of Oyer and Terminer (to "hear and determine"). Phips appointed William Stoughton, who had theological training but no legal training, as the chief justice of this court (Boyer 7). By then, Sarah Osborne had died of natural causes in

jail without a trial (Boyer 3), as had Sarah Good's newborn baby girl, and many others were ill (citation needed). There were perhaps 80 people in jail awaiting trial (citation needed).

Trial

All cases that were heard ended with the accused being condemned to death for witchcraft; no one was found innocent (citation needed). There was no way to escape the stigma of being labeled 'witch'. Only those who pleaded guilty to witchcraft and supplied other names to the court were spared execution (citation needed). Elizabeth Proctor and Abigail Faulkner were given respite "for the belly," because they were pregnant (Chronology). Though convicted, they would not be hanged until they had given birth (Chronology). A series of four executions beginning June 10, 1692 and ending September 22, 1692, saw nineteen people hanged, including a respected minister, a former constable who refused to arrest more accused witches, and at least three people of some wealth (Chronology). Six of the nineteen were men (The Dead); most of the rest were impoverished women beyond childbearing age (citation needed).

Only one execution was not by hanging. Giles Corey, an 80-year-old farmer from the southeast end of Salem, refused to enter a plea. The law provided for the application of a form of torture called *peine fort et dure*, in which the victim was slowly crushed by piling stones on his body; after two days of *peine fort et dure*, Corey died without entering a plea (Boyer 8). Though his refusal to plead is often explained as a way of preventing his possessions from being confiscated by the state, this is not true; the possessions of convicted witches were often confiscated, and possessions of persons accused but not convicted were confiscated before a trial, as in the case of Corey's neighbor John Proctor and the wealthy English's of Salem Town. Some historians hypothesize that his personal character, a stubborn and lawsuit-prone old man who knew he was going to be convicted regardless, led to his recalcitrance (Boyer 8).

Closure

The witch trials ended in January of 1693, although people already jailed for witchcraft were not all released until May 1693 (Chronology). On October 3, 1692, Increase Mather published "Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits." In it, Increase Mather stated "It were better that Ten Suspected Witches should escape, than that the Innocent Person should be Condemned." This incident was so profound that it helped end the influence of the Puritan faith on the governing of New England.

Possible Explanations of the Possessed

It is not widely believed any longer that the girls were actually possessed by the devil nor that their neighbors had anything to do with their symptoms. So what really happened? Some experts believe the accusers were motivated by jealousy or spite and their behavior was an act. Others believe they were afflicted by hysteria, a form of mental illness.

"Ergot of Rye is a plant disease that is caused by the fungus *Claviceps purpurea*. ... It is the ergot stage of the fungus that contains a storehouse of various compounds that have been useful as pharmaceutical drugs as well as mycotoxins that can be fatal when consumed. ... This species was also the original source from which LSD was first isolated." (Ergot of Rye) Convulsive ergotism causes nervous dysfunction, similar to many of the accused "witches" physical actions.

In her book *A Fever in Salem*, Laurie Winn Carlson gives a rebuttal to the Ergot theory. She believes that those afflicted in Salem, and in those who seemed to have been bewitched over the centuries, suffered from encephalitis lethargica, a disease whose symptoms match some of what was reported in Salem and could have been spread by birds and other animals (Aronson).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials] (2 May 2006)

The Mayflower

The English ship the Mayflower carried the Separatist Puritans, later known as pilgrims, to Plymouth, Mass., in 1620. The 180-ton vessel was about 12 years old and had been in the wine trade. It was chartered by John Carver, a leader of the Separatist congregation at Leiden, Holland, who had gone to London to make arrangements for the voyage to America. The ship was made ready at Southampton with a passenger list that included English Separatists, hired help (among them Myles Standish, a professional soldier, and John Alden, a cooper), and other colonists who were to be taken along at the insistence of the London businessmen who were helping to finance the expedition.

In the meantime the Leiden Separatists, who had initiated the venture, sailed for Southampton on July 22, 1620, with 35 members of the congregation and their leaders William Bradford and William Brewster aboard the 60-ton Speedwell. Both the Speedwell and the Mayflower, carrying a total of about 120 passengers, sailed from Southampton on August 15, but they were twice forced back by dangerous leaks on the Speedwell. At the English port of Plymouth some of the Speedwell's passengers were regrouped on the Mayflower, and on September 16, the historic voyage began.

This time the Mayflower carried 102 passengers, only 37 of whom were from the Leiden congregation, in addition to the crew. The voyage took 65 days, during which two persons died. A boy, Oceanus Hopkins, was born at sea, and another, Peregrine White, was born as the ship lay at anchor off Cape Cod. The ship came in sight of Cape Cod on November 19 and sailed south. The colonists had been granted territory in Virginia but probably headed for a planned destination near the mouth of the Hudson River. The Mayflower turned back, however, and dropped anchor at Provincetown on November 21.

That day 41 men signed the so-called Mayflower Compact, a "plantation covenant" modelled after a Separatist church covenant, by which they agreed to establish a "Civil Body Politic" (a temporary government) and to be bound by its laws. This agreement was thought necessary because there were rumours that some of the non-Separatists, called "Strangers," among the passengers would defy the Pilgrims if they landed in a place other than that specified in the land grant they had received from the London Company. The compact became the basis of government in the Plymouth Colony. After it was signed, the Pilgrims elected John Carver their first governor.

After weeks of scouting for a suitable settlement area, the Mayflower's passengers finally landed at Plymouth on Dec. 26, 1620. Although the Mayflower's captain and part-owner, Christopher Jones, had threatened to leave the Pilgrims unless they quickly found a place to land, the ship remained at Plymouth during the first terrible winter of 1620-21, when half of the colonists died. The Mayflower left Plymouth on Apr. 15, 1621, and arrived back in England on May 16.

William Bradford's classic account of the Mayflower's voyage does not mention the ship by name, nor does it describe the vessel. In 1926, however, a model was constructed by R. C. Anderson from general information about late-16th-century merchant ships of its tonnage. This model, which is in Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, gives the ship's dimensions as 90 ft (27.4 m) long, with a 64-ft (19.5-m) keel, 26-ft (7.9-m) beam, and a hold 11 ft (3.4 m) deep. In 1957 a close replica of the Mayflower, the Mayflower II, was built in England as a gift to America and sailed from Plymouth, England, to Plymouth, Mass., where it is now on view. This is the only time that Mayflower II has sailed across the Atlantic.

For nearly 38 years, this recreation of the Pilgrim's famous vessel has been little more than a floating museum confined to its pier near Plymouth Rock rarely leaving the dock, and when it has, it has mainly reached its destination by tug. Modelled faithfully after the slow and cumbersome 17th-century merchant vessels that sailed the waters between England and Europe, the Mayflower II lacks the most modern conveniences including an engine. It is hard to steer and has an unsettling habit of rolling with sea.

In 1964 the ship went on a brief sail, and crews unfurled her sails briefly in 1990 and 1991, after the square-rigged ship went through major renovations to make her more seaworthy. In 1992, the Mayflower II won approval to carry passengers after congress passed special legislation to loosen some of the Coast Guards strict certification guidelines. In 1992, the Mayflower II led a procession of the Tall Ships through the Cape Cod Canal. In the end of that year, it left on a 4 month tour to Florida, however the ship was usually towed and very little sailing actually took place. The Plimoth Plantation which runs the Mayflower II as part of its living history exhibit has added radios, navigational equipment, electric bilge pumps and life vests.

On July, 23, 1995, The Mayflower set sail again to commemorate the 375th anniversary of the original Mayflower's arrival to the new World.

[<http://pilgrims.net/plymouth/history/mayflower.html>] (2 May 2006)

The Mayflower

The Mayflower was the ship which transported the Pilgrims from Plymouth, England to "North Virginia" (which later became part of the United States of America) in 1620, leaving Plymouth on September 6 and dropping anchor near Cape Cod on November 11 (both dates according to the Old Style or the Julian Calendar). This voyage followed and was inspired by the successful establishment of the first permanent English settlement, Jamestown, by the London Company of Virginia in 1607.

Ship

The ship Mayflower was used as a cargo ship trading (often in wine) between England and other European countries, principally France but also Norway, Germany and Spain. At least between 1609 and 1622 it was mastered by Christopher Jones, who was Captain on the transatlantic voyage, and based in Rotherhithe. He was buried in the graveyard of St. Mary's Church, Rotherhithe following his death in March 1622, and it is likely that the ship was broken up for scrap lumber there in the following year. The Mayflower Barn just outside the Quaker village of Jordans in Buckinghamshire, England, purports to be constructed from these timbers.

Details regarding the size and overall dimensions of the ship are unknown, but it has been estimated from its load weight and the usual size of 180-ton merchant ships in the period to be 90 – 110 feet in length and about 25 feet in width. (The size of a ship is measured, not by its own weight, but by burden (the amount the ship can carry). The term "ton," as used to measure the burden of a ship, derives from the word "tun," a large cask used for storing wine as it was being shipped.) Careful research went into designing a replica, the Mayflower II (launched on September 22, 1956), to make it as much like its namesake as possible.

Voyage

Initially the plan was for the voyage to be made in two vessels (the other being the smaller Speedwell). The first voyage of the ships departed Southampton, England on August 5, 1620, but the Speedwell developed a leak and had to be refitted at Dartmouth. On the second attempt, the ships reached the Atlantic, but once again were forced to return, to Plymouth because of the Speedwell's leak. After some reorganisation the final 66-day voyage was made by the Mayflower alone. With the crowding of 102 passengers plus crew, each family was allotted very little space for personal belongings. At one point, the ship's main beam cracked and had to be repaired using a large iron screw. The Mayflower landed at Renews on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland, where it picked up water and supplies from local fishing families before sailing on

to Cape Cod. Their intended destination was a section of land in the area near the Hudson River. The ship, however, was forced off course by poor weather on the second half of the voyage. (The first half however was pleasant with nice weather.) As a result of the delay, the settlers did not arrive at the future site of Plymouth Colony until the onset of a harsh New England winter. They had failed to reach Virginia, where they had permission from the London Company to settle. To establish legal order outside of this jurisdiction, and to quell increasing strife within their ranks, the settlers wrote and signed the Mayflower Compact. On April 5, 1621 the Mayflower set sail from Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts on a return trip to England, arriving back on May 6, 1621.

Passengers

The passengers on the Mayflower were the earliest permanent settlers in New England, and so later many members of society took great interest in tracing their ancestry back to one of these. See list of passengers on the Mayflower for a complete accounting. See also list of Mayflower passengers who died in the winter of 1620 - 1621. See some of the descendants of these Mayflower Pilgrims in the Mayflower Descendants Chart.

The Mayflower landed in an area that John Smith had mapped on called New England. The Mayflower had landed in a place called Plymouth.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayflower>] (2 May 2006)

The First Thanksgiving

September 1620 – November 1620: Mayflower Voyage

The Pilgrims leave Plymouth Harbour in England on a ship called the Mayflower. They seek freedom in America to worship the way they want. The voyage is difficult, but only one of the 102 passengers dies.

November 1620 – February 1621: First Days of Plimoth

The Mayflower's destination is northern Virginia, but the ship is thrown off course by a storm. On December 11th the Mayflower lands at Plimoth and decides to stay.

The Pilgrims' first winter is very difficult. There are not enough houses built when the snow begins to fall. Many Pilgrims stay aboard the Mayflower through the winter. The Pilgrims suffer from the bitter cold and lack of food, and only half survive.

March 1621: Pilgrims and Wampanoag Meet

A Native American named Samoset walks into Plimoth colony and says "Welcome Englishmen." Samoset had learned some English from European fishermen. He introduces the Pilgrims to the Wampanoag leader Chief Massasoit. They also meet Squanto, who knows English too.

Chief Massasoit offers friendship and help to the Pilgrims. The two groups exchange gifts and sign the "Treaty of Friendship."

Spring and Summer 1621: Building a Friendship

In April, the Mayflower sails back to England. All of the Pilgrims choose to stay.

The Wampanoag share their knowledge of hunting, fishing and farming. A Wampanoag named Hobbamock moves with his family to Plimoth.

Massasoit and Squanto are captured by another native tribe, the Narraganset. The Pilgrims send 10 men to confront the Narraganset. Massasoit and Squanto are released.

October 1621: Harvest Feast

Plimoth Governor William Bradford declares a feast to give thanks to God for their first harvest. Massasoit and 90 other Wampanoag are invited to join the 52 Pilgrims for this three-day feast.

The English serve wild turkeys, geese, and ducks. The Wampanoag bring five deer, along with lobsters, clams, oysters, and fish. The feast also includes cucumbers, carrots, cabbages, turnips, radishes, onions, beets, corn, and wild fruits.

After 1621

More English people arrive at Plimoth. They begin settling other areas nearby. Sometimes the English give the Native Americans beads or tools in exchange for the land. But the natives believe that the land belongs to everyone and cannot be owned.

Today only a small number of Wampanoag still live in this area.

[<http://teacher.scholastic.com/thanksgiving/pictimeline/index.htm>] (2 May 2006)

The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party was a protest by the American colonists against Great Britain in which they destroyed many crates of tea on ships in Boston Harbour. The incident, which took place on Thursday, December 16, 1773, has been seen as helping to spark the American Revolution.

Background

The Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Acts of 1767 angered colonists regarding British decisions on taxing the colonies with no representation in the Westminster Parliament ("no taxation without representation"). One of the protesters was John Hancock. In 1768, John Hancock's ship *Liberty* was seized by customs officials and he was charged with smuggling. He was defended by John Adams and the charges were eventually dropped. However, Hancock later faced several hundred more indictments.

Hancock organized a boycott of tea from China sold by the British East India Company, whose sales in the colonies then fell from 320,000lb to 520lb. By 1773, the company had large debts, huge stocks of tea in its warehouses and no prospect of selling it because smugglers such as Hancock were importing tea without paying taxes (import tax). The British government passed the Tea Act, which allowed the East India Company to sell tea to the colonies directly, thereby allowing them to sell for lower prices than those offered by the colonial merchants and smugglers.

The ships carrying tea were prevented from landing as most American ports turned the tea away. In Boston, however, the East India Company had the help of the British-appointed governor — plans were made to bring in — by force — the tea under the protection given by British armed ships.

The Boston Tea Party

On Thursday, December 16, 1773, the evening before the tea was supposed to be landed, the Sons of Liberty, three groups of 50 Boston residents each organized by Samuel Adams, burst from the Old South Meeting House and headed toward Griffin's Wharf, dressed as Mohawks. Three ships — the *Dartmouth*, the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver* — were loaded with hundreds of crates of tea. The men boarded the ships and began destroying the cargo. By 9pm they had opened 342 crates of tea in all three ships and had thrown them into Boston Harbor. They took off their shoes, swept the decks, and made each ship's first mate agree to say that the Sons

of Liberty had destroyed only the tea. The whole event was remarkably quiet and peaceful. The next day, they sent someone around to fix the one padlock they had broken.

The Reaction

This act brought criticism from both colonial and British officials. For instance, Benjamin Franklin stated that the destroyed tea must be repaid and offered to repay with his own money. The British government responded harshly by closing the port of Boston and put in place other laws that were known as the "Intolerable Acts", also called the Coercive Acts. This act proved to be one of those that led to the American Revolution. At the very least, the Boston Tea Party and the reaction that followed served to rally support for revolutionaries in the thirteen colonies who were eventually successful in their fight for independence.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Tea_Party] (2 May 2006)

The History of Boston

The history of Boston, Massachusetts intertwines with the history of the United States. Boston is the capital of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the historical centre of New England.

European settlement

Boston was not the first significant area of settlement in Massachusetts - the Plymouth Colony of 1620 and Salem of 1626 preceded it. The first settlement in the immediate area of Boston was a short way across Boston Harbour at Charlestown. But Boston rapidly developed into the most important city in New England.

The "first Bostonian" was William Blaxton, the first European to settle on the Shawmut peninsula (named by the Native Americans who lived there). Settlers from Charlestown purchased land from Blaxton in 1630 to expand the settlement and secure water supplies.

Founded on September 17, 1630, Boston is named after Boston, England, a town in Lincolnshire from which several prominent colonists originated. The Puritans, who were part of the Winthrop Fleet led by John Winthrop to Boston, were not Separatists like the Pilgrims, but chartered colonists.

Boston's deep harbour and advantageous geographic position helped it to become the busiest port in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, eventually surpassing Plymouth and Salem. Until the 1760s, Boston was America's largest, wealthiest, and most influential city.

Colonial Boston

Early colonists believed that Boston was a community with a special covenant with God. Winthrop's sermon, "a City upon a Hill," captured this idea. This influenced every facet of Boston life, and made it imperative that colonists legislate morality as well as enforce marriage, church attendance, education in the Word of God, and the persecution of sinners. These values molded an extremely stable and well-structured society in Boston. Puritan values of hard work, moral uprightness, and education remain a part of Boston's culture.

The first school in America, Boston Latin School (1635), and the first college in America, Harvard College (1636), were founded shortly after Boston's European settlement.

On June 1, 1660, Mary Dyer was hanged on Boston Common for repeatedly defying a law banning Quakers from the colony. She is considered to be the last religious martyr in North America. A statue of Mary Dyer now stands in front of the Massachusetts State House.

Boston in rebellion

Boston played a key role in the sparking both the American Revolution and the ensuing American Revolutionary War. The Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and several of the early battles of the Revolution (such as the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the Siege of Boston) occurred near or in the city. During this period, Paul Revere and William Dawes made their famous midnight rides.

Today Boston is sometimes called the Cradle of Liberty. Its historic sites remain a popular tourist draw. The city has attempted to preserve its colonial and revolutionary past, from the harbouring of the USS Constitution to the many famous sites along the Freedom Trail.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Boston,_Massachusetts] (2 May 2006)

Boston is a city of “firsts” and “oldests.” The first European settlers were the Puritans seeking to escape religious persecution in England. The Puritans founded America's first school, Boston Latin School (1635), and America's first college, Harvard College (1636) and their ethics for morality, hard work and emphasis on education became the foundation of Boston's culture. In 1770, the British attempted to gain control over the colonists leading to the start of the American Revolution. Memorable moments in Boston history occurred during this period with the Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, the midnight ride of Paul Revere and battles in and around the city.

[<http://www.helloboston.com/History.Cfm>] (2 May 2006)