



# The Salem Witch Hunt: A Brief History with Documents

*Richard Godbeer*

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## **The Salem Witch Hunt: A Brief History with Documents** Richard Godbeer

The Salem witch trials stand as one of the infamous moments in colonial American history. More than 150 people -- primarily women -- from 24 communities were charged with witchcraft; 19 were hanged and others died in prison. In his introduction to this compact yet comprehensive volume, Richard Godbeer explores the beliefs, fears, and historical context that fueled the witch panic of 1692. The documents in this collection illuminate how the Puritans' worldview led them to seek a supernatural explanation for the problems vexing their community. Presented as case studies, the carefully chosen records from several specific trials offer a clear picture of the gender norms and social tensions that underlie the witchcraft accusations. The final documents cover recantations of confessions, the aftermath of the witch hunt, and statements of regret. A chronology of the witchcraft crisis, questions for consideration, and a selected bibliography round out the book's pedagogical support.

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