

It all began in late January of 1692 at the home of Samuel Parris. His daughter Betsy, and niece, Abigail, began exhibiting strange and destructive behavior. They shrieked, had convulsions and seizures, entered trance-like states and suffered from high fevers. Parris tried desperately to keep their condition a secret, but finally agreed to contact his physician. Upon examining the girls, Doctor William Griggs could find nothing physically wrong with them. He suggested their condition might be the result of witchcraft. The diagnosis of witchcraft, while certainly devastating, was not uncommon at the time. Throughout February, Parris prayed for the evil forces to release the girls.

The Puritan townspeople began pressuring the girls to identify the reasons for their suffering. The girls named three women as witches. One was a slave named Tituba who had often told them magical stories from her native Barbados, another was a peasant mother named Sarah Good, and the last was an elderly woman named Sarah Osborne who regularly failed to attend church. The women were arrested and examined in the village meetinghouse. During the examinations the girls described how they had been attacked by “specters” of these three women. While the two Sarah’s denied engaging in witchcraft, for some reason, Tituba confessed! Tituba then claimed the two Sarah’s were also ghosts and had conspired with her to torment the girls.

Soon, more young girls began acting strangely. One of the girls, Ann Putnam, was the daughter of one of the most influential families in Salem. Her family’s support of her accusations helped to legitimize the guilt of the “witches”.

Other townspeople soon would be accused of engaging in witchcraft. The people within the town of Salem became hysterical. Even Rebecca Nurse, a mother of eight, would be tried and convicted of witchcraft. Several girls claimed that Nurse’s apparition (ghost) tortured them and other witnesses linked her to the unusual deaths of several Salem residents. During her trial, 39 of her neighbors signed a petition stating she was a woman of propriety (virtue or goodness). When the jury declared her not-guilty, an uprising nearly occurred. The audience was horrified that she was acquitted, and several of the judges were left unsatisfied or left the bench. The jury was forced to reconvene and the court brought a confessed witch by the name of Deliverance Hobbs to the courtroom. When asked about Hobbs, the nearly deaf Nurse replied ‘she was one of us’. After hearing the words of Nurse, the jury returned a guilty verdict. Nurse later explained that she had never really heard the question, and that when saying ‘she was one of us’ she meant a co-defendant. Nurse was nevertheless hanged on July 19, 1692. Other accused witches were tortured until they confessed. In all, 26 “witches” were executed in Salem in 1692.

- 1. In Massachusetts in 1692, a diagnosis of witchcraft was...**
- A. devastating and very unusual.
 - B. a certain death sentence.
 - C. devastating, but not uncommon.
 - D. unheard of.

2. What is not true about Samuel Parris?

- A. He wanted to keep the condition of the girls a secret
- B. His daughter, Abigail, showed signs of being bewitched
- C. Eventually agreed to contact Dr. William Griggs
- D. He prayed in February for evil forces to release the girls

3. Why did Tituba confess to being a witch?

- A. She was angry at Sarah Good
- B. She thought if she confessed her life might be spared
- C. She claimed Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne helped her
- D. The passage doesn't tell

4. Why was Anne Putnam important?

- A. She was from an important Salem family. When her parents supported her claims, everyone thought the "witches" were guilty
- B. She was the first to accuse Tituba of witchcraft
- C. She failed to attend church, and thus, was in danger of being accused of witchcraft
- D. She was the first to accuse Rebecca Nurse, a mother of eight, of engaging in witchcraft

5. The trial of Rebecca Nurse...

- A. first resulted in her acquittal and then in her conviction.
- B. first resulted in her conviction and then in her being hanged.
- C. resulted in her acquittal.
- D. resulted in her confession.

6. The testimony of Deliverance Hobbs...

- A. resulted in the guilty verdict against Nurse.
- B. resulted in Nurse's acquittal.
- C. had no major impact of Nurse's trial.
- D. resulted in several judges leaving the bench.

7. Which is true about "she was one of us?"

- A. The court took it to mean that Rebecca Nurse said that Deliverance Hobbs was "also" a witch
- B. Rebecca Nurse meant that Deliverance Hobbs was a witch
- C. The court took it to mean that Rebecca Nurse never really heard the question
- D. Rebecca Nurse meant that both her and Deliverance Hobbs were in the same situation