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The Crucible of History:How Apology and Reconciliation Created Modern Conceptions of the Salem Witch Trials

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THE CRUCIBLE OF HISTORY: HOW APOLOGY AND RECONCILIATION
CREATED MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

By

Heaven Ly Umbrell, Bachelor of Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

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THE CRUCIBLE OF HISTORY: HOW APOLOGY AND RECONCILIATION
CREATED MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, historians, authors, and amateur enthusiasts alike have been mesmerized by the Salem witch trials. Most of the literature focuses on the trials themselves and takes one of three approaches: anthropological; sociological; or conspiratorial. Recently Gretchen Adams, professor of history at Texas Tech University, approached the trials differently, focusing on memory. She narrowed on how the “specters of Salem” loomed over American cultural and public memory. Apart from Adams, little scholarly inquiry has focused on the aftermath of the trials, especially how it affected the people directly involved. This thesis will expand the historiography of the Salem witch hunt by examining the historical significance of the trials evolving memory. When examining the competing narratives that arose about the trials and the community’s attempts at reconciliation, a precedent is set by the Massachusetts government that not only stunted the community's ability to heal, but branded the entire town of Salem and its Puritan inhabitants as agents of fanaticism and injustice. As a result Salem has fallen prey to the crucible of history, once a city upon a hill, now an over the top destination for those who prefer fantasy to reality.

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CHAPTER 1

Where It All Began

On June 10, 1692, Bridget Bishop became the first of many to be executed in Salem, Massachusetts for witchcraft. Bishop, known for her fierce tongue and quick temper, had been acquitted of witchcraft charges before. However, this time the allegations proved too profuse. Among other things, the court convicted Bishop of conjuring phantom black pigs to overpower her neighbor in his bed. The same neighbor also connected Bishop to him being visited by a diabolic monkey, with the feet of a chicken and the face of a man, which he claimed he had seen flying over Bishop's orchard at night. The monkey offered the man power and riches in exchange for his soul.¹ Bridget maintained her innocence. The evidence against her could only be described, at best, as circumstantial, yet she still found herself at the end of a noose on Gallows' Hill. In 2001, 309 years later, the state of Massachusetts publically exonerated her of all charges. The process had been a slow one, but the descendants of Bridget Bishop had finally reclaimed their ancestor's name in the crucible of history.

¹ "Testimony of John Louder v. Bridget Bishop," *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, ed. Bernard Rosenthal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 368.

Accusations of witchcraft began in January of 1692, in the home of Salem Village minister Reverend Samuel Parris.² Parris' daughter and niece, Betty Parris (9) and Abigail Williams (11), experienced torment from an unknown source- having fits, screaming out in pain, and complaining of harassments by invisible spirits. After considering all other possibilities, town elders concluded the girls' afflictions were the work of witchcraft. In the following weeks, other young girls in the village began to exhibit similar, peculiar fits. Most vocal among the additional afflicted girls were Ann Putnam Jr., Mercy Lewis, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Mary Warren. The tormented children, pressed by adults to name those who plagued them, accused the Parris' Native American slave, Tituba, along with village residents Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn as the culprits.³ Both village women pled not guilty, but Tituba confessed to having a contract with the Devil and condemned both Good and Osborn as witches in her testimony. No accused witch had ever admitted to the practice of witchcraft within the Massachusetts Bay colony. Tituba's confession and accusations gave those concerned with the outbreak of the Devil's influence in Salem the justification needed to pursue other suspects.

² Salem Village was an extension of Salem Town. Salem Town concentrated on commerce and trade. Salem Village developed as an overflow of the town and was rural in its setting. Salem Village, populated mainly by farmers, requested their own church in the 1670s, stating the distance from the town's church as its reasoning. The request initially met objection from the Salem Town, but in 1672 the village was granted the right to establish its own church. For more see Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 37-41.

³Deodat Lawson, *A Brief and True Narrative* (1692) in *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648-1706*, ed. George Lincoln Burr (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1914), 152-164.

Accusations soon spread through Salem Village, Salem town, and surrounding communities as well.⁴

In May, William Phips arrived from England with a commission as Governor of Massachusetts Colony along with a new charter from the King and Queen. The new charter transitioned power from elected officials within the colony to royally appointed governors, such as Phips.⁵ Phips took great interest in the escalation of events in Salem. However, the threat of impending war with the region's indigenous peoples presented Phips with a more urgent matter. Therefore, Phips commissioned a special court, known as the Court of Oyer and Terminer, to try suspected witches. He depended upon this court to conduct hearings and pass judgment, adhering to the laws and customs of England- not Massachusetts.⁶

Phips quickly appointed seven men to the court "of the best prudence and figure that could then be pitched upon."⁷ Members of the court were from similar backgrounds. They all held prominent social positions and were steadfast in their mainstream conservative religious beliefs. The Chief Justice of the court, William Stoughton, after graduating from Harvard College, had expanded his religious studies in England, where

⁴John Hale, *A Modest Inquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (1702), in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 399-432.

⁵The Charter of Massachusetts Bay – 1691, accessed April 11, 2019, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass07.asp.

⁶ William Phips, "Letters to the home government," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 196-8; Marilynne K. Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2004), 143-144.

⁷ Phips, "Letters," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 196.

he also preached. Upon returning to America, Stoughton entered politics instead of the ministry, but his religious convictions followed him into his political position.⁸

In Phips absence, Stoughton assumed executive powers over the trial. Stoughton, though, believed that while “the devil might appear in the shape of a guilty person, yet he would never be permitted to assume the shape of an innocent person,” and under his influence the court focused heavily on “spectral evidence.”⁹ Spectral evidence gave credibility to witness testimony that the accused witch’s spirit or spectral shape appeared to victims with malicious intent. Influential religious figures such as Reverends Increase and Cotton Mather, warned the magistrates about using spectral evidence, urging caution because “tis an undoubted and a notorious thing that a Deman may, by God’s permission, appear, even to ill purposes, in the shape of an innocent.”¹⁰ Spectral evidence had been allowed in other trials in New England, but in those cases more concrete evidence had to support a conviction- resulting in mostly dismissed cases. For instance, in the same year, Stamford, Connecticut experienced its own outbreak of afflictions. The court in Connecticut required more concrete evidence to pass judgment on the accused witches. Unless a confession was offered, judges insisted on two reputable witnesses with definitive proof of the practice of witchcraft. They viewed spectral evidence as

⁸John Langdon Sibley, *Bibliographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University: Volume 1, 1642-1658* (Cambridge: Charles William Server, 1873), 194,200-201.

⁹Sibley, *Graduates of Harvard*, 200.

¹⁰Cotton Mather to Governor Phips, “A Return of Several Ministers Consulted (June, 15, 1692), in *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England*, ed. Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1972), 118.

circumstantial and more tangible evidence had to be proven before it was taken into consideration. The result of this traditional execution of the law was one overturned conviction and no executions during the 1692 Connecticut witch trials.¹¹ The trials in Salem, however, did not follow this tradition of English law in requiring more tangible evidence. The court did seek other forms of evidence against the accused, but the reality was that most of those brought to trial were condemned “merely from the evidences of the afflicted persons.”¹²

The trial of George Burroughs, a former preacher in Salem Village, demonstrated that neither the luxury of being a man, nor the protection of being a clergyman could save an accused from spectral evidence. Even though Burroughs had long before moved to the Maine territory, and was unknown by most of his adolescent accusers, he found himself among those suspected of witchcraft. The charges brought against Burroughs consisted of mainly spectral events, as well as the claim that Burroughs was the leader of the witches in Salem. Burroughs protested the evidence against him. He argued that such methods being used to detect witches were too uncertain to trust, and he also questioned the character of some of those who testified against him. Burroughs insisted that any non-spectral evidence against him was pure hearsay. The court examination found no other

¹¹ Richard Godbeer, *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); For more detail on the specifications of acceptable evidence in the Stamford cases, see Godbeer, *Escaping Salem*, chapter 2.

¹² “Letter of Thomas Brattle, October 8, 1692,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 176.

concrete evidence against Burroughs. Nonetheless, the magistrates convicted and hung Burroughs based primarily on the spiritual visions of the afflicted girls.¹³

In addition to spectral evidence, the court demonstrated coercive methods during their proceedings to reach the outcome they desired. Several highly respected officials within Colonial New England, such as Deputy Governor Thomas Danforth and Reverend John Hale, as well as a few local citizens expressed discontent at how the court managed the trials. These concerned individuals feared that “irregular and dangerous methods” had been taken, resulting in innocent blood being shed.¹⁴ One judge of the court, Nathaniel Saltonstall, became so dissatisfied at the persecution of the defendants that he resigned from the court after the first death sentence.¹⁵

The magistrates conducted their examinations under the pretense that the accused were already guilty. John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin, who replaced Saltonstall on the special court, charged with conducting preliminary hearings, phrased their questions in such a way that the accused, who were not allowed a lawyer, had to attempt to defend

¹³ Cotton Mathers, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 215-222; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 114-115, 228-231; Multiple people testified that Burroughs, being a man of small frame, had amazingly fired a shotgun with a seven-foot barrel in one hand. Those who testified against Burroughs, on the grounds of this “unnatural feat,” admitted they had not witnessed it, but that Burroughs claimed he held the gun before its lock and braced the gun against his chest. Now, under the scrutiny of the court, Burroughs admitted that an Indian had helped him fire the gun. The jury saw these discrepancies in his story as a discredit to Burroughs character. For more see Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 360-361 and RSWH, ed. Rosenthal.

¹⁴ “Letters of Thomas Brattle,” *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 184; Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 425; Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 155, 187-189.

¹⁵ “Letters of Thomas Brattle,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 179.

themselves against a court that already viewed them as guilty. “Sarah Good,” began Hathorne, “what evil spirit have you familiarity with?” Good simply replied, “None.” “Why do you hurt these children?” the examiner continued. “I do not hurt them. I scorn it,” she responded. To this, the examiner moved on, “Who do you employ then to do it?” Each question Sarah answered to the best of her ability, trying to negate any charges of witchcraft on her behalf, but her statements met only disbelief and further questioning. “Sarah good doe you not see now what you have done why doe you not tell us the truth?” Hathorne demanded.¹⁶ The court quickly found Sarah guilty, she being unable to prove herself innocent. These interrogation tactics became routine in the examination of accused witches. As a result, many who could not defend themselves found their fate at the gallows. Sarah Good was among the first to hang for the crime of witchcraft in Salem.

Examinations of the accused progressed from private questioning to semi-public physical examinations as well. The bodies of accused men and women would be subjected to physical inspections by town elders. The examiners stripped the accused in front of an audience of inspectors. Each assessor would carefully search all parts of the accused body, looking for a “witch’s mark.” According to popular belief, a witches’ mark or “teat” served as a feeding site for their familiars, which aided the witches in exchange for feeding off of their blood. This teat could be any irregular mark found on the body. When described in the court records, examples of marks that constituted a witch’s mark were moles, birthmarks, dry skin, or scars. A male surgeon and a small group of women,

¹⁶ “Examination of Sarah Good, Sarah Osburn, & Tituba, as Recorded by Ezekiel Cheever,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 127.

chosen by the court, physically examined Bridget Bishop and several other women in June of 1692. The examiners found, what they saw as “apreternathurall [a preternatural] excrescence of flesh” between all of the women’s genitals and anus, which they deemed unusual in women. The accused women not only had to submit to these physical intrusions, but the results of the committee’s findings would then be read to the court and its spectators as evidence. Court records show that the appendages found on the women were not found during a second examination. Regardless, all women examined that day were found guilty, with evidence of a witch’s marks as part of the prosecution’s case.¹⁷

The court also used torture as a form of interrogation during the Salem witch trials. Accused who refused to give a plea or who asserted their innocence would often be subjected to physical punishment, resulting many times in a confession of witchcraft, or even death. John Procter, Sr., a farmer and tavern owner in Salem Village, condemned the trials from the start. Like many who did not agree with the trials, Procter found himself among the accused. Eventually, not only was Procter accused, but his wife, three of their children, and his sister-in-law. From prison, Procter wrote a letter to the clergy in Boston, urging the clergy to appoint new judges to the trials, or to move the trials to Boston. Procter stated the most urgent need for this change was the inhumane treatment of the accused. He proclaimed that while being examined, his son William, “because he

¹⁷“Physical Examinations No. 1 & No. 2 of Bridget Bishop, Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Procter, Alice Parker, Susannah Martin, 7 Sarah Good,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 362-363.

would not confess that he was Guilty, when he was Innocent, they tyed him Neck and Hells till the Blood gushed out at this Nose.”¹⁸

Giles Corey, a successful farmer and originally a supporter of the trials, had testified against his own wife, aiding in her condemnation. Shortly after, however, he came under suspicion himself.¹⁹ Corey quickly changed his opinion of the trials once he joined the accused. He realized none who had stood trial had been acquitted; therefore, he pled not guilty, but refused to stand trial. Upon deliberation, the magistrate decided to invoke an English precedent, never before used in New England. Under this practice, those who chose to stand mute were literally pressed until they broke their silence. The sheriff, under command of the court, stripped Corey naked, placed a board over his body, and stacked rocks on top of him. As the weight crushed his ribs and it became difficult to breathe, his tongue was pressed out of his mouth, and the sheriff forced it back in with his cane.²⁰ Reportedly, the only words Corey is rumored to have uttered were, “More weight.”²¹

Spectators, like Corey, noticed that no one accused and brought to trial had been acquitted. All had been convicted and sentenced to hang; the only deliverance from death

¹⁸ “Petition of John Procter from Prison,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 486.

¹⁹ “Statement of Giles Cory Regarding Martha Cory,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 155; Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 277-278.

²⁰ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 366-367; For more on the English practice of “peine forte et dure” see n1.

²¹ Francis Hill, *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 185.

was to confess to witchcraft. Of the near 200 accused, between 50-55 confessed to witchcraft. The slave Tituba pled guilty, and thus the court spared her from execution so long as she named fellow witches. The court's treatment of Tituba made clear to others that a confession warranted life, whereas denying the accusation led to a trial, which led to death. Throughout the trials, many of those who confessed to witchcraft later attempted to recant their confession. The court did not find the changes of plea as credible and thus did not keep extensive record of them. Still, observers of the trials recorded the withdrawal of some of these confessions. Tituba, for example, claimed to confess only because her master, Samuel Parris, had "beat her and other ways abuse her, to make her confess and accuse her sister-witches." A group of women accused of witchcraft in the Andover community claimed their confession came as the result of confusing interrogation tactics. The women stated that "we were not capable of judging our condition; as also the hard measures they used with us, rendered us uncappable of making our Defence; but said any thing and every thing which they desired."²²

Once convicted, the guilty had their properties confiscated. The appropriation of property from those found guilty was within the parameters of English common law, however, Governor Phips nevertheless expressed discontent with Chief Justice Stoughton's property seizures in a letter to the clerk of the English Privy Council stating that Stoughton "from the beginning hurried on these matters with great precipitancy and by his warrant hath caused the estates, goods and chattels of the executed to be seized and

²² Calef, "More Wonders," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 343,365,375.

disposed of without my knowledge or consent.”²³ One source of Phips’ discontent was that not all seizures were executed within common law guidelines. Philip English had not been found guilty of the crime of witchcraft, having fled in anticipation of being indicted after his wife’s arrest. Sheriff George Corwin confiscated all the family’s moveable goods. When English finally stood trial, in 1693 after the hysteria had started to die out, all charges against him were found “ignoramus,” meaning that English was not found guilty of witchcraft, but his property had still been seized in the name of the court.²⁴

No matter the legality, the process of confiscation left certain groups of Salem residents destitute. Those condemned for witchcraft that resided within Salem Town or Salem Village suffered their property being seized. In addition, the condemnation of victims left no persons legally able to defend against the family being stripped of their inheritance. Only widows and men endured forfeitures of their property; while married women had property taken only if their husbands also stood accused. If a man or a widow was convicted, there was no legal basis for remaining family members to make claims to the property, resulting in many families being impoverished for generations.²⁵

By October of 1692, nineteen people had been executed and one had been pressed to death. Serious criticisms of the trial had finally begun to circulate throughout the colony. Thomas Brattle, an observer of the trials, wrote a letter condemning them,

²³ Phips, “Letters,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 201.

²⁴ David C. Brown, “The Forfeitures at Salem, 1692,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1, Law and Society in Early America (January 1993): 107; For more on Philip English’s trials see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 223,775,776.

²⁵ Brown, “Forfeitures at Salem,” 91-96.

especially the use of spectral evidence. As writings such as this began to circulate, public concerns about the proceedings began to heighten. On October twelfth, the General Court convened in Boston and discussed the situation in Salem as the events continued to spiral outwards. After his own wife was accused of witchcraft, Governor Phips finally intervened, halting all further arrests until the colony could ask the English Crown's position on the cases. He also banned any further publications pertaining to the trials.²⁶ As October 1692 came to a close, an assistant of the court asked Phips his opinion, if the court would stand or fall? To which, Phips replied, "It must fall."²⁷

Support for the court proceedings had begun to dwindle. As 1692 came to a close, it was evident that the court would disband and the trials come to an end. The number of fits and new accusation from the afflicted slowed, and many officials presiding over the affairs began to reflect on the actions of the court. Samuel Sewall, one of the presiding judges, held a day of fasting and prayer, asking for God's pardon for the past and direction for the future.²⁸

Although no new arrests were made after October of 1692, a number of accused remained in the prisons of Salem. In January 1693, Phips permitted a new Superior Court to hear the remaining cases. These magistrates proceeded with more caution and did not

²⁶"Letter of William Phips to the Privy Council," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 687; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 315.

²⁷ Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, ed. Massachusetts Historical Society (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1878), 368, accessed September, 7, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/diaryofsamuelsew01sewaiala/page/n11>.

²⁸Sewall, *Diary*, 369-370.

allow spectral evidence into consideration. As a result, over fifty individuals, including the previously mentioned Philip English, had their charges cleared. The court found only three individuals guilty of witchcraft and sentenced them to the gallows. The colony's Attorney General divulged to Phips his own doubt of the convicted's guilt, confessing "that there was the same reason to clear the three condemned as the rest."²⁹ Since Phips' inquiry to the royal position on the trials had only just reached England, and no response was expected soon, Phips took it upon himself to relieve the three condemned, unwilling to provoke the crown or the growing dissenters within the Massachusetts Bay community. Former Chief Justice Stoughton, being still devoted in his mission, reportedly became enraged at Phips' actions.³⁰

Religious discontent grew within the community at Salem. A number of church members refused to attend services or partake communion. They filed an official complaint, citing displeasure at Reverend Samuel Parris' role in the trials. The complaint was an extensive denunciation not only to the Reverend's role in the trials, but also of the legitimacy of the proceedings. The complainants laid blame solely on the shoulders of Parris, their misleading Sheppard.³¹

With tensions mounting, Phips decided he had no choice but to decisively end the trials. Phips penned a letter in late February expressing his "great vexation." He

²⁹ Phips, "Letters," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 200-201, 383; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 360-361.

³⁰ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 382-382; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 370, 373-374.

³¹ "Records of the Salem-Village Church from November 1689 to October 1696, as Kept by the Reverend Samuel Parris" in *Salem- Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 282-283.

attempted to distance himself from the proceedings and stressed the culpability of Stoughton and the other appointed members of the court. He emphasized that many people in the community were “dissatisfied with the court” and that individuals “whose Innocency I was well assured” had been accused and some condemned. In fear that other “Innocent persons might otherwise perish” the Governor ordered the court and the trials “dissolved.” Phips reported in his letter that the “black cloud that treated this Province with destruccon [distruction]” had “dissipated” with the termination of the trials.³²

Phips received the crown’s long awaited reply to his initial inquiry, asking guidance for the direction of the trials, in late July. The instructions given to Phips specified that he should “give all Necessary directions that in al Proceedings against Persons accused for Witchcraft or being Possessed by the Devill, the greatest moderation and all due circumspection be used, so far as the same may be without Impediment to the Ordinary Course of Justice within Our said Province.”³³ Phips took the demand to use caution in the proceedings as an approval of his decision to halt the trials. However, though the proceedings had ended, the community continued to struggle with the specter of the Salem witch trials.

Competing narratives concerning the trials arose before they even came to a conclusion. Although Phips had forbidden further publication of the trials in the colony, he and other officials commissioned Cotton Mather to write an official history of the

³²“Letter of William Phips to the Earl of Nottingham,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 810-811.

³³ “Crown’s Reply to William Phips about Proceeding against Witches,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 800; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 414.

trials. Mather's *The Wonders of the Invisible World* most likely accompanied Phips initial letter to England as they arrived in London at the same time. Mather's manuscript went into publication within the same month and began circulating throughout London by the end of December. Following the trials, several narratives surfaced either in agreement or in conflict with Mather's account.³⁴

Made even more difficult by these competing narratives, the process of reconciling the damage done to the community took years. Although Phips had pardoned the remaining accused, they were required to pay their imprisonment debt before being able to return to 'normal life.' If released, the ex-accused and, by extension, the families of both the accused and condemned found their reputations tainted. The stigma of a witchcraft accusation made resuming normal life a difficult task. Petitions for exoneration from the charges began immediately, but a full legal reprieve by the government would take over three hundred years. This slow progress can be attributed to the fact that most officials refused to admit any guilt or wrongdoing for their roles in the trials, and only a single accuser came forward to admit any remorse. In fact, even an apology from the Massachusetts government did not come until 264 years after the conclusion of the trials.

For centuries, historians, authors, and amateur enthusiasts alike have been mesmerized by the Salem witch trials. Most of the literature focuses on the trials themselves and takes one of three approaches: anthropological; sociological; or conspiratorial. Recently Gretchen Adams, professor of history at Texas Tech University, approached the trials differently, focusing on memory. She narrowed on how the

³⁴ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 207.

“specters of Salem” loomed over American cultural and public memory. Apart from Adams, little scholarly inquiry has focused on the aftermath of the trials, especially how it affected the people directly involved. The Following chapters will expand the historiography of the Salem witch hunt by examining the historical significance of the trials evolving memory. When examining the competing narratives that arose about the trials and the community’s attempts at reconciliation, a precedent is set by the Massachusetts government that not only stunted the community's ability to heal, but branded the entire town of Salem and its Puritan inhabitants as agents of fanaticism and injustice. As a result Salem has fallen prey to the crucible of history, once a city upon a hill, now an over the top destination for those who prefer fantasy to reality.

Chapters two through four will run parallel to one another. Each chapter will examine the same period of time, from shortly before the trials conclusion to roughly the beginning of the eighteenth century. Chapter two reviews the narratives of the trials, as they evolved in the years directly following the conclusion of the witch hunt. Chapter three analyzes the large number of petitions presented to the Massachusetts government, as those affected by the trials attempted to challenge the courts actions and reconcile the damages done to them. Chapter four, then, looks directly at apology, or the lack there of. Chapter five begins where the previous three chapters conclude, demonstrating that the years directly following the trials set a precedent for slow progress and denial, which is repeated over the next three hundred years. Thus, Salem and the narrative of the trials evolve into a cliché, which in present day Salem, Massachusetts, is inseparable from reality.

CHAPTER 2

Recording the Narrative

In 1700, Increase Mather, respected minister and president of Harvard University, watched as a popularly circulated book turned into ash before him on the grounds of Harvard University.³⁵ Increase despised the book. The author of the book, Robert Calef, had been in a pointed debate with his son, Cotton, and now the popularity of this book, which questioned his and his son's religious authority, threatened to ruin both their public standing and the credibility of the Puritan church. Competing narratives of the Salem witch trials arose almost as soon as the trials began. By early in the eighteenth century, publishers in New England and London solidified in print a mirrored representation of the disconnect within Salem itself. No one person told the same tale, and the result of the conflicting narratives only served to complicate the divisions in the town.

Deodat Lawson compiled the first published account of the suspected witchcraft in Salem. In April of 1692, printer Benjamin Harris published *A Brief and True Narrative of Some Remarkable Passages Relating to Sundry Persons Afflicted by Witchcraft, at Sale Village Which Happened From the Nineteenth of March, to the Fifth of April, 1692* in Boston. Lawson wrote *A Brief and True Narrative* under the pretext of being an objective and "credible" bystander of the episodes; however, he had many personal ties

³⁵ Adams, *Specters of Salem*, 30.

that may have influenced his views of the occurrences.³⁶ Lawson had been born in England, but served as the pastor of Salem Village from 1684-1688. The Putnams and other prominent families in the village had advocated for Lawson to be ordained as the church's fully participating minister, but long rooted factionalism thwarted the proposal, and the efforts were abandoned in 1688. Lawson relocated to Boston; Reverend Parris replaced him in his post.³⁷

In 1692, Lawson learned of the disturbances in Salem and journeyed there, where he recorded what he witnessed. Lawson admitted that his interest in the trials came after a suspected witch suggested that Lawson's wife and daughters' deaths, which occurred three years prior, had in fact been due to witchcraft, not the divine providence of God. This accusation, along with the concerns of the "friends" who had relayed this message, gave purpose to Lawson's visit to Salem.³⁸ As a devout Puritan clergyman, Lawson believed in the existence of witches, and, with a grieving heart at the loss of his family, may have welcomed an alternative reasoning for his suffering. Lawson's account chronicled Salemites during March and April of 1692, relying heavily on the accounts of

³⁶Benjamin Harris, "The Bookseller to the Reader," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 152.

³⁷ Salem Villagers had a long history of social divisions leading up to the 1692 witch trials. For more on the case of Deodat Lawson see Francis Hill, *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1995), chapter 8. For social divisions in general, see Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*.

³⁸ Lawson shared his reasoning for visiting Salem in the appendix of his published version of the sermon he delivered at Salem Village church during his visit. Lawson published the sermon under the title *Christ's Fidelity the only Shield Against Satan's Malignity* in 1693 in Boston. The appendix notation, however, did not accompany this edition, but the 1704 edition that was published in London; Lawson, *A Brief and True Narrative*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 147-148.

the Putnam family, who were his “friends,” and also among the main accusing parties during the trials. While Lawson’s account can be interpreted in several different ways, his intent was to confirm witchcraft had been unleashed in New England. He stressed in his notes about the afflicted that “their Motions in their Fits are Preternatural, both as to the manner, which is so strange as a well person could not Screw their Body into; and as to the violence also it is preternatural, being much beyond the Ordinary force of the same person when they are in their right mind.”³⁹

Lawson’s account preceded the start of the trials and its circulation helped to promote belief in supernatural phenomena. Skepticism nevertheless did develop as the trials began. In early June, an appointed member of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, Nathaniel Saltonstall, resigned from his position after Bridget Bishop was sentenced to death. He expressed great dissatisfaction in the proceedings of the trials as his reason for leaving.⁴⁰ Thomas Brattle described a growing dissension of onlookers in a detailed letter written in early October, 1692. Brattle came from a prominent background. Born in Boston and a graduate of Harvard, he made his living as a successful merchant. Religiously, Brattle followed a more liberal theology than the Puritans who oversaw the trials. Considered an enlightened thinker, Brattle questioned the prosecution of supposed witches. He pointed out that there were many prominent figures “who account this

³⁹ Lawson, *A Brief and True Narrative*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 162.

⁴⁰ Brattle, “Letter,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 184; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 166.

practise as an abomination.”⁴¹ Several irregularities made him question the proceedings, including the fact that an arrest warrant had failed to be issued when Margaret Thatcher, the mother-in-law of Jonathan Corwin (who replaced Nathaniel Saltonstall as judge in the court of Oyer and Terminer) was accused of witchcraft.⁴² In addition, Brattle questioned the dependence on the testimony of the young afflicted girls, and the validity of spectral evidence and outdated practices such as the “touch test.”⁴³ Brattle’s detailed analysis of the trials’ spectacle and questioning of its legality circulated to elite circles of colony inhabitants, but did not see mass publication until 1700. His letter came at a critical time during the trials, just days before the General Court debated the future of the trials on October 12, 1692. The letter’s audience included Governor Phips, who ultimately decided to halt the trials until approval from the crown could arrive.⁴⁴

Brattle’s letter was not the only manuscript circulating as part of the General Court’s deliberations. Increase Mather and his son, Cotton Mather, both prepared their own statements on the trials, which were completed within days of each other in early October. Increase Mather’s testimony, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits Personating Men*, did not condemn the existence of witches, but urged caution to the

⁴¹ Brattle, “Letter,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 179.

⁴² Brattle, “Letter,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 178.

⁴³ A “touch test” was an experiment used to identify an evil doer. If an afflicted person touched the person who was causing their distress, the evil possessing the victim was said to be transferred back to where it came from, allowing the victim’s fits to cease. For more see Hill, *A Delusion of Satan*, 16-17; Brattle, “Letter,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 170, 185.

⁴⁴ Adams, *The Specter of Salem*, 29.

judges, reinforcing advice that both he and his son had helped issue before the trials began. He encouraged his readers to recall the scripture in which “Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light. He seems to be what he is not and makes others seem to be what they are not.”⁴⁵ Increase continued that the Devil “mixeth truth with lies,” acknowledging that Satan would tell “twenty great truths to make way for one lye.”⁴⁶ Increase Mather’s position was that it is better that a guilty party goes free than an innocent person hang. Consequently, he asked the judges to dismiss the testimony of the “afflicted” girls, and condemned spectral evidence, as the court could be falling prey to the Devil’s deception. Instead, he hoped the court would depend on more concrete evidence as the trials moved forward.

Cotton’s manuscript, however, came across less cautionary and more defensive. On September 22, 1692, Samuel Sewall, Chief Justice Stoughton, and other members of the court met with Cotton Mather to discuss the idea of publishing a narrative of the trials.⁴⁷ Cotton did not attend the trials, so he depended on court records to compose his report. *Wonders of the Invisible World* examined five strategically chosen trials, first narrowed in representation by the court officials, then again by Cotton himself.⁴⁸ In

⁴⁵ The scripture Mather’s refers to here is listed in his text as 2 Corinthians 11:14; Increase Mather, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits Personating me, Witchcrafts, Infallible Proofs of Guilt in Such as are Accused with that Crime. All considered According to the Scriptures, History, Experience, and the Judgement of Many Learned Men*, in the University of Virginia Library Special Collections, 6, accessed June 6, 2019, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/speccol/mather/mather.html>.

⁴⁶ Increase Mather, *Cases of Conscience*, 40.

⁴⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, September 22, 1692, 365-366.

⁴⁸ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 214.

conversation with his father's work, Cotton's account addressed spectral evidence. Cotton's view appeared to contradict his and his father's original cautionary advice. "In all the Witchcraft which now Grievously Vexes us, I know not whether any thing be more Unaccountable, than the Trick which the Witches have to render themselves and their Tools Invisible ... How far it may be obtained by a Magical Sacrament, is best known to the Dangerous Knaves that have Try'd it. But our Witches do seem to have got the Knack."⁴⁹ Following this, Cotton gave three examples of spectral evidence that he deemed credible, concluding his accounts with "Unriddle these Things, -- Et Eris mihi magnus Apollo"- meaning, unriddle these things and thou shalt be to me a great Apollo, or revealer of mysteries.⁵⁰

Although both Mathers denied any disagreement between their two positions, the readers of both manuscripts believed that they were in conflict with one another. As a result, Increase felt the need to include in his published edition a postscript that attempted to discredit rumors of conflict by stating, "Some I hear have taken up a Notion, that the Book newly published by my Son, is contradictory to this of mine ... I perused and approved of that book before it was printed."⁵¹ Cotton also confirmed the existence of this popular impression when he wrote to his uncle that "persons" have said, "that I run

⁴⁹ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 246-246

⁵⁰ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 248.

⁵¹ Increase Mather, *Cases of Conscience*, 73.

against my own father and all the ministers in the country; merely because I run between them.”⁵²

Both Mathers’ texts, along with others such as Brattle’s letter, were circulated among the elite panel present at the October 12, 1692 meeting of the General Court. The number of conflicting narratives being circulated worried Governor Phips. The narratives, paired with the growing dissension among Salem’s own inhabitants, caused Phips to forbid any further publications concerning the trials.⁵³ However, one account was chosen to accompany Phips’ letter to London - Cotton Mather’s *Wonders of the Invisible World*, complete with an approving preface by Chief Justice William Stoughton. In London, publishers printed the text as a novelty. The popularity of the book led to three editions between its arrival in late 1692 and the end of 1693. In the colonies, the same publisher who printed Lawson’s *A Brief and True Narrative*, Benjamin Harris, also had printed Cotton’s book before Phips’ proclamation went into effect. In order to comply with the new prohibition, Harris postdated the publication date, which allowed Cotton’s manuscript to circulate throughout the New England colonies.⁵⁴ Therefore, *Wonders* became the “official narrative” of the trials in both Britain and the colonies.

⁵² Cotton Mather to John Cotton Holmes, October 20, 1692, Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, accessed June 28, 2019, http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/letters/to_cotton2.html.

⁵³ “Letter of William Phips to the Earl of Nottingham,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal 810-811.

⁵⁴ Harris also post-dated Increase Mather’s *Cases of Conscience*. For more on Benjamin Harris and the publication of the witchcraft narratives in Salem and London see; Mary Rhinelander McCarl, “Spreading the News of Satan’s Malignity in Salem: Benjamin Harris, Printer and Publisher of the Witchcraft Narratives,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 129 (1993): 57-58.

As with most official narratives, a counter-narrative soon arose. Robert Calef, a Boston merchant, felt it his “duty to be no longer an idle spectator.”⁵⁵ Calef’s spoke out against Cotton’s *Wonders* out of fear that Cotton was trying to engulf New England in yet another storm of witchcraft.⁵⁶ Following the publication of *Wonders*, Cotton had written of two further cases of affliction that circulated as manuscripts, those of Mercy Short and Margaret Rule. Calef had read and taken issue with both, but primarily the account of Margaret Rule whose afflictions he had witnessed firsthand.⁵⁷ Calef described the girl’s afflictions as much less severe than Mathers claimed and examined an interrogation given by both Increase and Cotton in Calef’s presence. He then commented on the peculiarity of Cotton’s need for secrecy in visiting Miss Rule, “for her own Mother was not suffered to be present.”⁵⁸ Cotton responded to the new narrative, by calling Calef “the worst of Lyars” and threatening to sue for slander.⁵⁹ Calef requested a public forum in which he and Cotton would debate the truth of Calef’s writing. Instead, Calef was brought before the Majesties Justice by a warrant for “scandalous libels” against Cotton Mather in late November of 1693. When the case came before the court Cotton did not attend the trial,

⁵⁵ Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World* (Salem: John D. & T.C. Cushing, Jr. for Cushing and Appleton, 1823), 75.

⁵⁶ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 328-329.

⁵⁷ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 324.

⁵⁸ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 327-32.

⁵⁹ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 329.

allowing the charges against Calef to be dropped.⁶⁰ Most likely, Cotton realized pursuing the charges against Calef would result in the public debate that Calef had asked for as well as an increase in the public's curiosity of Calef's ideas; therefore, Cotton remained silent. What then ensued was a series of letters, mainly one-sided on the part of Calef, seeking answers and justification from Cotton.

As Calef sought Cotton's response, he became more and more focused on *Wonders* and the reservations he had with the younger Mather's work. His chief complaint, which he voiced many times in his correspondence, was the absence of a scriptural definition of witchcraft and how to detect a witch.⁶¹ Calef felt the court had taken too much liberty in pursuing individuals as witches, straying from scriptural guidance in favor of a more worldly approach. As a final vindication, Calef compiled his own manuscript, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, in response to Cotton's *Wonders*, which he prefaced with his communications with Cotton and his own version of the afflictions of Margaret Rule.

Calef also relied on court records and personal interviews, as did Cotton, and from these, Calef assembled a day by day record of the trials. The documentation he presented attempted to give substance to the claim that Cotton wrote "more like an Advocate than an Historian" and that "his Employers were not mistaken in their choice of

⁶⁰ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 329.

⁶¹ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 333.

him,” insinuating that Calef believed the magistrates hoped to use Cotton’s influence to persuade the public to the narrative they chose.⁶²

Calef’s manuscript became the voice of the accused and the condemned. He included in *More Wonders* several letters penned by the accused as they sat in prison. This included a letter by John Proctor, Sr., in which he exposed the torture inflicted by the court to elicit confessions.⁶³ Even Tituba, the first to confess, gave new testimony while in prison, claiming that her “Master did beat her and other ways abuse her, to make her confess and accuse (such as the call’d) her Sister-Witches.”⁶⁴ Tituba’s confession had granted her reprieve from the gallows. Therefore, as Calef pointed out and both Mathers either overlooked or ignored, the court had set a precedent that a confession warranted life while maintaining innocence led to death. Other accused realized this loophole. Calef shared the account of a group of women from Andover who claimed, “we were not capable of judging our condition; as also the hard measures they used with us, rendered us incapable of making our Defence.” It was evident to these women and those around them that “there was no other way to save our lives, as the case was then circumstantiated, but by our confessing our selves to be such and such persons, as the afflicted represented us to be ... And indeed that Confession, that is said we made, was

⁶² Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 379.

⁶³ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 363.

⁶⁴ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 343.

no other than what was suggested to us by some Gentlemen.”⁶⁵ Calef told the side of the narrative Cotton had omitted, and in doing so, painted a more ominous picture of the proceedings.

Calef did not stop there. He also deciphered the riddle of spectral evidence that Cotton had put forth to his readers in *Wonders*. Cotton presented three examples of spectral evidence he deemed unexplainable. In the first, a woman had been chased in a room full of people by a specter that no other saw. The specter held in its hand a spindle and when the woman pulled the spindle away, the other people then saw a spindle in her hand. Cotton claimed this was done “nevertheless by Demons unaccountably stole away, to do further mischief.”⁶⁶ The second was a similar instance. A woman, being tormented by a specter, claimed the specter teased her with a sheet of paper. The woman snatched the paper, retrieving a corner of it for the rest of the room to see. Lastly, Cotton told of a young man, whose parents had been accused. The man helped the sheriff to brand four of the cattle to be seized from his parent’s farm. The cows were to have their horns branded, as the sheriff was willing to leave them on the farm, “for the subsistence of the poor family.”⁶⁷ The young man held the first three and they were branded without issue, but as the fourth had the brand placed upon his horn, “he winc’d and shrunk at such a rate” that the young man could no longer hold him. Afterwards, he claimed that as the brand

⁶⁵ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 375.

⁶⁶ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 247.

⁶⁷ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 248.

touched the cow's horn, he felt the burning of the brand on his own thigh and when examined the man did have a mark on his own thigh.⁶⁸ Calef unscrambled these riddles with logical explanations. The corner of the paper, pretended to be taken from a Spectre, and the Spindle were both easily provided and could have been concealed by the afflicted.⁶⁹ Calef questioned the young man's credibility since he had married into the Putnam family, who were chief accusers in the trials. Calef also reasoned that the man could have had a "Push or Boyl upon his Thigh, with his straining it broke."⁷⁰ Since the abrasion was just a mark and not the imprint of the brand, it could not be confirmed that it was the brand that had inflicted his pain.

More Wonders highlighted the growing skepticism towards the trials. Calef pointed out a change in views by one of the trials' advocates, Reverend John Hale. Hale supported the court's prosecutions initially, endorsing the principle that the Devil could not "Afflict in a good man's shape." Following the accusation of his own wife, however, Reverend Hale renounced his previous view and agreed that the "Devil might so Afflict."⁷¹ In addition, Calef pointed to the arrangement by the General Court for a day of prayer on January 14, 1697, in penance for their continued misgivings. Puritans believed that hardships came as the cost of God's displeasure with them, but years after the conclusion of the trials the Puritan communities in New England were just as unsettled as

⁶⁸ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, In *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 248.

⁶⁹ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 370.

⁷⁰ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 370.

⁷¹ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 369-370.

they had been before. Therefore officials had called on a day of prayer in hopes to appeal to God. The court order decreed that “whatever mistakes on either hand have been fallen into, either by the body of this People, or any orders of men, referring to the late Tragedy, raised among us by Satan and his Instruments, through the awful Judgment of God, he would humble us therefore and pardon all the Errors of his Servants and People.”⁷² Calef reported that upon this day of fasting and prayer one of the judges, Samuel Sewall, had a statement read admitting that he may have “fallen into some Errors in the Matters at Salem.”⁷³ Calef also revealed that many of the jurors had also released a statement shedding doubt on their own convictions, writing “we fear we have been instrumental with others, tho Ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon ourselves, and this People of the Lord, the Guilt of Innocent Blood.”⁷⁴

Calef, along with Brattle, included information that Cotton chose to omit from his account. This error could have simply been due to the limited resources that Cotton had to compile his narrative, but Calef pointed out that while Cotton did not attend the trials, he did attend George Burroughs execution and consciously omitted details of the happenings of that day. Cotton had provided an extensive outline of the trial of George Burroughs, but when it came to the execution, Cotton simply recalled, “The Jury brought him in guilty: But when he came to Dy, he utterly deny’d the Fact, whereof he had been

⁷² Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 386.

⁷³ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 387.

⁷⁴ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 387.

thus convicted.”⁷⁵ Calef offered an alternative picture of that day. When given a chance to speak before his execution, Burroughs did maintain his plea for innocence and also recited the Lord's Prayer flawlessly. Most people thought this feat impossible by an agent of the Devil. Calef reported that the spectators at the gallows cried in favor of Burroughs. Cotton, fearing this might hinder the execution, stepped in and reminded the crowd that “the Devil has often been transformed into an Angel of Light” and his deception was limitless, in an attempt to appease the people and confirm the guilt of Burroughs.⁷⁶ A notion that his father had used as caution, Cotton had now used as a weapon. Calef does not stop there with the omitted information of Burroughs trial. He continued his tale by presenting a letter of confession from Margaret Jacobs, who had accused Burroughs. With a heavy conscience, the girl had gone to Burroughs on the eve of his execution to ask forgiveness for speaking untruths about him. She claimed that Burroughs forgave and prayed with her. Jacobs attempted to confess her falsehoods to the magistrates before the execution, but to her dismay she reported that “they would not believe me.”⁷⁷

Calef concluded his transcript with a summary of the unjust actions he felt that the court, with Cotton's approval and defense, had committed and for which he could find no scriptural justification. He ended by saying that if those practices continued, “Innocents will suffer as Witches” and “So long God will be Daily dishonoured, And so long his

⁷⁵ Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 222.

⁷⁶ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 360-361.

⁷⁷ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 365.

Judgments must be expected to continue.”⁷⁸ The judgment Calef had in mind was likely the continued misfortunes of the New England colonies, as well as the miseries suffered by key defenders of the trials.

Calef found it difficult to publish his narrative in the New England colonies when he completed it in 1697, although it did circulate in manuscript form. Therefore, he oversaw the publication of his account in London in 1700. His version of events was not published in the colonies until 1796- seventy-seven years after his death.⁷⁹ Despite his inability to have his manuscript published in the colonies, Calef did find an audience in New England, through his manuscript and London printing, prompting Increase Mather’s fiery exhibit of disapproval.

Around the same time that Increase publicly expressed his discontent with Calef’s book, publishers in New England printed a response to Calef’s book- a defense of both Mathers. In 1701 “several Persons belonging to the Flock of some of the Injured Pastors” composed *Some Few Remarks Upon A Scandalous Book, Against the Government and Ministry of New- England: Written, By One Robert Calef. Detecting the Unparrallel’d Malice and Falsehood, of the said Book; and Defending the names of Several Particular Gentlemen, by him therein Aspersed and Abused*. The text directly assaulted Calef’s character and opinions. The authors referred to Calef’s book as “a fire-brand thrown by a

⁷⁸ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 393.

⁷⁹ Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 293,295.

Mad-man.”⁸⁰ They used this platform in an attempt to vindicate the judges and both Mathers, of whom the authors charged Calef with using slanderous lies to “lessen the Esteem of those Servents of Christ” and raise his “own credit on the fall of theirs.”⁸¹ These actions, these unnamed authors suggested, were “fit for non but a Servant of the worst Master.”⁸²

The authors presented to their readers two letters, one from each of the Mathers, in which they privately defended themselves from Calef’s accusations. Increase’s letter focused on the accusation that he failed to properly serve the inhabitants of Massachusetts while negotiating the colony’s new charter in England. To the charges, Increase insisted that he negotiated as best he could and within his power, and included copies of letters that vouched for his persistence and fidelity on behalf of the colony’s settlers.⁸³ Increase concludes his letter with a synopsis of his credentials and boasts that “all Reasonable men, will own, That Reproaches cast on me, for my Expensiveness in the Publick Service, are most Ungrateful and Unworthy.”⁸⁴ The anonymous authors then

⁸⁰ Obadiah Gill, Increase Mather, and Cotton Mather, *Some Few Remarks Upon a Scandalous Book, Against the Government and Ministry of New-England, written by one Robert Calef. Detecting the Unparallel’d Malice & Falsehood, of the Said Book; and Defending the Names of Several Particular Gentlemen, by him therein Aspersed and Abused*, (1701), in Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 6, accessed July 1, 2019, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;rgn=main;view=text;idno=N00812.0001.001>.

⁸¹ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 65.

⁸² Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 8.

⁸³ For more on the letters and Increase Mathers defense of himself see, Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 23-29.

⁸⁴ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 29.

concluded “is there any man that has been more Faithful to the Church of New-England?”⁸⁵

Satisfied with their exoneration of the elder Mather, the authors turned their attention to Cotton. Acknowledging that the younger Mather thought it “needless to Vindicate himself” publically; the defenders took it upon themselves to publish Cotton’s response to Calef’s book, penned only for the church’s clarification.⁸⁶ Cotton asserted that Calef scarcely mentioned him without lying, but that he “shall only single out a few that are more Notorious” and briefly “touch upon them: from them you shall Judge of the rest.”⁸⁷ To begin, Cotton addressed the claim that he believed that the Devil cannot afflict in the shape of an innocent. To this, Cotton referred to his book *Memorable Providences* and the letter of advice he helped compile for the Judges before the trials in Salem. In both of them, he reminded his readers, he admitted fully to the possibility of this particular deception and that he had personally added, in the minister's advice, caution against the weight of spectral evidence.⁸⁸ He, however, did not address Calef’s accusation that Cotton had later abandoned his caution in the case of so many, particularly George Burroughs. Cotton reminded readers that he was not a judge in the trials, and that just because he spoke highly of the “Honourable Judges,” does not mean that he “approved of

⁸⁵ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 33.

⁸⁶ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 34.

⁸⁷ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 38.

⁸⁸ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 39.

all that was done.”⁸⁹ Although Cotton did not directly admit that the court made mistakes, this perhaps is the closest he came to expressing any doubt about the proceedings.

Cotton discussed the controversy over Margaret Rule next. Cotton rejected Calef’s account of his and his father’s actions, stressing that Calef had falsely represented their efforts.⁹⁰ The issue, Cotton proclaimed, was that when “little Bits, and Scraps, and Shreds” of discourse are carried away by “some Idle Eves droppers,” the result often renders “many Falshoods.”⁹¹ Thus, Cotton justified his refusal to engage Calef’s criticisms because he felt Calef was merely an unwelcome, ill informed overseer who drew his conclusions from hearsay.

Calef’s main complaint was Cotton’s vindication of the courts handling of spectral evidence. Cotton did not spend much time deliberating on the topic, simply declaring that “about the Troubles which we have had from the Invisible World, I have at present nothing to offer you.”⁹² He admitted that there may be “Errors on both Hands” but he left the deliberation of wickedness in the hands of God.⁹³

Cotton then took time to defend his father’s role in procuring the new charter, and then finally addressed Calef’s assertion that Governor Phips had ended the trials to save

⁸⁹ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 41.

⁹⁰ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 41-42; Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 333.

⁹¹ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 42.

⁹² Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 43.

⁹³ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 43-46.

his own wife from being condemned. Cotton shamed Calef for not allowing Phips to “rest quietly” and slandering the Governor’s good name. However, instead of offering a defense of Phips’ reasoning in ending the trials, he told an allegorical tale of an envious man who pulled down a statue of a deserving man. Those who would dare to dilute the memory of such a man, Cotton told, “will only dash and wound themselves against a Tombstone that will not be broken.”⁹⁴ Cotton thus suggested that Calef was attacking Phips and the Mathers out of mere jealousy.

Not completely satisfied with Cotton’s own defense of himself, the authors added to the argument a testimony from John Goodwin, whose child had been afflicted, in an attempt to disprove Calef’s charge that Cotton tried to procure accusations. Goodwin’s submission attested that although Cotton had visited his ailing child, “he never advised me to any thing concerning the Law, or Tryal of the Accused person.” Goodwin claimed that his decision to prosecute the person his daughter named as her tormentor did not come from the “advice of any Minister or Lawyer, or any other person,” but from his own accord.⁹⁵ With this, the authors felt the argument sufficient enough to vindicate those they felt had been wronged, but their efforts would not go unquestioned.

The defense no doubt circulated in manuscript form before it was published. By the time it made it to the printers, questions had already arisen about the true architect(s) of the work. Rumors spread that if not completely the work of one or both of the Mathers,

⁹⁴ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 51-52.

⁹⁵ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 64.

it had been written with their watchful supervision.⁹⁶ The idea persisted to such an extent that Increase and Cotton added to the published edition a post-script. In it, they ardently denied the claim that they composed the essay. They even claimed that “we were so far from Composing of the Essay, that we Earnestly but Fruitlessly, ask’d of them, to Abate some Expressions, of their Good and Kind opinions concerning us.”⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the fact still remained that this reply had only half-heartedly addressed the claims brought forth in Calef’s book. Therefore, another man felt it necessary to address Calef more directly; Reverend John Hale, whom Calef had also attacked in *More Wonders*.

Reverend Hale’s reply was published in New England in 1702. Hale’s parish was just north of Salem, and accusations had spread to there shortly after events began in 1692. Hale attended most proceedings and even gave witness on the character of Sarah Bishop and Dorcas Hoar, aiding in their condemnation.⁹⁸ He supported the trials from the beginning, but found himself in a tangled snare when the afflicted girls accused his wife of witchcraft.⁹⁹ Following the accusation, Hale became more cautious of the court’s actions. This change in stance is why Calef found Hale an easy target. Hale admitted that he did not feel he was the best person to refute Calef but stated, “I have waited five years for some other person to undertake it, who might doe it better than I can, but find

⁹⁶ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 227.

⁹⁷ Gill, Mather, and Mather, *Some Few Remarks*, 68.

⁹⁸ Sarah Bishop was the daughter-in-law of Bridget Bishop. Sarah and her Husband, Edward Bishop, Jr. were both found guilty of witchcraft, but escaped from prison before they were executed; Rosenthal, *RSWH*, 394, 900.

⁹⁹ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 397.

none.”¹⁰⁰ Most likely, he was referring to Cotton Mather, who refused to give a direct reply to Calef’s inquiries about the trials.

Though Hale became less vocal in the proceedings as they came to a close, his narrative, *A Modest Enquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft*, did not seek atonement, but instead fully defended the actions of the court. He believed that the court “managed with uprightness of heart.”¹⁰¹ However, the accusation of his wife caused “a more strict scanning of the principles” utilized by the court, and there he found cause for error.¹⁰² But, even in the court’s errors, Hale found reasoning in God’s will.

Hale began his account in direct conversation with Calef. He took on the task that Cotton would not- he outlined scriptural evidence on what defined a witch and how one might detect them. He first emphasized a piece of scripture that Increase had also outlined in *Cases of Conscience* “the way God governs Devils is by Chains ... sometimes greater and shorter, other times lesser and longer, as the Lord pleaseth.”¹⁰³ By reminding the readers of this passage, he attempted to maintain God’s preeminence over the happenings in Salem. Hale then shifted to the application of the scriptural guidelines on witchcraft. He outlined multiple cases of witchcraft within New England prior to the Salem outbreak. The purpose of this was to indicate the “principles formerly acted upon

¹⁰⁰ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 403.

¹⁰¹ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 403-404.

¹⁰² Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 404.

¹⁰³ Hales, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 407.

in Convicting” a witch.¹⁰⁴ The history and precedent of these cases, and also cases in Europe, comprised the literature that the court and its advisors consulted during the trials.¹⁰⁵

Hale gave his own account of the trials. He focused on the confessions of the accused and spoke briefly on the condemned who plead guilty. For Hale, the confessions offered definitive proof that the Devil had run amok in New England. Although he avoided her later retractions, Hale gave extensive reasoning as to why he found Tituba’s confession credible. He also evaded Calef’s charge that being a confessed witch meant preserving life, which gave motivation for false confession. Instead Hale accepts all the confessions as acknowledgements of guilt. He found authority in scripture asserting that those who went against God, “for his rebellion and treason, destroyed himself, hath left his name to stink unto all generations.”¹⁰⁶ Meaning, that those who had betrayed God would suffer on Earth and having confessed their sins, did not need to suffer capital punishment.

Hale admitted that errors had been made during the proceedings. His deeper reflections drew, for him, the conclusion that the courts had erred in their actions “by following such traditions of our fathers, maxims of the Common Law, and Presidents and Principles, which now we may see weighed in the balance of Sanctuary are found too

¹⁰⁴ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 411.

¹⁰⁵ Hales, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 425.

¹⁰⁶ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 430.

light.”¹⁰⁷ These principles had been set by generations of earlier men, and thus, if these predecessors had erred it was not the fault of the current court in their own application. The current court’s takes, then, were due to ignorance rather than willful malice. Hale referred to scripture in which those who “did not willingly depart from the rules of righteousness,” would be humbled before God and he would “pardon all the errors of his Servants and People, that desire to love his Name.”¹⁰⁸

Hale agreed that he could “see ground to fear, that there hath been a great deal of innocent blood shed in the Christian World.”¹⁰⁹ Hale, however, saw a more noble cause for this bloodshed. Hale again referred to the idea that God governed the Devil’s actions, as well as scripture where God permitted the sins of some in order to do his greater work, making the innocent lost martyrs in God’s work.¹¹⁰ Hale believed that God had grown angry at the secularization of New England and the laziness of his followers. Hale considered the witchcraft accusations “one end of the Lords letting Satan loose to torment and accuse so many; that hereby we may search out the truth more exactly.”¹¹¹ Hale continued to God’s purpose in the witch hunt, ending his narrative by likening New England to the prophecies of Micah. “The Lord grant it may be said of New England, as

¹⁰⁷ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 426.

¹⁰⁸ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 427.

¹⁰⁹ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 425.

¹¹⁰ Here Hale refers to Zechariah and the story of Joshua; Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 428.

¹¹¹ Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 430.

is prophesized of Judah ... I will cut off Witchcrafts out of thine hand, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers.”¹¹² Micah foretold that after the birth of Jesus, the Lord would rid Israel and Judah of their enemies, which had led to their divergence from the Lord’s path. Hale cautions his readers that if the cleansing in New England should be like that of Judah, men should “not give their Souls to the Devil in exchange for his restoring to them their goods again.”¹¹³ He hoped that the “glorious enterprise” of the founders of the colonies would be remembered and restored to its original course, so that the Lord’s favor could again be seen over the colonies.¹¹⁴

Calef never responded to either rebuttal of his work. Both Cotton and Calef’s accounts continued to circulate among audiences in Old and New England, being printed in several editions. The debate among readers persisted as to who had correctly conveyed the narrative. In 1728, the year his father died, Cotton’s son Samuel proclaimed when Calef had died in 1719, his book had died along with him - thus ending the debate. However, printers in New England finally took up the task of publishing Calef’s narrative in 1796 and reprinted it five times by 1866.¹¹⁵ In 1861, a Salem printer compiled both Cotton and Calef’s publications in a single volume called *Salem Witchcraft*. The two

¹¹² Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 431.

¹¹³ For more on the prophecies of Micah, see the *Bible*, Micah, chapter 5; Hale, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 431.

¹¹⁴ Hales, *A Modest Inquiry*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 432.

¹¹⁵ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 227.

works would be printed together in New England and London multiple times by the turn of the century.¹¹⁶

While the continued popularity of both books cannot be disputed, Samuel Cotton's words may very well have been truer than they seemed, at least in the eyes of the government. In 1783, James Madison compiled a list of influential books to be used by Congress as guidance for a developing country. A number of Cotton Mather's works, including *Wonders*, made the list and were included in the collection in the Library of Congress' official founding in Washington D.C., in 1800.¹¹⁷ Congress did not incorporate *More Wonders* until 1815, when it was included in the purchase of Thomas Jefferson's personal library to replace the original collection of the Library of Congress, which had burned during the War of 1812.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Burr, "Introduction to the *Wonders of the Invisible World*," in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 207-208.

¹¹⁷ "Reports on Books for Congress, [23 January], 1783," *National Archives*, accessed July 3, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-06-02-0031>.

¹¹⁸ Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, in the Library of Congress catalog, accessed July 7, 2019, <https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=28062&recCount=25&recPointer=4&bibId=9599832>.

CHAPTER 3

Petitioning the Court

Confessing to witchcraft guaranteed safety from the gallows. At least that had been the case since early in the trials. Elizabeth Johnson, Jr., spent a long winter in Salem prison with the knowledge that another confessed witch now stood to be executed.¹¹⁹ Elizabeth had falsely confessed to covenanting with the Devil, because she thought it meant immunity.¹²⁰ Now, as she awaited her trial, she hoped that telling the truth would set her free. When trials began after the winter recess, Elizabeth held strong to a sliver of hope- spectral evidence was no longer to be taken into consideration and most defendants on trial returned with a not guilty verdict. Sadly, when Elizabeth stood trial, the jury found her guilty of “covenanting with the Devill” and to the charge of witchcraft.¹²¹ In his haste to rid the colony of witches, Judge William Stoughton quickly signed the execution notice for Elizabeth and seven others. At the last minute, Governor Phips reprieved all eight and put an end to the trials in Salem.¹²² It seemed Elizabeth had been

¹¹⁹ “Petition of John Hale, Nicholas Noyes, Daniel Epps Jr., & John Emerson Jr. for Dorcas Hoar,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 673.

¹²⁰ “Examination of Elizabeth Johnson Jr., Copy,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 541; “Examination of Elizabeth Johnson Jr.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 543.

¹²¹ “Court Record of the Trial of Elizabeth Johnson Jr.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 771-772.

¹²² “Letter of William Phips to the Earl of Nottingham,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 811.

saved, but she now lived her life with the dark mark of a witchcraft conviction. She had no legal rights and the stain of a guilty verdict threatened both herself and her family with further accusations.

Petitioning the government in Puritan society was a common English practice. By supplying an outlet to direct dissension, the petition process served as a window into public opinion throughout the trials.¹²³ The first petition to the Salem witch court surfaced even before the Court of Oyer and Terminer had officially been formed, but the majority of the petitions filed came after the conclusion of the trials.

A warrant for the apprehension of Rebecca Nurse came shortly after the outbreak of the afflictions in 1692. At the ripe old age of seventy-one, Nurse was a member of Salem Church, although she attended services in Salem Village.¹²⁴ Highly respected and known for her pious virtue, Rebecca, along with her husband Francis, identified with the anti-Parris faction within the community. The Nurses also found themselves in multiple property disputes with the Putnams, who supported Reverend Parris.¹²⁵ In March, both Ann Putnam, Sr., and her daughter Ann, Jr., cried out against Rebecca; although Ann, Jr., only named Nurse as the culprit of her afflictions after Ann, Sr., suggested the name.¹²⁶

¹²³ Adams, *The Specter of Salem*, 21.

¹²⁴ "Warrant for the Apprehension of Rebecca Nurse, and Officer's Return," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 154-155.

¹²⁵ Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, 149.

¹²⁶ Rebecca Nurse's mother had also been accused of witchcraft years earlier; she was not convicted of the crime. Nonetheless, this made Rebecca susceptible to allegations of witchcraft because the art was seen as hereditary. Both of Rebecca's sisters, Mary Esty and Sarah Cloyce, were accused of

Just days before the establishment of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, a group of Salem residents risked their own lives in an attempt to save Rebecca's. Following the initial accusations, Elizabeth Procter, another accused, testified that Rebecca came to her to do the Devil's bidding.¹²⁷ Other afflicted girls also began to speak out against Nurse, and Reverend Parris even gave a damning testimony.¹²⁸ With evidence mounting, friends and family of Rebecca knew they had to act; even though by this time, accusations of witchcraft had spread like wildfire to those opposing the trials. Israel Porter composed a petition attesting to the good character of Rebecca Nurse. He, along with thirty-eight other Salem men and women, protested that they "never had Any: cause or grounds to suspect her of Any such thing as she is nowe Acused of."¹²⁹ Several others came forward and submitted personal statements proclaiming the same. Rebecca's supporters also attacked the character of her accusers, calling one "a woman of An unruly turbulent Spirit." Another claimed that one of Rebecca's opponents was known to "speack several

witchcraft during the Salem outbreak. For more see Marilynne K. Roach, *Six Women of Salem: The Untold Story of the Accused and their Accusers in the Salem Witch Trials* (Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, 2013); "Examination of Rebecca Nurse," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 157; "Statement of Samuel Nurse & John Tarbell for Rebecca Nurse," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 165.

¹²⁷ "Examination of Sarah Cloyce & Elizabeth Procter," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 173.

¹²⁸ "Statement of Samuel Parris Concerning Abigail Williams & Mary Walcott v. John Procter, Elizabeth Procter, Sarah Cloyce, Martha Cory, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Good, & Dorothy Good," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 181-182.

¹²⁹ Only one of the signers of Rebecca Nurse's petition would be accused of witchcraft- its composer, Israel Porter. He, however, was never indicted; "Petition of Israel Porter et al. for Rebecca Nurse," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 349.

unthruthes.”¹³⁰ Other advocates directly challenged the spectral evidence that the accusers and judges so heavily relied on. Sarah Nurse, Rebecca’s daughter, stated that she had seen Sarah Bibber, one of the accusers, pull a pin from her pocket just before Bibber fell into fits, holding her knees crying out that Rebecca’s specter had pricked her.¹³¹ Robert Moulton, another Salem resident, testified in support of Nurse that the accuser Susannah Shelden, who had claimed that the specters of witches threw her over a stone wall, had contradicted herself. Moulton insisted that he heard Shelden admit that she “Came over the stone wall her selfe.”¹³²

Although many petitioned in support of Rebecca, she also appealed to the court on her behalf. When her case went to trial, Rebecca’s first physical examination found she had a “preternaturall Excresece of Flesh” in her genitals thought to be a witch’s mark, but upon further examination, by another examiner, it could not be found again.¹³³ The judges still presented the report to the jury as evidence. Rebecca petitioned the court that since there existed a discrepancy in the results of her examinations, the court might inquire into the issue. Later, after a third exam, she wished that she “have Liberty to

¹³⁰ “Testimony of John Porter & Lydia Porter Regarding Sarah Bibber, in Support of Rebecca Nurse,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 433.

¹³¹ “Testimony of Sarah Nurse Regarding Sarah Bibber, in Support of Rebecca Nurse,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 432.

¹³² “Testimony of Robert Moulton Sr. Regarding Susannah Shelden, in Support of Rebecca Nurse,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 434.

¹³³ “Physical Examinations No. 1 & No. 2 of Bridget Bishop, Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Procter, Alice Parker, Susannah Martin, & Sarah Good,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 362.

manifest it to the wourld” and let the entirety of her examinations be known to the jury.¹³⁴ In spite of no additional examinations appearing in the records, when the jury deliberated they found Rebecca Nurse innocent of all charges.

The afflicted girls and the judges did not take the verdict well. Those who had accused Rebecca are recorded to have “made an hideous out-cry” and the judges were “strangely surprized.”¹³⁵ Juryman Thomas Fisk reported that upon the not guilty verdict, Chief Judge William Stoughton objected and asked the jury to reconsider evidence, which “the Prinsoner at the Bar spake against her self.”¹³⁶ Stoughton recalled that when evidence by confessed witches against Nurse came into deliberation, Nurse replied, “What do these persons give in Evidence against me now, they used to come amoung us.”¹³⁷ As a result, the jury reconvened and found Rebecca guilty.¹³⁸ Rebecca again appealed to the court on her behalf, explaining that her words were meant to express that they “were Prisoners with us,” not a fellow witch.¹³⁹ Her petition had little effect, and the

¹³⁴ “Petition of Rebecca Nurse,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 413-414.

¹³⁵ Calef, *More Wonders, in Narratives*, ed. Burr, 358.

¹³⁶ “Declaration of Thomas Fisk, Juryman,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 465.

¹³⁷ “Declaration of Thomas Fisk, Juryman,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 465.

¹³⁸ Calef, *More Wonders, in Narrative*, ed. Burr, 358-359.

¹³⁹ Governor Phips allegedly granted Rebecca Nurse a reprieve after the new verdict of guilty was brought in. This will be examined again in a later chapter; “Declaration of Thomas Fisk, Juryman,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 465.

court hanged her at the gallows on July 19, 1692.¹⁴⁰ Rebecca Nurse's case shows one type of petition utilized by the community during the trials. Although hers is the most extensive, other accused also had petitions submitted on their behalf.

John Procter, like Nurse, petitioned from inside Salem jail. Procter voiced his strong opposition to the trials from the start. He even reportedly beat his servant, Mary Warren, who was among the afflicted, for what he saw as her false accusations.¹⁴¹ Soon John found himself among those accused. While in prison, Procter petitioned, not to the court, but to the clergy in Boston. He accused the judges as "having Condemned" those imprisoned "already before our Tryals." He claimed that all who were accused were innocent and for those who confessed, he insisted it the result of coercion. Specifically, he told of five men who confessed after having their "neck and heels" tied together "until Blood was ready to come out of their Noses." He went further to allege that the court had already "undone us in our Estates," but for them to benefit from such seizures required "our Innocent Bloods." He asked in closing that the clergy either move the trials to Boston or replace the magistrates.¹⁴²

Two petitions surfaced in support of Procter and his wife Elizabeth, who was with child and also imprisoned. Members of Salem Village petitioned on behalf of the

¹⁴⁰ "Warrant for the Execution of Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth How & Sarah Wilds, and Officer's Return," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 466.

¹⁴¹ Karlson, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 243.

¹⁴² All quotes found in "Petition of John Procter from Prison," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 486; Procter's son, William, was also tortured to confess, but he refused. He was never condemned for more see "Examination of William Procter," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 664-665.

characters of both the accused. They protested that the Procters lived a “christian life,” therefore could not be guilty of the crime they were charged.¹⁴³ A group of inhabitants from neighboring Ipswich also appealed to the court on the Procters behalf. They defended the Procters’ nature by stating “we never had the Least Knowledge of Such a Nefandous wickedness” of their neighbors. The petitioners questioned spectral evidence in the context of the popular debate of whether or not the Devil could impersonate an innocent person, which the petitioners believed he could.¹⁴⁴ Between both petitions, fifty-two people had spoken out in defense of the Procters. Regardless, just days after his proponents submitted the petition, the court executed John Procter with neither his nor his supporters’ petitions being acknowledged.¹⁴⁵

By September 1692, opposition to the trials had reached a high. Conceivably to ease accusations of unfairness, some of the confessed began to stand trial. Dorcas Hoar became the first confessed witch to face judgment in front of the court. Reverend John Hale, author of *A Modest Inquiry*, testified against her, and the court found her guilty,

¹⁴³ “Petition in Support of John Procter & Elizabeth Procter,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 533.

¹⁴⁴ Procter associated with several Ipswich inhabitants professionally, as well as socially. Their questioning of whether the Devil could impersonate an innocent is shared in many of the narratives and critiques of the trials; “Petition in Support of John Procter & Elizabeth Procter,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 534-335.

¹⁴⁵ “Executions of George Burroughs, Martha Carrier, George Jacobs Sr., John Procter, & John Willard,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 547; Procter’s wife, Elizabeth, received a stay of execution because she was pregnant. When she gave birth, Governor Phips had already halted the trials. She ended up not being executed. For more on Elizabeth see Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 271.

condemning her to death.¹⁴⁶ Hale, perhaps already reflecting on his actions during the trials, led a petition to postpone Hoar's execution so that she could "perfect her repentance for Ye salvation of her soule."¹⁴⁷ The petition was granted. Dorcas' case made clear that those who confessed were no longer safe from death, as they had been before. As a result, several of the confessed witches retracted their confessions and admitted to falsely speaking out against fellow accused, due to the court manipulating their words and use of "violent urging."¹⁴⁸ Shortly after their petition, Governor Phips halted any new arrests. Phips may have realized the court's error when he received the petition, or perhaps he feared for his recently accused wife's ability to withstand the court's ruthless tactics.

The trials came to a standstill right as winter began to set in, in Massachusetts. Many families petitioned the court to release their loved ones over the harsh winter since survival in the detestable prison conditions was questionable. With the agreement that all existing jail bills would be paid and the accused would appear before the court when

¹⁴⁶ "Testimony of John Hale v. Dorcas Hoar," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 593; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 154.

¹⁴⁷ "Petition of John Hale, Nicholas Noyes, Daniel Epps Jr., & John Emerson Jr. for Dorcas Hoar," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 673.

¹⁴⁸ "Recantations of Mary Osgood, Eunice Frye, Deliverance Dane, Abigail Barker, Mary Tyler, Sarah Wilson Sr., Mary Bridges Sr., Mary Marston, Sarah Churchill, Hannah Post, & Mary Post, as Reported by Increase Mather," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 693-694.

called, the judges granted recognizance to many of those who had not yet been indicted on charges of witchcraft.¹⁴⁹

Over the winter, more petitions arose as the discourse on the trials grew. Despite Phips' ban of any publication concerning the trials, Increase and Cotton Mather's narratives circulated throughout the colony. Spectral evidence became a major topic of discussion with the general population as a result of these narratives. This is reflected in petitions that began to find their way to the court in early December 1692. Two confessed witches, who did not join their fellow confessors in withdrawing their confessions, attempted a different approach. Abigail Faulkner, Sr., and Rebecca Eames both petitioned the court for a pardon on the basis that the only evidence against them was spectral. Faulkner added that other accused who spoke out against her had since rescinded their claims, referring to the recantations previously submitted to the court.¹⁵⁰ Eames included that had she not confessed, she would "very speedily be hanged."¹⁵¹ Eames also argued to the court that Increase Mather and Thomas Brattle had both acknowledged the words spoken against her were "Nothing but ye Divells delusions."¹⁵² Francis Dane, Sr., submitted a statement to the court reiterating the sentiment of the previous petitions. He called the trials "Scandalous, and unjust" and scolded them for viewing "Spectre

¹⁴⁹ For recognizance records see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 697, 698, 704, 706, 707, 709, 710-712, 714-720.

¹⁵⁰ "Petition of Abigail Faulkner Sr. For Pardon," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 704.

¹⁵¹ "Petition of Rebecca Eames for a Pardon," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 705.

¹⁵² "Petition of Rebecca Eames for a Pardon," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 706.

Evidence as an infallible mark.”¹⁵³ To leave no doubt on his position, Dane addressed the claim in the preface of Increase’s *Cases of Consciousness*, which stated that the court had been “misinformed.”¹⁵⁴ In Dane’s opinion “Ignorance wherein we thought we did well, will not excuse us when we know we did amisse.”¹⁵⁵ With growing opposition, Governor Phips insisted the remaining cases be heard without the weight of spectral evidence. Chief Justice William Stoughton, who held the validity of spectral evidence in high regard, disagreed with the decision.

On the first day of court, officials deliberated over a petition by several Andover residents concerning defendants who had been released on recognizance. The petition stated that the named women should be “clear of that great transgression which hath been laid to their charge” because their arrests came at the “misrepresentation of the truth of *that* evidence.”¹⁵⁶ Without regard to their plea, all accused were tried. However, without spectral evidence being admitted into consideration the jury found most innocent.

Even without the force of spectral evidence, the court found three of the remaining accused guilty. William Stoughton sent out an execution notice for those three

¹⁵³ “Statement of Francis Dane Sr., Regarding Some of the Andover Accused,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 734.

¹⁵⁴ Mather, *Cases of Consciousness*, Preface; this page is not numbered in the original publication but the quote is present on the fourth page of the preface.

¹⁵⁵ “Statement of Francis Dane Sr., Regarding Some of the Andover Accused,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 735.

¹⁵⁶ “Petition for Mary Osgood, Eunice Frye, Deliverance Dane, Sarah Wilson Sr., & Abigail Barker,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 739.

and five of those who had been condemned before Phips halted the trials. Dorcas Hoar, Rebecca Eames, Elizabeth Procter, Abigail Faulkner, Sr., and Elizabeth Johnson, Jr. were among the eight who faced execution. Governor Phips, still unsatisfied with the court's methods, sent a reprieve on behalf of all eight and dissolved the court.¹⁵⁷

Petitions complaining of malpractice by Sheriff George Corwin also surfaced throughout the trials. John Parker alleged in a petition asking for reimbursement that upon confiscating their mother's estate, Sheriff Corwin allowed them to purchase the confiscated property for a sizable sum. They felt "so much money ought not to have been demanded of us," but fearing the family's belongings would be "immediately sold," they gave in.¹⁵⁸ The Parker brother's petition, like others during the trials, went unanswered. Once the court was disbanded, Philip English's petition received the only recognition by the government, which admitted fault in the actions of Corwin. English had evaded arrest, and therefore, the court had never convicted him of witchcraft. Seizure laws did not allow the taking of property without an indictment, but Corwin took much of English's estate anyway. Following the conclusion of the trials, Governor Phips released a letter to Corwin stating English's property had been "illegally seized" and Corwin was to appear in court with a full inventory of the property taken to "restore them unto" their owner.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ "Letter of William Phips to the Earl of Nottingham," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 810-811.

¹⁵⁸ "Petition of John Parker & Joseph Parker for Restitution for Mary Parker," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 700.

¹⁵⁹ "Letter of William Phips to George Corwin," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 813.

Phips, being called back to Britain to answer for charges against him, did not see these proceedings through, and in 1694, the court found the sheriff's accounts to be true- no further action was taken.¹⁶⁰

Despite being ignored, the petitions presented during the trials helped to outline the public's opinion on the trials and the court's resistance to yield to the hostile language of the petitions. Even though the Massachusetts population voiced discontent towards the court's proceedings during the witchcraft trials, many of those same judges became permanent members of the Superior Court of Massachusetts, including William Stoughton.¹⁶¹ Over the next decade, these men received more petitions concerning the trials, with little change of heart.

If able to pay their jail fees, those once accused could now return to their lives. Life after the trials, however, came with tainted reputations and financial burdens. In 1697, Elizabeth Procter petitioned the court in hopes of alleviating some of these hardships. Just before his execution, John Procter had changed his will and mentioned Elizabeth nowhere in its contents- not realizing Elizabeth, who he knew to be condemned, would survive him. Being a second wife and having a disgruntled relationship with John's children, the children refused to acknowledge that Elizabeth had any rights to their father's property. Elizabeth, though reprieved, could not challenge her step-children's actions because she was "dead in the law" as a convicted witch. Since she

¹⁶⁰ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 453; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 251.

¹⁶¹ Sewall, *Diary*, May 31, 1693, 378.

viewed herself as wrongfully accused in “that sad time of darknes” by “strangly Influenced persons,” she petitioned the court to put her “Into a capacity to mak use of the law” so that she might recover what by law should be hers. Elizabeth received no reply from the court.¹⁶²

Three years later, Abigail Faulkner, Sr., petitioned the court asking, just as Elizabeth had intended, for her attainder to be lifted. Like Elizabeth, Abigail spoke frankly about the trial in her plea. She charged that since she had been accused by the “afflicted who pretended to see me by their spectrall sight” her life had met many obstacles. Chiefly, that she lived as “a Malefactor Convict upon record of ye Most heinous Crimes that mankind Can be supposed to be guilty off, which besides its utter Ruining and Defacing my Reputacion, will Certainly Expose my selfe to Iminent Danger by New accusations.” Faulkner felt that if her attainder were lifted she and her family would “be freed from ye Evil Consequents Thereof.” Like Elizabeth, Abigail received no reply from the court.¹⁶³

After another three years of waiting, Francis Faulkner, Abigail’s husband, petitioned the court on behalf of the reprieved Elizabeth Procter, Abigail Faulkner, Sr., and Sarah Wardwell, along with the executed Rebecca Nurse, Mary Esty, Mary Parker, John Procter, Elizabeth Howe, and Samuel Wardwell. Francis stated that these

¹⁶² “Petition of Elizabeth Procter to Recover the Estate of John Procter,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 844; Elizabeth summarizes her troubles in her petition, but for more on her case see Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 402 and Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 245.

¹⁶³ “Petition of Abigail Faulkner Sr.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 847-848.

individuals “were accused of Witchcraft by certain possessed persons” and condemned on the “Evidence of the aforesaid possessed persons.” This evidence, Francis claimed, “through Errors and Mistakes in those tryalls” was now seen as invalid. Even so, the victims of the trials “Names are Exposed to Infamy and reproach, while their Tryall and condemnation stands upon Publick Record.” To this, he asked that the court clear the named petitionees so that they and their posterity may be void of any negative consequences.¹⁶⁴

For reasons unknown, the court chose to reply to Francis Faulkner’s petition. Perhaps because he was a man, or his words felt less aggressive and accusatorial than the two before. But most likely, the petition found an audience in 1703 because the main opponent to the reconciliation of the trials, William Stoughton, had died in 1701. Whatever the reason, the court reversed the attainders of Abigail Faulkner, Sr., Elizabeth Procter, and Sarah Wardwell, “as if no such convictions, Judgements, or Attainders had ever been had or given.” They did not, however, lift the convictions of the six executed individuals that Faulkner included.¹⁶⁵

Anticipating that not reversing the attainders of the executed could cause discontent and unrest among the communities, a group of Massachusetts ministers felt they should lend advice to the court. The ministers emphasized to the court that the

¹⁶⁴ “Petition of Francis Faulkner et al. To Clear the Records of Rebecca Nurse, Mary Esty, Abigail Faulkner Sr., Mary Parker, John Procter, Elizabeth Procter, Elizabeth How, Samuel Wardwell, & Sarah Wardwell,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 848-849.

¹⁶⁵ “An Act for the Reversing the Attainder of Abigail Faulkner Sr. et al.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 850.

condemned met their fate from the “great weight” of the “Afflicted persons.” Since, it had been “Acknowledged, that there were Errors and mistakes in the aforesaid Tryalls,” something ought to be “publickly done to clear the good name and reputation of some who have suffered ... against whom there was not as is Sufficient evidence to prove the guilt of such a Crime.”¹⁶⁶ Days later, the court issued an addition to the “Bill of Attainder.” They still did not clear the executed parties, but did officially proclaim that “no Spectre Evidence may hereafter be accounted valid.” They then reaffirmed their earlier proclamation of the reversal of the three aforementioned women and that no negative consequences were to follow them or their relatives.¹⁶⁷

Around the same time as Abigail Faulkner, Sr., and Elizabeth Procter’s petitions, Philip English sued Sheriff Corwin for the property he still owed him. Before the case could be settled, Corwin fell ill and died. English, allegedly, became so enraged that he threatened to confiscate the body of Corwin for compensation. While most likely a hollow threat, the Corwin’s are rumored to have buried the sheriff in the family cellar.¹⁶⁸

English did not stop his pursuit despite the death of Corwin. In 1709, he headed a petition for many inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay in hopes of reconciling the

¹⁶⁶ “Petition of Ministers from Essex County,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 851; the mistakes acknowledged here, most likely refer to the “mistake on both hands” described in the Bill for the Day of Prayer in 1697.

¹⁶⁷ “Order of the General Court Concerning a Bill of Attainder of Abigail Faulkner Sr. et al.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 852.

¹⁶⁸ Hill, *A Delusion of Satan*, 206; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 251; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 520.

“reputations and estates” of those affected by the events in 1692. He chose his words carefully, telling the court that their hardships were the result of court actions thought to be “Right in the hour of darkness,” but acknowledging dissatisfaction in the courts 1703 actions, he asked that they “pass some sutable Act” that “shall Restore ye Reputations to ye Posterity of ye suffurars and Remunerate them as to what they have been Damnified in their Estates.”¹⁶⁹ Another petition followed, stating much the same and signed by some of the same inhabitants.¹⁷⁰

Realizing a need, in 1710 the Massachusetts government set up a system to hear all petitions of those who had lost family members during the trials or had themselves been accused. The court commissioned a committee to collect petitions and compile a report of advice to be considered. In the short life of the committee, Salemites submitted some forty-five petitions for review.¹⁷¹

The petitions submitted varied in their language. Most attempted to appeal to the court cordially, but others, like the husband of executed Mary Esty, presented their case with more hostility. He insisted on restitution for the damages done to his estate “by

¹⁶⁹ “Petition of Philip English et al.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 853.

¹⁷⁰ “Petition of Isaac Esty Sr. et al. for Restitution for Mary Esty,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 854.

¹⁷¹ Appointment of the committee is noted in their review in “Recommendation and Authorization for Compensation Claims and Amounts Allowed,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 885; The forty-five petitions are found in Rosenthal, *RSWH*, 855-885; Historian Emerson Baker recorded in *A Storm of Witchcraft* that the committee stayed in Salem for six days. The review document in the *RSWH* does not give a duration of their stay, just that they met in Salem on September 13, 1710. Also, forty-five documents are included in the remaining records, although presumably more existed. For instance, no petition is included on the behalf of John Procter, but in the report, it states that Procter’s sons petitioned for a specified amount of restitution.

reasons of such a hellish molestation.”¹⁷² His approach, however, remained in the minority. Many applied for restitution of losses to their estates, chiefly from what they saw as an abuse of Sheriff Corwin’s authority. Philip English submitted an extensive list of losses, which totaled more than all the other petitions combined. Petitioners also asked for compensation for expenses acquired while caring for and visiting their loved ones in jail, including the fee they had submitted for their loved ones’ releases. Not only the families of those executed and condemned petitioned for restitution. Others who had been accused, but not officially charged, petitioned for repayment of jail fees as well.¹⁷³

Understandably, after being left out of the 1703 bill, families of the condemned requested that the remaining attainders be lifted. Nehemiah Jewett, a member of the committee, submitted a document of his own, asking that the executed individuals with no family present to petition also be considered. While the reversal of the attainders would aid in any legal issues of the condemned that had not been put to death, the hope for the families of the executed, seemed to focus on clearing the reputation of their loved ones and avoiding any negative repercussions in the future for themselves.¹⁷⁴

The simple lifting of the attainders could only guarantee relief from the former, however. This is evident in that both Abigail Faulkner, Sr., and Sarah Wardwell, who

¹⁷² “Petition of Isaac Esty for Mary Esty,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 855.

¹⁷³ “Petition of Philip English for Restitution,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 866-869; for a survey of the other petitions see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 855-885.

¹⁷⁴ “Letter of Nehemiah Jewett to Stephen Sewell,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 860; for a survey of the other petitions see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 855-885.

already had their attainders lifted, in their 1710 petitions still asked for both restitution and the reversal of their attainders. Therefore, there must have *still* remained a need to clear their names of any negative association with the trials.¹⁷⁵

The committee advised the government of a dire need to clear the remaining attainders and to compensate those who suffered greatly from the repercussions of the trials. The report included a summary of costs for all of the condemned parties, both executed and reprieved. However, they did not include the sums from petitioners who were never condemned for the crime of witchcraft. Elizabeth Procter, along with Elizabeth Johnson, Jr., appeared with the condemned and reprieved individuals, but with the note, “I find their names amongst ye above Condmned persons and no sum put to them.”¹⁷⁶ Elizabeth Procter does not appear in the petitions from 1710, making no plea for her late husband or herself.¹⁷⁷ In the case of Elizabeth, Jr., no restitution had been requested, but her brother did solicit the committee to lift her attainder.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ “Petition of Abigail Faulkner Sr. for Restitution,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 869; “Petition of Samuel Wardwell Jr. for Restitution for Sarah & Samuel Wardwell,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 883.

¹⁷⁶ “Summary of the Amounts Requested by the Victims & Their Relatives,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 886-887.

¹⁷⁷ Although Elizabeth Procter did not petition the committee on behalf of herself or her husband, John’s sons did. The petition is not included in the forty-five surviving documents, but in the committee’s report it is listed that John Procter’s sons, John and Thorndike, had requested restitution; “Summary of the Amounts Requested by the Victims & Their Relatives,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 887.

¹⁷⁸ “Petition of Francis Johnson for Restitution for Elizabeth Johnson Jr.,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 875.

A year later, when the government finally took action on the committee's report, the court did not satisfy all of the petitioners. Only those who petitioned and the court had condemned received restitution. Meaning Philip English received no sum to replenish his estate since his trial returned with a not guilty verdict.¹⁷⁹ The court reversed the attainders for thirteen of the executed, ignoring Nehemiah Jewett's plea for the six who had no family petition on their behalf. Eight of the condemned but not executed also had their attainders lifted. Elizabeth Johnson, Jr., however, did not appear among those listed in the Act.¹⁸⁰

Nathaniel Dane, representing the portion of the community that did not receive compensation, urged the court to reconsider. He hoped the court would "consider the Sufferings of our Relations" and to alleviate some of that suffering by reimbursing "Prison fees and court charges."¹⁸¹ Sarah Parker, who also signed Dane's document, wrote her own appeal. Her mother Mary Parker was executed and Sarah received compensation for her, but Sarah felt she deserved to also be reimbursed for charges during her imprisonment.¹⁸² Their petitions went unanswered and compensation remained for the family of the condemned.

¹⁷⁹ "Order for Payment of Damages by Governor Joseph Dudley," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 892.

¹⁸⁰ "An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. for Witchcraft," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 889. The language in this document will be addressed in chapter four and five.

¹⁸¹ "Petition of Nathaniel Dane et al. for Restitution," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 897.

¹⁸² "Order for Payment of Damages by Governor Joseph Dudley," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 892; "Petition of Sarah Parker for Restitution," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 899.

Philip English continued to petition the court and in 1717 a committee considered his inquiry to be compensated for what Sheriff Corwin had confiscated.¹⁸³ After deliberation, the court offered him two hundred pounds to settle his case and be done with his persistence.¹⁸⁴ Reportedly, English became enraged at the low sum and refused the proposal.¹⁸⁵

Elizabeth Johnson, Jr., also petitioned the court again. She reminded the court that she “was condemned by the Court at Salem,” yet her name did not appear with the others on the order lifting the attainders. She stressed that she was “very desirous of the favour of that Act . . . and that the Honourable Court would please to allow me Something in Consideration of my charges by reason of my long Imprisonment.”¹⁸⁶ For reasons unknown, the court did not reply to her petition. Perhaps they confused her with her mother, Elizabeth Johnson, Sr., who had been found not guilty.¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, for the remainder of her life, Elizabeth, Jr. remained guilty of witchcraft in the eyes of the law.

¹⁸³ “Order Appointing a Committee to Consider Philip English’s Petition,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 915.

¹⁸⁴ “Final Action on Claim by Philip English,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 916-917.

¹⁸⁵ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 251.

¹⁸⁶ “Petition of Elizabeth Johnson Jr. for Reversing Attainder and for Restitution,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 901.

¹⁸⁷ Francis Johnson petitioned separately on behalf of his mother and sister, although many with multiple family members compiled their petition into a single document. Presumably, Francis Johnson submitted two, in hopes of avoiding any confusion on the identity of the two. These can be seen in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 875, 876.

CHAPTER 4

Taking Responsibility

In 1692, Ann Putnam, Jr., vigorously accused her fellow villagers of witchcraft. She became one of the most vocal accusers during the trials, giving testimony that brought several innocent people to their death. Fourteen years later, in August of 1706, she stood timidly in front of the Salem Village congregation as Reverend Parris' successor, Joseph Green, read aloud her apology.¹⁸⁸ Public reconciliation of their actions did not come easily to the instigators and arbitrators of the trials. The pride of these individuals only prolonged tensions between the church, government, and Salem community.

In his initial letter to the crown, Governor Phips feared the repercussions of being found at fault for the witchcraft proceedings. By October 1692, unrest had settled amongst the onlookers of the trials. George Burroughs had recently shaken the community's belief in the accuracy of the trials with his rendition of the Lord's Prayer, and petitions on behalf of the condemned had already begun. In his first letter, Phips had asserted that he "was almost the whole time of the proceedings abroad in the service of their Majesties ... and depended upon the Judgement of the Court as to the right method

¹⁸⁸ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 568.

of Proceeding in cases of witchcrafter,” but to his dismay “when I came home I found many persons in a strange ferment of disatisfactions.”¹⁸⁹ Phips attempted to further distance himself from the court's actions by assuring the crown that “I hereby declare that as soon as I came from fighting against their Majesties enemyes and understood what danger some of their innocent subjects might be exposed to ... put a stop to the proceedings of the Court and they are now stopped till their Magisties pleasure be knowne.”¹⁹⁰ However, council minutes disagreed with Phips’ claims. He is shown as present during council proceedings throughout the trials, therefore aware of the proceedings.¹⁹¹ Robert Calef even recorded Phips as giving Rebecca Nurse a reprieve, after her verdict of not guilty had been overturned by the judges, but he retracted it due to the judges’ discontent.¹⁹² These inconsistencies coupled with the fact that the governor conveniently left out the recent witchcraft accusation against his wife, suggest that his words could be interpreted as defensive and self-serving.

In Phips’ February 1693 letter, in which he informed the crown that he had brought the trials to a permanent conclusion, he attempted to deflect blame from himself once more and diverted it to the Deputy Governor, William Stoughton - Chief Justice of the court. Phips reasserted that he was not present during the proceedings, but that upon

¹⁸⁹ “Letter of William Phips to the Privy Council,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 686.

¹⁹⁰ “Letter of William Phips to the Privy Council,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 687.

¹⁹¹ “Proceedings of the Council of Massachusetts Bay from 18th July to 28 December 1692,” *National Archives UK*, CO 5/785.

¹⁹² Calef, *More Wonders, in Narratives*, ed. Burr, 359.

his arrival he found Stoughton vigorously persisting in the proceedings, in spite of “great dissatisfaction and disturbance of the people.”¹⁹³ Phips then stressed that *he* put a halt to the proceedings, discharged some imprisoned on bail, and beseeched the judges to consider a way to relieve “others and prevent them from perishing in prison.”¹⁹⁴ When Phips allowed a special court to try those remaining in prison, under altered methods, the governor shared that to his dismay Stoughton condemned three individuals who should have been cleared and signed a warrant for a “speedy execution” of those three and five others, who were condemned before the trials had halted. When Phips graciously reprieved these accused, he recorded that the Deputy Governor was “inraged and filled with passionate anger and refused to sitt upon the bench in a Superior Court.” Phips then directly charged Stoughton by stating that he “indeed hath from the beginning hurried on these matters with great precipitancy and by his warrant hath caused the estates, goods and chattles of the executed to be seized and disposed of without my knowledge or consent.”¹⁹⁵ He closed his letter assuring the crown that since his noble actions, no further complaints had been made and that any differing opinions concerning the matter had come before his intervention.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Phips, “Letters,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 199.

¹⁹⁴ Phips, “Letters,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 200.

¹⁹⁵ Phips, “Letters,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 201.

¹⁹⁶ Phips, “Letters,” in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 201-202.

Phips continued to distance himself from any disapproval with the court's proceedings. By mid-March, the order for all remaining prisoners to be released had been approved. However, only prisoners who had the means to pay their jail debts were released. The rest remained imprisoned until they could cover the charges, all while more expenses mounted on their bills.¹⁹⁷ Phips also received a petition from Philip English to have his confiscated property returned to him. Although in his letter to the crown Phips accused Stoughton of being liable for illegally confiscating property, he did not press Stoughton to right this wrong, but he did the Sheriff who had physically taken the property. Phips officially charged Sheriff George Corwin of Salem with illegal seizure of English's property in April.¹⁹⁸ Opinions varied over Corwin's behavior during the trials; However, Phips' concluded that the sheriff stepped outside the law in the case of Philip English. He did not charge Corwin in any of the other cases brought against him this could be due to Phips not finding any fault in the other case or because he had become preoccupied with the growing discontent surrounding his own actions.

By the time Phips charged Corwin, the Governor found himself under fire. Many under his command found Phips lacking in his ability to govern and lead the colony's military. Complaints about Phips began in late 1692 and persisted in the years to follow. William Stoughton began collecting several accounts critical of Phips.¹⁹⁹ None of the

¹⁹⁷ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 402.

¹⁹⁸ "Letter of William Phips to George Corwin," in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 813-814.

¹⁹⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 472.

surviving testimonies against Phips mention the witchcraft trials as part of their complaints.²⁰⁰ Nonetheless, part of Stoughton's eagerness to aid in the defamation of Phips undoubtedly came from their estranged relationship, which the trials exacerbated. Phips commissioned his clerk, Benjamin Jackson, to gather affidavits on his behalf. Just as the account opposed to Phips, none of the statements in Phips' favor mentioned any handling of the trials.²⁰¹ The same cannot be said for the Governor's defense of himself. In September of 1693, Phips penned a letter to the crown pleading his own case. Before he directly addressed the charges being brought against him, he reminded his readers that when he came to Massachusetts, he faced a massive outbreak of witchcraft. Phips boasted that his action of putting a "stop to those Proceedings hath hindered the Ruin of this majesties Province."²⁰² Undoubtedly Phips hoped to appeal to the crown as a savior of their misguided subjects. Despite his efforts, in July of 1694, Phips received orders to return to London to stand trial for the complaints against him; Lieutenant Governor William Stoughton was to head the province in his absence.²⁰³ Phips died before his case could go to court, never admitting any fault in his part of the trials.

²⁰⁰ "Abstract of information and depositions relating to the complaint of Mr. Brenton and Captain Short Against Sir William Phips, and articles offered against Phips by the collector," *National Archives UK*, CO5/858.

²⁰¹ "From Sir William Phips to the committee, 25 Sep 1693," *National Archives UK*, CO5/906.

²⁰² "Letters concerning the Salem witch trials, the defense of New England, and a proposed invasion of Canada," *National Archives UK*, CO5/751.

²⁰³ Sewall, *Diary*, July 4, 1694, 390; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 459.

Judges of the witchcraft court, regardless of the discontent over the trials proceeding and the growing number of petitions against the court seemed initially unaltered by the controversy over the trials. Every member was reelected to the Massachusetts council. Phips' scapegoat, William Stoughton, received his office by the largest margin.²⁰⁴ Stoughton's staunch religious convictions allowed him to keep a righteous attitude towards his actions during the trials. When he heard of Governor Phips' declaration to reprieve those he had condemned in February of 1693, he reportedly proclaimed angrily, "We were in a way to have cleared the land of them."²⁰⁵ In his opinion, Phips had sealed the colony's fate as accepting of the "Kingdom of Satan" by dismissing the trials and reprieving those accused.²⁰⁶ Following Phips departure and Stoughton's rise to interim-governor, Stoughton focused on the running of the colony, and although he had many petitions for restitution brought before him, he acted on none during his time in power. Stoughton avoided issues concerning the trials, when possible, during his governorship. However, in the case of slanderous speech against the judges, he made an exception.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, May 31, 1693, 378.

²⁰⁵ Sibley, *Harvard Graduates*, 201.

²⁰⁶ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 374; Sibley, *Harvard Graduates*, 201.

²⁰⁷ The government of Massachusetts made no decisions concerning the trials and restitution after the departure of Phips, besides the trial of Thomas Maule. Warrants for payment of court and county officials took place under Phips, and the petitions for reparations were not addressed until after Stoughton's death in 1701. For more see; Rosenthal, *RSWH*; "Proceedings of the Council of Massachusetts Bay," *National Archive UK*, CO 5/785.

Thomas Maule, a resident of Salem and a Quaker, actively protested the intolerant rule of the Puritan government. In 1690 he wrote a book to defend Quakerism; he revised this text after the trials to include his thoughts on God's reasoning for releasing a storm of witchcraft in New England. *Truth Held Forth and Maintained* asserted that the trials were God's punishment for the government's earlier persecution of Quakers. Maule condemned the judges' overzealous prosecution of witches and affirmed that it is "better that one hundred Witches should live, than that one person be put to death for a Witch, which is not a Witch."²⁰⁸ Publishers in Boston refused to publish his pamphlet, so Maule arranged for a publisher in New York to print a modest amount of copies. The text soon found its way into the hands of Salem court officials.²⁰⁹

Stoughton and the council arrested Maule so that he could be brought to trial for his slanderous work and ordered all copies of *Truth Held Forth* burned.²¹⁰ After almost a year of imprisonment, Maule finally stood trial. His defense claimed that as an English subject and merchant he had every right to print his text. The judges protested that slanderous narratives were not ordinary merchandise. Maule countered that the court had

²⁰⁸ Thomas Maule, *Truth held forth and maintained according to the testimony of the holy prophets, Christ and his apostles recorded in the Holy Scriptures. With some account of the judgements of the Lord lately inflicted upon New-England by witch craft: To which is added, something concerning the fall of Adam, his state in the fall, and way of restoration to God again, with many other weighty things, necessary for people to weigh and consider*, 1965, in Evans Early American Imprint Collection, accessed July 11, 2019, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;rgn=main;view=text;idno=N00599.0001.001>, 186.

²⁰⁹ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 512-513.

²¹⁰ Sewall, *Diary*, Dec. 19, 1695, 416.

no definitive proof that the text belonged to him. He argued that “my Name to my Book made by the Printer does not in Law evidence to prove the same to be Thomas Maule, no more than the Spector Evidence, in Law, is of force or validity to prove the person accused by said evidence to be the Witch.”²¹¹ To this, the judges acquitted Maule of all charges; Robert Calef, the author of *More Wonders*, posted Maule’s bail.²¹² Stoughton’s reaction to Maule’s release was not recorded, but with Stoughton’s defense of spectral evidence and anger of its dismissal as proof during the witch trials, one can conclude that Maule’s witty defense did not please the acting governor.²¹³ Stoughton died in 1701, and if he did have any reservations about his role in the trials, he never addressed them in any surviving written records or publicly.

Not all of the judges managed well after the trials. Samuel Sewall struggled the rest of his life over his part in the proceedings. By November of 1692, Sewall began to express doubts about the actions of the court. In his diary, he asked God for guidance in

²¹¹ Thomas Maule, *New-England Persecutors Mauled With their own Weapons. Giving some Account of the bloody Laws made at Boston against the Kings Subjects that dissented from their way of Worship. Together with a brief Account of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Thomas Maule of Salem, for publishing a Book, entituled, Truth held forth and maintained*, in the Cornell Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, accessed July 11, 2019, 64, <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=witch;cc=witch;rgn=main;view=text;idno=wit123>.

²¹² Sewall, *Diary*, Nov. 10, 1696, 436; Stacy Schiff, *The Witches: Salem, 1692* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2015), 377.

²¹³ Thomas Maule later published *New-England Persecutors Mauled with their own Weapons*, which reasserted his ideas from *Truth Held Forward*, along with his own account of his trial. Maule’s trial is credited with being cited as precedent by the lawyers of the John Peter Zenger trial, which established the right to print controversial opinions. For more see “Thomas Maule, the Quaker Who Criticized the Salem Witch Trials - and Got Away with It,” *New England Historical Society*, accessed July 11, 2019, <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/thomas-maule-the-quaker-who-criticized-the-salem-witch-trials-and-got-away-with-it/>.

the future and to “save New England as to Enemies and Witchcrafts, and vindicate the late Judges.”²¹⁴ Once the trials concluded, Sewall’s personal life fell into desperation. In the four years directly following the trials, he buried four children and before his own death in 1729 he would bury two more children and a second wife.²¹⁵ Feeling the weight of God’s punishment on him, Sewall often fasted and prayed for guidance and deliverance from the hardships that he and the colony now had thrust upon them.

In 1696, the House of Representative asked for a day of prayer and tasked the local ministers with outlining a “Recapitulation of the Sins, whereby the Divine Anger has been provoked against the Country.” Cotton Mather answered their call and composed a bill of the shortcomings that he felt were God’s reasoning for the outbreak of witchcraft, drought, war, and illness. The House added an article, not of Cotton’s composure or agreement, alleging partiality was obvious in the court of justice during the trials.²¹⁶ When the bill moved forward to the supreme council, still partially manned by Sewall and three other Salem witch trial judges, this article was of particular concern. As a result, the council compiled its own bill. The two governmental bodies went back and forth until they were able to agree. On December 17 they finally signed into law a bill asking for a day of prayer, which had no direct mention of witchcraft or the trials, but

²¹⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, November 22, 1692, 370.

²¹⁵ Sewall, *Diary*, 1692-1729; Diane E. Foulds, *Death in Salem: The Private Lives Behind the 1692 Witch Hunt* (Guilford, CN: Globe Pequot Press, 2010), 211-212.

²¹⁶ Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather Volume 1 1681-1709* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 211.

only “particular Sins ... that have not been duely seen and resented.” The bill did, however, acknowledge “Mistakes, on either hand ... referring to the late Tragedie raised amongst us by Satan” and asked that God “would humble us therefore, and pardon all the Errors of his Servants.”²¹⁷ This variation of the bill leaves it to the reader to decipher which “hands” might be a fault, though it certainly does not insinuate fault by the court, as the original amendment had.

Unsatisfied and wrestling with his demons, Sewall felt the need to address his own actions on the day set for collective prayer in 1697. At South Church in Boston, Sewall handed to Reverend Samuel Willard an apology to be read before the congregation. Sewall took the tragedies of his family and New England as God’s retaliation for the sins of the court and by extension his own negligence in failing to act on his doubts. He stood in front of the crowded church and accepted full blame for the trials. He asked God, “who has an Unlimited authority” to pardon him and all others of “*his* sins.”²¹⁸ Sewall’s repentance did not end there. On the anniversary of his apology, Sewall observed a day of fasting and prayer for the remainder of his life.²¹⁹ While never recorded in his diary, family lore claimed that Sewall’s contrition transcended mere

²¹⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, December 1696, 439-444.

²¹⁸ Sewall, *Diary, Fast Day*, 445; Sewall’s diary does not list the day, January 14, 1697, as his heading for this entry, but only that it is a “Copy of the Bill I put upon the Fast Day,” which is situated between the January 15th and January 26th entries, in the online source that I used.

²¹⁹ See Sewall, *Diary*, years post-1697 for more detail; Foulds, *Death in Salem*, 211.

confession and prayer. As a constant reminder of his sin, Sewall donned a “hair shirt” or “sackcloth” beneath his clothes from the date of his apology, until his death.²²⁰

The exclusion of his self-mortification from his diary may seem odd for a man who otherwise took pride in recording even the smallest of details. If one were to survey Sewall’s diary, the events of 1692 and 1693 are scarce and what does remain becomes less thorough as the trials move forward. Other judges follow this same pattern of omission. Wait Still Winthrop, an original judge of the court of Oyer and Terminer, kept a collection of his correspondence. However, the letters from 1692 and 1693 are missing from the family’s holdings. Another member of the Supreme Court, Thomas Danforth, who also served as deputy governor at the start of the occurrences and, according to Thomas Brattle, was a stark critic of the trials, yet he left no written recollection or acknowledgment of the trials.²²¹

Although alone in his apology among his colleagues, Sewall was not the only to admit fault. As Robert Calef recorded in *More Wonders*, following Sewall’s public

²²⁰ Self-mortification is most commonly associated with the Catholic faith. However, Sewall’s descendant, when sharing the family story of Sewall wearing the hair shirt, speculated on the religious precedent for him partaking in this act. For more detail see Eve LaPlante, *Salem Witch Judge: The Life and Repentance of Samuel Sewall* (New York: HaperOne, 2007), 5, 202-206.

²²¹ Winthrop held a seat on both the original court of Oyer and Terminer and the Superior Court assembled in 1693 to hear the remaining cases, following Phips’ dismissal of the court of Oyer and Terminer. Thomas Danforth presided over the initial examination before Phips created the Court of Oyer and Terminer, but was not included among Phips’ appointees. Danforth rejoined the court in 1693 when the Superior Court held trials without the acknowledgment of spectral evidence; there remain no other records from the other judges about the trials. I chose to highlight Sewall, Winthrop, and Danforth because they all have several records preserved, yet their connection with the trials remains scarce in these holdings; For more on the missing records see Schiff, *The Witches*, 364

apology, the members of the 1692 jury submitted their atonement in writing. The jurors begged forgiveness of “God for Christ’s sake for this our Error ... and we also pray that we may be considered candidly, and aright by the living Sufferers as being then under the power of a strong and general Delusion ... do declare according to our present minds, we would none of us do such things again.”²²² It would be almost another decade before the last apology from anyone directly connected with the trials would come. This delay can be attributed to extended disputes with the religious authority within Salem Village.

Reverend Parris’ relationship with his congregations had been estranged before the outbreak of accusations, which had originated in his household. Unlike his predecessors Salem Village inhabitants allowed Parris to be ordained as their new minister. Nonetheless, the factionalism of the town immediately caused tension and impeded Parris’ ambitions. Parris spent much of his time as minister in Salem Village at odds with members of his congregation over money and religious practices. The trials only served to elevate the animosities of the anti-Parris faction.²²³

Days before Governor Phips officially ended the trials, a group of dissenters refused to attend church services and partake in communion that Reverend Parris presided over. Parris inquired as to the reasoning on February 7, 1693.²²⁴ He received a

²²² Calef, *More Wonders*, in *Narratives*, ed. Burr, 388.

²²³ For more on the factionalism in Salem surrounding Parris, and Parris’ beginnings in Salem Village see Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, chapter 7 and Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 84-93.

²²⁴ Samuel Parris, “Records of the Salem Village Church from November 1689 to October 1696, as Kept by the Reverend Samuel Parris,” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 281.

written concession from three representatives of the dissenting group a short nine days later. These select brethren asserted that they withdrew from services and communion on the grounds of Parris' role in the escalation of the trials, seeing Parris as an impetus to the mindless execution of innocent people. To which, Parris proclaimed to the protesters that he "at present time" had "no sufficient grounds" to vary his opinion of the actions taken place during the trials. Thus, the representatives asked that the church convene a council to hear their complaints.²²⁵ Parris prolonged the request of the dissenters and by his admittance even refused to converse with them on one of their many calls to the reverend's parsonage- two months passed before Parris brought the request to his congregation.²²⁶ On May 18th, church members met at Parris' residence and agreed to the request of an impartial committee to consider the dissatisfied brethren's charges and disseminate advice accordingly.²²⁷

In defense of himself, Parris read his "Meditations for Peace" aloud to his congregation. He admitted "in that hour of distress and darkness" he may have "unadvisedly expressed" himself. He expressed his sympathy for those who suffered and what started as a heartfelt apology, quickly found blame enough to share. Although he asked forgiveness "in every offence in this or other affairs ... I have erred and offended"

²²⁵ Parris, "Records of the Salem Village Church," in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 281-283.

²²⁶ Parris, "Records of the Salem Village Church," in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 284-285.

²²⁷ Parris, "Records of the Salem Village Church," in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 286.

he also expressed the need for the community to forgive themselves. Parris advised that the “evil angels” had deluded “us on both hands, but how far on the one side or the other is much above me to say.” Therefore, it was important for the Salem village inhabitants to forgive each other for “God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.”²²⁸

Unfortunately Parris’ plea did not satisfy those opposed to him and with no action being made to create a council for mediation, in July, the dissenters, totaling fifty signatures, petitioned Governor Phips to “appoint a sufficient number of prudent and impartial persons to take cognizance of our miserable condition and give us what advice they shall in the wisdom think fit.”²²⁹ Again, the petitioners’ request fell on deaf ears. It took almost two years for them to receive a reply. Finally, in March of 1695, the general court approved for the plea to be forwarded to the Superior Council for their approval.²³⁰

With the long-awaited actions of the court in motion, the growing anti-Parris faction released another petition, reasserting their grievances and added that the actions of the reverend in the years lapsed, instead of unifying the congregation had widened the breach amongst the community. To this end, the dissenters saw no other resolution but for Parris to relinquish his role as reverend of Salem Village Church.²³¹ In response, a

²²⁸ Parris, “Meditations for Peace,” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 298-299.

²²⁹ “Petition to the Governor (July 7, 1693),” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 258.

²³⁰ “Response of the General Court (March 1695),” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 260.

²³¹ “Anti-Parris Petition (1695),” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 261.

pro-Parris petition emerged. The signing petitioners, which outnumbered the dissenters, did not address claims related to the trials, but maintained that the “removing of Mr. Parris from his present station will not unite us in calling another Minister.”²³² The congregation had removed three ministers already, and these actions had done no more to unify the fellowship as would removing Reverend Parris. The pro-Parris advocates argued that leaving an already divided flock without a shepherd “may rather prove the ruining of the interests of Christ.”²³³ A council of church elders, including Increase and Cotton Mather, deliberated on the claims and advised the Salem-Village Church that they rendered “Mr. Parris’s removal necessary.”²³⁴ Just shy of a year later, Parris remained in the church parsonage, unwilling to leave unless he “be fairly dealt with in payment of all my dues.”²³⁵

Not until 1697, after Parris pursued legal proceeding to acquire back pay from the Village, did Parris and the dissenters finally agreed upon three mediators: Wait Still Winthrop, Samuel Sewall, and Elisha Cooke. All three held a seat on the Superior Court in 1697 and Winthrop and Sewall had both been judges in the court of Oyer and Terminer

²³² “Pro-Parris Petition (May 1695),” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 262.

²³³ “Pro-Parris Petition (May 1695),” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 262.

²³⁴ “Letter of Increase Mather and Other Elders to the Salem-Village Church, May 6, 1695,” in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 308.

²³⁵ Samuel Parris to Bartholomew Gidney, April 13, 1696, in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 311.

in 1692.²³⁶ On the advice of the arbitrators, the Salem village inhabitants voted in favor of paying Reverend Parris an agreeable sum, in exchange for Parris' dismissal from the church and removal from the parsonage.²³⁷ Although Sewall made no entry in his diary about his part in the mediation between Parris and the Salem inhabitants, it is worth noting that later in the same year that Sewall had made his public apology, he aided in Parris' removal as minister in Salem Village.

In 1698, the Village ordained a new minister, Joseph Green. Young and fresh from Harvard, Green took to work mending the fissures in the church immediately after his ordination. He initiated steps to reconcile with the dissenting brethren and in 1699 he reseated the meetinghouse, placing the Nurses and the Putnams on the same bench.²³⁸ Although the colonial government prolonged collective healing by avoiding the growing number of petitions, it would seem with Reverend Green's help, the community members of Salem Village were beginning to heal. This is perhaps most evident in the lone apology of one of the accusers.

²³⁶ "Petition of John Tarbell, Samuel Nurse, Joseph Putnam, and Daniel Andrew (July 1697)", in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 265.

²³⁷ "Vote of Salem-Village Inhabitants, September 14, 1697," in *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, ed. Boyer and Nissenbaum, 267.

²³⁸ The Nurses and the Putnams had been on opposing sides during the trials. For more see Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*; For more on Joseph Green see Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, 217-221; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 234.

The fates of the accusers are not well documented, although several of the young girls did eventually marry and move away from Salem Village.²³⁹ None of them, save one, left any record of their thoughts on their roles during the trials. In 1706, Ann Putnam, Jr., petitioned the Salem Village Church for membership. To become a member of the church, Ann would first have to publicly confess her former faults. Reverend Green took the proposal to Samuel Nurse, son of the condemned Rebecca Nurse, of whom Ann played a pivotal role in her damnation. Nurse agreed not to oppose Ann's acceptance.²⁴⁰ With Green's assistance, Ann wrote her apology. On August 25th, she stood in front of the Salem Village congregation as Reverend Green read it aloud. She confessed that through a "great delusion of Satan ... I have been instrumental, with others, through ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon myself and the land the guilt of innocent blood." She conceded she "did it not out of any anger, malice, or ill-will to any person." Addressing the fate of Rebecca Nurse directly, she pledged that "I desire to lie in the dust, and to be humbled for it."²⁴¹ The church accepted Ann into communion; she died nine years later.²⁴²

²³⁹ Elizabeth Booth, Sarah Churchill, Betty Parris, and Mercy Lewis all married following the trials. Others, such as Abigail Williams and Mary Warren disappeared into obscurity. For more see Hill, *A Delusion of Satan*, 214-215.

²⁴⁰ Roach, *Six Women of Salem*, 374.

²⁴¹ The entirety of Ann Putnam, Jr.'s apology can be read in Hill, *Salem Witch Trials Reader*, 108.

²⁴² Marilynne K. Roach, *Six Women of Salem: The Untold Story of the Accused and Their Accusers in the Salem Witch Trials* (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2013), 392.

Eighteen years after the trials had concluded, the colonial government came as close as they would to admitting wrongdoing. Starting shortly after the conclusion of the trials the court had received an influx of petitions on behalf of those still living who had been accused and those who had been executed. In 1711, petitions existed to lift the attainders of those accused and those condemned, as well as requests for restitution and lawsuits for wrongful confiscation, as in the case of Philip English. The general court signed into law a reversal of attainders on October 17, 1711. The act acknowledged that in 1692 some had been put to death and “others lying still under the like Sentence” hereby are reversed and they should be “Null and void to all Intents, Constructions and purposes whatsoever, as if no such Convictions, Judgments or Attainders had ever been had or given.”²⁴³ Although the act seemed to be a step forward, it only lifted the attainders for thirteen of the executed and eight of those condemned but not put to death. Meaning that while the court had exonerated some, not all who the court had wronged were cleared.

The court also made sure that blame was properly placed within their proclamation. The court asserted that “Some of the principal Accusers and Witnesses in those dark and Severe prosecution have since discovered themselves to be person of profligate and vicious Conversation.” Undoubtedly, taking a stab at the jury and Ann Putnam, who had publicly repented their roles in the trials. The act then made clear that

²⁴³ “An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. for Witchcraft,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 889.

“no Sheriffe, Constable Goaler or other Officer shall be Liable to any prosecution in the Law for any thing they then Legally did in the Execution of their Respective Offices.”²⁴⁴ Thus, the blame had been officially placed on those false witnesses and not the colonial government and court that had presided over the execution of twenty innocent people.

The Massachusetts government did not revisit the victims of the Salem witch trials until 1957. The government enacted a resolve, while well-intentioned, it too would fall short of full exoneration. The resolve recognized that in the case of the Salem witch trials the government had been mute, aside from Samuel Sewall's apology, and there existed a need for it to be addressed publicly. However, it read not as an admittance of guilt, but just as it had in 1711, a half-hearted restoration of the reputations of those wronged. The law asserted that descendants of the trial's victims were “still distressed by the record of said proceedings,” and so even though the proceedings were “lawful under the Province Charter and the law of Massachusetts as it then was” needed to clear those grievous individuals of all “disgrace or cause for distress” as well as “remission of any penalty, fine or forfeiture hither to imposed or incurred.”²⁴⁵ Only one name was included in the document specifically, Ann Pudeater, who had been executed in 1692.

In 2001 the Massachusetts government amended the Resolve of 1957 by simply adding the final five names of condemned and executed that had not been officially

²⁴⁴ Both quotes are taken from the transcript of the 1711 Act in “An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. for Witchcraft,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 889.

²⁴⁵ Massachusetts State Government, “Resolves of 1957, chapter 145,” 1957, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://docs.digital.mass.gov/dataset/resolves-1957-chapter-145/resource/c87f3665-acc3-4bb3-a010-8f9369cbf6de>.

cleared: Bridget Bishop, Susannah Martin, Alice Parker, Wilmot Redd, and Margaret Scott.²⁴⁶ No other amendments were made, meaning that no official admittance of guilt by the government, on the scale of Sewall or Putnam, has ever been made about those wrongfully executed in 1692.

²⁴⁶ Massachusetts State Government, "An Act Relative to the Witchcraft Trial of 1692," 2001, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2001/Chapter122>.

CHAPTER 5

The Aftermath of the Aftermath

By the time the government issued the proclamation for a day of fasting and prayer in December of 1696, the General Court of Massachusetts had already received and chosen to ignore the first post-trial petition from Elizabeth Procter asking to restore her good name. A debate had spread over the nature of the Mathers' narratives, and Robert Calef's rebuttal to Cotton's *Wonders of the Invisible World* had begun to circulate in manuscript form. The court had attempted- and failed- to silence Thomas Maule's damning opinions about the Puritan government that presided over the colony, and the residents of Salem Village had petitioned the council for guidance amidst their turmoil with Reverend Parris. In conjunction with the harsh New England winter, and war (King William's War, 1689-1697) tensions mounting daily, the government proclaimed a day of penance. What officials connected with the trials in Salem did not expect was the animosity that the day would bring to the surface over the court's handling of the trials.

Cotton Mather composed the initial draft of the decree. The House of Representatives, however, felt the need to blame the trials on the court. Cotton had defended the court's actions, culminating in *Wonders of the Invisible World*. Thus, Cotton disapproved greatly of the House's actions to add a statement that "Partiality in the

Courts of Justice was obvious.”²⁴⁷ The General Court, in response, reacted in horror at the statement’s condemnation of individuals who still sat in the General Court. After much debate between the House and General Court, the proclamation left the matter of responsibility vague. Although the government did admit that mistakes had been made, the proclamation insisted that the mistakes were made “by the body of this People, or any Orders” of them. Since the misgivings could be “on either hand” the court allowed the public to place blame where they felt appropriate.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the public was frustrated at the colony’s authority figures, who had failed to properly guide the community. The court undoubtedly chose the wording carefully, in an attempt to displace culpability, knowing that emerging narratives criticized the witch trial court officials and the Reverends who defended those officials. Samuel Sewall confirmed this when he offered himself as a culprit in his apology, which was read on the Day of Fast and Prayer.

Once the main opponent to the reconciliation process, William Stoughton, passed away in 1701, the court had the opportunity to make amends. In 1703, a petition was filed asking the court to lift the attainders not only of three condemned individuals who had been reprieved, but also six who had earlier been hung by the court’s orders. This presented the court with an ideal opportunity to begin the healing process between the legal system and the victims of the trials. The court, though, only reversed the attainders

²⁴⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, November 2, 1696, 439.

²⁴⁸ Sewall, *Diary*, 440.

of the three reprieved, and dismissed spectral evidence in any further proceedings.²⁴⁹ The exclusion of the six executed individuals came from the desire to avoid admitting that the court had wrongly found those individuals guilty, even though they had been condemned on the evidence that the court now dismissed.

By 1711, those affected by the trials, supported by much of the clergy, made it evident that more needed to be done to right the wrongs of the trials. The General Court, thus, organized a committee to recommend how relief could be given to these families; no action was taken for over a year. The bill, while perhaps a legitimate attempt at reconciliation, came up short, just as had prior ones. The court failed to exonerate all of the victims, omitting six of the executed even though a member of the committee had submitted a plea on their behalf. At least one person who had been reprieved also did not have her attainder lifted. As the 1703 act had, the court used the disguise of a peace offering to defend their own roles in the proceedings. First, they noted that the “principle Accusers and Witnesses ... have since discovered themselves to be persons of profligate and vicious Conversations.”²⁵⁰ The court took advantage of the recent apology of Ann Putnam, Jr., in which she admitted through a “great delusion of Satan” that she found

²⁴⁹ “Petition of Francis Faulkner et al. to Clear the Records of Rebecca Nurse, Mary Esty, Abigail Faulkner Sr., Mary Parker, John Procter, Elizabeth Procter, Elizabeth How, Samuel Wardwell, & Sarah Wardwell,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 848-849.

²⁵⁰ “An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. for Witchcraft,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 888-889.

herself with the “guilt of innocent blood.”²⁵¹ The government eagerly allowed Ann, Jr., and those who stood with her to be scapegoats. In an attempt to make it clear, the court put into writing that the officials were not “Liable to any prosecution in the Law for any thing they then Legally did in the Execution of their Respective Offices.”²⁵² While the persecution of suspected witches, by the Court of Oyer and Terminer and General Court, may have been “legal” at the time, the fact remained, as Sewall attested to in his apology that an atmosphere of panic was present, no matter how devout officials were in their religious beliefs.

It had taken nineteen years from the time of uncertainty in the trials to the October 1711 act. Three bills had been passed by the Massachusetts colonial government and still, the court refused to neither relieve all victims from their grievances, nor admit guilt in the actions of the court. A new form of delusion had set in over Massachusetts Bay. This time government officials refused to acknowledge that the court and the governor who presided over the trials, as well as the ministers who righteously defended the court, were just as culpable as those who falsely accused their neighbors. This prolonged denial followed Salem and the Puritans for centuries to come, disfiguring the narrative and memory of the trials.

²⁵¹ For the quote see “The Confession of Ann Putnam,” in *Salem Witch Trials Reader*, ed. Hill, 108.

²⁵² “An Act to Reverse the Attainders of George Burroughs et al. For Witchcraft,” in *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 888-889.

Although seventeenth century Puritans did not doubt the existence of witches, the budding Scientific Revolution had already resulted in scientific evidence disproving the supernatural. Following the trials, Salem became an example of the ills caused by a superstitious belief system not founded upon scientific principles. Francis Hutchinson, a British minister and advocate of Robert Calef's work, questioned the reality of witches and challenged the validity of the "justices that had prosecuted" the condemned and scolded Reverend Parris as a "zealous Prosecutor."²⁵³ Richard Boulton, in response, defended the existence of witchcraft, relying heavily on Cotton Mather's narrative of the events in Salem. Nonetheless, even Boulton admitted that any mistakes "behoves those, under whose care it lies."²⁵⁴ Both authors held Puritan authorities accountable for the results of the trials.

Historians in the early eighteenth century also examined the trials in Salem. Daniel Defoe's *The Political History of the Devil* (1726) accused the afflicted of pretending to be ill, and though many accusers claimed the delusion of Satan in defense of their actions, Defoe saw no means of true Satanic delusion and shuddered at people

²⁵³ Francis Hutchinson, *An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft: With Observations Upon Matters of Fact; Tending to Clear the Texts of the Sacred Scriptures and Confute the Vulgar Errors about that Point. And also Two Sermons: One in Proof of the Christian Religion; the Other Concerning Good and Evil Angels* (1718), in Hathi Trust, 108, accessed September 20, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112203148285&view=1up&seq=194>.

²⁵⁴ Richard Boulton, *A Compleate History of magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft* (1722), in National Archives, accessed September 20, 2019, 57, <https://archive.org/details/possibilityreali00boul/page/n9?q=richard+boulton+magick>.

who “would fain be thought devils.”²⁵⁵ Daniel Neal, in his *History of New England* (1720), felt that had the magistrates followed the initial advice of the ministers to use caution in the acceptance of spectral evidence, the “calamities” at Salem could have been avoided.²⁵⁶ Instead, the “blind Fury and Zeal of the People” elicited a mob-like mentality, pitting neighbor against neighbor.²⁵⁷ Like Defoe, Neal concluded that fakery had been at work in Salem. He felt that either those who had falsely accused or had falsely confessed should be held legally accountable for perjury or “treated as Lunaticks” void of rational thought.²⁵⁸ John Oldmixon’s *British Empire in America* (1708) implicated Puritan excess as the malefactor in creating the “Novelty of Witch-burning.”²⁵⁹ The scholarly popularity of such literature kept the woes of the Salem witch trials alive, and cultivated a discourse of Puritans as fanatics throughout the first half of the eighteenth century.

²⁵⁵ Daniel Defoe, *A Political History of the Devil* (1726), in National Archives, accessed September 21, 2019, 343-344, <https://archive.org/details/politicalhistory00def/page/342>.

²⁵⁶ Daniel Neal, *The History of new-England, Containing an Impartial Account of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Country, to the Year of Our Lord, 1700. To Which is Added, the Present State of New-England. With a New and Accurate Map of the Country. And Appendix Containing Their Present Charter, Their Ecclesiastical Discipline, and Their Municipal-laws. In Two Volumes* (1720), in National Archives, accessed September 21, 2019, 529, <https://archive.org/details/historyofnewengl02neal/page/546>.

²⁵⁷ For quote see Neal, *History of New England*, 533; For comments on mob mentality see Neal, *History of New England*, 535.

²⁵⁸ Neal, *History of New England*, 539.

²⁵⁹ John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America: Containing the History of the Discovery, Settlement, Progress and Present State of all the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America ... With Curious Maps done from the Newest Surveys* (1708), in National Archives, accessed September 21, 2019, 69, <https://archive.org/details/britishempireina00oldm/page/68>; This is one of the first instances where it is reported that witches had been burned in Salem. Even though all those executed in New England were hanged, accounts such as this helped foster the idea that witches had been burned in Salem.

Existing alongside the literature was the reality of the victims of the trials. Eventhough forty years had passed since the trials, and twenty-six years after reparations had been paid, the affected communities still felt the burden of the trials. In 1737, Reverend Israel Loring preached an Election Day sermon. In his address to the General Court, he pled with them to address the continued hardships of the victims of Salem who had lost loved ones, reputations, and estates to the “fallacious” process in Salem, 1692.²⁶⁰ The next year, Samuel Sewall, Jr., submitted an order to the House of Representatives to look into the circumstances of the inhabitants of Salem, as Loring had asked. The order passed, but it took yet another year for the governor to announce that a committee had been commissioned to investigate those affected by the trials in 1692, and look into the suffering of the Quakers in the early decades of the colony. However, a 1749 petition from the family of George Burroughs, asking for recompense from the court, made clear that the committee had not reached any satisfactory conclusions.²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Israel Loring, *The duty of an apostatizing people to remember from whence they are fallen, and repent, and do their first works. A sermon preached before His Excellency Jonathan Belcher, Esq; the Honourable His Majesty's Council, and the Honourable House of Representatives of the province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, May 25th. 1737. Being the anniversary for the election of His Majesty's Council for the province*, in Evans Early American Imprint Collection, accessed September 21, 2019, 51, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;view=text;idno=N03405.0001.001;rgn=div1;node=N03405.0001.001:4>.

²⁶¹ Although Puritans and Quakers both came to America in hopes of exercising religious freedom, Puritans were intolerant of any other faith than their own. Therefore, when Quakers came to Puritan Massachusetts preaching religious tolerance, the Puritans viewed them as heretics and persecuted them accordingly; Charles Upham, *Salem Witchcraft Volume II* (1867), in The Project Gutenberg, accessed September 21, 2019, 483, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17845/17845-h/salem2-htm.html>.

By mid-century, the allegory of the Salem witch trials had spread to neighboring colonies, equating the actions in Salem with fanaticism and injustice. In 1741, a young indentured servant in New York allegedly uncovered a slave conspiracy. Officials, anxious to stifle any revolt, arrested nearly two hundred slaves and suspected sympathizers. After a series of weak testimonials and coerced confessions, between thirty and forty supposed conspirators were executed. Josiah Cotton, a relative of Cotton and Increase, penned an anonymous letter to the governor of New York in which he likened the tactics used by officials and condemning the 1741 “conspirators” to the proceedings in Salem. New York had mocked the actions of the Massachusetts court, but now they found themselves accepting baseless evidence and thoughtlessly executing innocent people. Josiah warned New York’s governor that if the government continued on their path, the result would be to “destroy your own Estates by making Bonfires of the Negros and perhaps thereby loading yourselves with greater Guilt than theirs.”²⁶²

The shadow of the Salem trials had now transcended decades. Both Salem Village, the location of the outbreak, and Salem Town, where the trials took place, attempted to distance themselves from the controversy. Although Salem Village had sought its independence from Salem Town since the late 1660s, it was not until the 1750s that the General Court officially voted to approve the political and economic separation of the two. The King and royal governor, however, frowned on the addition of new

²⁶² For more on the 1741 Slave Conspiracy, see Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005); For the quote from Josiah’s letter, see the transcription of it in *New York Burning*, 203-205; Baker, *Storm of Witchcraft*, 264.

townships, which would allow for additional representation in the House of Representatives. Therefore, Salem Village was established as the District of Danvers-allowing it to function as an independent town, but not elect a member to the House. Danvers eventually received town status and kept its new name.²⁶³ The change in name, thus, allowed Salem Village to disconnect itself from the stigma of the trials. Possibly Salem Town had hoped the separation would permit the same for its own reputation, but the trials and the name Salem were synonymous. Salem Town remained the “witch town.”

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the age of enlightenment had won out over the supernatural views of the Puritan population. Witchcraft, increasingly seen as unconventional and easily explained through scientific theory, found its place as a metaphor for overzealous, unjust circumstances.²⁶⁴ As the American Revolution loomed, decades later, John Adams utilized the trials as a moral compass for his actions. As a young lawyer, stationed in Salem in 1766, Adams visited witchcraft hill - “the site where the famous persons formally executed for witches were buried.”²⁶⁵ A few years later, in 1773, Adams served as the defense attorney for British soldiers, on trial for the Boston Massacre. Although Adams did not sympathize with those he defended, he felt that

²⁶³ Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, 39-45; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 235-236.

²⁶⁴ For more on Salem as a metaphor see Adams, *Specter of Salem*.

²⁶⁵ John Adams, *August 1766 From the Diary of John Adams*, August 7 or 14, 1766, *Founders Online* in National Archives, accessed September 22, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/01-01-02-0010-0007>.

supplying them with adequate representation was “one of the best Pieces of service I ever rendered my Country.” Adams feared that if the offenders were brought under judgment without proper defense, or a thorough examination of the evidence, it would “have been as foul a stain upon this Country as the Executions of the Quakers or Witches.”²⁶⁶ He viewed Puritan fanaticism as a blemish best not repeated. During his Presidency, the founding father found himself the object of intense criticism following the passing of his Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798.²⁶⁷ Adams’ opponents enlisted the same comparison, asserting that such a disregard for the rights of the “sovereign people, under the garb of liberty and equality” had not been seen since “the scenes of Salem witchcraft or the persecutions of quakers.”²⁶⁸

The Puritan shame over overzealous persecutions accompanied their descendants in the newly formed United States of America. The state government continually faced the issue of how to address such blemishes in its past. In 1827, Massachusetts became the first state to create an education commission and offer free public education. The curriculum, which quickly became a model for other states, focused on educating

²⁶⁶ John Adams, 1773. *March 5th. Fryday. From the Diary of John Adams*, March 5, 1773, *Founders Online* in National Archives, accessed September 23, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=March%201773&s=1511311111&r=10>.

²⁶⁷ Facing war with France, President John Adams passed a series of Acts collectively known as the Alien and Sedition Acts. The acts were the result of Democratic-Republican debate over Federalist policies. For more see John C. Miller, *Crisis in Freedom: The Alien and Sedition Acts* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1951).

²⁶⁸ From John Adams to Charles Holt, 27 August 1820, *Founders Online* in National Archives, accessed September 23, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=Salem%20witchcraft&s=1511311111&r=5>.

students on topics of moral and nationalistic importance to help create ideal citizens.²⁶⁹

The Puritan ideal of the “City upon a Hill” provided contributors of textbooks with a moral founding of America. Here, the righteous ambitions of the Puritans became the primary narrative over the more secular and controversial alternative of their Jamestown counterparts. Salem, however, presented the curriculum with a contradictory view.

In textbooks, Salem became a cautionary tale, which if repeated threatened the nation’s progress. Authors attempted to divert blame away from the Puritan colonists who orchestrated the trials. Jedidiah Morse’s *The American Geography* (1789) blamed the impulse of self-interest over civic duty as the motivator for the excessive nature of the trials. He also boasted that the court was at first “regulated by precedents” in England, but the colonists soon saw the error of their ways and corrected their actions. Samuel Goodrich’s *The First Book of History for Children and Youth* (1831) echoed much of the same sentiment, insisting that the notion of persecuting witches was “not an invention of their own,” in fact the catalyst had been Parliament, which “had thought it necessary to make severe laws against witchcraft.”²⁷⁰ In both cases, Americans had handled witchcraft accusations in a manner superior to the Motherland, and later instances proved “that England is not entirely cured of that delusion.”²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Adams, *The Specter of Salem*, 49.

²⁷⁰ Samuel Goodrich, *The First Book of History: For Children and Youth* (1831), in National Archives, accessed September 24, 2019, 36-37, <https://archive.org/details/firstbookofhisto00goodiala/page/36>.

²⁷¹ Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography* (1789), in Hathi Trust, accessed September 24, 2019, 191-192, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=aeu.ark:/13960/t11n98v2t&view=1up&seq=224>.

Richard Salter Storrs, clergyman and descendant of the Mathers, addressed the New England Society in 1857, echoing the popular sentiment shared by distributors of educational materials. In his oration, Storrs acknowledged that the Puritan fathers had committed errors, but not out of malice.²⁷² They, unlike the Pilgrims who acknowledged their presence to be a “stepping-stone,” posed a vision of a “definite and positive spiritual life, diffused through the State.”²⁷³ When remembering the Pilgrims, Storrs reminded the Society to recall that “Plymouth opened to us the gates of our prosperity,” but the present situation of the country was the result of the “fruits” of the Puritans.²⁷⁴

Though historians and government officials tried to separate the Puritan quest from the delusions of 1692, the roots of fanaticism were planted deep in the town of Salem and would not rest forever. In 1811, the Pastor of the East Church of Salem, William Bentley, recorded that a girl had begun to exhibit “convulsion fits ... and complained of a women in Boston who bewitched her ... The public mind long disturbed by fanaticism took the alarm like tinder.” The episode became a spectacle, attracting visitors from near and far, who compared accounts and passed tales along to others. The town Selectmen, fearing the repercussions of the revisiting of such a dark time in Salem’s

²⁷² Richard Salter Storrs, “The Puritan Scheme of National Growth,” in *The New England Society Orations; Addresses, Sermons, and Poems Delivered before the New England Society in the City of New York, 1820-1885*, in National Archives, accessed September 20, 2019, 333, <https://archive.org/details/newenglandsociet02braiiala/page/327>.

²⁷³ Storrs, “The Puritan Scheme of National Growth,” in *The New England Society Orations*, accessed September 20, 2019, 332, 351.

²⁷⁴ Storrs, “The Puritan Scheme of National Growth,” in *The New England Society Orations*, 369.

past, dismissed the girl as a “pretend witch” and ordered her “out of town or into the Work house.” This quick denouncement of affairs “disappointed the fanatics who promised themselves a harvest from this affray.” The damage had been done, however, and Bentley worried “a new start to fanatic zeal” had begun in Salem.²⁷⁵

The community in Salem was not alone in its revival of supernatural interest. In 1851 a descendant of Salem witch judge John Hathorne helped bring the topics of Salem witchcraft and Puritan injustice to the nation. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *House of the Seven Gables* chronicles a family’s curse, which started when the patriarch, a wealthy Puritan named Colonel Pyncheon, falsely accused another man of witchcraft because he refused to sell Pyncheon his land. Upon the man’s execution, Pyncheon claimed the man’s land, but not before the man cursed Pyncheon for his malice.²⁷⁶ The popularity of Hawthorne’s book resulted in a surge of publications on the Salem witch trials including Charles Upham’s *Salem Witchcraft* (1867); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* (1868); and a cameo in the opening of another Salem judge descendant’s popular novel, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* (1868).²⁷⁷

As a result of the renewed interest in Salem witchcraft, the metaphor of Salem found its way back into public dialogue. During the Civil War, Southern sympathizers

²⁷⁵ William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts* (1905), in National Archives, accessed September 24, 2019, 9-10, <https://archive.org/details/diaryofwilliambe04bent/page/9>.

²⁷⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1907).

²⁷⁷ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 271.

resurrected the Puritan stereotype in pro-secession propaganda. Newspapers in the North and South referred negatively to Puritanic Northerners, and none did so as fervently as the *New York Herald*. In 1861, the *Herald* ran several articles which argued “The Real Origin of Succession.” The editor, James Bennet, had concluded that the “Puritans of fact” held a place of “ascendancy in history which they do not deserve.” Politicians and clergy had clouded the true nature of the Puritan and now, the *Herald* set out to provide the public with a true account of the history of the Puritans in America.²⁷⁸ The position the paper took on the New England Puritan rejected the idea of Northern superiority, expressed by Northern elites, who saw the north as the “brain” of the union and “the germ of which everything that is good in the country has sprung.” Bennet reminded his readers that most presidents have hailed from the southern states and were slaveholders, thus “it was not the witch-burning, persecuting sectarianism of Massachusetts that modelled the constitution.”²⁷⁹ Bennet, in his tirade against Puritanism, warned against the

²⁷⁸ James Bennett, “The Real Origins of Succession: Old England and New England Puritanism,” *The New York Herald*, January 26, 1861, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1861-01-26/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1861&index=4&rows=20&words=Puritan+PURITAN+Puritanism+Puritans&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=New+York&date2=1865&proxtext=puritanism&y=21&x=14&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>.

²⁷⁹ James Bennett, “The Reaction Against the Abolitionist-American Civilization Versus Puritan Fanaticism,” *The New York Herald*, February 3, 1861, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1861-02-03/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1861&index=0&rows=20&words=Puritan+Puritanical+Puritanism+Puritans&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=New+York&date2=1862&proxtext=puritanism&y=21&x=8&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>.

public's absent-minded following of "fanatical blood thirsty Puritans"²⁸⁰ who continuously choose "religious fanaticism over rationalism."²⁸¹

By the end of the Civil War, the New England Puritan had become synonymous with zealous persecution, injustice, and bigotry, all of which was present at Salem. Public opinion about the nation's accepted historical narrative came into question. Following the 250th Anniversary celebration of the landing at Plymouth, Ralph Waldo Emerson addressed the New England Society to foster support for a growing faction who wished to transition the emphasis of America's founding story from the Puritans to the Pilgrims. Unlike Richard Salter Storrs, who saw the Puritans as visionaries, Emerson argued that a recent reevaluation of history "has shown a distinction among those early settlers which adds to the honor of Plymouth."²⁸² He felt the earlier Puritan settlers of Plymouth presented the nation with a more wholesome founding. Emerson cautioned that as the United States began to redefine itself out of the shadows of the Civil War, when "estimating nations it is well to consider the nature that is underneath" and to "consider

²⁸⁰ James Bennet, "Historical Parallels of Radical Republicanism in England and France," *The New York Herald*, March 3, 1861, accessed September 25, 2019, [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1861-03-03/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1861&index=1&rows=20&words=Puritan+Puritanism+Puritans&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=New+York&date2=1865&proxtext=puritanism&y=21&x=14&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1861-03-03/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1861&index=1&rows=20&words=Puritan+Puritanism+Puritans&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=New+York&date2=1865&proxtext=puritanism&y=21&x=14&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1;);

²⁸¹ James Bennet, "The Three Schools of Politics in the United States," *The New York Herald*, July 8, 1861, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1861-07-08/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1861&index=3&rows=20&words=Puritanic+Puritanism&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=New+York&date2=1862&proxtext=puritanism&y=21&x=8&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>.

²⁸² Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Oration and Response, 1870," in *The New England Society Orations*, 375.

what criticisms one can make.” Thus, it is important to ensure ourselves and others of the “friendly relations of America.”²⁸³ President Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 proclamation, making Thanksgiving a fixed, national holiday, along with advocates such as Emerson helped the transition from Puritan to Pilgrim centered narrative in American history effortless.

In the years following the Civil War, memorialization became popular throughout America; likewise, one family in Danvers began to plan for a memorial of their own. The descendants of Rebecca Nurse organized the Nourse Monument Association in 1875. The committee took ten years to privately raise the funds to construct a memorial in Rebecca’s honor. Fundraisers were held to obtain capital. One such enterprise took place in 1883 at the old Nurse homestead, which was now owned by descendants of the Putnam family. Around two hundred people attended a basket picnic lunch where an account of the trials was read and a tour of the grounds, where Rebecca once lived, was offered.²⁸⁴ The committee dedicated the monument in 1885. The Putnam family agreed to have the monument placed in the cemetery on the Old Nurse family homestead since there was still an objection to any memorial in Salem Town at Gallows Hill, where the victims had been executed. At the dedication, the minister of the First Church of Danvers, Fielder Israel, expressed the desire that one day the idea of such a memorial would not be a

²⁸³ Emerson, “Oration and Response,” in *The New England Society Orations*, 392.

²⁸⁴ The Nurse decedents, like many other decedents of the witch trials, adopted an alternate spelling of the family name; William P. Upham, “An Account of the Rebecca Nurse Monument,” *Essex Institute Historical Collection* 23 (1886): 151-152, in Hathi Trust, accessed September 21, 2019, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435069736700&view=1up&seq=164>.

foreign idea, for “when in some coming day, a sense of justice ... and gratitude for the light that surrounds and protects us against error, folly, and fanaticism shall demand the rearing of a suitable monument to the memory of those who in 1692 preferred death to a falsehood.” Israel hoped that the erection of the memorial to Rebecca would serve as a stepping stone to properly memorialize the “Christian martyrs” of 1692 at Gallows Hill.²⁸⁵

Though Danvers limited commercialization of the trials to fundraising for a monument, by 1880 Salem Town had started to embrace the benefits of witchcraft tourism. The popularity of Hawthorne’s books attracted curious onlookers to the site of the witch trials and hangings. The 1880 *Visitor’s Guide to Salem*, instructed guests to visit the “Old Witch House” where examinations were said to have taken place and “Witch Hill” where the hangings occurred.²⁸⁶ In addition, the courthouse put several artifacts concerning the trials on display, including trial transcripts, the death warrant for Bridget Bishop, and “witch pins” with which the afflicted girls claimed to be pricked.²⁸⁷

As the bicentennial of the trials approached, plans formed to properly memorialize the victims in Salem. In 1892 the Essex Institutes devised a plan to construct a lookout tower on Gallows Hill. The Institute felt those who opposed the scheme were “short-sighted” in their interpretation of the memorial. Opponents felt the whole fiasco

²⁸⁵ Upham, “Account of the Rebecca Nurse Monument,” 153, 214.

²⁸⁶ Thomas Franklin Hunt, *Visitor’s Guide to Salem* (1880), in National Archives, accessed September 21, 2019, 8-9, <https://archive.org/details/visitorsguidetos00hunttf/page/8>.

²⁸⁷ Hunt, *Visitor’s Guide to Salem*, 20.

should “be cast into oblivion as too horrible to contemplate; a shame on Salem and the community.” Supporters, however, acknowledged that the trials had become “the most popular known outbreak of any age or in any land” and attempting to ignore the event was unrealistic. With thousands of visitors coming to the empty hill every year, there was a need to utilize the property to serve as a “lesson to be learned.”²⁸⁸ The Salem witch trials were too controversial among Salemites, and thus the city government favored the opponents. The monument plan died and the Salem community did not observe the bicentenary of the trials with any official commemoration. Danvers quietly acknowledged the anniversary by adding to the Nurse Memorial a plaque that listed the names of family and friends who had risked their lives to petition and testify on Rebecca’s behalf.²⁸⁹ Two hundred years after the trials, and the community and officials of Salem were still handling the reconciliations of the trials just as they had in 1693.

By 1895 the narrative of the Salem witch trials became controlled by the commercial sector of the town. The *Visitor’s Guide* now included multiple pages devoted to witchcraft tourism. In addition to the “Witch House” and Gallows Hill, the town now invited visitors to experience the home of the Bishops, which Charles Upham, author of *Salem Witchcraft*, resided in during his time in Salem.²⁹⁰ The homestead and points of

²⁸⁸ Eden Putnam, “The Proposed Memorial ‘Look Out’ on Gallows Hill, Salem” in *Putnam’s Monthly Historical Magazine* Vol. 1 (1892-1893): 296, in National Archives, accessed September 22, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/putnamsmnthlyh189293putn/page/n673>.

²⁸⁹ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 273-274.

²⁹⁰ Thomas Franklin Hunt, *Visitor’s Guide to Salem, 1895*, in Hathi Trust, accessed September 22, 2019, 34-35, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t4sj1mx1z&view=2up&seq=8>.

interest concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne and the *House of the Seven Gables* were also emphasized, as well as information about Hawthorne's ancestor, the Salem witch judge, John Hathorne.²⁹¹ The courthouse also beefed up their display of artifacts, including an account of the steadfast Giles Corey.²⁹² Visitors could also enjoy experiencing the local, modern creation of the mysterious “witch woods.”²⁹³ Patrons were encouraged to leave Salem with a memento of the “Salem Witch,” who adorned several souvenirs including, spoons, cups, saucers, sleeve buttons, scarf pins, and more.²⁹⁴

The Essex Institute continued in their quest to erect a monument for the martyrs of 1692. They stood firm in their belief that a full acknowledgment and proper commemoration of the events would help “mark the end of fanaticism.”²⁹⁵ Their pursuit met defeat year after year and in 1931 the Salem City Council again officially rejected the request for a memorial at Gallows Hill.²⁹⁶ Although the city government continued to avoid connections with the trials, the city’s economy became increasingly dependent on

²⁹¹ Hunt, *Visitor's Guide*, 1895, 7, 8, 171-173.

²⁹² Hunt, *Visitor's Guide*, 1895, 32.

²⁹³ Hunt, *Visitor's Guide*, 1895, 144.

²⁹⁴ Hunt, *Visitor's Guide*, 1895, 185.

²⁹⁵ Hunt, *Visitor's Guide*, 1895, 33.

²⁹⁶ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 275.

the revenue brought in by tourism, particularly following an economic downturn in the early twentieth century.²⁹⁷

Following the conclusion of World War II, the Massachusetts government, in conjunction with the Salem local government, struggled against a revival of connections to the trials once more. Descendants of Ann Pudeator, who had been condemned and reprieved but did not have her attainder lifted in 1703 or 1711, petitioned the state legislature to pass a bill clearing her name. The clearing of Pudeator's name would be purely symbolic as part of the reconciliation process. The current Massachusetts government could not undo actions taken by the English Massachusetts colonial government; therefore, any acknowledgment of innocence would only benefit the descendants of a victim as a part of the healing process. The bill failed to pass in 1945 and 1946.²⁹⁸

While the government continued to avoid the topic of the Salem witch trials, the public again revisited the narrative of the trials. In 1949 Marion Starkey wrote a bestseller, *The Devil in Massachusetts*, and most influential, in 1953 Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* premiered. News anchor Walter Cronkite also helped publicize the trials in an episode of his popular national show, *You Are There*.²⁹⁹ With another resurgence in

²⁹⁷ Salem's economic downturn was due to the Great Depression and a massive fire that demolished many homes and businesses; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 275.

²⁹⁸ Daniel Long, "Poor Ann," *The New Yorker*, September 11, 1954.

²⁹⁹ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 275-276.

popularity of the trials, the bill to clear the name of Ann Pudeator came before the legislature once more. The House passed the bill, but the Senate rejected it.³⁰⁰ It was not until 1957, twelve years after the initial petition, that the legislature finally passed the bill to clear Pudeator's name. The bill named only Pudeator, not any of the others left out in 1711. The document also specified that the government at the time had acted legally. While the State of Massachusetts considered this an official apology, it admitted to no wrongdoing, nor did it take this opportunity to symbolically clear the remaining condemned.³⁰¹

If the legislature hoped that by pacifying the Pudeator family, the publicity surrounding Salem would diminish, they were mistaken. Popular culture in the 1960s and 70s embraced supernatural phenomena. During this time Samantha Stevens, a fictional witch on the American Broadcasting Company show *Bewitched*, put a spell on America. In the first year, the show ranked number one for ABC and was rated the number two sitcom among the three broadcasting networks. The show's popularity persisted throughout its eight-year run.³⁰² The network shot eight episodes total on location in Salem. As a result, tourism in Salem increased drastically.

Shortly after the first taping of *Bewitched* in Salem, Laurie Cabot moved to the town and opened the first witchcraft shop in town. Her shop offered herbs, remedies, and

³⁰⁰ Long, "Poor Ann."

³⁰¹ Massachusetts State Government, "Resolves of 1957."

³⁰² Walter Metz, *Bewitched* (Detroit: Wayne's State University Press, 2007), 14.

tarot readings. Though Salem reportedly already had an active “witch community,” Laurie Cabot brought attention to their presence, received the title of “Official Witch of Salem,” and began to help integrate modern witches into Salem politics.³⁰³ If there had been any question before, Salem now officially embraced the concept of the “Salem Witch.” Townspeople opened the Salem Witch Museum; the high school changed their mascot to the Salem Witches, and the police department, fire department, and newspaper all donned the silhouette of a witch and broomsticks as their insignia as opposed to the official town seal.³⁰⁴

In 1982, the town held their first Haunted Happening celebration. The celebration took place over Halloween weekend and sought to entice all ages, history buffs, and Halloween enthusiasts alike. The first celebration pulled in around 50,000 visitors. Biff Michaud, the president of the Salem Witch Museum, christened the town the “Halloween Capital of the World.” The festival has since grown to a full month of Halloween celebrations, boasting about 500,000 visitors on average.³⁰⁵ Despite the celebration’s success, some visitors found their visit to Salem to be quite frustrating. David Brown wrote *A Guide to the Salem Witchcraft Hysteria of 1692* after he visited the town and met

³⁰³ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 585; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 277-278.

³⁰⁴ Mary B. W. Tabor, “Salem Journal: The Witch City Dusts off its Past,” *The New York Times*, September 9, 1991, section A, 10; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 275-276.

³⁰⁵ Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, “Touring History: Guidebooks and the Commodification of the Salem Witch Trials,” *The Journal of American Culture* 30 (2007): 281; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 278; “The History of Halloween in Salem,” *Salem Haunted Happenings*, accessed September 23, 2019, <https://www.hauntedhappenings.org/facts-fun/history/>.

only disappointment in his “attempts to locate the important sites associated with the witchcraft delusions.”³⁰⁶ By the city embracing the commercialization of the “Salem witch,” a shift away from the history of the trials had been replaced by the romance of fictionalized witches.

With the tercentenary celebrations of the trials approaching, the city council hoped to distinguish history from commercial enterprise. In 1986 the city established the Salem Tercentenary Committee to lift the shroud of misunderstanding and shame that has been associated with the trials.³⁰⁷ The primary goal of the committee was to educate visitors through lectures, presentations, and workshops, as well as the erection of a memorial to the victims of 1692. Select members of the Tercentenary Committee also included an agenda to reconcile the misgivings of the trials with the British Parliament. Committee members proposed that since the victims of the trials were citizens of England, only the British government could rightfully issue a resolve on the behalf of those wronged in 1692. The proceedings, though “lawful under the Province Charter” were “shocking” both then and now. The proposal asserted that laws which once governed Massachusetts were now “abandoned and superseded by our more civilized laws.” Thus, the committee hoped British Parliament would collaborate with the committee to relieve in any “distress or corruption of blood attacks to the descendants of

³⁰⁶ Davie Brown, *A Guide to the Salem Witchcraft Hysteria of 1692* (Worcester, MA: Mercantile Publishing Co., 1984), ix.

³⁰⁷ Final Report – May 26, 1993, Salem Witchcraft Tercentenary Committee Records, Salem State University Archives and Special Collections, Box 1, Folder 54; Jennifer Ratliff, e-mail correspondence with Jennifer Ratliff, September 23, 2019; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 279.

said persons by reasons of said proceedings.”³⁰⁸ The Clerk of Parliament, however, felt that no “such action would be possible or effective.”³⁰⁹ The tercentenary committee deserted any further attempt to reconcile the legal standing of the witchcraft victims. Instead, the festivities would help another goal set by Salem Mayor Neil J. Harrington to “put Salem on tourists’ map,” and jump the number of visitors “from 600,000 to more than a million.”³¹⁰

While scholars helped develop programming for the celebration, the planning quickly became trivialized and shrouded by fanaticism. The monument design was chosen by a contest, in which contestants from as far as China and Checkoslovakia entered. Famous playwright, Arthur Miller announced the winner, seemingly giving the town’s approval to his popular, yet only partially accurate account of the trials. Laurie Cabot, the “Official Witch of Salem” voiced complaints in an interview with *The New York Times*. She complained about the city’s attempts to capitalize on the trials, and called it a “major political issue.”³¹¹ She charged the tercentenary committee with failing to educate the public on “what was really going on during the trials.” She felt it important that witches not be conflated with outlandish claims of sacrifice and blood drinking, but

³⁰⁸ “Proposed Resolve to British Parliament,” Salem Witchcraft Tercentenary Committee Records, Salem State University Archives and Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 43.

³⁰⁹ Lord Bert Oram to Charles E. Engeman, October 15, 1990, Salem Witchcraft Tercentenary Committee Records, Salem State University, Box 3, Folder 43.

³¹⁰ Tabor, “Salem Journal,” *The New York Times*, section A, 10.

³¹¹ Tabor, “Salem Journal,” *The New York Times*, section A, 10.

instead insisted that “they are a religious order that uses magic for good.”³¹² Upset that the city did not equate the current witch population with the “witches” of 1692 and its exploitation of the practice of witchcraft, local witches “cast a spell” on the city and distributed leaflets accusing the committee of hate crimes and cover-ups.³¹³

In a crusade to defend their religion and practices, the “witches” of Salem again altered the narrative of the victims of 1692. City officials, though, felt the tercentenary was not the platform to debate witchcraft as a religion. Instead, the city continued their plans as usual, and historians, who were part of the tercentenary committee, argued semantics instead of historical fact. The committee presented the definition of a witch as it would have been perceived in 1692; Cabot’s following, however, argued that those who practiced witchcraft, including those in 1692, subscribed to a pre-Christian meaning. Cabot, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, hoped that the committee would reposition the campaign of 1692 as being against “satanism, not witchcraft.”³¹⁴ Historian and committee member Alison D’Amario defended the committee’s use of the 17th century definition, but added to the delusion brought about by Cabot and the hungry imaginations of the world by saying she believed some benevolent form of witchcraft was being practiced in Salem in 1692, although those who were hung were not guilty of

³¹² Tabor, “Salem Journal,” *The New York Times*, section A, 10.

³¹³ Tabor, “Salem Journal,” *The New York Times*, section A, 10; Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 587.

³¹⁴ Bruce D. Brown, “A Cauldron of Controversy,” *The Washington Post*, September 13, 1992.

that charge.³¹⁵ Thus, the narrative of the Salem witch trials had again shifted due to the city government not being willing to step in and directly address misconceptions.

Despite the controversy, Salem's tercentenary celebrations continued. A modest memorial was placed in the city center, even though the city had been gifted a tract of land on Gallows Hill to build a memorial in 1936.³¹⁶ The memorial consists of twenty granite benches along a stone wall. Each bench displays a victim's name and their date of execution. The memorial is placed across from the Burying Point, a cemetery where many seventeenth century graves are located.³¹⁷ Though symbolic in its location, the memorial is not near other attractions in the town. In modern tourist brochures, the memorial is rarely highlighted. In the current sixty-three page guide, the memorial receives only a small, one-ninth of a page cameo, where it is listed as a symbolic place of "reflection and remembrance."³¹⁸

Later in 1992, Danvers celebrated the tercentenary with a ceremony and monument of its own. The Danvers Tercentenary Committee unveiled a memorial located across from the location of the 1692 Salem Village Meetinghouse. The memorial includes a large pulpit surrounded by granite walls that contain the name and testimony

³¹⁵ Brown, "A Cauldron of Controversy," *Washington Post*, September 13, 1992.

³¹⁶ Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 275.

³¹⁷ Marialisa Calta, "Salem Revmebers, 300 Years Later," *The New York Times*, May 10, 1992, sec 5, 14.

³¹⁸ "Salem Massachusetts: 2019 City Guide and Map," 27, accessed September 23, 2019, <https://www.salem.org/2019Guide/mobile/index.html#p=1>.

of all twenty-five people who lost their lives to the trials- the twenty included in the Salem memorial, as well as five who died in prison. In addition to the memorial, the Danvers archivist and the committee submitted a petition for a resolution for those not named in the acts of 1703, 1711, or 1957. The resolution passed, and all those not named previously were acknowledged to have “good names,” including Elizabeth Johnson Jr., who had been left out of the previous bills.³¹⁹ The memorial in Danvers, like the town itself, sees far fewer tourists than Salem. The town is content to process memory and preserve history, even at the cost of sacrificing tourism.³²⁰

In 2001, the legislature in Massachusetts passed one final act concerning the victims of the Salem witchcraft trials. On Halloween, the finale of the Haunted Happening celebration in Salem, the state government passed an amendment to the 1957 resolution adding five names to the list of victims who were to be exonerated. Danvers archivist Robert Trask felt the bill redundant, seeing as the Danvers Tercentenary Committee had already passed a resolution stating the innocence of those left out of the previous acts.³²¹ Nonetheless, the bill was passed, but, Elizabeth Johnson Jr. was not included. This oversight perhaps gave merit to Mr. Trask's assertion that the 2001 resolve was not concerned with historical accuracy, but publicity. State Representative, Paul

³¹⁹ “Special Resolution of the Massachusetts House of Representatives,” adopted September 14, 1992, titled “Resolutions Relative to the Commemorative Observance of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Salem Village Witchcraft Trials of 1692;” Trask, e-mail correspondence with Robert Trask, October 2, 2019.

³²⁰ Calta, “Salem Remembers,” *The New York Times*, section 5, 14.

³²¹ Robert Trask, e-mail correspondence with Robert Trask, September 11, 2019.

Tirone, a main proponent of the 2001 resolution, insisted on the need for the legislation in the midst of the terrorist paranoia following the September 11, 2001 attacks. The history lesson, Mr. Tirone argued, needed to be revisited since some had started to “look at their neighbors with suspicion.”³²² As noble as Mr. Tirone’s sentiment was in connection with the newest “witch hunt” in America, the efforts of he and his supporters had started years before.³²³ The amendment was not prompted by the need for a new history lesson, but in true Puritan fashion, an act of excessiveness on the part of the government and community in Salem to once again capitalize on the victims of the Salem witch trials.

Salem, in contrast to Danvers’ quiet existence, boasts over 1 million tourists each year and is increasingly dependent on tourism for their city economy. The city embraces the macabre and spiritual instead of the historical. Visitors can have their picture taken dressed like a Sanderson sister, from the cult classic *Hocus Pocus*, visit the statue of the fictional witch Samantha Stevens (which sees more foot traffic than the memorial in Salem), or try their hand at “white magic” at one of the witchcraft shops. The transition of Salem to a fanatical place of enchantment and amusement resulted from a series of changing narratives of the Salem witch trials. By the government prolonging and avoiding any direct intervention in the trials, due to a want to distance themselves from blame, the narrative was allowed to change forms over the centuries. Today, academics

³²² “Massachusetts Clears 5 for Salem Witch Trials,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 2001, section A, 12.

³²³ Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials*, 587.

who attempt to revise the true nature and historical significance of the trials are
overthrown for the more appealing, romantic delusion of the Salem witch trials that the
commodification of history has created.

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Appendix I - Petitions Post-Trials and Prior to the Creation of the 1710 Inquiry Committee

Author of Petition	Date of Petition	Petition Concerning	Purpose of Petition
Elizabeth Procter	May 27, 1696	Elizabeth Procter	Attainder reversed
Abigail Faulkner Sr.	June 13, 1700	Abigail Faulkner Sr.	Attainder reversed
Francis Faulkner	March 2, 1703	Rebecca Nurse, Mary Esty, Abigail Faulkner Sr., Mary Parker, John Procter, Elizabeth Procter, Elizabeth How, Samuel Wardwell, Sarah Wardwell	Attainder reversed
Ministers from Essex County: Thomas Barnard, Joseph Green, William Hubbard, Benjamin Rolfe, Samuel Cheever, Zech. Symmes, Joseph Gerrish, John Rogers, Jabez Fitch, John Wise, Joseph Capen, and Thomas Symmes	July 8, 1703	All imprisoned and condemned	Attainder reversed
Philip English	May 25, 1709	Philip English, Issac Esty Sr., Benjamin Procter, John Procter Jr., Thorndike Procter, George Jacobs, William Buckley, John Nurse, John Tarbell, John Parker, Joseph Parker, John Johnson, Francis Faulkner, Issac Estey Jr., Joseph Estey, Samuel Nurse, Benjamin Nurse, John Preston, Samuel Nurse Jr., William Russell, Francis Nurse, George Nurse	Attainder reversed for convicted and restitution to the families of the executed and those who were imprisoned
Isaac Esty Sr.	May 25, 1709	Isaac Esty, John Nurse, Joseph Parker, Thorndike Procter, George Jacobs, and their relations	Attainder reversed for convicted and restitution to the families of the executed and those who were imprisoned

For more see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 844-854

Appendix II - Petitions Presented to the 1710 Inquiry Committee

Author of Petition	Date of Petition	Petition Concerning	Purpose of Petition
Isaac Esty Sr.	September 8, 1710	Mary Esty	Sarah's attainder reversed and restitution
Edward Bishop Jr.	September 9, 1710	Edward Bishop Jr. and Sarah Bishop	Restitution
Mary and Elizabeth How	September 9, 1710	Elizabeth How	Restitution
Jane and Henry True	September 11, 1710	Mary Bradbury	Mary's attainder reversed and restitution
Ephraim Wilds	September 11, 1710	Sarah Wilds	Sarah's attainder reversed and restitution
Rebecca Eames	September 12, 1710	Rebecca Eames	Rebecca's attainder reversed and restitution
Nehemiah Jewett	September 13, 1710	Bridget Bishop, Susanna Martin, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Welmot Read, Margaret Scott	Attainders reversed and restitution
Ebenezer Barker	September 13, 1710	Abigail Barker	Restitution
John Barker	September 13, 1710	Mary Barker	Restitution
John Barker	September 13, 1710	William Barker Jr.	Restitution
John Barker	September 13, 1710	William Barker Sr.	Restitution

Author of Petition	Date of Petition	Petition Concerning	Purpose of Petition
Sarah (Bridges) Preston	September 13, 1710	Sarah (Bridges) Preston	Restitution
William Buckley	September 13, 1710	Sarah Buckley and Mary Whittredge	Restitution
Charles Burroughs	September 13, 1710	George Burroughs	Attainder reversed and restitution
Thomas Carrier Sr.	September 13, 1710	Martha Carrier	Attainder reversed and restitution
Sarah Cole	September 13, 1710	Sarah Cole	Restitution
John Moulton	September 13, 1710	Martha Cory and Giles Cory	Martha's attainder reversed and restitution
Nathaniel Dane	September 13, 1710	Deliverance Dane	Restitution
Mary DeRich	September 13, 1710	Mary DeRich	Restitution
Philip English	September 13, 1710	Philip and Mary English	Restitution
Philip English	September 13, 1710	Philip English	Restitution
Abigail Faulkner Sr.	September 13, 1710	Abigail Faulkner Sr.	Attainder reversed and restitution
Abraham Foster	September 13, 1710	Ann Foster	Attainder reversed and restitution
John Frye	September 13, 1710	Eunice Frye	Restitution

Author of Petition	Date of Petition	Petition Concerning	Purpose of Petition
Peter Green	September 13, 1710	Mary Green	Restitution
Francis Johnson	September 13, 1710	Sarah Hawkes	Restitution
John King and Annis King	September 13, 1710	Orcas Hoar	Restitution
John King and Annis King	September 13, 1710	Dorcas Hoar	Restitution
William Hobbs	September 13, 1710	Abigail Hobbs	Restitution
George Jacobs Jr.	September 13, 1710	George Jacobs Sr., Rebecca Jacobs, and Margaret Jacobs	Restitution
Francis Johnson	September 13, 1710	Elizabeth Johnson Jr.	Attainder reversed and restitution
Francis Johnson	September 13, 1710	Elizabeth Johnson Sr.	Restitution
Lawrence Lacey	September 13, 1710	Mary Lacey Jr.	Restitution
Lawrence Lacey	September 13, 1710	Mary Marston	Restitution
Mary Morey	September 13, 1710	Sarah Morey	Restitution
Samuel Nurse Jr.	September 13, 1710	Rebecca Nurse	Attainder reversed and restitution
Samuel Osgood	September 13, 1710	Mary Osgood	Restitution
John and Joseph Parker	September 13, 1710	Mary Parker	Attainder reversed and restitution

Author of Petition	Date of Petition	Petition Concerning	Purpose of Petition
Mercy (Wardwell) Wright	September 13, 1710	Mercy (Wardwell) Wright	Restitution
Samuel Wardwell	September 13, 1710	Samuel and Sarah Wardwell	Sarah's attainder and reversed restitution
Margaret Towne	September 13, 1710	John Willard	Restitution
Joseph Wilson	September 13, 1710	Sarah Wilson Sr. and Sarah Wilson Jr.	Restitution

* Petition on behalf of those condemned that did not have family come forward

For more see *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 855-888.

**Appendix III - Summary of Those who had Petitions Presented on their Behalf
from 1696-1710**

Accused	Verdict	Executed	Petition	Attainder reversed	Restitution
Mary Bradbury	Condemned	Escaped	1710	1711	Yes
Abigail Barker	Confessed, recant, not tried		1710		Yes
Mary Barker	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		Yes
William Barker Jr.	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		Yes
William Barker Sr.	Confessed	Escaped	1710		Yes
Bridget Bishop	Condemned	June 1692	1710	1992/2001	
Edward Bishop Jr.	Arrested, escaped		1710		
Sarah Bishop	Arrested, escaped		1710		
Sarah Bridges	Confessed, not tried		1710		Yes
Sarah Buckley	Arrested, tried, not guilty		1709, 1710		
George Burroughs	Condemned	Aug. 1692	1710	1711	Yes
Martha Carrier	Condemned	Aug. 1692	1710		Yes
Sarah Cole	Arrested, not tried		1710		
Giles Cory	Refused to stand trial	Pressed to death, Sept. 1692	1710	1711	Yes
Martha Cory	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1710	1711	Yes
Deliverance Dane	Confessed, Recant, not tried		1710		Yes
Rebecca Eames	Confessed, Recant		1710		Yes
Philip English	Escaped, tried, not guilty		1709, 1710		
Mary English	Escaped, tried, not guilty		1710		
Mary Esty	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1703, 1709, 1710	1711	Yes
Abigail Faulkner Sr.	Condemned	Reprieved	1700, 1710	1703	Yes
Ann Foster	Condemned	Died in prison, Dec. 1692	1710		Yes
Eunice Frye	Confess, recant, tried, not guilty		1710		Yes
Sarah Good	Condemned	July 1692	1710	1711	Yes
Dorothy Good	Confessed, not tried		1710		Yes
Mary Green	Escaped, caught, not tried		1710		

Accused	Verdict	Executed	Petition	Attainder reversed	Restitution
Sarah Hawkes	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		Yes
Doras Hoar	Confessed, tried, condemned	Reprieved	1710	1711	Yes
Abigail Hobbs	Confessed		1710	1711	Yes
Elizabeth How	Condemned	July 1692	1703, 1710	1711	Yes
George Jacobs Sr.	Condemned	Aug. 1692	1709, 1710	1711	Yes
Rebecca Jacobs	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1709, 1710		Yes
Margaret Jacobs	Confessed, Recant		1709, 1710		Yes
Elizabeth Johnson Jr.	Confessed, tried, guilty	Reprieved	1710	1992	Yes
Elizabeth Johnson Sr.	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		Yes
Mary Lacy Jr.	Confessed		1710	1711	Yes
Mary Lacy Sr.	Confessed, tried, guilty	Reprieved			Yes
Mary Marston	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		
Susanna Martin	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1710	1992/2001	Yes
Sarah Morey	Arrested, not tried		1710		
Rebecca Nurse	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1703, 1710, 1709,	1711	Yes
Mary Osgood	Confessed		1710		Yes
Alice Parker	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1709, 1710	1992/2001	Yes
Mary Parker	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1703, 1710, 1709,	1711	Yes
Mary Post	Confessed, tried, guilty	Reprieved	1710		Yes
Elizabeth Procter	Condemned, stayed execution	Reprieved	1696, 1703	1703	Yes
John Procter	Condemned	Aug. 1692	1703, 1710, 1709,	1711	Yes
Ann Pudeator	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1710	1957	Yes
Wilmot Redd	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1710	1992/2001	Yes
Margaret Scott	Condemned	Sept. 1692	1710	1992/2001	Yes
Mercy (Wardwell) Wright	Confessed, tried, not guilty		1710		
Samuel Wardwell	Confessed, tried, recant, guilty	Sept. 1692	1703, 1710	1711	Yes

Accused	Verdict	Executed	Petition	Attainder reversed	Restitution
Sarah Wardwell	Confessed, tried, guilty	Reprieved	1703, 1710	1703	Yes
Mary Whittredge	Arrested, tried, not guilty		1710		
Sarah Wilds	Condemned	July 1692	1710	1711	Yes
John Willard	Condemned	Aug. 1692	1710	1711	Yes
Sarah Wilson Jr.	Confessed, not tried		1710		Yes
Sarah Wilson Sr.	Confessed, not tried		1710		Yes

For More see. *RSWH*, ed. Rosenthal, 844-910; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*, 288-292.

* I have only included, under the petition section, petitions received prior to the final colonial government action in 1711.

Many individuals, including Elizabeth Johnson Jr., Philip English, and the family of George Burroughs continued to petition the Massachusetts Superior Court following the 1711 Act.

VITA

Heaven Umbrell completed her undergraduate degree at Stephen F. Austin State University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in 2014. Following three years of teaching public school, she returned to Stephen F. Austin to pursue her graduate degree in the 2017. While working on her degree, she was employed by the history department at SFA as a graduate assistant. Heaven received her Master of Arts from Stephen F. Austin State University in December of 2019.

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This thesis was typed by Heaven Ly Umbrell