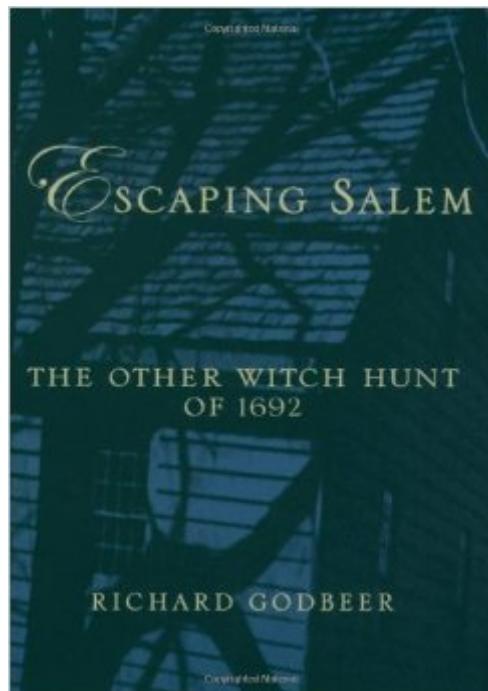


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Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt Of 1692 (New Narratives In American History)



Synopsis

The Salem witch hunt of 1692 is among the most infamous events in early American history; however, it was not the only such episode to occur in New England that year. Escaping Salem reconstructs the "other witch hunt" of 1692 that took place in Stamford, Connecticut. Concise and accessible, the book takes students on a revealing journey into the mental world of early America, shattering the stereotype of early New Englanders as quick to accuse and condemn. Drawing on eyewitness testimony, Richard Godbeer tells the story of Kate Branch, a seventeen-year-old afflicted by strange visions and given to blood-chilling wails of pain and fright. Branch accused several women of bewitching her, two of whom were put on trial for witchcraft. Escaping Salem takes us inside the Connecticut courtroom and into the minds of the surprisingly skeptical Stamford townspeople. Were the pain and screaming due to natural or supernatural causes? Was Branch simply faking the symptoms? And if she was indeed bewitched, why believe her specific accusations, since her information came from demons who might well be lying? For the judges, Godbeer shows, the trial was a legal thicket. All agreed that witches posed a real and serious threat, but proving witchcraft (an invisible crime) in court was another matter. The court in Salem had become mired in controversy over its use of dubious evidence. In an intriguing chapter, Godbeer examines Magistrate Jonathan Selleck's notes on how to determine the guilt of someone accused of witchcraft, providing an illuminating look at what constituted proof of witchcraft at the time. The stakes were high—if found guilty, the two accused women would be hanged. In the afterword, Godbeer explains how he used the trial evidence to build his narrative, offering an inside perspective on the historian's craft. Featuring maps, photos, and a selected bibliography, Escaping Salem is ideal for use in undergraduate U.S. survey courses. It can also be used for courses in colonial American history, culture, and religion; witchcraft in the early modern world; and crime and society in early America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few people know that while the infamous Salem witch hunt was taking place in 1692, southwestern Connecticut was undergoing a scare of its own. Godbeer has meticulously researched this event and presents a remarkably detailed story based upon the participants own words. He follows the accusers, the victims, the "witches", the ministers, and the magistrates, from the beginning of the outbreak to its much-more-sensible-than Salem conclusion. Seems one could be a witch and avoid execution in Olde New England. Puritans all - how did Connecticut avoid hysteria and wanton killing? This brief book tells the tale in an interesting, historically accurate fashion.

Short history exploring witch trials outside of the Salem cliche. Looking at a different region, this book still compares situations to Salem to highlight important socio-cultural connections to American society. Short and easy to read.

A great look into the curiosity of witchcraft in 1692. Everyone is familiar with the Salem witch hunt of 1692, but the witch hunt that took place in Stamford, Connecticut is little known. Excellent read.

I came across this little book while doing research on my ancestors. After learning I was a direct descendant of Daniel Westcott, I found his connection to late 17th century witchcraft in the colonies. The book is a little dry, but the facts and bits of colonial wisdom were interesting....not to mention Daniel and wife Abigail's approach to dealing with a house servant who in today's world would be a resident of the top-floor, inpatient, psych ward.

I would probably rate this in at 3.5 stars...but I rounded up to 4 stars.'Escaping Salem' tells the story of the 'witch hunt' in Stamford, CT. We have all grown up hearing about the witch hunts in Salem. There have been movies and there have been discussions of the blood thirsty people in that community going after the witches to rid their villages of their evil practices.This book begins to examine the people behind some of the stories in the relatively quiet community of Stamford. The

book looks at one particular case of a girl named Kate Branch of her fits or rage, her delusions and her overall strange behavior. It discusses the people that many believed were witches and why they considered them witches. Though the arguments were often weak, the arguments gained traction and led to the trials of a couple of women accused of being witches. The book takes you in to the courtroom as you see some of the problems of the prosecution and the difficulty of 'proving' witchcraft. I had always believed that trials were thrown together to just convict but you can see that there was definitely more effort needed to convict someone. The biggest problem with the book is that it often reads like a textbook until the last chapter when the author interjects more of his thoughts and conclusions. The book is using public documents so there are some holes in the story which Godbeer tries to fill. Overall, an interesting peak into the late 1600s court system and witches problem.

It is interesting the way the author wrote this book. The first chapters put the frame of the scholar text. It is like reading a novel and then the last chapters gives more scholarly inside of this even. I was surprised that so few people had been killed for witchcraft during the Salem trials. From some pagan friends saying I was under the impression the number was much more high some thousand at least. It is a good book worth reading.

I bought this book for the spring semester. It arrived VERY fast, and is in perfect condition. Use to find your textbooks, I paid about 40-50% less for new books on than I would have paid for used books at my college bookstore. Plus I assume, I'll be able to sell these books to the bookstore and knock even ore off the total price of "renting".

I had to read this book for my History class. It was really a great book. I may have to go and read his book on the Salem Witch Trials.

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