

Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft. By PAUL BOYER and STEPHEN NISSENBAUM. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974. xv + 221 pp. \$10.00.

Sympathy for the Salem witch hunters? Impossible! Yet these two very capable social historians do precisely that in their splendid study of the social origins of the Salem witchcraft trails of 1692. They are quite convincing.

Starting with the trials, they gradually broaden their study to discuss geographical, economic and social considerations. Each chapter logically and easily flows from the one preceeding. (Indeed, just as the reader begins to ask questions of the text, the authors take them up themselves.) The plot unfolds almost as a mystery story and the reader is tantalized to keep reading and discovering, the authors skillfully combining documentation, inference and insight. With one exception.

In Chapter 6, the section on Stepmothers and Witches, while interesting and insightful, is too fanciful to be convincing. Had the authors qualified their statements, there would be little quarrel but as the chapter is written there is too much conjecture; later in Chapter 8 these inferences are used as fact to prove another point. The cavil is with choice of words, not with conclusions. This is admittedly a minor point, but it does mar what otherwise is an excellent and very important study of a fascinating event in American history.

These skillful historians have accomplished exactly what they said they were going to do. They have illuminated the interaction between "the extraordinary moment" and "the ordinary history of the village." As they explain in their text, the problems of Salem Village were not unique: its response was. Here the old, the traditional, the out-of-date won out—if only for a violent and fleeting moment—against the forces of the new, the changing, the modern world. These problems and the people who were grappling with them led the authors "to feel a curious bond with the 'witch hunters' of 1692." The reader feels and shares this bond as well.

This is an important book about an important topic. It should be read by social historians because it is a model of technique and clear, cogent writing, by colonial historians because the subject is a focal point in this period and has not been examined in this manner before, and by church historians because of its insights into the relationship of the church to the social context in which it must always operate.

In a world changing as rapidly as was that of the late seventeenth century—or the late twentieth century—social dislocation and upheaval were and are forces arousing fear and fanaticism, and these forces arouse the human reaction to want to do something, *anything* to stem the tide of events. The Salem Puritans are here presented as very human, very understandable and very recognizable people; more like ourselves, perhaps, than we care to admit.

Grove City College
Grove City, Pennsylvania

M. BARBARA AKIN

William Penn and Early Quakerism. By MELVIN B. ENDY, JR. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973. viii + 410 pp. \$17.50

Considering the quantity of books written about William Penn, it is most remarkable that there has never been a first rate study of his theology. Professor Endy's book not only fills a real need but is so excellent that it can be considered definitive. The bulk of this study is a careful explication of Penn's theology in juxtaposition to the thought of leading Friends such as Barclay and Penington. Endy's general thesis is that while the experience of the inward light provided assurance of grace and a method to solve problems of interpretation of Scripture, the definition of the light posed theological conundrums.

Salem Possessed

Lloyd E. Chiasson



Salem Possessed:

Salem Possessed Paul Boyer, Stephen Nissenbaum, 1974 Tormented girls writhing in agony stern judges meting out harsh verdicts nineteen bodies swinging on Gallows Hill The stark immediacy of what happened in 1692 has obscured the complex web of human passion individual and organized which had been growing for more than a generation before the witch trials Salem Possessed explores the lives of the men and women who helped spin that web and who in the end found themselves entangled in it From rich and varied sources many previously neglected or unknown Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum give us a picture of the events of 1692 more intricate and more fascinating than any other in the already massive literature on Salem Salem Possessed wrote Robin Briggs in The Times Literary Supplement reinterprets a world famous episode so completely and convincingly that virtually all the previous treatments can be consigned to the historical lumber room Not simply a dramatic and isolated event the Salem outbreak has wider implications for our understanding of developments central to the American experience the breakup of Puritanism the pressures of land and population in New England towns the problems besetting farmer and householder the shifting role of the church and the powerful impact of commercial capitalism

Salem Possessed Paul Boyer, Stephen Nissenbaum, 1997 Salem Possessed Paul S. Boyer, Stephen Nissenbaum, 1982 *Salem possessed* Paul Boyer, Stephen Nissenbaum, 1974 **The Story of the Salem**

Witch Trials Bryan F. Le Beau, 2016-05-23 Between June 10 and September 22 1692 nineteen people were hanged for practicing witchcraft in Salem Massachusetts One person was pressed to death and over 150 others were jailed where still others died The Story of the Salem Witch Trials is a history of that event It provides a much needed synthesis of the most recent scholarship on the subject places the trials into the context of the Great European Witch Hunt and relates the events of 1692 to witch hunting throughout seventeenth century New England This complex and difficult subject is covered in a uniquely accessible manner that captures all the drama that surrounded the Salem witch trials From beginning to end the reader is carried along by the author s powerful narration and mastery of the subject While covering the subject in impressive detail Bryan Le Beau maintains a broad perspective on events and wherever possible lets the historical characters speak for themselves Le Beau highlights the decisions made by individuals responsible for the trials that helped turn what might have been a minor event into a crisis that has held the imagination of students of American history *Who Were the Accused Witches of Salem?* Laura Hamilton Waxman, 2012-01-01 In June 1692 a jury in Salem Massachusetts found Bridget Bishop guilty of performing witchcraft The only evidence against her was villagers testimony As punishment she was publicly hanged Meanwhile local girls had been behaving oddly for months They cried out of being pinched or choked by a witch s spirit The girls accused neighbors outcasts and respected community members of tormenting them As fear spread through Salem jails filled with the accused In the end nineteen people were hanged for witchcraft in one of the darkest moments in U S history But what led to this terrifying event Who was likely to be accused Why did the witchcraft fever finally come to an

end Discover the facts about the Salem Witchcraft Trials and the mark they left on the U S justice system **Salem possessed; the social origins of witchcraft** Paul Boyer, *Illusive Shadows* Lloyd E. Chiasson, 2003-11-30 As Chiasson and his contributors illustrate trials are media events that can have long reaching significance They can and have changed the way people think how institutions function and have shaped public opinions While this collection on ten trials is about witchcraft slavery religion and radicalism it is in many ways the story of America Trials are the stuff of news Those rare moments when justice or a reasonable facsimile is meted out And what offers up more high drama or melodrama than a highly publicized trial Most news events enjoy short life spans They happen they are reported they are quickly forgotten As Chiasson and his contributors make clear a trial often is a lingering living thing that builds in tension It is every once in a long while a modern Shakespearean drama with a twist The audience becomes members of the cast because every once in a long while society finds itself the defendant Trials can have lasting importance beyond how the public perceives them A trial can have long reaching significance if it changes the way people think or how institutions function or shapes public opinion Ten such American trials covering a span of 307 years are covered here In each the sociological underpinnings of events often has greater significance than either the crime or the trial The ten trials included are the Salem witch trials the Amistad trial the Sioux Indian Uprising trials the Ed Johnson Sheriff Shipp trial the Big Bill Haywood trial the Ossian Sweet trial the Clay Shaw trial the Manuel Noriega trial and the Matthew Shepard trial While the book is about ten crimes the subsequent trials and the media coverage of each it is also a book about witchcraft about religion slavery and radicalism It paints portraits of a racist America a capitalistic America an anarchist America It relates compelling tales of compassion greed stupidity and hate beginning in 17th century colonial times and ending in present day America In many ways it is the story of America Witches of the Atlantic World Elaine G. Breslaw, 2000-09 Breslaw history U of Tennessee has created a fascinating reader for undergraduate classes in history anthropology religious studies or women s studies surveying the subject of witches witch hunts and the larger political context of both The sections which cover Christian perspectives non Christian beliefs diabolical possession issues of gender and a lengthy section on the Salem witch trials each include an introduction by Breslaw primary sources then secondary commentaries on the sources The latter are excerpts from books and articles Annotation copyrighted by Book News Inc Portland OR **Essays on the Sociology of Perception** Mary Douglas, 2013-10-16 First published in 1982 this is one of Mary Douglas favourite books It is based on her meetings with friends in which they attempt to apply the grip group analysis from *Natural Symbols* The essays have been important texts for preparing grid group exercises ever since She is still trying to improve the argument of *Natural Symbols* and is always hoping to find better applications to illustrate the power of the two dimensions used for accurate comparison

Embracing the Track of Appearance: An Mental Symphony within **Salem Possessed**

In some sort of consumed by displays and the ceaseless chatter of immediate conversation, the melodic elegance and mental symphony created by the written word usually disappear in to the background, eclipsed by the persistent sound and disturbances that permeate our lives. Nevertheless, nestled within the pages of **Salem Possessed** an enchanting literary prize full of natural feelings, lies an immersive symphony waiting to be embraced. Constructed by a masterful musician of language, this fascinating masterpiece conducts visitors on a mental journey, well unraveling the concealed songs and profound affect resonating within each carefully crafted phrase. Within the depths of this touching evaluation, we will explore the book is key harmonies, analyze its enthralling writing type, and submit ourselves to the profound resonance that echoes in the depths of readers souls.

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