

**ALL THOSE
TERRIFYING HISTORIES SERIES**

Kenneth Cavalcanti (ed.)

**Witchcraft, Sorcerers
and Magic:
An Introduction**

feat. The Infamous Salem Trials, Luciferian Practices, The Inquisition,
Witch-Hunts, Malleus Maleficarum, White/Black Magic, Wicca

*Horror Stories
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INTEGRAL

Witchcraft, Sorcerers and Magic: An Introduction

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#9

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Notes on the Edition

“Witchcraft, the exercise or invocation of alleged supernatural powers to control people or events, practices typically involving sorcery or magic. Although defined differently in disparate historical and cultural contexts, witchcraft has often been seen, especially in the West, as the work of crones who meet secretly at night, indulge in cannibalism and orgiastic rites with the Devil, and perform black magic. Witchcraft thus defined exists more in the imagination of contemporaries than in any objective reality. Yet this stereotype has a long history and has constituted for many cultures a viable explanation of evil in the world. The intensity of these beliefs is best represented by the European witch hunts of the 14th to 18th century, but witchcraft and its associated ideas are never far from the surface of popular consciousness and—sustained by folk tales—find explicit focus from time to time in popular television and films and in fiction.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica

Once Upon a Time in Salem Village

In Salem Village of Puritan Massachusetts, in February 1692, Betty Parris (age nine) and her cousin Abigail Williams (age eleven), the daughter and the niece, respectively, of Reverend Samuel Parris, began to have fits described as “beyond the power of epileptic fits or natural disease to effect” by John Hale, the minister of the nearby town of Beverly. The girls screamed, threw things about the room, uttered strange sounds, crawled under furniture, and contorted themselves into peculiar positions, according to the eyewitness account of Reverend Deodat Lawson, a former minister in Salem Village.

The girls complained of being pinched and pricked with pins. A doctor, historically assumed to be William Griggs, could find no physical evidence of any ailment. Other young women in the village began to exhibit similar behaviors. When Lawson preached as a guest in the Salem Village meetinghouse, he was interrupted several times by the outbursts of the afflicted.

The first three people accused and arrested for allegedly afflicting Betty Parris, Abigail Williams, 12-year-old Ann Putnam, Jr., and Elizabeth Hubbard, were Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba—with Tituba being the first. Some historians believe that the accusation by Ann Putnam, Jr., suggests that a family feud may have been a major cause of the witch trials. At the time, a vicious rivalry was underway between the Putnam and Porter families, one which deeply polarized the people of Salem. Citizens would often have heated debates, which escalated into full-fledged fighting, based solely on their opinion of the feud.

Sarah Good was a destitute woman accused of witchcraft because of her reputation. At her trial, she was accused of rejecting Puritan ideals of self-control and discipline when she chose to torment and “scorn [children] instead of leading them towards the path of salvation”.

Sarah Osborne rarely attended church meetings. She was accused of witchcraft because the Puritans believed that Osborne had her own self-interests in mind following her remarriage to an indentured servant. The citizens of the town disapproved of her trying to control her son’s inheritance from her previous marriage.

Tituba, an enslaved South American Indian woman from the West Indies, likely became a target because of her ethnic differences from most of the other villagers. She was accused of attracting girls like Abigail Williams and Betty Parris with stories of enchantment from *Malleus Maleficarum*. These tales about sexual encounters with demons, swaying the minds of men, and fortune-telling were said to stimulate the imaginations of girls and made Tituba an obvious target of accusations.

Each of these women was a kind of outcast and exhibited many of the character traits typical of the “usual suspects” for witchcraft accusations; they were left to defend themselves. Brought before the local magistrates on the complaint of witchcraft, they were interrogated for several days, starting on March 1, 1692, then sent to jail.

In March, others were accused of witchcraft: Martha Corey, child Dorothy Good and Rebecca Nurse in Salem Village, and Rachel Clinton in nearby Ipswich. Martha Corey had expressed skepticism about the credibility of the girls’ accusations and thus drawn attention. The charges against her and Rebecca Nurse deeply troubled the community because Martha Corey was a full covenanted member of the Church in Salem Village, as was Rebecca Nurse in the Church in Salem Town. If such upstanding people could be witches, the townspeople thought, then anybody could be a witch, and church membership was no protection from accusation. Dorothy Good, the daughter of Sarah Good, was only four years old but was not exempted from questioning by the magistrates; her answers were construed as a confession that implicated her mother. In Ipswich, Rachel Clinton was arrested for witchcraft at the end of March on independent charges unrelated to the afflictions of the girls in Salem Village.

When Sarah Cloyce (Nurse’s sister) and Elizabeth (Bassett) Proctor were arrested in April, they were brought before John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin at a meeting in Salem Town. The men were both local magistrates and also members of the Governor’s Council. Present for the examination were Deputy Governor Thomas Danforth, and Assistants Samuel Sewall, Samuel Appleton, James Russell and Isaac Addington. During the proceedings, objections by Elizabeth’s husband, John Proctor, resulted in his arrest that day.

Within a week, Giles Corey (Martha’s husband and a covenanted church member in Salem Town), Abigail Hobbs, Bridget Bishop, Mary Warren (a servant in the Proctor household and sometime accuser), and Deliverance Hobbs (stepmother of Abigail Hobbs), were arrested and examined. Abigail Hobbs, Mary Warren, and Deliverance Hobbs all confessed and began naming additional people as accomplices. More arrests followed: Sarah Wildes, William Hobbs (husband of Deliverance and father of Abigail), Nehemiah Abbott Jr., Mary Eastey (sister of Cloyce and Nurse), Edward Bishop, Jr. and his wife Sarah Bishop, and Mary English.

On April 30, Reverend George Burroughs, Lydia Dustin, Susannah Martin, Dorcas Hoar, Sarah Morey, and Philip English (Mary’s husband) were arrested. Nehemiah Abbott, Jr. was released because the accusers agreed he was not the person whose specter had afflicted them. Mary Eastey was released for a few days after her initial arrest because the accusers failed to confirm that it was she who had afflicted them; she was arrested again when the accusers reconsidered. In May, accusations continued to pour in, but some of the suspects began to evade apprehension. Multiple warrants were issued before John Willard and Elizabeth Colson were apprehended; George Jacobs, Jr. and Daniel Andrews were not caught. Until this point, all the proceedings were investigative, but on May 27, 1692, William Phips ordered the establishment of a Special Court of Oyer and Terminer for Suffolk, Essex and Middlesex counties to prosecute the cases of those in jail. Warrants were issued for more people. Sarah Osborne, one of the first three persons accused, died in jail on May 10, 1692.

Warrants were issued for 36 more people, with examinations continuing to take place in Salem Village: Sarah Dustin (daughter of Lydia Dustin), Ann Sears, Bethiah Carter Sr. and her daughter Bethiah Carter Jr., George Jacobs, Sr. and his granddaughter Margaret Jacobs, John Willard, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Abigail Soames, George Jacobs, Jr. (son of George Jacobs, Sr. and father of Margaret Jacobs), Daniel Andrew, Rebecca Jacobs (wife of George Jacobs, Jr. and sister of Daniel Andrew), Sarah Buckley and her daughter Mary Witheridge.

Also included were Elizabeth Colson, Elizabeth Hart, Thomas Farrar, Sr., Roger Toothaker, Sarah Proctor (daughter of John and Elizabeth Proctor), Sarah Bassett (sister-in-law of Elizabeth Proctor),

Susannah Roots, Mary DeRich (another sister-in-law of Elizabeth Proctor), Sarah Pease, Elizabeth Cary, Martha Carrier, Elizabeth Fosdick, Wilmot Redd, Sarah Rice, Elizabeth Howe, Capt. John Alden (son of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins), William Proctor (son of John and Elizabeth Proctor), John Flood, Mary Toothaker (wife of Roger Toothaker and sister of Martha Carrier) and her daughter Margaret Toothaker, and Arthur Abbott. When the Court of Oyer and Terminer convened at the end of May, the total number of people in custody was 62.

Cotton Mather wrote to one of the judges, John Richards, a member of his congregation, on May 31, 1692, expressing his support of the prosecutions, but cautioning him: "Do not lay more stress on pure spectral evidence than it will bear... It is very certain that the Devils have sometimes represented the Shapes of persons not only innocent, but also very virtuous. Though I believe that the just God then ordinarily provides a way for the speedy vindication of the persons thus abused".

The Court of Oyer and Terminer convened in Salem Town on June 2, 1692, with William Stoughton, the new Lieutenant Governor, as Chief Magistrate, Thomas Newton as the Crown's Attorney prosecuting the cases, and Stephen Sewall as clerk. Bridget Bishop's case was the first brought to the grand jury, who endorsed all the indictments against her. Bishop was described as not living a Puritan lifestyle, for she wore black clothing and odd costumes, which was against the Puritan code. When she was examined before her trial, Bishop was asked about her coat, which had been awkwardly "cut or torn in two ways".

This, along with her "immoral" lifestyle, affirmed to the jury that Bishop was a witch. She went to trial the same day and was convicted. On June 3, the grand jury endorsed indictments against Rebecca Nurse and John Willard, but they did not go to trial immediately, for reasons which are unclear. Bishop was executed by hanging on June 10, 1692.

Immediately following this execution, the court adjourned for 20 days (until June 30) while it sought advice from New England's most influential ministers "upon the state of things as they then stood". Their collective response came back dated June 15 and composed by Cotton Mather:

The afflicted state of our poor neighbours, that are now suffering by molestations from the invisible world, we apprehend so deplorable, that we think their condition calls for the utmost help of all persons in their several capacities.

We cannot but, with all thankfulness, acknowledge the success which the merciful God has given unto the sedulous and assiduous endeavours of our honourable rulers, to detect the abominable witchcrafts which have been committed in the country, humbly praying, that the discovery of those mysterious and mischievous wickednesses may be perfected.

We judge that, in the prosecution of these and all such witchcrafts, there is need of a very critical and exquisite caution, lest by too much credulity for things received only upon the Devil's authority, there be a door opened for a long train of miserable consequences, and Satan get an advantage over us; for we should not be ignorant of his devices.

As in complaints upon witchcrafts, there may be matters of inquiry which do not amount unto matters of presumption, and there may be matters of presumption which yet may not be matters of conviction, so it is necessary, that all proceedings thereabout be managed with an exceeding tenderness towards those that may be complained of, especially if they have been persons formerly of an unblemished reputation.

When the first inquiry is made into the circumstances of such as may lie under the just suspicion of witchcrafts, we could wish that there may be admitted as little as is possible of such noise, company and openness as may too hastily expose them that are examined, and that there may no thing be used

as a test for the trial of the suspected, the lawfulness whereof may be doubted among the people of God; but that the directions given by such judicious writers as Perkins and Bernard [be consulted in such a case].

Presumptions whereupon persons may be committed, and, much more, convictions whereupon persons may be condemned as guilty of witchcrafts, ought certainly to be more considerable than barely the accused person's being represented by a specter unto the afflicted; inasmuch as it is an undoubted and notorious thing, that a demon may, by God's permission, appear, even to ill purposes, in the shape of an innocent, yea, and a virtuous man. Nor can we esteem alterations made in the sufferers, by a look or touch of the accused, to be an infallible evidence of guilt, but frequently liable to be abused by the Devil's legerdemains.

We know not whether some remarkable affronts given to the Devils by our disbelieving those testimonies whose whole force and strength is from them alone, may not put a period unto the progress of the dreadful calamity begun upon us, in the accusations of so many persons, whereof some, we hope, are yet clear from the great transgression laid unto their charge.

Nevertheless, we cannot but humbly recommend unto the government, the speedy and vigorous prosecution of such as have rendered themselves obnoxious, according to the direction given in the laws of God, and the wholesome statutes of the English nation, for the detection of witchcrafts.

Hutchinson sums the letter, "The two first and the last sections of this advice took away the force of all the others, and the prosecutions went on with more vigor than before". (Reprinting the letter years later in *Magnalia*, Cotton Mather left out these "two first and the last" sections.) Major Nathaniel Saltonstall, Esq., resigned from the court on or about June 16, presumably dissatisfied with the letter and that it had not outright barred the admission of spectral evidence. According to Upham, Saltonstall deserves the credit for "being the only public man of his day who had the sense or courage to condemn the proceedings, at the start." (chapt. VII) More people were accused, arrested and examined, but now in Salem Town, by former local magistrates John Hathorne, Jonathan Corwin, and Bartholomew Gedney, who had become judges of the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Suspect Roger Toothaker died in prison on June 16, 1692.

From June 30 through early July, grand juries endorsed indictments against Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Proctor, John Proctor, Martha Carrier, Sarah Wildes and Dorcas Hoar. Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin and Sarah Wildes, along with Rebecca Nurse, went to trial at this time, where they were found guilty. All five women were executed by hanging on July 19, 1692. In mid-July, the constable in Andover invited the afflicted girls from Salem Village to visit with his wife to try to determine who was causing her afflictions. Ann Foster, her daughter Mary Lacey Sr., and granddaughter Mary Lacey Jr. all confessed to being witches. Anthony Checkley was appointed by Governor Phips to replace Thomas Newton as the Crown's Attorney when Newton took an appointment in New Hampshire.

In August, grand juries indicted George Burroughs, Mary Easte, Martha Corey and George Jacobs, Sr.. Trial juries convicted Martha Carrier, George Jacobs, Sr., George Burroughs, John Willard, Elizabeth Proctor, and John Proctor. Elizabeth Proctor was given a temporary stay of execution because she was pregnant. On August 19, 1692, Martha Carrier, George Jacobs Sr., George Burroughs, John Willard and John Proctor were executed.

"Mr. Burroughs was carried in a Cart with others, through the streets of Salem, to Execution. When he was upon the Ladder, he made a speech for the clearing of his Innocency, with such Solemn and Serious Expressions as were to the Admiration of all present; his Prayer (which he concluded by repeating the Lord's Prayer) [as witches were not supposed to be able to recite] was so well worded, and uttered

with such composedness as such fervency of spirit, as was very Affecting, and drew Tears from many, so that it seemed to some that the spectators would hinder the execution. The accusers said the black Man [Devil] stood and dictated to him. As soon as he was turned off [hanged], Mr. Cotton Mather, being mounted upon a Horse, addressed himself to the People, partly to declare that he [Mr. Burroughs] was no ordained Minister, partly to possess the People of his guilt, saying that the devil often had been transformed into the Angel of Light. And this did somewhat appease the People, and the Executions went on; when he [Mr. Burroughs] was cut down, he was dragged by a Halter to a Hole, or Grave, between the Rocks, about two feet deep; his Shirt and Breeches being pulled off, and an old pair of Trousers of one Executed put on his lower parts: he was so put in, together with Willard and Carrier, that one of his Hands, and his Chin, and a Foot of one of them, was left uncovered." — Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*.

In September, grand juries indicted 18 more people. The grand jury failed to indict William Proctor, who was re-arrested on new charges. On September 19, 1692, Giles Corey refused to plead at arraignment, and was killed by *peine forte et dure*, a form of torture in which the subject is pressed beneath an increasingly heavy load of stones, in an attempt to make him enter a plea. Four pleaded guilty and 11 others were tried and found guilty.

On September 20, Cotton Mather wrote to Stephen Sewall: "That I may be the more capable to assist in lifting up a standard against the infernal enemy", requesting "a narrative of the evidence given in at the trials of half a dozen, or if you please, a dozen, of the principal witches that have been condemned". On September 22, 1692, eight more persons were executed, "After Execution Mr. Noyes turning him to the Bodies, said, what a sad thing it is to see Eight Firebrands of Hell hanging there".

Dorcas Hoar was given a temporary reprieve, with the support of several ministers, to make a confession of being a witch. Mary Bradbury (aged 77) managed to escape with the help of family and friends. Abigail Faulkner, Sr. was pregnant and given a temporary reprieve (some reports from that era say that Abigail's reprieve later became a stay of charges).

Mather quickly completed his account of the trials, *Wonders of the Invisible World* and it was given to Phips when he returned from the fighting in Maine in early October. Burr says both Phips' letter and Mather's manuscript "must have gone to London by the same ship" in mid-October.

"I hereby declare that as soon as I came from fighting... and understood what danger some of their innocent subjects might be exposed to, if the evidence of the afflicted persons only did prevaile either to the committing or trying any of them, I did before any application was made unto me about it put a stop to the proceedings of the Court and they are now stopt till their Majesties pleasure be known." - Governor Phips, Boston, October 12, 1692

On October 29, Judge Sewall wrote, "the Court of Oyer and Terminer count themselves thereby dismissed... asked whether the Court of Oyer and Terminer should sit, expressing some fear of Inconvenience by its fall, [the] Governour said it must fall". Perhaps by coincidence, Governor Phips' own wife, Lady Mary Phips, was among those who had been "called out upon" around this time. After Phips' order, there were no more executions.

In January 1693, the new Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize and General Gaol [Jail] Delivery convened in Salem, Essex County, again headed by William Stoughton, as Chief Justice, with Anthony Checkley continuing as the Attorney General, and Jonathan Elatson as Clerk of the Court. The first five cases tried in January 1693 were of the five people who had been indicted but not tried in September: Sarah Buckley, Margaret Jacobs, Rebecca Jacobs, Mary Whittredge (or Witheridge) and Job Tookey. All were found not guilty. Grand juries were held for many of those remaining in jail. Charges were

dismissed against many, but 16 more people were indicted and tried, three of whom were found guilty: Elizabeth Johnson Jr., Sarah Wardwell and Mary Post.

When Stoughton wrote the warrants for the execution of these three and others remaining from the previous court, Governor Phips issued pardons, sparing their lives. In late January/early February, the Court sat again in Charlestown, Middlesex County, and held grand juries and tried five people: Sarah Cole (of Lynn), Lydia Dustin and Sarah Dustin, Mary Taylor and Mary Toothaker. All were found not guilty but were not released until they paid their jail fees. Lydia Dustin died in jail on March 10, 1693.

At the end of April, the Court convened in Boston, Suffolk County, and cleared Capt. John Alden by proclamation. It heard charges against a servant girl, Mary Watkins, for falsely accusing her mistress of witchcraft. In May, the Court convened in Ipswich, Essex County, and held a variety of grand juries. They dismissed charges against all but five people. Susannah Post, Eunice Frye, Mary Bridges Jr., Mary Barker and William Barker Jr. were all found not guilty at trial, finally putting an end to the series of trials and executions.

The legal procedures for such a case were tough enough in that period. After someone concluded that a loss, illness or death had been caused by witchcraft, the accuser entered a complaint against the alleged witch with the local magistrates. If the complaint was deemed credible, the magistrates had the person arrested and brought in for a public examination—essentially an interrogation where the magistrates pressed the accused to confess.

If the magistrates at this local level were satisfied that the complaint was well-founded, the prisoner was handed over to be dealt with by a superior court. In 1692, the magistrates opted to wait for the arrival of the new charter and governor, who would establish a Court of Oyer and Terminer to handle these cases. The next step, at the superior court level, was to summon witnesses before a grand jury.

A person could be indicted on charges of afflicting with witchcraft or for making an unlawful covenant with the Devil. Once indicted, the defendant went to trial, sometimes on the same day, as in the case of the first person indicted and tried on June 2, Bridget Bishop, who was executed eight days later, on June 10, 1692.

There were four execution dates, with one person executed on June 10, 1692, five executed on July 19, 1692 (Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Howe and Sarah Wildes), another five executed on August 19, 1692 (Martha Carrier, John Willard, George Burroughs, George Jacobs, Sr., and John Proctor) and eight on September 22, 1692 (Mary Eastey, Martha Corey, Ann Pudeator, Samuel Wardwell, Mary Parker, Alice Parker, Wilmot Redd and Margaret Scott).

Several others, including Elizabeth (Bassett) Proctor and Abigail Faulkner, were convicted but given temporary reprieves because they were pregnant. Five other women were convicted in 1692, but the death sentence was never carried out: Mary Bradbury (in absentia), Ann Foster (who later died in prison), Mary Lacey Sr. (Foster's daughter), Dorcas Hoar and Abigail Hobbs.

Giles Corey, an 81-year-old farmer from the southeast end of Salem (called Salem Farms), refused to enter a plea when he came to trial in September. The judges applied an archaic form of punishment called *peine forte et dure*, in which stones were piled on his chest until he could no longer breathe. After two days of *peine forte et dure*, Corey died without entering a plea. His refusal to plead is usually explained as a way of preventing his estate from being confiscated by the Crown, but, according to historian Chadwick Hansen, much of Corey's property had already been seized, and he had made a will in prison: "His death was a protest... against the methods of the court". A contemporary critic of the trials, Robert Calef, wrote, "Giles Corey pleaded not Guilty to his Indictment, but would not put himself upon Tryal by the Jury (they having cleared none upon Tryal) and knowing there would be the same Witnesses against him, rather chose to undergo what Death they would put him to".

As convicted witches, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey had been excommunicated from their churches and denied proper burials. As soon as the bodies of the accused were cut down from the trees, they were thrown into a shallow grave, and the crowd dispersed. Oral history claims that the families of the dead reclaimed their bodies after dark and buried them in unmarked graves on family property. The record books of the time do not note the deaths of any of those executed.

Much, but not all, of the evidence used against the accused, was spectral evidence, or the testimony of the afflicted who claimed to see the apparition or the shape of the person who was allegedly afflicting them. The theological dispute that ensued about the use of this evidence was based on whether a person had to give permission to the Devil for his/her shape to be used to afflict. Opponents claimed that the Devil was able to use anyone's shape to afflict people, but the Court contended that the Devil could not use a person's shape without that person's permission; therefore, when the afflicted claimed to see the apparition of a specific person, that was accepted as evidence that the accused had been complicit with the Devil.

Cotton Mather's *The Wonders of the Invisible World* was written with the purpose to show how careful the court was in managing the trials. Unfortunately the work did not get released until after the trials had already ended. In his book, Mather explained how he felt spectral evidence was presumptive and that it alone was not enough to warrant a conviction. Robert Calef, a strong critic of Cotton Mather, stated in his own book titled *More Wonders of the Invisible World* that by confessing, an accused would not be brought to trial, such as in the cases of Tituba and Dorcas Good.

Increase Mather and other ministers sent a letter to the Court, "The Return of Several Ministers Consulted", urging the magistrates not to convict on spectral evidence alone. (The court later ruled that spectral evidence was inadmissible, which caused a dramatic reduction in the rate of convictions and may have hastened the end of the trials.) A copy of this letter was printed in Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience*, published in 1693. The publication *A Tryal of Witches*, related to the 1662 Bury St Edmunds witch trial, was used by the magistrates at Salem when looking for a precedent in allowing spectral evidence. Since the jurist Sir Matthew Hale had permitted this evidence, supported by the eminent philosopher, physician and author Thomas Browne, to be used in the Bury St Edmunds witch trial and the accusations against two Lowestoft women, the colonial magistrates also accepted its validity and their trials proceeded.

According to a March 27, 1692 entry by Parris in the Records of the Salem-Village Church, a church member and close neighbor of Rev. Parris, Mary Sibley (aunt of Mary Walcott), directed John Indian, a man enslaved by Parris, to make a witch cake. This may have been a superstitious attempt to ward off evil spirits. According to an account attributed to Deodat Lawson ("collected by Deodat Lawson") this happened around March 8, over a week after the first complaints had gone out and three women were arrested. Lawson's account describes this cake "a means to discover witchcraft" and provides other details such as that it was made from rye meal and urine from the afflicted girls and was fed to a dog.

In the Church Records, Parris describes speaking with Sibley privately on March 25, 1692, about her "grand error" and accepted her "sorrowful confession." After the main sermon on March 27, and the wider congregation was dismissed, Parris addressed covenanted church-members about it and admonished all the congregation against "going to the Devil for help against the Devil." He stated that while "calamities" that had begun in his own household "it never brake forth to any considerable light, until diabolical means were used, by the making of a cake by my Indian man, who had his direction from this our sister, Mary Sibley." This doesn't seem to square with Lawson's account dating it around March 8. The first complaints were February 29 and the first arrests were March 1.

Traditionally, the allegedly afflicted girls are said to have been entertained by Parris' slave, Tituba. A variety of secondary sources, starting with Charles W. Upham in the 19th century, typically relate that

a circle of the girls, with Tituba's help, tried their hands at fortune telling. They used the white of an egg and a mirror to create a primitive crystal ball to divine the professions of their future spouses and scared one another when one supposedly saw the shape of a coffin instead. The story is drawn from John Hale's book about the trials, but in his account, only one of the girls, not a group of them, had confessed to him afterward that she had once tried this. Hale did not mention Tituba as having any part of it, nor did he identify when the incident took place. But the record of Tituba's pre-trial examination holds her giving an energetic confession, speaking before the court of "creatures who inhabit the invisible world," and "the dark rituals which bind them together in service of Satan", implicating both Good and Osborne while asserting that "many other people in the colony were engaged in the devil's conspiracy against the Bay".

Tituba's race has often been described in later accounts as of Carib-Indian or African descent, but contemporary sources describe her only as an "Indian". Research by Elaine Breslaw has suggested that Tituba may have been captured in what is now Venezuela and brought to Barbados, and so may have been an Arawak Indian. Other slightly later descriptions of her, by Gov. Thomas Hutchinson writing his history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 18th century, describe her as a "Spanish Indian". In that day, that typically meant a Native American from the Carolinas/Georgia/Florida.

The most infamous application of the belief in effluvia was the touch test used in Andover during preliminary examinations in September 1692. Parris had explicitly warned his congregation against such examinations. If the accused witch touched the victim while the victim was having a fit, and the fit stopped, observers believed that meant the accused was the person who had afflicted the victim. As several of those accused later recounted, "we were blindfolded, and our hands were laid upon the afflicted persons, they being in their fits and falling into their fits at our coming into their presence, as they said. Some led us and laid our hands upon them, and then they said they were well and that we were guilty of afflicting them; whereupon we were all seized, as prisoners, by a warrant from the justice of the peace and forthwith carried to Salem".

The Reverend John Hale explained how this supposedly worked: "the Witch by the cast of her eye sends forth a Malefick Venome into the Bewitched to cast him into a fit, and therefore the touch of the hand doth by sympathy cause that venome to return into the Body of the Witch again".

Other evidence included the confessions of the accused; testimony by a confessed witch who identified others as witches; the discovery of poppits (poppets), books of palmistry and horoscopes, or pots of ointments in the possession or home of the accused; and observation of what were called witch's teats on the body of the accused. A witch's teat was said to be a mole or blemish somewhere on the body that was insensitive to touch; discovery of such insensitive areas was considered de facto evidence of witchcraft.

Various accounts and opinions about the proceedings began to be published in 1692. Deodat Lawson, a former minister in Salem Village, visited Salem Village in March and April 1692. Later that year, an account of what he "collected" was published as *A Brief and True Narrative of Some Remarkable Passages Relating to Sundry Persons Afflicted by Witchcraft, at Salem Village: Which happened from the Nineteenth of March, to the Fifth of April 1692*.

Reverend William Milbourne, a Baptist minister in Boston, publicly petitioned the General Assembly in early June 1692, challenging the use of spectral evidence by the Court. Milbourne had to post £200 bond (equal to £31,541, or about US\$42,000 today) or be arrested for "contriving, writing and publishing the said scandalous Papers".

Sometime in 1692, minister of the Third Church in Boston, Samuel Willard anonymously published a short tract in Philadelphia titled, "Some Miscellany Observations On our present Debates respecting