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National History Day

### Process Paper

My group mates and I have always been interested in the Salem Witch Trials, and were drawn to the subject right off the bat, before we had even heard the theme.. After deciding on the subject, we then narrowed it down to the specific case of Bridget Bishop. At first we felt that it might be hard to connect her case to the theme, but we quickly realized that the technicalities of the court case were an example of miscommunication, which ended up working really well because we felt she aligned well with the theme; communication in history.

Our research was conducted rather sporadically. The first thing we did was gather our required amount of primary sources, which occurred over a long period of time. Eventually, as the deadline grew nearer, two thirds of the group hunkered down to compile our evidence and fill in the gaps of information with secondary sources. We created our thesis after having gathered primary sources, so our process was slightly janky because of the out of order methodology. Most of our primary sources were images and quotes, so we ended up needing a lot of other articles to back up our ideas and points.

This project was created by using the most symbolic/important events surrounding Bridget Bishop during the Salem Witch Trials, which were then put on a poster board using images or shortened explanations of such events. The title of this project was *The Salem Witch Trials, Bridget Bishop: The Puritan Enigma*. It was chosen to lead the reader into Bishop's illusive story, explained with these event summaries and images.

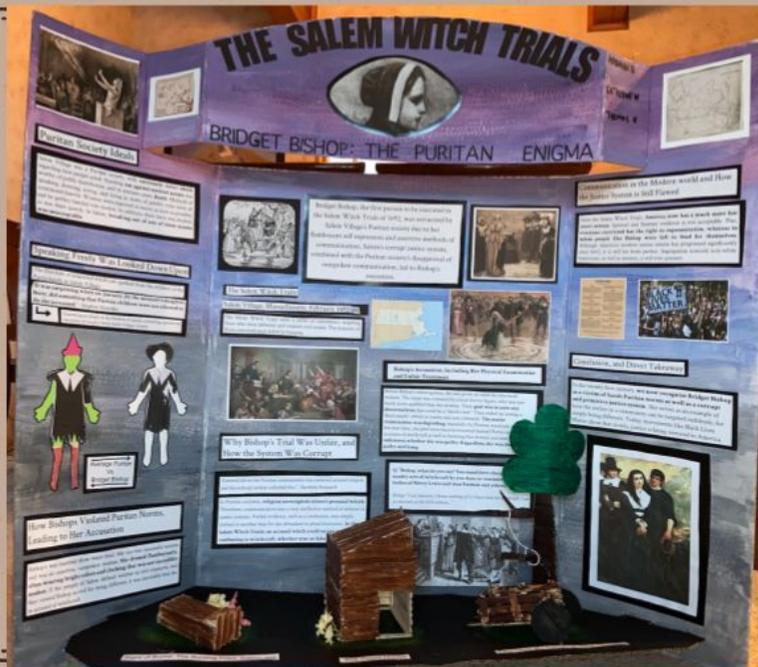
This project's historical argument is that Bridget Bishop's execution was unfair, as her only accusations surrounded that of her physical appearance and personality. Her trial was based purely off of bias towards her lack of puritan normailites.

This topic is significant in history because in comparing Bishop's execution to today's modern justice system, we do not use spectral evidence, and have grown the ability to recognize people's rights as humans. We concluded that if Bishop's trial was held in the modern day, she would have walked free, as our modern justice system has developed greatly since then. However, Bishop's trial also portrays that the modern system still has room for growth by illustrating how easily people let personal belief overflow into the lives of others. Personal sacrifice of beliefs/morals should always come second to the greater good.

# The Salem Witch Trials

## Bridget Bishop: The Puritan Enigma

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National History Day Project: Poster  
Word count: 679



## Left Side Poster

### Puritan Society Ideals

Salem Village was a Puritan society, with **extremely strict ideals** regarding how people acted. Standing **out against societal norms** was worthy of public humiliation, and in extreme cases: **death**. Methods of speaking, dressing, acting, and living in terms of gender roles were all scrutinized heavily. Women were expected to marry as soon as possible, and be perfect familial role models. In addition, their dress was modest, as was their speech. In Salem, **breaking out of any of these norms was unacceptable**.



### How Bishops Violated Puritan Norms, Leading to Her Accusation

Bishop's was married three times total. She ran two successful taverns and was an assertive, outspoken woman. **She dressed flamboyantly, often wearing bright colors and clothing that was not incredibly modest**. If the people of Salem defined witches as evil creatures, and they viewed Bishop as evil for being different, it was inevitable that she be accused of witchcraft.

### Speaking Freely Was Looked Down Upon

The first hint of suspected witchcraft sparked from the children of the Parris family in Salem Village.

**"It was surprising when on January, 20, the minister's daughter, Betty, did something that Puritan children were not allowed to do: she screamed."**- Stephen Krensky.

Something as simple as the freedom of speech, screaming, sparked the execution of roughly thirty Salem Village citizens.



## Middle Poster



The Salem Witch Trials:  
Salem Village, Massachusetts, February 1692-1693

The Salem Witch Trials were a series of convictions targeting those who were different and violated civil norms. The majority of those convicted were killed by hanging.

### How Bishops Violated Puritan Norms, Leading to Her Accusation

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Bridget Bishop, the first person to be executed in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, was ostracized by Salem Village's Puritan society due to her flamboyant self expression and assertive methods of communication. Salem's corrupt justice system, combined with the Puritan society's disapproval of outspoken communication, led to Bishop's execution.



### Bishop's Accusation, Including Her Physical Examination and Unfair Treatment

Before Bishop's interrogation, she was given an exam by nine local women. The exam was overseen by a local doctor figure, who was not much more qualified than the women. **Their goal was to note any abnormalities** that could be a "witch's test". They ended up noting a 'third nipple', which in reality was just a blemish. **The entire examination was degrading,** especially for Puritan standards. Only a few days later, she pled innocence to reverend Samuel Parris on accounts of witchcraft as well as harming five women and men. **It's unknown whether she was guilty. Regardless, she was declared guilty and hung.**

## Right Side Poster



### Communication in the Modern world and How the Justice System is Still Flawed

Since the Salem Witch Trials, **America now has a much more fair court system.** Spectral and 'hearsay' evidence is not acceptable. Plus, **everyone convicted has the right to representation, whereas in Salem people like Bishop were left to fend for themselves.** Although America's modern justice system has progressed significantly since 1692, it is still far from perfect. Segregation towards non-white Americans, as well as women, is still ever-present.

### Conclusion, and Direct Takeaway

In the twenty first century, **we now recognize Bridget Bishop as a victim of harsh Puritan norms as well as a corrupt and primitive justice system.** She serves as an example of how the outlier in a community can be targeted ruthlessly, for simply being different. Today, movements like Black Lives Matter show that slowly, justice is being restored to America.



## **Primary Sources:**

Alex, editor. "Salem Village Historic District is located in Massachusetts." *Wikipedia*, 6 June 2009, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/\\_\\_\\_Salem\\_Village\\_Historic\\_District#/media/File:USA\\_Massachusetts\\_location\\_map.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/___Salem_Village_Historic_District#/media/File:USA_Massachusetts_location_map.svg).> Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

This is a really simple map of Massachusetts. It's nothing too analytical or insightful, but it's nice to have a visual of the location of Salem Village. It's useful to our presentation because it provides a visual map of Salem.

"Bill of Rights." *Google Sites*, Accessed 16 Dec. 2020

<[sites.google.com/a/svvsd.org/custis/unit-iii-the-u-s-constitution/a-bill-of-rights?tmpl=%2Fsystem%2Fapp%2Ftemplates%2Fprint%2F](https://sites.google.com/a/svvsd.org/custis/unit-iii-the-u-s-constitution/a-bill-of-rights?tmpl=%2Fsystem%2Fapp%2Ftemplates%2Fprint%2F)>.

This website is useful because it shows the current rights U.S. citizens are given, versus the rights the Bridget Bishop was denied of. At the time of the Salem witch trials, the bill of rights nor the constitution or declaration of independence had been made so Bishop did not have secure rights, which was part of the reason she was treated so unfairly.

Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum. Nissenbaum., editors. "(Examination of Bridget Bishop, First Version)." *WayBackMachine*, 22 Dec. 2014, <<https://web.archive.org/web/20141222133126/http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=BoySall.sgm&images=images%2Fmodeng&data=%2Ftexts%2Fenglish%2Fmodeng%2Foldsalem&tag=public&part=29&division=div2>>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

This website is a direct dialogue and description of Bridget Bishop's interrogation regarding charges against her for witchcraft and murder. The first half of the text is her addressing questions, and in then the second half she claims her innocence more thoroughly, and speaks assertively about her innocence. The text is obviously useful for our thesis because it covers the basic necessities of her accusation. She speaks self assured, with confident and efficient words. Furthermore; no one is there to back her up or equal the playing field between her and her interrogators. This makes her attitude and word choice even more impressive. This source will definitely be crucial to our project.

Court. *Social Studies for Kids*, <[www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/salemwitchtrials\\_victims.htm](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/salemwitchtrials_victims.htm)>. Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

The roots of where this image came from is unknown in clear. But, there are many important things we see in this photo. The court is very chaotic. In Puritan societies, religion outweighed citizen's personal beliefs. Therefore, communication was a very ineffective method of defense in justice systems. Verbal evidence, such as a confession, was simply viewed as another way for the

defendant to plead innocence. In the Salem Witch Trials, an accused witch could escape execution by confessing to witchcraft, whether true or false.

DiMario, Alison. Interview. 10 May 2008. Salem Witch Museum Interview, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra5-DYiWzMo>>. Accessed 12 Dec. 2020

Museum Director Alison DiMario and Irish Radio Journalist Sean McCarthy (The Irish Examiner Newspaper) speak informatively about the Salem Witch Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The Salem Witch Museum is renowned the world over for keeping alive the history and factuality of the infamous Salem Witch Trials of 1692. The Salem Witch Museum welcomes all visitors and a trip to the museum is always worth making on any trip to the Boston Area of Massachusetts.

Ehninger, John W., M. Salem Witch Trials. 20th century. <<http://womenatthecenter.nyhistory.org/salem-witch-trials/>>. Accessed 13 Dec. 2020

This image captures a trial of the Salem Witch Trials that includes Tituba. Aside from Bridget Bishop, the first executed in the Salem Witchcraft Trials, Tituba played an extremely important role as the first to be accused of witchcraft. She was a slave of Samuel Parris of Danvers, Massachusetts. It is believed that her cultural tradition were mistaken for witchcraft. Although this may have been either true or false, she confessed to witchcraft regardless. Those who do not confess, guilt or not, were to be executed.

Helminski, Francis, editor. "Statements of innocence, Part of the memorial for the victims of the 1692 witchcraft trials, Danvers, Massachusetts." *wikipedia*, 31 Oct. 2019, <[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem\\_witch\\_trials#/media/File:Danvers\\_victims\\_memorial,\\_quotations\\_from\\_victims.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials#/media/File:Danvers_victims_memorial,_quotations_from_victims.jpg)>. Accessed 3 Dec. 2020.

This primary source details the statements of innocence from a few different victims of the Salem witch trials. The vast majority of cases never even admitted to being guilty. So many women were convicted unjustly, and this memorial is proof of that. Although Bridget Bishops is not included, the cases are similar in the sense that the women being convicted claimed innocence up until the very end.

Leal-Olivas, Daniel. "Mapping Black Lives Matter Protests Around The World." *wbur*, 22 June 2020, [www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/06/22/mapping-black-lives-matter-protests](http://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/06/22/mapping-black-lives-matter-protests). Accessed 15 Dec. 2020. This image is of a Black Lives Matter protest in London. It does not relate to the Salem Witch trials at a surface glance, but I think it is a nice representation of how social issues have progressed. Bridget Bishop was a minority in the sense that she was outcasted for being different, and black people in

America (and all over the world) are also being treated unfairly because their skin color is different than white. I would like to use this image for our paragraph relating the Salem Witch trials to current life.

Leon, Sharon. "Interview with Nancy A. Hewitt." *History Matters*, May 2005, <<https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7461>> Accessed 13 Nov. 2020.

This website holds an interview with Nancy A. Hewitt. By focusing on questions surrounding Hewitt's particular draw to the subject of the Salem Witch Trials, one is able to induce how realistic, un-surreal her point of view on the matter. As a teacher, the engagement of the reality of Witch trials was a difficult task to engage and capture attention from students, etc. Witch trials once seemed like a fantasy, but after this read one realizes the reality of it all.

Salem Witch Trials. *History*, <[www.history.com/news/salem-witch-trials-first-accused-woman-slave](http://www.history.com/news/salem-witch-trials-first-accused-woman-slave)> Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

This image shows a witch being dunked in a pool of water in attempt to gain a confession. Some accused witches were dunked in water to prove their guilt of practicing witchcraft during trial. In this illustration, we see this in action. Surrounding the accused witch, a large portion of the population stands and watches. Arms crossed, these people appear merciless.

Sordillo, Darlene. "Bubble Bubble, Toil and.. Witchcraft." *Bordertown News* [North Hampton], 21 July 1971, sec. 4A, pp. 1-2.

This article, written in 1971 in North Hampton, New Hampshire's local news minor Bordertown New focused on the interview of Susan Williamson, and her input on witchcraft. Williamson explains the differing point of views on witchcraft, as it can be "a religion although it does not necessarily have to be." There are many misconceptions about witchcraft, explained in detail. Williamson pursued her witchcraft words of wisdom to young, open-minded people in various high schools, saying they are terrific listeners.

Upham, W. P. *Map of Salem Village*. 1692. <<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/maps/index.html>> This primary source is an image; a map. Accessed 8 Dec. 2020

Salem Village of Massachusetts in 1692. It was created by W.P. Upham. Within Salem, the map has seven villages, each labeled with a letter. Brookdale is an *A*, Loewsfdale is a *B*, Danvers Centre is *C*, Tapleyville is *D*, Putnamville is *E*, Danvers Plane *F*, and finally Danversport is an *H*. Each of these villages is included within the Salem boundaries. The shape of Salem looks like a like a smaller square, upper left, connected to a very lumpy oval/rectangle. Aside from geographic locations, the map also includes important buildings, alities of Bishop, nor does it contribute to our thesis incredibly well. However; the information is basic evidence of Bishop's

trial, and may be of use. This primary source details the statements of innocence from a few different victims of the Salem witch trials. The vast majority of cases never even admitted to being guilty. So many women were convicted unjustly, and this memorial is proof of that. Although Bridget Bishop is not included, the cases are similar in the sense that the women being convicted claimed innocence up until the very end.

---, editors. "(Indictment v. Bridget Bishop, No. 2)." *archive.today*, 12 July 2012, <<https://archive.is/20120712053424/http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=BoySal1.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/oldsalem&tag=public&part=32&division=div2>>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

This website has the official statement of Bridget Bishop's conviction of witchcraft and wrongdoings. It doesn't provide any characteristics or qualities of Bishop, nor does it contribute to our thesis incredibly well. However; the information is basic evidence of Bishop's trial, and may be of use.

### **Secondary Sources:**

Ashton, John. *Witchcraft*. 1882. *HISTORY MATTERS - The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*, 1982, <<https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6763>>. Accessed 13 Nov. 2020.

This image is a reference to a case of still born infancy that was blamed of witch craft. It doesn't have anything to do with Bridget Bishop, but it is a perfect example of how normal phenomenons were twisted into dark and illogical things. It's also an indirect example of sexism. Women could be charged for taking over the husbands role. In this case, the puritan fathers were the ones who convicted the mother of witch craft. This example could be a good parallel to Bishop's case.

Augustyn, Adam. "Puritanism." *Britannica*, edited by Amy McKenna, <[www.britannica.com/topic/Puritanism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Puritanism)>. Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

This article goes into good depth about what the Puritan lifestyle is like. Puritan is a religious reform movement in the late 16th and 17th centuries that sought to "purify" the Church of England of remnants of the Roman Catholic "popery" that the Puritans claimed had been retained after the religious settlement reached early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. From this article, one is able to apply it to the root causes as to why some were executed in the Salem Witch Trials.

Blumberg, Jess. "A Brief History of the Salem Witch Trials." *Smithsonian.com*, 24 Oct. 2007, [https://celopsummerscitech2012.pbworks.com/w/file/57093189/A%20Brief%20History%](https://celopsummerscitech2012.pbworks.com/w/file/57093189/A%20Brief%20History%20of%20the%20Salem%20Witch%20Trials)

20of%20the%20Salem%20Witch%20Trials%20\_%20History%20%26%20Archaeology%20\_%20Smithsonian%20Magazine.pdf>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

This website gives a summary about the Salem witch trials; specifically about how they started and the events that led up to the trials. The article provides some useful information about reverend Samuel Paris, who interrogated Bishops, and how he was not well liked and rather "greedy in nature". This does a good job of backing up why Bishop's trial was unfair, as well as plenty of others who were convicted of similar crimes. Overall, the articles blames the trials on religious hysteria

Burns, Margo, editor. "The personal seal of William Stoughton on the warrant for the execution of Bridget Bishop." *Wikipedia*, 2007, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem\\_witch\\_trials#/media/File:WilliamStoughton-personalseal.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials#/media/File:WilliamStoughton-personalseal.jpg)> Accessed 3 Dec. 2020.

Although this source doesn't add any content to our analysis or thesis in particular, it's still an interesting piece of evidence that would be nice to incorporate into our presentation.

Crafts, William. "Witchcraft at Salem Village. Engraving. The central figure in this 1876 illustration of the courtroom is usually identified as Mary Walcott." *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem\\_witch\\_trials#/media/File:Witchcraft\\_at\\_Salem\\_Village.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials#/media/File:Witchcraft_at_Salem_Village.jpg)>. Accessed 3 Dec. 2020.

This as a popular engraving of one of the court cases during the Salem Witch trials. Through some analysis and inference of the image, I think it represents the unequal gap between the people being accused, and the people in power. The men are the ones in power; seated higher up and looking down on the court floor. It's unknown to me why the women on the floor, but purely through symbolism; she represents more inequality.

*Discovery Education*. <[www.pinterest.com/pin/408068416207592912/](http://www.pinterest.com/pin/408068416207592912/)>. Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

This image provides an insightful map of the accused and accusers in Salem Village. The two groups are naturally separated on the map because of economic living area. The accusers live in Salem town, which was much better off economically, as well as had a more elite social culture. The people that lived in Salem Village, on the other hand, were mostly poor farmers. The economic division represented in this photo strengthens our claim that the justice system was unfair, and that most people accused were simply at the hand of social and economic injustice/ prejudice.

Dunn, Sophie. "Bizarre Facts You Never Knew about the Salem Witch Trials." *ONSEV*, edited by Sophie Dunn, Sophie Dunn, <[www.obsev.com/life/salem-witch-trials-facts/](http://www.obsev.com/life/salem-witch-trials-facts/)> Accessed 15 Dec. 2020.

This useful article contains a whole wide variety of facts about the Salem Witch Trials. The Salem witch trials began in Massachusetts in 1692 when two young girls accused three women of witchcraft after a series of inexplicable fits and violent outbursts. The Salem witch trial followed the witchcraft craze in Europe that spread throughout the continent from the 1300s to the end of the 1600s. Aside from these main points, the article addresses European influences and Boston before the trials.

Harbin, Erica. "Beyond Superstition: Biological and Psychological Forces." *geocities.ws*, 27 Apr. 2004, <[www.geocities.ws/geneticutie/humcoreessayfinal.html](http://www.geocities.ws/geneticutie/humcoreessayfinal.html)>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

This essay supports the argument that Bridget Bishop was not a super natural creature or practicing witchcraft, in fact; those that were claiming to be afflicted by her 'powers' were merely experiencing sleep paralysis. The essay is well written and uses credible sources as evidence. Through researching, it's apparent that some people truly believe in the super natural today, and therefore think that Bishops was a real witch. The essay does a good job of squashing these claims.

Krensky, Stephen. *Witch Hunt*. Illustrated by James Watling, Toronto, Random House Inc., 1989.

This book is about the Salem Witch Trials in Salem Village, 1692. The Parris family of Salem Village noticed weird behavior in their children, much to dismay the Puritan norms. This included screaming, crying, and disobedience. Instead of blaming this weird behavior on any food bug or virus, a local doctor examining the children concluded that it must be witchcraft, and this story is what sparked the Salem Witch Trials as more and more people fell "sick." The story goes on.

Patzer, Mirella. "Bridget Bishop." *History and Women*, 12 June 2010, <[www.historyandwomen.com/2010/06/bridget-bishop-1692.html](http://www.historyandwomen.com/2010/06/bridget-bishop-1692.html)> Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.

This website, a blog by Mirella Patzer, includes in article on Bridget Bishop, with real quotes from Bishop herself. When asked about her guilt, Bishop respond with strong words.. "I am innocent, I know nothing of it, I have done no witchcraft, I am as innocent as the child unborn..." In this text, we Bishop's legendary use of strong words. Today, guilt or not, we look back at her as a strong woman.

*Tryals of Seberal Witches. History of Massachussets*, [historyofmassachusetts.org/salem-witch-trials-primary-sources/](http://historyofmassachusetts.org/salem-witch-trials-primary-sources/).

This book dates back to the seventeenth century. Rebecca Beatrice Brooks March 10, 2019 18  
Comments Martha Carrier was a woman from Andover who was accused of witchcraft  
during the Salem Witch Trials. Martha Ingalls Allen was born between 1643 and 1650 to Andrew  
Allen Sr and Faith Ingalls in Andover, Massachusetts.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. "Vertuous Women Found: New England Ministerial  
Literature, 1668-1735." *Harvard Library*, 1976, dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/  
handle/1/14123819/Vertuous%20Women%20Found.pdf?sequence=1. Accessed 15 Dec.  
2020.

This essay is quite lengthy, but it has some valuable information  
about how females were expected to act in Puritan society. Most of the  
female ideals were rather extreme, (by today's average societal views),  
like "a virtuous women went to church" and "women became legitimately  
visible in only three ways: they married, they gave birth, they died. In  
the written materials, dying is by far the best documented activity". The  
article mentions a lot more about Puritan religion and all the things that  
made women virtuous. It's important for our project because Salem Village  
was Puritan, and Bridget Bishop violated a lot of Puritan expectations.