

The Salem Witch Trials Memorial



In the summer of 1692, almost 200 people in this region were accused of practicing witchcraft, defined by the court of the time as a crime. The hysteria began in what is now Danvers, Massachusetts, and spread through communities as far north as Maine. Because the court was held in Salem Town, these events have come to be known as the Salem Witch Trials.

It is important to remember that, although the Puritans believed in witchcraft, none of the accused was actually a witch. Yet 20 people were put to death, victims of fear, superstition, and a court system that failed to protect them. The Salem Witch Trials have intrigued people ever since.

Dedicated in 1992 by Nobel Laureate Eli Wiesel, the Salem Witch Trials Memorial is a somber place for reflection on the events of the Salem Witch Trials. The design of the Memorial reflects the history of Trials:

- Multiple elements of stone and plantings symbolically represent the social indifference to the persecutions that took place in 1692.
- The words inscribed in the threshold are the victims' protests of innocence, interrupted midsentence by the granite wall symbolizing the pleas falling on deaf ears.

- At the rear of the memorial, the tombstones of the adjacent cemetery stand in mute witness to the Trials.
- Twenty cantilevered stone benches are carved with the names and execution dates of each of the victim.

Victims of the Trials

Hanged, July 19, 1692

Sarah Good, Salem Village
Susannah Martin, Amesbury
Elizabeth Howe, Ipswich
Sarah Wildes, Topsfield
Rebecca Nurse, Salem Village

Hanged, August 19, 1692

George Burroughs, Wells, Maine
John Proctor, Salem Village
John Willard, Salem Village
George Jacobs, Andover
Martha Carrier, Andover

Pressed, September 19, 1692

Giles Corey, Salem Farms

Hanged, September 22, 1692

Martha Corey, Salem Farms
Mary Easty, Topsfield
Alice Parker, Salem
Ann Pudeator, Salem
Margaret Scott, Rowley
Wilmot Redd, Marblehead
Samuel Wardwell, Andover
Mary Parker, Andover

The Lessons of the Salem Witch Trials

There are many lessons from the events of 1692 in Salem. Here are the lessons that have inspired us to act.

“The Trials haunt us as evidence of the victory of prejudice over reason, and the victory of fear over courage. Cultivating the will and the courage to see clearly beyond prejudice safeguards us from “witch hunts” of all kinds.

They remind us that the mechanics of hate can take on a life of their own, particularly in communities already grappling with economic, political, and social divisions. Building community across difference and dedicating ourselves to economic, political and social equality

engages the lessons of Salem. The Witch Trials, with most of the accused already in positions of marginalization (in this case women), highlight the importance of protecting and safeguarding those at the edges of our society and our communities.

When we stand up with, protect, and defend anyone on the margins and those among us whose voices have been silenced, we honor the history of 1692.”

Margo Shea, Assistant Professor, History Department, Salem State University and former Voices Against Injustice Board Member

Why We Memorialize

The lessons of the Salem Witch Trials compel **Voices Against Injustice** to celebrate today’s champions of human rights by presenting the annual Salem Awards, stewarding the Salem Witch Trials Memorial and inspiring members of our world-wide community to confront fear and social injustice with courage. In order to fulfill our mission we

Remember

We maintain the Witch Trials Memorial in partnership with the City of Salem and Peabody Essex Museum and use lessons to inspire action.

Honor

We recognize individuals and/or organizations working to help those who suffer discrimination and injustice.

Act

We partner with schools, community, and organizations to create, commission, and implement programming to educate and compel to action based on the lessons of the Witch Trials.

