

Amesbury's Witch



What caused the Salem witch trials? How did a village get caught up in such madness? Even though it is a simple question, it does not have an easy answer. (3) Between 1692 and 1693 witch hysteria spread all through out Salem Massachusetts. A total of 141 people were arrested, 19 were hanged and one was crushed to death. It is said that it all started when Rev. Samuel Parris came back from Barbados he brought two slaves. One particular slave named Tituba took care of his nine year old daughter Elizabeth, and his eleven year old niece Abigail. Things started to happen when Tituba told the girls voodoo stories. The girls eventually told all the other girls in the village and they started telling each others fortunes. When Rev. Parris found out he brought the girls to Dr. Williams Griggs. The doctor could not diagnose a medical condition. He decided to diagnose the girls bewitchment. (4) The Puritans believed in Witches. It was believed that witchcraft was an entering into a compact with the devil in exchange for certain powers. To the Puritans witchcraft was a sin. It went against God and what he believed. (3) Since the Puritans believed in witches they found the witches to be responsible for all of this. The girls were then forced to give the names of the witches. Rather than admit to what probably started as a game the girls accused Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn. The girls then kept randomly giving out peoples names they new from the village. (4) One of the women who was accused of witchcraft was Susannah Martin.

Susannah Martin was the daughter of Richard and Joan(Bartram)North. On September 30,

1621 she was baptized on Olney, Buckinghamshire, England. Susannah's mother died when she was very young. Her father then remarried and they brought Susannah and her sister to America with them. On August 11, 1646 in Salisbury, MA Susannah was married to George Martin, a blacksmith. They had eight children together. Susannah was described as a short, slightly plump, active, and "of remarkable personal neatness." She was said to be very outspoken, defiant, and contemptuous of authority.(1)

In October of 1669 Susannah and her husband George were in two court cases at the same time. George was being sued by Christopher Bartlett. Supposedly Susannah had called him a liar and a thief. The verdict found Susannah guilty. At this time George and Susannah's son Richard was taken to court for abusing his father and throwing him down, taking away his clothes and holding up an ax against him. This was presented to the grand jury at the Salisbury court. The court found him guilty and sentenced him to be "whipped ten stripes."(1)

Susannah was issued a warrant for arrest on a charge of witchcraft on April 30, 1692. She was then arrested on May 2, 1692. When the trial began on June 26, 1692 Susannah pleaded not guilty.(1) Many people had suspected Susannah of witchcraft. She did not care, she told Judge Hathorne "Let them think what they will." Susannah even did what was considered to be the unthinkable. She laughed when all the girls were tumbling around crying in pain. Salem's trials may have had a different outcome had more people laughed at the girls' events. They asked Susannah what it was that she was laughing at. She replied smartly by saying "Well I may at such folly." She told the court that she felt the girls were not bewitched, they were lying. "Pray God discover you, if you be guilty." Hathorne replied. Susannah in turn said "Amen. A false tongue will never make a guilty person." This statement could serve as an epitaph on this Salem event.(2) After two months of mental anguish and suffering in the Salem jail Susannah was condemned to death on Gallows Hill July 19, 1692. Along with Susannah, Sarah Good, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Wilde, and Elizabeth Howe had their bodies thrust into a shallow grave in a crevice of the site.(1)

Let Goody Martin rest in peace, I never knew her harm a fly,

And witch or not - God knows - not I?

*I know who swore her life away;
And as God lives, I'd not condemn
an Indian dog on word of them.*
- John Greenleaf Whittier



*This is a stone that is in place of Susannah Martins house in Amesbury
Massachusetts .This was located at the end of Martin St. originally. It is now moved to the end
of North Hunt rd. This was moved when highway Rte 495 was put in.*

“Susannah Martin’s husband George Martin had purchased Mr. Sadler’s farm a little near the Falls. The Falls is now R.W. Patten’s. This location was becoming the center of business since Richard and Thomas Macy had built the new mill and small inducement there could be before another removal. Mr. Currier wanted a place near his mill. So he negotiated for Mr. Martin’s farm and succeeded in purchasing it. In 1660 George marked out a home on the west side of “Roberts Rings” Hill. This is now known as the “Martin Place”. This was a romantic spot commending a fine view of the Southern and Western landscape and river. Stretching to the west lies the Noble Hill which forms the Northern boundary of the Beautiful Valley, known as Pleasant Valley at the time and even at a much later date covered with Noble oaks and Hickories. Close in front is a little swamp which from time immemorial has supplied large quantities of blueberries and were no doubt equally productive then. In the rear of their new home on the summit of the Ring’s Hill was a view seldom to be equalled. For miles in all directions the landscape lay stretched out like a panorama, embracing the outlines from “Pipestave hill” sweeping to the blue waters of the

Atlantic on the east and the “Loggin Plain” on the north. Here George built his house and cleared his fields and lived here for a quarter of a century. Him and his sons gathered in abundance corn and wheat annually. Susannah and George had six sons and four daughters: Hannah b. Feb.1, 1644, Richard b. June. 29, 1647, George b. Oct. 21, 1648, John b. Jan. 26, 1651, Hester b. April. 7, 1652, Jane b. Nov. 2, 1656, Abigail b. Oct.10, 1659, William b. Dec. 11, 1662, Samuel b. Sept.29, 1667. William died on the same day Samuel was born. A second William was born, but there are no records of him.”(5)

“George honored with many offices of trust. He was one of the “Eighteen” who organized the new town in 1654 and signed the articles of agreement. He held the office of “Lot Layer” from the organization in 1654 till his death. George assisted in laying out the Lyons Mouth Lots, river lots, Great Swamp Lots, Powow River Lots and all the other lots. He was the only Blacksmith in town for some years. His records disappear in 1686 and it is probable that he died sometime during that year. After he died Susannah continued to take care of the house until she died at the Witch Trials on July 16, 1692.”(5) I Could not find how or why their home is no longer standing. I do not think that is documented.

Sources

1. <http://www.rootsweb.com/>. Notable Women Ancestors. Bonnie Johnson. 3-13-02.
2. A Guide To The Salem Witchcraft Hysteria Of 1692. David C. Brown. 1984.
3. <http://www.saelmwitchtrials.com/salemwitchcraft.html>. Salem Witchcraft. Tim Sutter. 2000-2002. 3-28-02.
4. <http://www.paralumun.com/witchsaalem.htm>. Salem Witch Trials 3-28-02.
5. The Witch Of Amesbury. by A Descendant. In Folder 974.4515 W771 C.1. Copied 20,21. Sept.1965. The Amesbury Public Library.