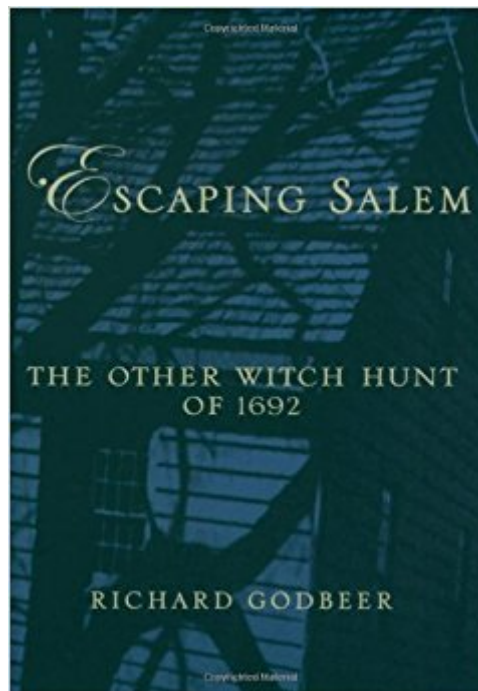




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Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt Of 1692 (New Narratives In American History)



Synopsis

The Salem witch hunt of 1692 is among the most infamous events in early American history; however, it was not the only such episode to occur in New England that year. *Escaping Salem* reconstructs the "other witch hunt" of 1692 that took place in Stamford, Connecticut. Concise and accessible, the book takes students on a revealing journey into the mental world of early America, shattering the stereotype of early New Englanders as quick to accuse and condemn. Drawing on eyewitness testimony, Richard Godbeer tells the story of Kate Branch, a seventeen-year-old afflicted by strange visions and given to blood-chilling wails of pain and fright. Branch accused several women of bewitching her, two of whom were put on trial for witchcraft. *Escaping Salem* takes us inside the Connecticut courtroom and into the minds of the surprisingly skeptical Stamford townspeople. Were the pain and screaming due to natural or supernatural causes? Was Branch simply faking the symptoms? And if she was indeed bewitched, why believe her specific accusations, since her information came from demons who might well be lying? For the judges, Godbeer shows, the trial was a legal thicket. All agreed that witches posed a real and serious threat, but proving witchcraft (an invisible crime) in court was another matter. The court in Salem had become mired in controversy over its use of dubious evidence. In an intriguing chapter, Godbeer examines Magistrate Jonathan Selleck's notes on how to determine the guilt of someone accused of witchcraft, providing an illuminating look at what constituted proof of witchcraft at the time. The stakes were high--if found guilty, the two accused women would be hanged. In the afterword, Godbeer explains how he used the trial evidence to build his narrative, offering an inside perspective on the historian's craft. Featuring maps, photos, and a selected bibliography, *Escaping Salem* is ideal for use in undergraduate U.S. survey courses. It can also be used for courses in colonial American history, culture, and religion; witchcraft in the early modern world; and crime and society in early America.

Book Information

Series: New Narratives in American History

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (January 6, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195161300

ISBN-13: 978-0195161304

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 0.3 x 4.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 19 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #29,970 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in Books > Law > Legal History
#42 in Books > History > Americas > United States > Colonial Period #218 in Books > Religion
& Spirituality > Occult & Paranormal

Customer Reviews

"Escaping Salem will engage every reader who has fallen under the spell of witchcraft's history in New England. But beware: still deeper enchantment awaits as Richard Godbeer unfolds his riveting tale of how ordinary men and women struggled to make sense of the wonders and terrors at work in their Connecticut village."--Christine Leigh Heyrman, University of Delaware
Richard Godbeer's Escaping Salem is a thoughtful and lively retelling of a 'forgotten' witchcraft case. The strong story line is nicely balanced with astute commentary on the background and context. Indeed Godbeer uses the case to open up a broad vista of early New England life at ground level. And, in doing so, he shows a balance of interests and concerns that differs significantly from the endlessly hyped (but somewhat atypical) picture of the 'Salem witch-craze' in exactly the same year."--John Demos, Yale University

Richard Godbeer is at University of California at Riverside.

Short history exploring witch trials outside of the Salem cliché. Looking at a different region, this book still compares situations to Salem to highlight important socio-cultural connections to American society. Short and easy to read.

A great look into the curiosity of witchcraft in 1692. Everyone is familiar with the Salem witch hunt of 1692, but the witch hunt that took place in Stamford, Connecticut is little known. Excellent read.

It is interesting the way the author wrote this book. The first chapters put the frame of the scholar text. It is like reading a novel and then the last chapters gives more scholarly inside of this even. I was surprised that so few people had been killed for witchcraft during the Salem trials. From some pagan friends saying I was under the impression the number was much more high some thousand at least. It is a good book worth reading.

An in-depth look at Puritan Connecticut. Expert coverage of a frightening period in New England's darker history.

I had to read this book for my History class. It was really a great book. I may have to go and read his book on the Salem Witch Trials.

I bought this book for the spring semester. It arrived VERY fast, and is in perfect condition. Use to find your textbooks, I paid about 40-50% less for new books on than I would have paid for used books at my college bookstore. Plus I assume, I'll be able to sell these books to the bookstore and knock even ore off the total price of "renting".

I came across this little book while doing research on my ancestors. After learning I was a direct descendant of Daniel Westcott, I found his connection to late 17th century witchcraft in the colonies. The book is a little dry, but the facts and bits of colonial wisdom were interesting....not to mention Daniel and wife Abigail's approach to dealing with a house servant who in today's world would be a resident of the top-floor, inpatient, psych ward.

I recieved the product in a great time, the envelop was very protective! I will recomend this store and product to others.

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