



# Salem Witch Trials

The infamous Salem trials, which lasted several months, saw the executions of 20 people along with two dogs who were thought to be accomplices.

The trials began during the spring of 1692, after a group of young girls in Salem Village, Massachusetts, claimed to be possessed by the devil and accused several local women of witchcraft. As a wave of hysteria spread throughout colonial Massachusetts, a special court convened in Salem to hear the cases; the first convicted witch, Bridget Bishop, was hanged that June. Eighteen others followed Bishop to Salem's Gallows Hill, while some 150 more men, women and children were accused over the next several months. By September 1692, the hysteria had begun to abate and public opinion turned against the trials. Though the Massachusetts General Court later annulled guilty verdicts against accused witches and granted indemnities to their families, bitterness lingered in the community, and the painful legacy of the Salem witch trials would endure for centuries.



Of all the men and women found guilty of witchcraft in Salem, MA, 19 were executed by hanging, one was crushed by stones, but no one was burned at the stake. Though burning was an official form of execution in parts of Europe, by the end of the 17th century the practice was far less common.

*Source: All About History Magazine, 2013  
history.com*