Judge Sewall's Apology: The Salem Witch Trials and The Forming Of An American Conscience

Richard Francis

The infamous Salem witch trials were a series of prosecutions for witchcraft starting in 1692 in Salem Village, Massachusetts. Learn about what led to the allegations and the hundreds of people who were accused. Amid these simmering tensions, the Salem witch trials would be fueled by residents' suspicions of and resentment toward their neighbors, as well as their fear of outsiders.

Presided over by judges including Hathorne, Samuel Sewall and William Stoughton, the court handed down its first conviction, against Bridget Bishop, on June 2; she was hanged eight days later on what would become known as Gallows Hill in Salem Town. Five more people were hanged that July; five in August and eight more in September. The Salem witch hunt of 1692 has entered our vocabulary as the very essence of injustice. Biographer and novelist Richard Francis looks at the familiar drama with fresh eyes. Also the experience of one man is not forming the American Conscious especially since he is a wealthy white man with political clout. However, the book was a great read, a history book disguised as a novel and a whole chapter on this man's hatred of wigs, literal wigs that made it quite enjoyable. The Salem Witch Trials have been covered in academic works, plays, and movies; they are fascinating examples of mass religious delusion and judicial error, and it is commendable that we do not let them go. The trials didn't last long; the public quickly turned away from this mistaken view of religion and justice.