



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 6 October 2021 – Morning

A Level History A

Y312/01 Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the reasons for the outbreak of witch persecutions in Salem in 1692. [30]

Passage A

The country's residents were then near the front line of an armed conflict that today is little known but which at the time commanded their lives and thoughts. They called it the Second Indian War. Whatever the name, after 1688 that struggle with the French and the Native American Indians for control of New England's northeastern frontier dominated public policy and personal decisions alike. The dramatic events of 1692 can be fully understood only by viewing them as intricately related to current political and military affairs in northern New England. The histories of King William's War, King Philip's War – its equally brutal predecessor in the 1670s – and the Salem witchcraft crisis are intricately intertwined. A fundamental part of that understanding must rest on comprehending the worldview of late-seventeenth century Puritan New Englanders, who lived in a pre-Enlightenment world that had not yet experienced the scientific revolution. In the world of 1692, many events lacked obvious explanations. Early New Englanders saw themselves as residents in a 'world of wonders', in which the universe of invisible spirits surrounding them was as real as the one they could see. With very few exceptions they believed unhesitatingly in the existence of witches. When they encountered harmful events that otherwise seemed inexplicable, New Englanders often concluded that an evil witch had caused their troubles. During the early 1690s residents of Bat Colony were experiencing many setbacks that needed explanation.

Adapted from: M. B. Norton, *In the Devil's Snare, The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*, published in 2002.

Passage B

A common explanation for the witchcraft outbreak, and its spreading, centres on the political and social turmoil facing the colony, particularly in view of its lack of a charter. That is, the colony's charter had been revoked in 1684, and although Increase Mather was soon expected to arrive with a new one, a situation of instability and anxiety prevailed. In addition to this uncertainty about the charter, itself a symptom of ongoing political disputes with England, were persistent threats from Native American Indians against the colony and a decline of power among orthodox clergy – all ingredients for broad social instability, providing fertile ground for the discovery of enemies in the invisible world. This traditional explanation centring on political and social turmoil is plausible but not satisfying. The trials only make some sense after the examination of multiple causes. Attempts to explain by a single theory what happened in 1692 distort rather than clarify the events of that year. The orgy of accusations cut across towns and villages and across gender, class and age. People fed all sorts of names to the accusers, either in sincere belief that a particular person was a witch or for motives rooted in malice, greed or the need to justify the proceedings. Yet there was no grand conspirator behind it all; instead varieties of individuals, for varying motives, responded to the open invitation of the society in which they lived to provide names to those who had been defined as the witch-finders of their day.

Adapted from: B. Rosenthal, *Salem's Story: Reading the Witch Trials of 1692*, published in 1995.

3

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** To what extent did the reasons for the persecution of witches remain the same throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Throughout the witchcraze of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the persecution of witches was most consistently and intensely pursued in the Holy Roman Empire.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** How similar were the responses of different European states to witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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