



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A Level History A

Unit Y312

Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries

Sample Question Paper

Version 0.14

Date – Morning/Afternoon

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



OCR supplied materials:

- 12 page Answer Booklet

Other materials required:

- None



First name											
Last name											
Centre number							Candidate number				

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Complete the boxes above with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any 2 questions in Section B.
- Write your answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- Do **not** write in the bar codes.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **8** pages.

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 persecutions in Salem.

[30]

Passage A

Only a unique set of political events allowed the Massachusetts witch hunt to proceed on the scale it did. Before 1692, witchcraft cases in New England had usually involved only one or two defendants. Most accusations did not lead to trial or ended in acquittal. Before 1692, there were 93 defendants in witch cases in New England; only 16 were executed. Moreover there had been no death sentence in the region for witchcraft since 1663 except for a case in Boston in 1688. Witch hunting on a large scale, was not the norm.

However, a new governor arrived in Boston, he brought with him a new charter for the colony. The colonists, especially those around Salem, had grown increasingly nervous about the possibility of witches. The court system had come to a halt by 1692, so that in the early stages of the uproar the local authorities had no choice but throw suspects in jail and await the new governor. Besides the constitutional crisis, the times were marked by wars and epidemics. It seemed to many people that there was 'a general movement of Divine Providence against the region.' The situation of the whole colony was still perilous: so the white inhabitants felt. Beyond it lay savagery, which could unleash death from the forest at any time in the form of Indian attacks. A number of girls living in Salem in 1692 had recently been orphaned in Indian forays in Maine; some had witnessed the slaughter of their families. This fluid, dangerous situation added greatly to the tension over witchcraft charges in the village, and perhaps only such a context could have prepared the ground for a sympathetic response to the girls' claims in the first place. The political and military position of the colony was uncertain and tense in 1621–92, already deeply troubled by that, and by recent waves of disease, the inhabitants of Salem were unusually willing to listen to bizarre tales of witchcraft and possession from young girls, a source in which they would not have put great stock during calmer times.

Adapted from: R. Thurston, *The Witch Hunts: A History of the Witch Persecutions in Europe and North America*, published in 2013

Passage B

Social and economic tensions within Salem Village resulted in the witch hunt of 1692. There was a deep rift in Salem Village between those who supported the ministry of Samuel Parris as well as the witch hunt and those who objected to or withheld support from Parris and the pursuit of witches.

Salem Village's factional strains were rooted in religious tensions. Analysis of both the pro- and anti-Parris petitions as well as the village's committee membership discloses a sharp division in Salem Village between church members, strongly associated with their minister, Samuel Parris, and non-church members, who dominated the anti-Parris committees of 1691–1693 and signed the petition of 1695 requesting that Parris be removed from his position. Church members composed a much greater proportion of pro-Parris petition signers as well as of pro-Parris committee members.

Although Salem Village's turmoil over its church and minister might not account for events elsewhere, Salem Village's longstanding religious tensions seem likely to have significantly contributed to the initial afflictions in Parris's own household and to the conclusion that they were caused by agents of the Devil. Once evidence came to light that the Devil's agency was not limited to Parris's household or to Salem but was designed to destroy the entire Puritan community, some religious and secular leaders determined to root out the Devil's minions, and the witch hunt became widespread.

Adapted from: R.B. Latner, *Salem Witchcraft: Explorations and Discoveries*

Section B

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

- 2*** 'Consistently used as a means of social control by the authorities.' How far do you agree with this view of the festival of misrule in the period? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Throughout the period the main reason for the persecution of women was their economic position.' How far do you agree with this view? **[25]**
- 4*** 'Throughout the witch craze of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the authorities were reluctant to use torture.' How far do you agree with this view? **[25]**

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Passage B: Latner, R.B., *Salem Witchcraft: Explorations and Discoveries*. Available at www.tulane.edu/~salem, accessed March 2014.

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