



# *Salem witch trials*

## FACTS

-The Salem witch trials of the late 17th century was a kaotic time in America's early history, and have remained at the forefront of the national consciousness ever since.

-25 people lost their lives because of the trials. 20 were executed (generally hanged) by the prosecutors, and five died while serving prison time. Two of the casualties were babies.

## WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE

### **Salem witch trials**

*They began in 1692*

- They began in 1692, a full 73 years before the start of the American Revolution and some 40 years before George Washington was even born.

### **How to prove you were a witch**

-*One thing they would do was the "swimming test."* they would drag you to the nearest body of water, strip you to your undergarments, bound and then toss you into the water and see if you sing or float.

-An innocent person would sink like a stone, but a witch would simply bob on the surface. The victim typically had a rope tied around their waist so they could be pulled from the water if they sank, but it wasn't unusual for accidental drowning deaths to occur.

- The touch test worked on the idea that victims of sorcery would have a special reaction to physical contact with their evildoer.

- Where a possessed person fell into spells or fits, the suspected witch would be brought into the room and asked to lay a hand on them. A non-reaction signaled innocence, but if the victim came out of their fit, it was seen as proof that the suspect had placed them under a spell.

## WHERE THEY TOOK PLACE

### **Salem is located in Massachusetts**

-*Some of the trials actually took place in Ipswich and Andover in addition to Salem itself.*

-Despite being generally known as the Salem witch trials, the preliminary hearings in 1692 were conducted in several towns: Danvers, Salem Town, Ipswich, and Andover.