



Death in Salem: The Private Lives behind the 1692 Witch Hunt

Diane Foulds

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Salem witchcraft will always have a magnetic pull on the American psyche. During the 1692 witch trials, more than 150 people were arrested. An estimated 25 million Americans—including author Diane Foulds—are descended from the twenty individuals executed. What happened to our ancestors? *Death in Salem* is the first book to take a clear-eyed look at this complex time, by examining the lives of the witch trial participants from a personal perspective.

Massachusetts settlers led difficult lives; every player in the Salem drama endured hardships barely imaginable today. Mercy Short, one of the “bewitched” girls, watched as Indians butchered her parents; Puritan minister Cotton Mather outlived all but three of his fifteen children. Such tragedies shaped behavior and, as Foulds argues, ultimately played a part in the witch hunt’s outcome. A compelling “who’s who” to Salem witchcraft, *Death in Salem* profiles each of these historical personalities as it asks: Why was this person targeted?

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