

Move 2: The Unexpected Participants

My second move is meant to present the unknown people and regions that were affected by the fallacies that define witchcraft. I looked into the stories of men who were on trial, and though there were fewer instances of this, they still were tried the same as the women. I also examined the witch hunts in European countries to see if they differed from the stereotypical Salem witch hunts. A few of the stories I found are in this move.

Men:

We only hear the stories of the women who were mothers and wives who were burned alive at the stake or tarred and feathered in ye old Europe and early the early American colonies because they were accused of practicing Satanic witchcraft, but what **we never look into is the men** who were also convicted (possibly falsely) of witchcraft. It is historically true that women were targeted for witch hunts more than men because women tend to be more emotional than men, and women mature earlier than men, so before modern science, changes in a girls body were unexplainable. For example, George Burroughs was Salem Village's pastor in 1680. He had graduated from Harvard in 1670 with honors. A quote from a reading by Frances Hill says that, "George Burroughs was confident, strong-willed, and decisive, a man of action as well as a preacher, unusually athletic and clever enough to do well in Harvard. Short of stature, muscular, dark-complexioned, he was highly attractive to women, as is shown by his winning the hand of a rich widow as his second wife when he was a mere village minister" (Frances Hill). This quote

goes back to the idea of witches being charming and intelligent enough to outwit the general population, and get away with Demonic witchcraft.

Even though there are many other examples of men accused of witchcraft around the world, people instantly link gender with the word “witch.”

The view atop a broomstick:

There have been many witch hunts across the globe during different times, but the most talked about one is the Salem witch Trials in Salem Village, Massachusetts. It was in January of 1692 when two girls related to Reverend Samuel Parris fell ill. The girls did not get better, so William Griggs, the village doctor, diagnosed them. When he said that they had been bewitched, the village was thrown into a witch hunt which resulted in “the death by hanging of nineteen men and women. In addition, one man was crushed to death; seven others died in prison...”¹

Even though the Salem Village witch Trials were devastating to the lives of many people in the New World, witch hunts go back much further than the American colonies. There were many other witch hunts in Europe as well. Some examples of these trials were the Basque witch trials in Spain, the Fulda witch trials in Germany, and the North Berwick witch trials in Scotland.

Basque Witch Hunt, Spain

In the 17th century, the Spanish Inquisition undertook the most ambitious attempt at rooting out witchcraft. The trial of the Basque witches began in January of 1609 in Logroño

¹ <http://www.salemwitchmuseum.com/education/>

(northern Spain). The cause of the persecutions were similar to the common assumptions that surround witchcraft. By the end some 7,000 cases had been examined by the Inquisition.

Fulda Witch Hunt, Germany

The Witch trials of Fulda in Germany in the years from 1603 to 1606 resulted in the death of about 250 people. The witch trials were ordered by Prince-abbot Balthasar von Dernbach after he had returned to power in 1602 after being exiled for over twenty years, and presided over by Balthasar Nuss, who had attached himself to the abbot during his exile and afterwards was appointed Zentgraf of Hofbieber and Malefiz Meister. Investigations began in March 1603, and then the arrests began in the city. One of the first and the most well-known victim was Merga Bien, whose case even concerned the Imperial Chamber Court. The witch hunts stopped soon after the Prince-abbot died on 15 March 1605. Nuss was imprisoned and accused of having enriched himself; Nuss was beheaded in 1618.

North Berwick Witch Trials, Scotland

The North Berwick witch trials took place in 1590. A number of people from East Lothian, Scotland, were accused of witchcraft in the St Andrew's Auld Kirk in North Berwick. They went on for two years and implicated seventy people. These included Francis Stewart, 5th Earl of Bothwell on charges of high treason. The "witches" held their covens on the Auld Kirk Green, which is part of the modern-day North Berwick Harbour area. As a common theme of witch trials, the confessions were extracted by torture in the Old Tolbooth, Edinburgh.