

*Mysteries, Memories, and Metaphors:
The Salem Witchcraft Trials in the
American Imagination*

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THE SPECTER of Salem witchcraft haunts the American imagination. No other historical event has provided such a wide range of scholars, dramatists, fiction writers, poets, and amateur sleuths with a subject that so stubbornly resists a final resolution. Although barely nine months passed from the first accusations of witchcraft to the last, those nine months of accusations, confessions, denials, trials, and executions spawned a vast literature that for 300 years has sought to fix blame or find reason for the ordeal of the witch trials of 1692. As the title of today's panel suggests, our fascination has indeed been enduring. Historian and Geographer David Lowenthal said of historical landscapes in the physical world that 'features recalled with pride are apt to be safeguarded against erosion and vandalism; those that reflect shame may be ignored or expunged from the landscape.'¹

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1. David Lowenthal, 'Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,' *Geographical Review* 65 (1975): 31.

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And so it is with our mental landscape. We preserve, guard, and celebrate that in which we find reason to take pride or that which reinforces our sense of ourselves as we imagine we are—or would like to be. We may find utility in a historical event or individual as a symbol at one time but not at another. Other figures and events are deliberately, or mercifully, ‘forgotten’ when they remind us of the ‘shame’ that Lowenthal mentioned. But Salem witchcraft fits uncomfortably into all of these standard scenarios.² So in some ways there are two mysteries here. The first is: what happened at Salem in 1692—or, more accurately ‘why’ things happened as they did. And, secondly, why do we preserve the memory and excavate it so persistently? There is a fundamental paradox in our awkward relationship to Salem witchcraft: a ‘mystery’ we wish to examine closely and, at the same time, what we have come to call a ‘crime’ from which we wish to distance ourselves.

We all know, at least in part, the basic outline of the story of the Salem witchcraft trials: in early 1692, in the household of the Salem minister Samuel Parris, two young girls (his nine-year-old daughter, Betty, and his eleven-year-old niece, Abigail Williams) began having strange symptoms that included seizures and, as one witness reported, claims of being ‘bitten and pinched by invisible agents their limbs wracked and tormented so as might move an heart of stone, to sympathize with them.’³ Mr. Parris, as was appropriate, consulted with physicians and ministers to determine the nature of the girls’ affliction. Their verdict: the children suffered from witchcraft. Neither prayer nor fasting, the appropriate measures to follow in such cases, ended the siege. Soon, a

2. On memory and culture in general, see: Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1999); Wesley Frank Craven, *The Legend of the Founding Fathers* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965); and David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

3. John Hale, ‘A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft,’ (1702), in George L. Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648–1706* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 413.

search for the source of the bewitchment was begun, and three local women were accused. Instead of ending the episode with a trial of the three, the investigation accelerated, and a Court of Oyer and Terminer was appointed to look for what was now believed to be a widespread conspiracy of witches. Before the court was suspended in October, the destruction to the community was staggering. The toll in part was this: over 150 arrested and imprisoned, nineteen hanged, including a minister; one man pressed to death with stones; and at least four persons died in prison. The accusations reached as far up the social ladder as the wives of a minister and the governor, and several prominent members of the community fled to New York before probable arrest.⁴

This is a sensational set of facts, with a ready potential for drama. But there are other factors in this case that tantalize us: the seemingly copious body of contemporary materials, from trial records to published commentary, that records but does not explain; the disturbing knowledge that those who pled innocent died, while those who pled guilty lived; the fact that although traditional procedures were followed in the initial examination of the girls in the Parris household, traditional judicial procedures regarding evidence in such cases was not. Instead, 'spectral' evidence, or the unsupported testimony of those claiming to be tormented by the invisible 'shapes' of the accused, was allowed. And, the question also remains: why a local (albeit capital) crime that was rarely pursued with any vigor exploded into a regional crisis of tragic proportions.

4. A large body of modern scholarship exists on the Salem witchcraft trials. Some of the more recent and best analyses from a variety of perspectives include: Paul S. Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); David D. Hall, 'Witchcraft and the Limits of Interpretation,' *New England Quarterly* 55 (1982): 253-81; Jane Kamensky, *Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1987); John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Bernard Rosenthal, *Salem Story: Reading the Witch Trials of 1692* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

The 'story,' then, of Salem witchcraft is one the outlines of which are familiar to us, but one that has been filtered through the accretion of narrative inventions and analytical conclusions over the intervening centuries. Some of these interpretations are also familiar. The tragedy, for example, was alternately a result of: religious fanaticism, power-mad ministers, hysterical girls, local disputes, misogyny, or the persecution of 'real' witches. And, the most persistent incorrect 'fact' is that convicted witches were 'burned.' In addition, Salem witchcraft became a metaphor that has surfaced in many cultural controversies from the end of the trials to the present day; a metaphor whose meanings ranged from governmental tyranny to superstition and ignorance, blind obedience to religious authority, the threat of 'disorder' and violence by the public, to persecution. These days, it is simply invoked as a 'witch-hunt.'

Perhaps a brief survey of where, how, and why Salem witchcraft has appeared within a long list of cultural controversies and as a wide variety of cultural texts will illustrate how deeply this memory is embedded in our culture as what I have come to call our national 'cautionary tale.' With apologies to those who see Nathaniel Hawthorne, Arthur Miller, 'Haunted Happenings,' or late twentieth-century historians at the center of 'all things Salem' I am going to take a less-traveled path today.

Creative literature is where the truth that historians pursued in the archives about the events of 1692 most often came alive for readers. And, the result was often the embedding of fictional elements of motives firmly in the imagination, along with facts. Salem witchcraft, in the 1820s, became one of the first domestic plot devices in a new American national literature. Most major American writers have used Salem witchcraft in some form, from Washington Irving to Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Greenleaf Whittier and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Arthur Miller. Hawthorne's use of Salem witchcraft, in particular, was linked not only to the creation of a national literature, but to the popularity of short stories and novels within the American reading

public.⁵ Whittier used the subject in a variety of ways, including the explicitly political, as a basis for antislavery poetry in the 1840s and 50s. But Salem witchcraft was also used by many lesser-known writers, such as Harry Halyard, who, as is noted on the inside cover of his book, *The Haunted Bride*, also wrote the equally unmemorable *Wharton the Whale Killer*. In *The Haunted Bride*, a cheaply printed short novel published in 1848, Salem, its witches, and its 'hypocritical ministers' act only as the briefest framing device for a tale that is long on pirates, separated lovers, 'a tribe of friendly Indians,' and adventure on the high seas. Halyard's pot-boiler is worth mentioning as just one example of dozens of similar fictional treatments that illustrate the popularity of Salem as a subject, or simply as a sales device, as early as the 1840s.⁶

An often-neglected genre for the perpetuation of the memory of Salem is the school history book. Nineteenth-century school-book compilers sought dramatic stories to hold students' attention.⁷ Earthquakes, violent storms, wars, and witchcraft were all favorite topics in these books and were presented with the clear goal of teaching a moral lesson. In the case of the Salem witchcraft episode, reason and order were shown to have ultimately prevailed, and the hallmark of American civilization was shown as 'progress' away from such 'dark and superstitious days.' One 1830s Philadelphia schoolbook described Salem witchcraft as 'an agitation, a terror in the public mind,' while another author blamed 'the prevailing credulity of the age'⁸ and unfortunate, English cultural influences. A New Englander, in a textbook that was one of the most popular from the 1830s to the 1860s, first set forth his philosophy of history as not only concerned with 'noble' examples, but 'with pictures of the vicious, ultimately overtaken by misery and shame' as a solemn warning against superstition

5. See Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

6. Harry Halyard, *The Haunted Bride* (Boston: F. Gleason's Publishing Hall, 1848), 10.

7. Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 166-170.

8. William Grimshaw, *History of the United States* (Philadelphia: Grigg and Elliott, 1832), 60.

and vice of all types.⁹ As for Salem, it was 'a singular infatuation' that was finally recognized as a 'rash and indefensible' part of 'the spirit of the age'¹⁰ that Americans learned from and moved beyond.

'The spirit of the age' also became a familiar refrain in orations at the annual December dinners of the New England societies across the nation. The members, who were local professional and social elites with familial ties to New England, frequently sought to mount a defense of the reputations of the Puritan forefathers — from whom they, celebrating the anniversary of the landing at Plymouth, felt, as yet, no need to distance themselves or to even distinguish the Puritan from the Pilgrim. Their annual toasts and orations provide a year-by-year, barometric reading of the anti-Puritan atmosphere in American culture into the twentieth century. Their main posture was defensive, and their main theme was 'progress.' Some, like Gardiner Spring at the 1820 meeting of the New York City chapter, alluded only to 'errors . . . in those times.'¹¹ Other speakers demanded to know why Puritans should be singled out or 'set down as weak and credulous, because they did not throw off all the [common] errors of the age?'¹² Charles Boynton of Cincinnati probably best expressed the frustration of the membership at large on the subject of Salem witchcraft when he told his audience in 1847 that 'there are thousands in our own country, whose prominent idea of the New England Puritans is, that they were a set of misguided fanatics or prating hypocrites, who sang Psalms on Sunday and hunted witches . . . through the week.'¹³ Boynton and others were replying specifically to the use of Salem witchcraft in relation to various cultural controversies.

9. Charles A. Goodrich, *A History of the United States* (Hartford, Conn.: H. F. Sumner & Co., 1835), 3.

10. Goodrich, *History of the United States*, 67.

11. *The New England Society Orations: Addresses, Sermons, and Poems Delivered Before the New England Society in the City of New York, 1820-85*, eds. Cephas and Eveline Brainerd, 2 vols. (New York: The Century Co., 1901), 1: 23. This meeting was notable for contention over the Congregational-Unitarian issue that was the subtext of Spring's address. The New York chapter would carefully avoid controversial issues until the mid-1850s as a result.

12. Brainerd and Brainerd (eds.), *The New England Society Orations*, 2: 193.

13. Oration delivered before the New England Society of Cincinnati . . . December 22, 1847 (Cincinnati: Collins and Van Wagner, 1848), 8.

While still in living memory, Salem witchcraft had been evoked in at least one public controversy. During the 1721–22 controversy over smallpox inoculation, Nathaniel Gardner, a regular contributor to Boston's *New England Courant*, wrote a parody of the dialogues published by Cotton Mather and other ministers, who supported inoculation, asking: 'I pray, Sir, who have been instruments of Mischief and Trouble both in Church and State, from Witchcraft to Inoculation?'¹⁴ Through the eighteenth century, as it passed from lived experience into historical memory, and on even to the present day, this use of Salem witchcraft has been repeated, as it has been found to have almost endless application to the most unlikely cultural controversies.¹⁵

One Philadelphia newspaper correspondent in the 1760s suggested that the installation of an American bishop, along the lines of the English church, might be wise. This, he argued, might curb religious zeal, as 'who knows whether the New Englanders will remain content . . . and will not again hang Quakers [and] witches?'¹⁶ On the third anniversary of the Boston Massacre, John Adams described his role as the defense attorney for the British soldiers as 'one of the most gallant, generous, manly, and disinterested actions of my whole life.' The conviction and execution of the soldiers, he continued, would 'have been as foul a stain upon this country as the executions of the . . . witches

14. Mr. [Nathaniel] Gardner, 'Another Dialogue between the Clergyman and Layman,' *New England Courant* (January 22, 1722). According to Leo LeMay, this article was one of three parodies of Mather's recently published *Sentiments on the Small Pox Inoculated* (Boston: S. Kneeland for Edwards, 1721). Mather noted in his own diary about Gardner's several attacks: 'Something must be done towards the Suppressing and Rebuking of those wicked Pamphlets, that are continually published among us, to lessen and blacken the Ministers, and poison the People.' *Diary of Cotton Mather*, 2 vols. (1912; repr. New York: Frederick Unger Publishing, Co., 1957), 2: 674.

15. Histories: see, for example, Joshua Scottow, *A Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony* (Boston: Benjamin Harris, 1694); and, Thomas Hutchinson, *The history of the colony of Massachusetts-Bay: from the first settlement thereof in 1628, until its incorporation with the colony of Plimouth, province of Main, &c. by the charter of King William and Queen Mary, in 1691*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Isaiah Thomas, 1774). On religious controversies, see, for example, Thomas Maule, *The Truth held forth and maintained according to the Testimony of the Holy Prophets, Christ and his Apostles recorded in the Holy Scriptures with some Account of the Judgments of the Lord lately inflicted upon New England by Witchcraft* (New York: William Bradford, 1695).

16. Letter to the Editor, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 8, 1768.

anciently.¹⁷ The following year, 1776, Alexander King, a Suffield, Connecticut, physician, compared the tyranny of the local Committee of Safety to that of the Salem judges. He claimed that the climate of public opinion in the Suffield area was such that any 'inadvertant [*sic*] expression' might bring calamity to a household. Such a climate, he said, reminded him of 'the time of imaginary witchcraft at Salem.' Then, too, men had neither 'sense enough to perceive the impostures [nor] resolution enough to stem the torrent.'¹⁸

As new religious movements arose in the early nineteenth century, they often faced bitter challenges from established denominations. Salem witchcraft was usually invoked at a point in the argument where the religious movement under discussion was alleged to promote (or have the potential to cause) a conflict of allegiance among its followers between the duties of a citizen to the polity and to his faith. The elements that were generally present in faiths that attracted the comparison with Salem included a strong central leader, unorthodox ritual or doctrine, and the appearance of the loss of individual autonomy in followers. For example, the American public was scandalized in the 1830s by the 'pretended prophet' Brother Matthias, whose 'uncleanness, seduction, and adultery committed in the name of the Lord' was the subject of considerable commentary in newspapers and pamphlets.¹⁹

Matthias, according to one writer, was only one in a long line of divines who had indulged in 'a series of delusions originating in fanaticism . . . as with the Puritans, and the persecutions for witchcraft in the early days of New England.'²⁰ To many observers, the rise of Spiritualism in the 1850s represented belief in

17. Entry for March 5, 1775. John Adams, *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, Lyman H. Butterfield, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

18. Journal of Alexander King (typescript), Connecticut Historical Society, Book N5, page 9, July 26, 1776. Thanks to Marla Miller for this quotation from her own research on the period.

19. William L. Stone, *Matthias and his Impostures, or the Progress of Fanaticism* (New York: Harper, 1835), 3. G. Vale, *Fanaticism: Its Source and Influence* (New York: Vale, 1835), 4.

20. Stone, *Matthias and his Impostures*, 3, 16.

unseen phenomena that did 'not surpass those witnessed during the Salem witchcraft.'²¹ Spiritualism and its practitioners were regularly labeled either as frauds or victims of a mass delusion similar to belief in 'witchcraft, which has not been much in favor since Cotton Mather's days when it led to deplorable consequences.'²² The Fox sisters of Rochester, New York, who demonstrated 'rapping' communications from the spirit world, provoked many comparisons along the lines of this example: 'the Salem witches are defunct indeed . . . but the Rochester knocking girls have arisen in the stead.'

The Latter Day Saints provoked critics in the press to expect Salem witchcraft-like episodes among their followers. In *Harper's Monthly*, one writer warned of a recurrence of Puritanism in Utah of the 'kind that burned witches.'²³ According to another writer, every time the age of superstition seems to have passed, 'along comes [a] Joe Smith' and a return to the days when 'we are burning for witches miserable old women who . . . [have] lost their beauty.'²⁴ Regarding the problems inherent with 'blind obedience' to religious leaders, Mormonism was seen as 'instructive and as worthy of remembrance as the more celebrated drama acted at Salem.'²⁵ In short, according to their enemies, followers of such religious 'innovations' were less in danger of going to 'Hell' as to 'Salem.'

In the period from 1849 to 1860, in particular, Salem witchcraft became an important part of a rhetorical strategy for Southern politicians, newspapers, and periodicals as an illustrative metaphor for the consequences of abolition agitation and Northern

21. [unsigned], 'The Spiritual Medium,' *The National Era*, December 9, 1852.

22. [unsigned], 'Convention of Spiritualists,' *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), August 11, 1852.

23. C. C. Goodwin, 'The Mormon Situation,' *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 63 (October 1881): 760.

24. [unsigned review], 'Mormonism Exposed,' *Southern Quarterly Review* 1 (April 1842): 399.

25. Introduction, *Catalogue of books, early newspapers, and pamphlets on Mormonism Collected by the Late Mr. William Berrian* (New York, 1898).

political ascendancy.²⁶ As sectional tensions over slavery sharpened hostilities and metaphors, Henry Bedinger of Virginia taunted Representatives John Palfrey and Horace Mann of Massachusetts in an 1849 Congressional speech with the charge that perhaps they should not comment on the 'degraded' culture of the Southern states when in Massachusetts 'witches . . . were, in the brave days of old, burned, literally by the cord!'²⁷ Over the next decade, Southerners received a steady stream of denunciations of Northern character and culture as fundamentally different and essentially dangerous, with Salem witchcraft as a prime example. Abolitionist Parker Pillsbury was one of a few who attempted to turn the Salem witchcraft metaphor back onto the South by connecting the 'barbarism of slavery' to a code that would, in an earlier age, have been 'willing to swing over the gibbet . . . every homely woman who dared to live a single life, and earn the reputation of being a witch.'²⁸

Southerners who paid attention to such things may not have been surprised when Wendell Phillips praised John Brown for the 'brave act of an old Puritan soul' shortly after the Harpers Ferry raid in 1859.²⁹ They were not prepared, however, for the general outpouring of approval in the North for the 'spirit' of the raid, if not for the act itself.³⁰ The day after Brown's execution in Vir-

26. On the creation of an 'emotional' climate and 'dishonorable symbols' between sections, see especially, Avery O. Craven, 'The Coming of the War Between the States, 1860-65: An Interpretation,' *Journal of Southern History* 2 (August 1936): 304. This is not to claim, however, that other issues did not contribute to the atmosphere of 'cultivated hostilities.' The 'threat of amalgamation' or miscegenation, for instance, was mentioned constantly in debates and in written polemics, but this was only considered a real threat because of failure to stop the 'fanatical abolitionist' from conquering the South. For an example of this cause-and-effect argument, see Drayton, *South Vindicated*, 180. Those fears were also subsumed within the Salem witchcraft metaphor. On the sectional-crisis politics in general, see David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*, completed and edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); William Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Alan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).

27. *Congressional Globe*, 30th Cong., 2nd sess., 111-12.

28. Parker Pillsbury, 'West Indian Emancipation,' *The Liberator*, August 12, 1859.

29. James Redpath, *Echoes of Harper's Ferry* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860), 112. From an address originally delivered on December 19, 1859, at the Congregational Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

30. Redpath, *Echoes of Harper's Ferry*, passim. For an example of this sentiment from a

ginia, a North Carolina newspaper warned Virginia Governor Henry Wise to burn the gallows, lest someone remove it and ship it north, as 'Yankees have no objection to mingling money-making with their grief.' The idea of memorial services and 'mock funerals' that Northerners were rumored to be planning irritated the same editor enough to suggest that if Northerners were looking for public entertainment, 'it is a pity they haven't a witch or two to drown or burn.'³¹ By December 1860, a Southerner reading an editorial in the New Orleans-based *De Bows Review* that said simply: 'the North, who, having begun with burning witches, will end by burning us!'³² needed no further explanation about who or what was on the way.

An aspect of these political debates of the 1850s, beyond the appearance of Salem as an illustrative metaphor, was the repetition of the idea that the 1692 executions were carried out by 'burning' the condemned. As a result, at least in the popular mind, that erroneous fact became firmly established and appeared frequently after 1865. This most likely was a deliberate choice made simply because of its effectiveness. The more horrible image of burning linked it to 'barbaric' practices, while hanging, the actual execution method at Salem, would have been less likely to provoke an immediate and visceral response in an audience. Borrowing from tales of European witch hunts, politicians and writers introduced an element that gave power to their chosen symbol by eliminating the still-standard method of execution in preference to one that reinforced the idea of an injustice done under the color of law.³³

nonprofessional abolitionist, see also: Charles Henry Van Wyck, *True Democracy—History Vindicated* (Washington, D.C.: Republican Executive Committee, 1860), 11. For an evaluation of both Northern and Southern responses to the raid, see *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Raid*, Paul Finkleman, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995).

31. *Register* (Raleigh, North Carolina), December 3, 1859.

32. *De Bow's Review* 29 (December 1860): 797.

33. On the persistence of burning as an effective symbol of 'ignorance and barbarity,' see also Bernard Rosenthal, *Salem Story: Reading the Witch Trials of 1692* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 209.

The career of Salem witchcraft in the post-Civil War era is more familiar to most of us. It remained a popular literary topic, and as historians adopted new standards and developed new methodologies, it often was one of the first topics studied.³⁴ Salem witchcraft also continued to find employment from the late nineteenth century to the present day in disputes as diverse as the Scopes evolution trial; the establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Commission; child sex-abuse cases; the raid on the Branch-Davidians at Waco, Texas; animal-rights activists' causes; local political investigations; Presidential impeachment; gay rights in the military; and bans on cigarette smoking.

Perhaps the most familiar twentieth-century use, however, was as a plot device in Arthur Miller's 1953 drama 'The Crucible.' The drama that implicitly condemned the anti-Communist activities of Senator Joseph McCarthy is often considered to have created an association between 'red hunts' and Salem 'witch-hunting' and to have fixed the meaning of 'persecution' to the episode. But Salem witchcraft had been used in the 1920s in connection with a previous 'red hunt,' as well as in leftist publications condemning McCarthy's efforts in the years immediately preceding Miller's play.³⁵

In popular culture its uses have ranged from Salem's own tourist industry to television programs (especially popular for Halloween episodes), a full-length opera, the name of a cocktail, the title and plot for an adult film, and the title for a piece of marching band music, to name just a few. Perhaps the most entertaining example appeared locally in 1999. Wondering if the 'curse of the Bambino' might not fully explain the inability of the Red Sox to win a pennant against the New York Yankees, Luke Salisbury suggested in the *Boston Globe* that the problem might run far

34. See, for example, George M. Beard, *The Psychology of the Salem Witchcraft Excitement of 1692, and its Practical Application to our Own Time* (New York: Putnam, 1882).

35. For an example in the 1920 episode, see Lila M. Houston to Editor, *Mountain Lakes News*, n.p., n.d., Papers of Lucia A. and Edwin Doak Mead, Swarthmore College Peace Collection (Microfilm, reel 10, box 17). For one example of Salem witchcraft used prior to *The Crucible* in the 1940s-50s 'red hunt,' see George Marshall, 'Salem, 1950,' *Masses & Mainstream* 3 (July 1950): 62-63.

deeper. Perhaps, he mused, we might consider that 'the fate of the Red Sox is retribution for every sin from King Philip's War to the Salem Witches to Sacco and Vanzetti.'³⁶ So, more than 300 years later, the memory of Salem witchcraft persists without a satisfying resolution to our most pressing questions about the episode itself. It continues to be of enormous use, whether the subject is the tension between the duties of citizenship and religious allegiance or baseball. That versatility alone may account for its enduring fascination.

36. Luke Salisbury, Editorial, *The Boston Globe*, October 13, 1999, A19.

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