

NO: Socioeconomic Tensions Were Not Responsible for the Witchcraft

Hysteria in Salem

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- Witchcraft was an immediate and serious concern in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries
- First "encounter" and starter was in Reverend Samuel Pariss' kitchen, in Salem
- Parris' west Indian servant, Tituba did "readings" and admitted to being a witch
- Salem Christians were willing to spare lives of confessed witches
- Sir William Phips halted court proceedings against the accused in May 1693, leftovers were released, his wife included
- Laurie Winn Carlson believes physical and neurological symptoms in the town should be weighed more heavily
- Behaviour was very similar to pandemic or encephalitis lethargica that broke out in 20th century, and could be reason for unanswered questions in America
- Limited medicine and experience, physicians could only conclude witchcraft
- Puritans came to establish utopian vision of community based upon religious ideals, worked, until 1690s
- Since nobody could stop illness of citizens for ten months, city decided it was witchcraft
- One year hundreds in prison, and many hung, next year all freed, witchcraft was nonsense
- People blamed own misfortunes on others they did not like, because they could get away with it
- Many accusers could not even identify their accused

Encephalitis Lethargica

- Similar illness of encephalitis lethargica swept Europe, and America, claiming over 5million lives
- Towns had to abandon football games, Disney World closed down all because of disease
- Unexplained physical and neurological symptoms due to this disease

Women vs. Men

- Some historians saw this as a power struggle
- Women were thought to be faking ill so they would not have to do chores or work
- Women were accused of lashing back at men by temporarily stopping their lives to "prove a point"

Mass Psychogenic Illness, MPI

- Contagious spread of behaviour within a group of individuals
- One person serves as the leader, and others follow
- Can be done unconsciously, or out of need of attention
- Can be seen as a response to overwhelming life and work stress
- Includes: fainting, malaise, convulsions with hyperventilation, and excitement
- Transmission is by sight or sound to other members of the groups through unconscious fantasies

Puberty

- Change of hormones and physical appearance may trigger weird behaviour
- Can cause fits, convulsions, and erratic behaviour
- Other disorders follow along, such as anorexia nervosa for teenaged girls

Rye and Bread Poisoning

- Fungus outbreak on crops may have caused erratic behaviour
- Hallucinogenic poisoning may have been caused by tainted crops
- LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) was found to be very concentrated in 1692
- Could explain outbreak in different colonies
- As grain is passed to family, and friends different reactions may have taken place, and therefore randomly spreading illness

Similarities Between the "Salem Witchcraft Trials Phenomenon," and Encephalitis Lethargica

1962 Salem	1916-1930s Encephalitis Epidemic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fits • Spectral visions • Mental "distraction" • Pinching, prickling • "bites" • eyes twisted • inability to walk • neck twisted • Repeating nonsense words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convulsions • Hallucinations • Psychoses • Myoclonus of small muscles • Erythmata on skin surface, capillary haemorrhaging • Oculogyric crisis: gaze fixed, upward, downward, or to the side • Paresis: partial paralysis • Torticollis: spasm of neck muscles forces head to one side, spasms affect trunk and neck • Palilalia: repetition of one's own words

Glossary of Terms: Salem Witch Trials

Word	Meaning/Definition
Socioeconomic	- having to do with status, politics, or wealth
Hysteria	- Behavior exhibiting excessive or uncontrollable emotion, such as fear or panic. - A mental disorder characterized by emotional excitability and sometimes by amnesia or a physical deficit, such as paralysis
LSD	- a powerful hallucinogenic drug [lysergic acid diethylamide, LSD, acid]
Affliction	- A condition of pain, suffering, or distress.
Puritans	- A member of a group of English Protestants who in the 16th and 17th centuries advocated strict religious discipline along with simplification of the ceremonies and creeds of the Church of England.
Oppressors	- To keep down by severe and unjust use of force or authority
Segregation	- The policy or practice of separating people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups, as in schools, housing, and public or commercial facilities, especially as a forth of discrimination.
Encephalitis	- inflammation of the brain usually caused by a virus; symptoms include headache and neck pain and drowsiness and nausea and fever

Questions Concerning the NO side of the Salem Witch Trials

1. List four of the five factors that may have caused the symptoms in Salem, in 1960s.
2. Who was the first woman to be accused of witchcraft?
3. What kind of similarities was found between those who were “bewitched” and those suffering from Encephalitis Lethargica?
4. What are afflictions?
5. How well did most people know their accusers?
6. Why do some historians believe it was a type of feminist action?
7. What does MPI stand for?
8. What are some of the symptoms of MPI?
9. Do you believe puberty is a valid cause for the events that took place in Salem?
10. What does LSD stand for?
11. How might people have come in contact with LSD?
12. Which theory do you believe is most logical, and why?