

Good morning to the living (who get the other 363 days),

I've included below the link and Wikipedia article for **Days of the Dead** for further knowledge. This year the **Days of the Dead** are celebrated from October 31<sup>st</sup> until November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Of course, we all know what day falls into that span- **Halloween!** Halloween's icons include the black clad witches upon their brooms as some of us grew up seeing in the Wizard of Oz.

It made me wonder how many witches or witchcraft stories exist in our family histories?

*So I did an inventory, and I thought you'd be interested in knowing that amongst our Dancesors clients we had 3 ancestors that were hung as Salem witches (out of a total of 19 total), 1 that died in prison, 1 that was accused and escaped, 2 that were tried but not executed, 2 that were accused but not tried, 2 that were accusers, 2 that were magistrates, 2 that were supporters, 1 that was clergy. We also had 3 other ancestors accused of witchcraft outside of Salem.*

**That's 12 accused witches and 7 accusers or delivers of judgment for and against, amidst our past!**

**Now is the time to reach out and start the process to find out how much witchcraft came into play in your story!**

**The interesting details of these 19 ancestors are below:**

#### **Executed for witchcraft in Salem**

**8 times Great Grandmother of a Dancesors client- Elizabeth Jackson Howe** (c. 1635–July 19, 1692) was one of the accused in the Salem witch trials. She was found guilty and executed on July 19, 1692. The Perley family of Ipswich, Massachusetts, were among the chief accusers of Elizabeth Howe. They had a ten-year-old daughter they claimed was being afflicted by Howe. The child complained of being pricked by pins and sometimes fell into fits. In their testimony against Howe, on June 1, 1692, they quoted their daughter as saying, "I could never afflict a dog as Good Howe afflicts me." At first the parents did not believe their daughter's accusations. They took the child to several doctors who told them she was "under an evil hand". Her condition continued for two or three years, until "she pined away to skin and bones and ended her sorrowful life". Howe was accused of afflicting several other girls within Salem Village. Public execution was considered the most severe punishment of the time in Puritan Massachusetts. Convicted witches were hanged on Gallows Hill. Elizabeth Howe was hung on July 19, 1692 and buried in a crevice on Gallows hill.

**8 times Great Grandmother of my wife Mrs. Dancesors (editor-in-chief)- Mary Towne Eastey** (bap. August 24, 1634 – September 22, 1692) was a defendant in the Salem witch trials in colonial Massachusetts. She was executed by hanging in Salem in 1692. Like her sister Rebecca Nurse, Eastey was a pious and respected citizen of Salem, and her accusation came as a surprise. During the examination on April 22, 1692, when Eastey clasped her hands together, Mercy Lewis, one of the afflicted, imitated the gesture and claimed to be unable to release her hands until Eastey released her own. Again, when Eastey inclined her head, the afflicted girls accused her of trying to break their necks. Mercy claimed that Eastey's specter had climbed into her bed and laid her hand upon her breasts. In the face of such public hysteria, Mary Eastey defended herself with remarkable eloquence: when she was

asked by the magistrates John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin how far she had complied with Satan, she replied, "Sir, I never complied with Satan but prayed against him all my days, I have no compliance with Satan, in this ... I will say it, if it is my last time, I am clear of this sin." Hathorne, showing a momentary doubt about her guilt, went so far as to ask the girls if they were quite sure that Mary Eastey was the woman who afflicted them.

For reasons unknown, Eastey was released from prison on May 18 after two months. However, on May 20, Mercy Lewis claimed that Eastey's specter was afflicting her, a claim which other girls supported. A second warrant was issued that night for Eastey's arrest. She was taken from her bed and returned to the prison; Lewis ceased her fits after Eastey was chained. Eastey was tried and condemned to death on September 9. Mary was hung on September 22, 1692. Her married sisters Rebecca Nurse and Sarah Cloyce were also accused of witchcraft. Rebecca was found guilty and executed, but Sarah survived.

**8 times Great Aunt of my wife Mrs. Dancesors Rebecca Towne Nurse** (February 21, 1621 – July 19, 1692) was executed for witchcraft (killing 7 babies with her spirit) by the government of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England during the Salem Witch Trials in 1692. She was the wife of Francis Nurse, with several children and grandchildren, and a well-respected member of the community. Because there was spectral evidence against her, she was convicted and hanged as a witch on July 19, 1692. This occurred during a time when the Massachusetts colony was seized with hysteria over witchcraft and the supposed presence of Satan within the colony.

**Martha Corey** (1619 or 1620 – September 22, 1692) was accused and convicted of witchcraft during the Salem witch trials, on September 9, 1692, and was hanged on September 22, 1692. Her second husband, Giles Corey, was also accused.

The community was surprised to see Corey accused, as she was known for her piety and dedicated church attendance, and had been officially admitted to the Salem Village Church in 1691.<sup>[6]</sup> She had never shown support for the witch trials, since she did not believe witches or warlocks existed. She publicly denounced the witch trials as well as the judges who were involved in the various cases. <sup>[7][8]</sup> She was outspoken in her belief that the accusers were lying, and upon hearing this, two young girls Ann Putnam Jr. and Mercy Lewis promptly accused her of witchcraft.

She was unaware of the level of paranoia in the village, and when she went to trial, she was simply truthful about her innocence and never doubted she would be exonerated. As the girls testified against her during examination, Corey asked the judge not to believe the rantings of hysterical children and continued to make similar claims throughout the Salem trials, so this combination made it easy for the afflicted girls to create a story accusing Corey.

The girls began mimicking her movements as if they were being controlled by her. Mercy Lewis called out, "There's a man he whispered in her ear." John Hathorne asked Lewis if the man was Satan, then shortly Ann Putnam Jr. cried out that Martha Corey had a yellow bird sucking on her hand, which was enough evidence to persuade the jury of her guilt. By accusing her, the Putnam family established their power in the town and showed that they would willingly attack anyone who openly doubted their motives and authority.

**9 times Great Uncle of another Dancesors client Ezekiel Cheever** (1614–1708) was a schoolmaster, and the author of "probably the earliest American school book", *Accidence, A Short Introduction to the Latin Tongue*. Upon his death, it was said that "New England [had] never known a better teacher." He has been called "the chief representative of the colonial schoolmaster".<sup>[9]</sup> At the hearing before the magistrates, March 1, 1691-2, in Salem Village, in the cases of the first persons charged with witchcraft,

Ezekiel Cheever was deputed to take down the examination of the unfortunates. At the trial of Martha Corey he made the following deposition; March 19 following: "Mr. Ezekiel Cheevers affirmed to ye jury of inquest: that he saw Martha wife to Giles Cory examined before ye Magistrates at which time he observed that ye said Cory sometimes did bite her lip; and when she bit her lip Mercy Lewis and Elizabeth Hubbard and others of ye afflicted persons were bitten also when said Cory pinched her fingers together: then Mercy Lewis Elizabeth Hubbard and others were pinched; and according to ye motions of said Martha Corey's body; so was yea afflicted persons; afflicted; this he affirmed to be true according to ye best of his observation Mr. Edward Putnam affirmed ye same to ye jury of inquest that Mr. Cheevers doth Mr. Thomas Putnam affirmed ye same: all upon oaths of all of them."

She was hanged on September 22, 1692. She was 72 years old. This accusation represented a turning point in the Salem Witch Trials as Corey was a respected member of the church who had good economic and social standing within the community. After this, accusations escalated across social boundaries, and over one hundred women were eventually accused of witchcraft.

Her husband, Giles, defended her against the allegations, and in due time he was also accused of witchcraft himself. He refused to undergo a trial and was executed by pressing, a slow crushing death under a pile of stones. The main reason usually cited for his refusal to be tried or to say yea or nay was to keep his estate from being confiscated from his heirs. When the sheriff asked how he would plead, he responded only by asking for more weight. He died on September 19, 1692, three days before his wife Martha was hanged. Since he had not been convicted, his estate passed, in accordance with his last will and testament, to those of his children who had maintained that he was innocent.

**Martha Allen Carrier** (between 1643 and 1650 – 19 August 1692) was a Puritan accused and convicted of being a witch during the 1692 Salem witch trials.

They returned to Andover in 1688 where they lived in poverty and were dependent on the family farm to supply them with a living. Martha nursed her father and two brothers when an outbreak of smallpox spread through the city in 1690 but could not save them. Thereby she became a landowner in her own right. Her husband and four of her children also contracted the disease. Her husband and two of the children survived. They were accused of bringing the disease to the city, but investigation has revealed that the disease was most likely brought by new immigrants from England. Thirteen people perished during the epidemic, and the Carriers were barred from entering public places

Martha was accused of witchcraft in May 1692 by a group of young women known as the Salem Girls who consisted of Susannah Sheldon, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard and Ann Putnam Jr, who would travel through Essex County, Massachusetts rooting out suspected witches by engaging in a theatrical display. Whether the court believed this act is still open to debate, but what is known is that when *Martha* was confronted by the girls, she acted as any rational person would when faced with their wild behavior. The girls accused her of leading a 300 strong witch army, using her occult powers to murder and afflict people with terrible diseases and of being promised the dubious position of "Queen of Hell". Martha vehemently denied these charges and in turn charged her accusers with insanity.

A warrant was signed for Martha's arrest and she was arrested on 28 May 1692 along with her sister Mary and brother-in-law Roger Toothaker, and their daughter Margaret Toothaker (born 1683). Martha's young children were sent to prison with her, apparently in hopes that their confinement would cause her to confess. The first accused "witch" in Andover, Martha was accused of witchcraft by her neighbor Benjamin Abbot after he fell sick and blamed his illness on her bewitching him after they had gotten into an argument that involved a land dispute. She was taken to jail and placed in chains to keep

her spirit from roaming. Three days later, *Martha* underwent the examination that always preceded the witchcraft trials, but she maintained her innocence.

Martha's trial started on 31 May 1692 and she was transported to the Salem Village Meeting House to face the accusing girls, overviewed by judges [John Hathorne](#), [Jonathan Corwin](#), and [Bartholomew Gedney](#). When Martha entered the room, the girls fell to the floor, writhing with cries of agony.

Neighbors were summoned to air their grievances. One local witness complained that Martha's craft caused him to lose a fistfight to her son Richard. Several other women who were accused confessed that Martha had led them to practice witchcraft. Ann Foster said she rode on a stick with *Martha* to Salem Village, her nephew Allen Toothaker testified that he lost two of his livestock, attributing their deaths to Martha. Samuel Preston blamed the death of one of his cows on Martha claiming that after a disagreement she had placed a hex on the animal. Other [Andover](#) citizens used her as a scapegoat for their supposed witchcraft and she soon became the principal name mentioned whenever a new person was accused.

On June 28, 1692, a summons for witnesses against *Martha* included Samuel Preston Jr, **9 times Great Aunt of a Dancestors client- Phoebe Chandler** and John Rogers. Phoebe Chandler (born 1681) testified that about a fortnight before Martha Carrier, was sent for to Salem to be examined, upon the Sabbath day when the psalm was singing, said Martha Carrier took me said deponent by the shoulder & shook me, in the meeting house & asked me where I lived: but I made her no answer, (not doubting but that she knew me, having lived some time the next door to my father's house, on one side of the way) & that day that said Martha Carrier was ceased, my mother sent me to Carry some bear to the folks that were at work in the lot, & when I came within the fence there was a voice in the bushes(which I thought was Martha Carriers voice, which I know well) but saw nobody, & the voice asked me, what I did there & whether I was going: which greatly frightened me, so that I run as fast as I could to those at work, & told them what I had heard, about an hour & half, or two hours after, my mother sent me again upon the same occasion, to the workmen above Coming home, near the place above where I heard that voice before, I heard the same voice, as I judged, over my head, saying I should be poisoned within two or three days, which accordingly happened, as I Conceive, for I went to my sister Allen's farm the same day, and on Friday following, about one half of my right hand was greatly swollen & exceeding painful, & also part of my face, which I can give no account how it Came & Continued very bad some days, & several times since I have been troubled with a great weight upon my breast, & upon my legs, when I have been going about, so that I could hardly go, which I have told my mother of: And the last sabbath day was seven night, I went to meeting very well in the morning, & went to my place where I used to sit (the ministers not being Come) & Richard Carrier son of above Martha looked very earnestly upon me, & immediately my hand which had formerly been poisoned as above, began to pain me greatly, & I had a strange burning at my stomach, & then was struck deaf that I could not hear any of the prayer, nor singing, tell the two or three last words of the singing.

Her trial was also fully transcribed at the direction of Cotton Mather, who believed this case to represent the strongest case for the use of spectral evidence. The evidence he found persuasive was the testimony of Martha's 18-year-old son, Richard, and her 7-year-old daughter, Sarah, that she made them become witches to haunt others at her direction. However, John Proctor wrote governor William Phips that he witnessed these children's torture in the jail where he was also imprisoned. The children were reportedly hung by their heels "until the blood was ready to come out of their noses" or until they said what their interrogators wanted to hear.

Throughout all this, Martha Carrier remained defiant and stubborn. She did not confess while many others around her did so she might save her life. There is a possibility that she simply did not expect the outcome of the trials would lead to her execution, as she was one of the first Andover citizens accused and clearly believed the proceedings were a ridiculous invention of a group of adolescents. Others, seeing the punishment meted, quickly confessed to outrageously trumped up charges, often naming Martha as a principal ringleader in return for clemency. She accused the court of complicity in her plotting.

In refusing to submit to the unanimous wishes of the male judges, ministers and politicians who gave the hysteria legitimacy, she stood up to male authority figures wielding not only physical power, but spiritual authority and she spoke her mind.<sup>[12]</sup> Her actions against the court did not save her as she, another woman and four other men were found guilty by the court for witchcraft and sentenced to death by hanging on 5 August 1692.

On 19 August 1692, Martha was taken in the back of a cart to Gallows Hill in Salem. Cheering crowds lined the streets and gathered at the scaffold to witness the hanging of Martha and the four men who were also convicted of witchcraft. She never gave up as even from the scaffold, her voice was heard asserting her innocence refusing to confess to "a falsehood so filthy". Her body was dragged to a common grave between the rocks about two feet deep where she joined the bodies of George Burroughs and John Willard.

**John Proctor** (March 30, 1632 – August 19, 1692) was a landowner in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was the son of John Proctor, Sr. (1594–1672) and Martha Harper (1607–1667). He was hanged on August 19, 1692 in Salem Village, Massachusetts Bay Colony during the Salem Witch Trials after being falsely accused and convicted for witchcraft.

**10 times Great Grandfather of another Dancestors client-** **Thomas Low** Thomas was born about 1605 in Boxford, Suffolk, England. Thomas married Margaret Todd on June 22, 1630 in Polstead, Suffolk England.

He and his family came to New England with [Reverend Nathaniel Rogers'](#) party. The Rogers party sailed from Gravesend, England, on June 1, 1636, and arrived in Massachusetts Bay (probably Charlestown) November 17, 1636. The ship was probably the "*Rebecca*." The "*Rebecca*" was 16 weeks at sea. A month before she sighted land, beer (the liquid staple of the 1600's) ran out and the crew and passengers were forced to drink stale water mixed with vinegar to purify it. On November 16th Rebecca encountered heavy fog which cleared the next day to reveal "Cape Anne fair on their starboard bow." Thomas and his family probably arrived at Chebacco, now part of Ipswich in 1637.

Thomas and other prominent men of Ipswich, Chebacco Parish, signed a letter declaring the innocence of witchcraft charges against their neighbors, John Proctor and his wife, Elizabeth.

### **Died in prison in Salem**

**10 times Great Grandmother of another Dancestors client-** **Ann Alcock Foster** (c. 1617 – December 3, 1692) was an Andover widow accused of witchcraft during the Salem witch trials. In 1692, when a woman named Elizabeth Ballard came down with a fever that baffled doctors, witchcraft was suspected, and a search for the responsible witch began. Two afflicted girls from Salem village, Ann Putnam and Mary Walcott, were taken to Andover to seek out the witch, and fell into fits at the sight of Ann Foster.

Ann, seven years a widow, was arrested and taken to Salem prison. Foster's daughter, Mary Foster Lacey, and her daughter, named Mary Lacey Kemp (called "Mary Lacey Jr."), were accused of witchcraft as well.

A close reading of the trial transcripts reveals Ann resisted confessing to the crimes she was accused of, despite being "put to the question" (i.e. tortured) multiple times over a period of days.

Her resolve broke when her daughter, Mary Lacey Sr., similarly accused of witchcraft, accused her own mother Ann of the crime, likely to save herself and her child. Ann's subsequent confession was an apparent attempt to shield her daughter.

Convicted, Ann died in the Salem jail on December 3, 1692, aged around 75, after 21 weeks of imprisonment before the trials were discredited and ended.

### **Escaped**

**13 times Great Aunt of another Dancestors client Mary Perkins Bradbury** (baptized September 3, 1615 – December 20, 1700) was tried, convicted and sentenced to hang as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. However, she managed to evade sentence until the trials had been discredited, and died in 1700, aged 85.<sup>1</sup>

In the notorious witch trials of 1692, Mary Bradbury was indicted for (among other charges):

Certain Detestable arts called Witchcraft & Sorceries Wickedly Maliciously and feloniously hath used practiced and Exercised At and in the Township of Andover in the County of Essex aforesaid in upon & against one Timothy Swann of Andover In the County aforesaid Husbandman – by which said Wicked Acts the said Timothy Swann upon the 26th day of July Aforesaid and divers other days & times both before and after was and is Tortured Afflicted Consumed Pined Wasted and Tormented..

Witnesses testified that she assumed animal forms; her most unusual metamorphosis was said to have been that of a blue boar. Another allegation was that she cast spells upon ships. Over a hundred of her neighbors and townspeople testified on her behalf, but to no avail and she was found guilty of practicing magic and sentenced to be executed. Through the ongoing efforts of her friends, her execution was delayed. After the witch debacle had passed, she was released. By some accounts she could escape. Others claim she bribed her jailer. Another account claims that her husband bribed the jailer and took her away to Maine in a horse and cart. They returned to Massachusetts after the witch hysteria had died down. Mary Bradbury died of natural causes in her own bed in 1700, aged 85.

Her family friend, and her son-in-law's father, Major Robert Pike, was in command of all the forces of Norfolk County, Massachusetts Bay Colony and those located in present-day Maine. As early as 1650 he was what would now be called a trial justice and in 1672 an associate judge of the courts of Norfolk Co. In political life a member of the General Court when 32 and of the Governor's Council from 1682–96, when having reached the age of 50 years he retired to the private life of the farm.

### **Tried but not executed**

**9 times Great Grandmother of another Dancestors client- Rebecca Blake Eames** (February 1, 1641 - May 8, 1721) was among those accused of witchcraft during the Salem witch trials of 1692.

Rebecca Eames was in the crowd at the August 19, 1692, hanging of witches in Salem when she was accused of causing a pinprick in the foot of another spectator. She was arrested. Eames later testified that the devil had appeared to her as a colt and had persuaded her to follow him. She testified that she had allowed her son Daniel (born 1663) to be baptized by the devil. She confessed to afflicting Timothy Swan.

She was examined again on August 31, 1692 by John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin. She repeated her confession and implication of her son Daniel as a wizard and her confession of afflicting Timothy Swan. She also implicated "Toothaker Widow" [Margaret Toothaker] and Abigail Faulkner as fellow witches.

Mary Walcott, Mary Warren and Ann Putnam Jr. gave testimony on September 15 that they had been afflicted by Rebecca Eames. She was tried and convicted on September 17, with nine others. They were all condemned to die. Four of those nine were executed on September 22. In October, the Court of Oyer and Terminer was dissolved. Rebecca Eames remained in Salem prison. On December 5, she submitted a petition to Governor Phips retracting her "false and untrue" confession, saying she had been "hurried out of my Senses" by Abigail Hobbs and Mary Lacey who had said she would be hanged if she did not confess. Her husband, Robert Eames, died on July 22, 1693, four months after his wife's release from prison.

**8 times Great Aunt of my wife Mrs. Dancesors Sarah Towne Cloyce** (bap. 3 September 1648 – 1703) was accused of witchcraft but never indicted by a grand jury in the Salem Witch Trials

### **Named, but no arrest warrant issued in Salem**

**10 times Great Uncle of another Dancesors client-** Rev. **Francis Dane** (20 November 1615 – 17 February 1697) was baptized in Bishop's Stortford, England, and was probably born there.

Dane had lived in Andover for 44 years, and was 76 years old when the Salem Witch Trials began. On October 18, 1692, Dane, Thomas Barnard, and twenty-three others wrote a letter to the governor and to the General Court publicly condemning the witch trials.

Dane and his family were in danger as half a dozen family members stood accused, including Francis Dane himself. Another minister, George Burroughs, had been hanged, and thus Dane's status did not guarantee protection. He warned that his people were guilty of blood for accepting unfounded accusations against covenanted members of the church. Two of Francis Dane's daughters, **Elizabeth Dane Johnson** and **Abigail Dane Faulkner**, and his daughter-in-law, (**Also, an 8 times Great Aunt of another Dancesors client**) **Deliverance Haseltine Dane**, were all arrested. Abigail Dane Faulkner's two daughters, **Abigail Faulkner** and Dorothy Faulkner, were also accused of witchcraft. All of these survived the trials.

Dane's daughter, Abigail Faulkner Sr., was convicted and condemned in September 1692 but given a temporary stay of execution because she was pregnant. She was later pardoned by the governor and released. Although Dane's extended family had the most accused of any family, none of his immediate family members was executed, except Elizabeth Jackson Howe (executed July 19, 1692), wife of James Howe, Jr. (or How). Martha Carrier, Dane's niece, was also executed as a witch August 19, 1692.

### **Magistrates in Salem**

**13 times Great Uncle of another Dancesors client-** **William Stoughton** (1631 – July 7, 1701) was a colonial magistrate and administrator in the Province of Massachusetts Bay. He was in charge of what have come to be known as the Salem Witch Trials, first as the Chief Justice of the Special Court of Oyer and Terminer in 1692, and then as the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature in 1693. In these trials he controversially accepted spectral evidence (based on supposed demonic visions). Unlike some of the other magistrates, he never admitted to the possibility that his acceptance of such evidence was in error.

**9 times Great Grandmother's 2<sup>nd</sup> husband of another Dancestors client, also, 2<sup>nd</sup> husband of Great Aunt, and 1<sup>st</sup> husband of the mother-in-law of 8<sup>th</sup> Great Grandfather (he was married 4 times) -**

**Thomas Prence** (c. 1601 – March 29, 1673) was an English born colonist who arrived in Plymouth in November 1621 on the ship *Fortune*. In 1644 he moved to Eastham, which he helped found, returning later to Plymouth. For many years he was prominent in Plymouth colony affairs and was colony governor for about twenty years covering three terms. In 1661 Prence presided over the court during Plymouth's first witchcraft trial and it was reported that he handled the situation in a reasonable way.

### **Clergy in Salem**

**10 times Great Grandfather of another Dancestors client-** Rev. **Nicholas Noyes II** (December 22, 1647 at Newbury, Massachusetts Bay Colony – December 13, 1717 at Salem, Massachusetts Bay Colony) was a colonial minister during the time of the Salem witch trials. He was the second minister, called the "Teacher", to Rev. John Higginson. During the Salem "witch" trials, Rev. Noyes served as the official minister of the trials.

Before the execution of Sarah Good on July 19, 1692, Noyes asked her to confess. Her famous last words were, "You are a liar! I am no more a witch than you are a wizard, and if you take away my life God will give you blood to drink." Twenty-five years later, Noyes died of a hemorrhage and literally did choke on his own blood. He was 9 days shy of his 70th birthday. On September 22, 1692, Noyes had officiated as clergyman at the final hangings of those accused of witchcraft. It is reported that he turned toward the suspended bodies of the victims and said, "What a sad thing it is to see eight firebrands of hell hanging there."

On November 14, 1692, 17-year-old Mary Herrick accused Noyes's cousin, Sarah Noyes Hale (wife of John Hale, daughter of Deacon James Noyes, and granddaughter of Rev. William Noyes), and the ghost of executed Mary Eastey of afflicting her, but unsurprisingly Sarah Noyes Hale was never formally charged or arrested. A later commentator on the trials, Charles Upham suggests that this accusation was one that helped turn public opinion to end the prosecutions, and spurred John Hale's willingness to reconsider his support of the trials.

Some sources claim Noyes later retracted his opinions on the witch trials, and publicly confessed his error, but an entirely unflattering portrait of Noyes as an active persecutor of the accused witches in the examinations prior to their trials is presented by Frances Hill in her book *A Delusion of Satan*. A 1703 petition to clear the names of the accused witches, signed by Essex County ministers, did not include Noyes' name. In 1712, the excommunications of Rebecca Nurse and Giles Corey were reversed by the Salem Church "... as a result of pressure from Samuel Nurse rather than from any remorse on the part of Nicholas Noyes."

### **Those that condemned the proceedings in Salem**

**13<sup>th</sup> Great Grandfather of another Dancestors client-** **Samuel Stratton** was born in England, about 1592. He married in England, Alice Beebe, daughter of Alexander Beebe and Elizabeth Hull. Alice was born about 1594 in Northamptonshire, England. Samuel & Alice were in Watertown as early as 1647, when he was surveyor of town lots there. He was referred to by the title Mister, indicating good social standing. He and his sons Samuel & John took the Oath of Fidelity in December 1652. They all appear on the muster roll of the Watertown Militia. He was an outspoken man. When Margaret Jones was executed for witchcraft in 1648, Samuel and his wife condemned the authorities and were brought to court for reflecting on the judgement of the court and fined five Pounds. Samuel refused to pay, claiming that he



was right in his condemnation. The court told him to recant his condemnation or pay an additional fine. He reluctantly paid the fine.

### **Other Dancestors clients accused of witchcraft outside of Salem**

**8 times Great Aunt of another Dancestors client- Elizabeth Dickerson Knapp** known as "Goodwife" Knapp. In 1653 Goodwife Knapp was accused and convicted of witchcraft and executed by hanging in Try's field outside the village of Fairfield.

Nothing is known of the trial of Goodwife Knapp or what she was accused of. This was right in the middle of the epidemic of witch trials and executions in England and Scotland and the phenomenon naturally made its way to the new colonies. Typically, the witch was accused of associating with the Devil, sometimes intimately. The "evidence" was usually a series of unusual happenings that occurred in the presence of the accused, or strange behavior that was deemed to be inappropriate. In many cases, the accused women seem to be rather more outspoken than others—in other words, they didn't know their proper place.

The remarkable thing about the Goodwife Knapp execution is not the trial itself but the aftermath. Roger Ludlow, the Deputy Governor of Connecticut, had been fighting on and off for several years with his neighbor Mary Staples (wife of Thomas Staples, also known as Staplies). In 1651 Ludlow won a suit against Mary Staples for slander but this did not put an end to their dispute.

During the trial and imprisonment of Goodwife Knapp, Roger Ludlow and his supporters tried to get her to affirm that Mary Staples was a witch, but Knapp refused. Just before the execution, Ludlow claimed that Goodwife Knapp came down the ladder and whispered in his ear that Mary Staples was, indeed, a witch.

Ludlow told this story to his friends, Rev. John Davenport and his wife, and it soon spread to the entire village of Fairfield. Accusing someone of witchcraft was a very serious charge—especially just after Goodwife Knapp had been hanged. When Thomas Staples heard that Ludlow was making these accusations against his wife, he filed a defamation suit against Roger Ludlow. The trial took place in May 1654."

**8 times Great Grandmother of another Dancestors client Gertrude Hendrickson** Jacob's wife Gertrude or Yeshro was accused in 1683 of witchcraft and was brought forth to trial before William Penn and the Council of Philadelphia. The only witchcraft trial in the province of Pennsylvania occurred before the Council, before the organization of the Provincial Court, on December 27, 1683. Only one of two old women, both Swedes, seems to have been tried. Yeshro Hendrickson's name disappears. Margaret Mattson lived upon her husband's plantation on the Delaware, near Crum Creek, in Ridley Township, now Delaware County. She remained for long in local legend, the "Witch of Ridley Creek." At her trial she appeared before William Penn, his Attorney General, a Grand Jury of twenty-one persons, all apparently English, and a Petit Jury of twelve persons, one of whom was a Swede. One Councilman, Lasse Cock, was also a prominent Swede. The case was heard, all the formalities gone through with, and the verdict rendered the same afternoon, as follows: "Guilty of having the Common Fame of a Witch, but not Guilty in manner and Form as she stands indicted." There were various accusations of a vague sort against the poor woman, as that she had bewitched calves, geese, cattle and a few persons. Her own daughter testified that she was in league with the Devil, but the sober sanity of the Quaker Jury brought in an eminently safe verdict. Tradition has it that William Penn said to her: "Art thou a witch?"

Hast thou ridden through the air on a broomstick?" When the poor, confused creature answered, "Yes," he said that she had a perfect right to ride upon a broomstick, that he knew no law whatever against it, and promptly ordered her discharge. This was the only witchcraft trial ever before the Pennsylvania Courts. Jacob paid the \$50 fine, but she appears to have never been brought to trial.

**My 10<sup>th</sup> Great Grandmother Elizabeth Simson Nicholson** Edmund Nicholson's wife was sympathetic with the Quakers. Elizabeth was admonished four times in the period 1659 to 1662 for not attending regular church. Between June 4th and November 27, 1660 at the age of 67, Edmund drowned while at sea. Because of the ongoing conflicts between the churches and Elizabeth's Quaker leanings the Puritan court blamed Elizabeth and her son Christopher and his brothers for his death, saying that they were witches. They were fined and placed in a Butcher's cub (holding pen), where they were forced to stand under the gallows with ropes around their necks. The boys were whipped severely, to the point of collapse.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day\\_of\\_the\\_Dead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_of_the_Dead)

*The **Day of the Dead** (Spanish: Día de Muertos) is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico, in particular the Central and South regions, and by people of Mexican heritage elsewhere. The multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died and helping support their spiritual journey. In Mexican culture, death is viewed as a natural part of the human cycle. Mexicans view it not as a day of sadness but as a day of celebration because their loved ones awake and celebrate with them. In 2008, the tradition was inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.*

*The holiday is sometimes called **Día de los Muertos** in Anglophone countries, a back-translation of its original name, Día de Muertos. It is particularly celebrated in Mexico where the day is a public holiday. Prior to Spanish colonization in the 16th century, the celebration took place at the beginning of summer. Gradually, it was associated with October 31, November 1, and November 2 to coincide with the Western Christian triduum of All Hallowtide: All Saints' Eve, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day. Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars called ofrendas, honoring the deceased using calaveras, aztec marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed, and visiting graves with these as gifts. Visitors also leave possessions of the deceased at the graves.*

*Scholars trace the origins of the modern Mexican holiday to indigenous observances dating back hundreds of years and to an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. It has become a national symbol and as such is taught (for educational purposes) in the nation's schools. Many families celebrate a traditional "All Saints' Day" associated with the Catholic Church.*

*Originally, the Day of the Dead as such was not celebrated in northern Mexico, where it was unknown until the 20th century because its indigenous people had different traditions. The people and the church rejected it as a day related to syncretizing pagan elements with Catholic Christianity. They held the traditional 'All Saints' Day' in the same way as other Christians in the world. There was limited Mesoamerican influence in this region, and relatively few indigenous inhabitants from the regions of Southern Mexico, where the holiday was celebrated. In the early 21st century in northern Mexico, Día de Muertos is observed because the Mexican government made it a national holiday based on educational policies from the 1960s; it has introduced this holiday as a unifying national tradition based on indigenous traditions.*

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