

**Madison County
Genealogical Society,
Box 631, Edwardsville, IL
62025-0631**

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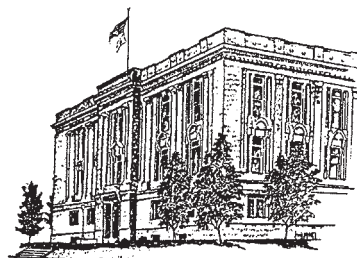
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NEWSLETTER

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DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!

Dues for 2023 are now being accepted. We would very much appreciate receiving your renewal checks ASAP. Send your renewal checks to:

***Ferne Ridenour, MCGS Treasurer
4814 Loop Road
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September Meeting

On October 13, 2022, Tom Pearson, Retired Subject Specialist in the Genealogy Room of the St. Louis Public Library presented a program titled ***Speaks With the Dead: Getting to Know Your Living-Impaired Relatives or The Basics of Cemetery Research***. The following is a summary of that presentation, as a detailed report of the presentation would be too long for this newsletter. Tom discussed several pertinent topics such as:

How to find the cemetery where your relative is buried.

He gave several suggestions for finding this information and several online resources for finding the name of the cemetery and where it is located.

Once you find the cemetery, how do you find their grave?

Several methods of locating a grave were covered: dowsing for it, walking the cemetery, ask the sexton or a local undertaker, check at the local genealogical society, check local city or county records, or if someone in your family knows where the grave is, take them with you.

What should you take with you to the cemetery?

Mr. Pearson presented a list of many things you might need on your cemetery trip.

What is the best time to visit a cemetery?

Spring or Fall is the best time to go. It is easier to avoid tripping hazards, snakes, poison ivy, poison sumac, and poison oak. If you are looking for a small family cemetery, in summer crops can block the view.

How should I record the info I find in the cemetery?

Tom discussed several ways to record the data and discussed several things you should not do without asking or should not do at all.

What if a grave is not marked?

If you cannot find the grave and you KNOW it is supposed to be in the cemetery, there are several things to look for. These were discussed by Mr. Pearson.

How do I stay safe in a cemetery?

Tom discussed personal safety in the graveyard and gave reasons for some of the items he suggested you take along.

Grave Markers

Mr. Pearson discussed the evolution of grave markers from stones to protect the corpse from scavengers, or to keep the dead from rising from their graves. He also discussed the different materials used to make gravestones and the many shapes, forms, and iconography used on gravestones through the years.

What should I know about cemetery laws?

Tom briefly discussed the cemetery laws of Missouri and Illinois.

Mr. Pearson had a handout that listed internet addresses for web sites useful in cemetery research. If you send an email to Tom at 89ilguy@gmail.com, he will send you an electronic version of that handout, with links to those websites. However, some of the links may be outdated and inactive.

October Meeting

On October 9, 2022 Dr. Kelly Obernuefemann, Professor of History and the Coordinator of History, Political Science, and Geography at Lewis and Clark Community College, presented a program titled *Witchcraft in Colonial America*.

There are a lot of misconceptions about witchcraft in colonial America. Everyone has heard of Salem and everyone knows something went really wrong in Salem. When talking about witchcraft in America, we are mostly talking about the New England Colonies, the Puritan colonies. Those people were looking for witches and the Puritan life is focused on everyone in the community's morals ... making sure that everybody was doing what God wanted. Their government went back to the Mayflower Compact – doing what the church elders told you to do, with no separation of church and state. If you committed adultery, it was not just a crime against your family; it was a crime against the community. Because you brought down God's wrath and God does not want a community of sinners, you were publicly shamed and you had to pay fines. The Puritans really felt that God was watching them and constantly judging them. If things went wrong, it meant that God was angry, and they had to find a reason for God's anger. They looked inward at their community to figure out who was bringing down God's wrath on the whole community. Neighbors always watched neighbors, making sure that nobody stepped out of line. God punished not just one person, He punished the whole town. Puritan Family values were about keeping your family in line. There was incredibly strict punishment of children and correction of wives (which included physical abuse).

In New England and the colonies, women were brought to court more often than men for moral offenses, witchcraft, slander, unladylike behavior, and murder. Some men were brought to court for some of these reasons, but men often could get away with what women could not. Moral offenses like adultery and fornication were crimes against the church, crimes against religion, and therefore crimes against God.

It was easier to punish women for moral offenses than men because it was the woman who got pregnant; and if she did not name the father, she was the only one punished. In the story of "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hester was punished and never named the father of her child. In Puritan society that is how it was. The woman had a huge fine put on her, assuming that the father would step forward and pay it, but if he did not and she kept quiet, the woman was accused of moral offenses.

Occasionally, men were accused of witchcraft; but it was usually the women who were accused. Women were watched by the neighbors and any woman who slandered a man's reputation was in trouble. If she said he was a bad husband or he beat his kids, or anything that could damage a man's reputation and it was repeated to the church elders, she had to come up before the church and show remorse. If she did not, a ducking stool was to be her punishment – we say "dunking" stool, they said "ducking." They literally put her on a stool and lowered her down into the nearest stream, made sure she was under the water for a little bit, and raised her up and said, "Do you repent?" If she said, "No," she was put back under the water. They did that until she was significantly remorseful.

When it came to slander, men just beat each other up in the street and were done with it. If a woman had been known to slander her neighbors or the men in the community, she would be another target when it came to looking for witches. Unladylike behavior could also make you a target if people were looking for witches. What was your background? Were you someone who had been punished for unladylike behavior? So what is unladylike behavior? It is the type of things that my grandmother would say ladies do not do. It is things like showing a little too much skin or, in certain times, showing any skin, or wearing pants. If you wore pants, you were going to be whipped in public. Women should not be in taverns. If you were a woman and had to have a drink, drink at home. Do not drink in public or be in a tavern. No cursing or fighting with another woman. All of those things men could do and sometimes men were even applauded for defending their family. But, a woman fighting with another woman in public...no one wanted to see that. It was considered not only unladylike but uncivilized behavior. People did not like such behavior.

It did not matter what gender you were when it came to murder; but how you were executed depended on gender. The common way to execute someone in Puritan times was hanging. That could be true for women as well as men; but if a woman had murdered her husband or she was an indentured servant who had murdered her master, she had committed a crime against people who had authority over her. Her manner of execution was being burned at the stake, unless someone stepped in and commuted it to hanging. Women were supposed to respect authority.

So why were they so hard on women? The Puritans looked to the Bible...the sins of Eve. Eve was a temptress and she tempted all the men into sinning, and brought down God's

wrath. Women raised their children, so women should be good examples for their kids. If a woman was immoral, she would raise immoral kids, and that would be on the community. You had to make sure that you kept a good eye on her and that she kept a good eye on the kids. There was a whole list of Puritan rules, such as: "Better to be whipped than damned," "Spare the rod, spoil the child." Puritans definitely believed in punishing children and correcting wives. The New England colonies had such a strong religious motivation and religious reason for their creation; and, life was really, really hard in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire.

Why were people looking for witches in New England and not in North Carolina or South Carolina? Every single colony had laws about witchcraft; but very few of the colonies brought anybody to trial. In colonial times there were always tropical storms bringing diseases and epidemics, some of which were water borne, to the Southern colonies. A tropical storm could come in and pollute your wells with rainwater or flood waters and you would get sick from drinking brown water. In the South people were used to drinking bad water every day. New England did not usually have to deal with brown water because the rivers were usually pretty clean. In New England, it was an event where suddenly everyone became sick at the same time, so it must be witchcraft.

You could get famine when the harvest failed; that was God's punishment. If God loved you, the harvest would have been plentiful and people would be plentiful. God would have made you prosper. Per Abraham and the Bible, God makes his followers have a prosperous life. Why disease, why famine, and why were those Indians such a problem? In New England, they believed that bad Indians were a constant problem. They worried about living side by side with heathens; and they also had to worry about being captured by Indians. Before 1675 and King Phillip's War, if you were captured by Indians, it was usually by French Indians. They came over the border from Canada as allies of the French government. The French government said, "Go steal some people and bring them back to Montreal or Quebec. You can ransom them for money." Since France and England were always at war with each other, the Canadian border was always a problem. Life up near the Canadian border was a life of constant Indian threat.

The number one most popular reading material in Colonial times was the Bible; number two was captive tales. Women, and occasionally men, who had been captured by the Indians were ransomed and brought back to their families and then their story was written. The church or sometimes non-religious publishers published their stories, but priests or reverends usually came to take their story. Those priests and reverends wanted the ex-captives to say God had helped them survive their days with the Indians. That God had blessed them and that is why they had survived. Everyone wanted to read these stories because they wanted to know what would happen if the Indians took them and how they could survive being captured by the Indians and what to expect if Indians came and burned down their town and took hostages. The New England colonists

worried about the Canadian border all the time; but the Carolina Colonies did not worry about the Canadian border.

There was a really high casualty war called King Phillip's War from 1675 to 1676. It lasted 16 months; and the casualty rate from King Phillip's War was higher than our casualty rate for World War II or The Civil War. The percentage of dead men versus the population was ridiculously high: 8% for white men. During the Civil War, depending what state you were in, it was only up to 5%. For Indians, at least 60% of their people got wiped out. King Phillip's War was a time of constant warfare with atrocities committed by both sides in Massachusetts, Connecticut, north getting close to the border in the New Hampshire and Vermont areas, but not so much in Rhode Island. Eventually, the New England colonists won against a united Indian army who wanted to kick white people out of America. The tribes attacked those New England colonists and took their possessions and their supplies. Then the tribes ran out of food and were eventually forced to surrender. The Indians failed in their mission only because they ran out of food.

After this huge devastation in the Indian population, the Indians needed to recoup their population losses. After King Phillip's War, the New England Indian population was down 60% to 80%. There was no way to know for sure because there was no census for Indians. So far as war captives and other New England colonists were concerned, life was scary in New England after 1676. It was not just the French Indians who were after them, it was any surviving tribe from King Phillip's War. They were likely to kidnap your kids because they needed to adopt the children into their tribes to increase their numbers. Puritans could not understand why, over and over again, when they could find their kids, the kids did not want to come home. How could their children turn their backs on God's chosen religion and want to live with heathens? What were the Puritans doing wrong? Why were their captive children not good God-fearing children? The answer is obvious to us today. Indians did not use corporal punishment against children. Thus, the children wanted to stay in tribal territory, not Puritan society. The Puritans worried about their mortal spirit. They thought the rough life in New England was God's challenge here on earth, that God was punishing them here on earth. They also believed that if they met God's challenges on earth, they would go to heaven afterwards.

There were witch trials in more areas than New England but New England's were worse because of the Puritan style of life. Not counting Salem, there were 93 cases of witchcraft in Colonial America, spreading all the way down in the Southern Colonies and Barbados. When you add the six months in Salem, Massachusetts, there were 234 cases and 36 sentences of execution (but not all carried out). What went wrong in Salem and who was to blame?

In most areas when people started looking for witches, the accused usually fit a certain profile, but this was not true in Salem. If you exclude Salem and look at the 93 other cases

in Colonial America, this was the profile of an accused witch. A woman, who was the temptress and the daughter of Eve, usually 40-60 years of age, what we today call middle-aged but the colonists called old, not a single person, not a teenager. They were women who had been married a long time but had very few or no children; so God had not blessed them with children. Why did God not favor those women? What was wrong with those women in the eyes of God?

Everywhere but Salem, the women were accused of “white witchcraft,” which is associated with healing. Echinacea, witch hazel, and aspirin were things associated with healers and “white witchcraft” in colonial times. So was giving tea or a lotion to someone with some kind of rash. If your cow was not giving milk, a white witch might have given you a lotion to rub on your cow’s udder to cause her to begin producing milk. That is what white witches did – things to make a positive result in people’s lives, not some crazy demonic pact. But people were not supposed to use magic because God did not like magic. The Puritans thought people should tough it out if they got sick and pray a little harder so God so god would save them. The cure for sickness was prayer not magic potions.

Women were the healers, the ones who took care of the kids, the ones who brewed the tea, and the ones who gave you the lotion. These healers were targeted when looking for witches. A woman previously accused of theft or slander would not have a good reputation in their neighborhood and, therefore, could be a witch. The premier colonial witchcraft historian, John Demos, said a typical accused witch in America was, “Abrasive in style, contentious in character, and stubbornly resilient in the face of adversity.” A witch was a strong woman who thought she could make her own decisions – that got her into trouble. These were some of the typical characteristics of witches when Salem broadened their terminology of what defines a witch. The Puritans started accusing anybody and everybody.

The Salem witch trials started in the home of Samuel Parris in 1692. He was a minister who had lost his congregation. His congregation was taken from him and given to someone else because he fell out of favor with the church elders. If you were a minister back then, you were one of the important people of your town and your family was the most respected family in town. His family would have been greeted on the street. People would have shown them signs of respect, would have kind of cleared the way for them, and said hello to them. It was a big blow to his family when he was demoted and lost his congregation. His daughter and his ward felt that the vibe in the neighborhood was different. The family was not popular anymore and they were not respected. The girls wanted attention because they did not get it from the congregation anymore. Dad was not important anymore.

One night the girls had a sleepover at the home of Samuel Parris. Those at the sleepover included his daughter, another teenage girl (his ward, probably his niece or a cousin), and a third local girl who was staying with them for a few nights. Those three girls had a sleepover and played sleepover games.

And, like most girls today, they wanted to know whom they would someday marry. The Parris family had a slave whose name was Tituba. Slavery was legal in every colony at that time. New England later turned away from slavery because it was not important to their economy, but at one time there were slaves in every colony. Even a minister like Parris could own a slave. Usually they only owned a small number - one, two, or three. Tituba was from the Caribbean and could supposedly tell the future. So, the girls decided to ask Tituba to tell their future as to “Who am I going to marry?”

Tituba cracked an egg into a pan of water. She made sure to break the yolk because she wanted it to be messy so it would form a letter or shape. Then Tituba looked at the shape of the egg in the bowl of water; but she did not have an answer to their question right away because yolks do not make many letters except “I” and “J.” The girls were also looking in the water and one of the three girls said, “I see a coffin. Someone is going to die. Whoever we are going to marry is going to die soon.” The girls just fed on each other’s imagination all night. They each kept coming up with crazier and crazier things. By morning, they were telling all kinds of crazy stories, speaking in their own language, and just acting abnormal. So, a doctor was brought in the next morning. The doctor said, “I cannot find anything wrong with the girls. Maybe they are bewitched. Let us ask the girls.” “Girls, did somebody put a spell on you?”

All the adults were looking at them and here was their chance to be popular again. They answered, “Yes, we have been bewitched.” Then they named three neighborhood women: Tituba, and two others who fit the profile of the typical accused witch, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne. They are easy targets. Especially Sarah Osborne, who did not have any close family to come to her defense. Sarah Good had also been known to say nasty things to people because she was ashamed that she was homeless. When people tried to give her charity, she did not accept it with grace. These three people who fit the profile were easy targets: a healer, someone who committed a previous crime like theft, and an older woman. No one would speak up for them if they were accused because they were lower class. The girls accused these three women, and that is when Salem’s accusation of witches began.

Tituba knew that, as a black slave woman, she was doomed if she did not do something drastic so she said, “I will name a name. I am not a witch, but I know a witch.” That is how she got herself off the hook and saved her neck from the rope. The person Tituba named as a witch also said “I will name a name. I am not a witch, but I know a witch.” And so the awful cycle began: One accused witch after another claimed innocence and accused another as a witch; the Puritans rounded up the accused; that accused person claimed innocence and accused another as a witch until they had accused all the people who fit the usual profile. After that, they started accusing and arresting people just because they wanted their property.

At the same time there was also economic tension between Salem Village and Salem Town. Salem Town was a port and

was making money and starting to turn away from the very strict black clothing worn by Puritans. They started wearing fancier clothes and had bigger meals. The Puritans of Salem Town started enjoying luxury because they were making a lot of money. The Puritans of Salem Village were still poor farmers and were jealous of the people of Salem Town. The people near the far edge of the Salem Village started accusing people who lived close to Salem Town as witches who had turned away from God. They were suspicious of them because they were not acting in the Puritan style. There were some areas in Salem Village where neighbors accused neighbors over boundary lines because they wanted that neighbor's pasture. There was hysteria going on and people began acting in ways that were not even remotely Christian. In six months, more than 150 women are accused, 28 were convicted, and 19 were hanged. Some of the convicted were waiting to be hanged when suddenly someone accused the governor's wife of being a witch. When that person accused the governor's wife, what happened? The Governor said accusations of people as witches was to stop immediately! Accused witches were pardoned and sent home! Ministers were silenced! The trials where people had been convicted as witches were declared invalid! The

Governor asked what Salem Village was doing listening to teenagers in the first place and said Salem Village should be ashamed of itself! The trials were over!

But some of the women who were awaiting execution did not get released. 28 convicted people died in prison. The prison system at that time consisted on one room under the local magistrate's house. The women packed in these subterranean rooms to await trial had a huge sanitation problem, became sick and malnourished, and died. Their families had to bring them food every day or pay money to the magistrate's wife so she would feed them even a little bit. The families also had to pay an iron tax for making the shackles and chains that bound their loved ones. It was said that iron stopped a witch; so iron handcuffs were put on the accused witches and they had to pay for them. After Salem, no one was executed for witchcraft in America.

Today, there is a monument to the women who were executed for witchcraft in Salem. It is a circle and around that circle are the names of the women who were executed on that spot.