

Salem Witch Trials Creative Writing Lesson Plan

Overview

The Salem witch trials of 1692 were the largest and deadliest witch-hunt in colonial North American history. Hundreds of innocent people were accused of witchcraft and arrested. In numerous instances, multiple members of the same families found themselves accused. This was in part due to the belief that witchcraft ran in the families, particularly through the matriarchal line. The Hobbs were one such family; the father, William, his wife Deliverance, and William's daughter Abigail, all found themselves accused of witchcraft in 1692. Determining details of the lives of average people in the colonial period can be extremely difficult, or even impossible. If not for their involvement in the witchcraft trials, we would know almost nothing about many of these individuals. In the case of the Hobbs family, records from the witchcraft trials reveal a startling, unusually colorful story.

Objectives:

- Enhance students understanding of the Salem witch trials and the innocent individuals involved.
- Practice writing creative narratives composed with well-chosen details and well-structured sequences.
- Encourage greater interest in history through creative writing.

Materials

- Either print copies or digital access to the Salem Witch Museum's Witch Trials Online Sites Tour, "Hobbs Family Home, Site of" webpage:
<https://salemwitchmuseum.com/locations/hobbs-family-home-site-of/>

Activity

- Introduce students to the information included in the overview.
- Instruct students to read the "Hobbs Family Home, Site of" webpage.
- Ask students to address the following prompt in a 2-3-page creative writing essay.

Prompt

- Writing from the perspective of William, Deliverance, or Abigail Hobbs, compose a short story capturing this individual during specific moment during the witchcraft trials.
- Consider the following questions when composing this story:
 - What has happened just before this moment?
 - What is happening in this scene? Where are they? Who is there?
 - How does this individual feel? How are they reacting to the events captured in this scene?
 - How do the people around them feel? How would this impact the way they interact with this individual?
 - What do you think will happen to this individual in the moments after this scene concludes?