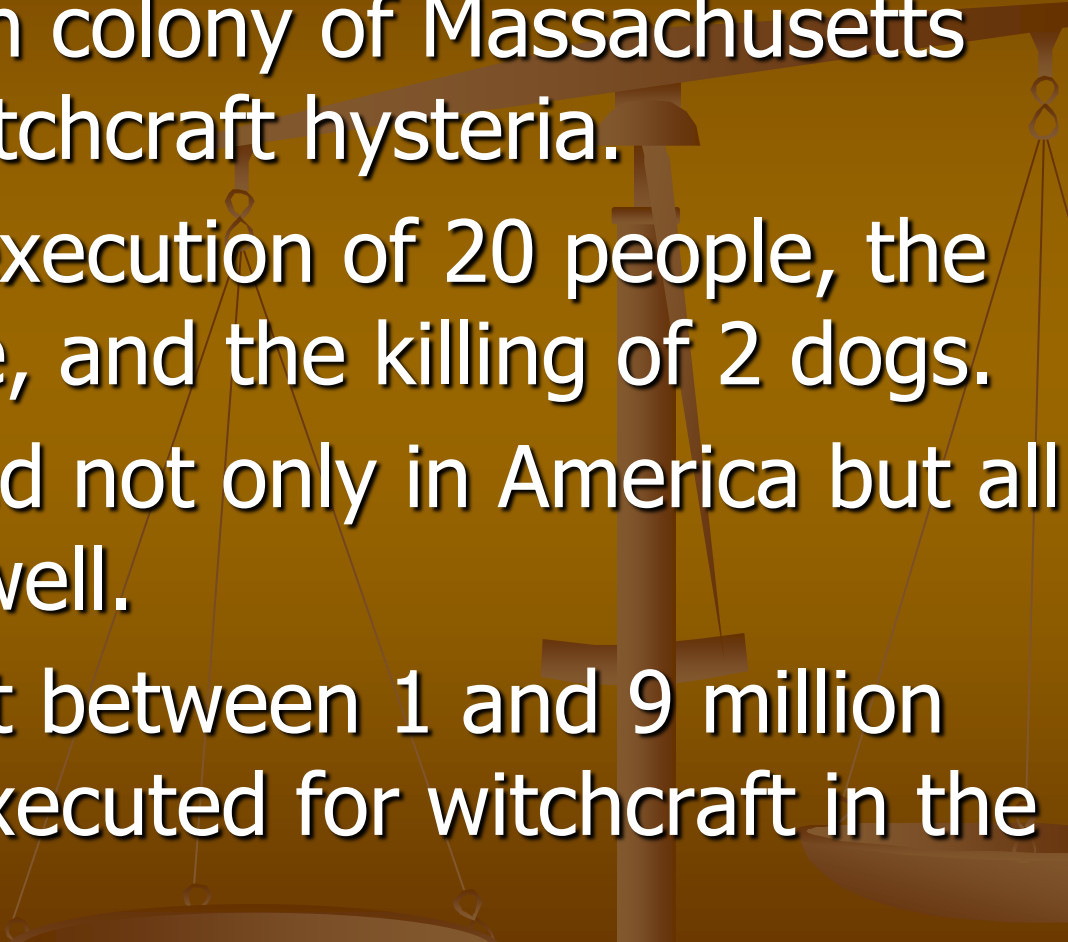


# The Salem Witch Trials



**“Examination of a Witch”**

# The History

- In 1692, the British colony of Massachusetts was swept by a witchcraft hysteria.
  - It resulted in the execution of 20 people, the jailing of 150 more, and the killing of 2 dogs.
  - The trials happened not only in America but all across Europe as well.
  - It is estimated that between 1 and 9 million Europeans were executed for witchcraft in the 1500s and 1600s.
- 

# Why were people accused of being witches?

- Thousands of years ago before the religion of Christianity existed, many people in Europe practiced their traditional folk culture
  - gathering herbs to prevent or treat diseases
  - worshiping elements or parts of the natural world rather than a specific god
  - practicing pagan songs and rituals
- Before Christianity, this was normal, but after Europe was “Christianized,” these traditional folk practices were no longer acceptable.
- Christians began to see these practices as demonic or satanic, even though the people who practiced them were NOT really worshipping the Devil.



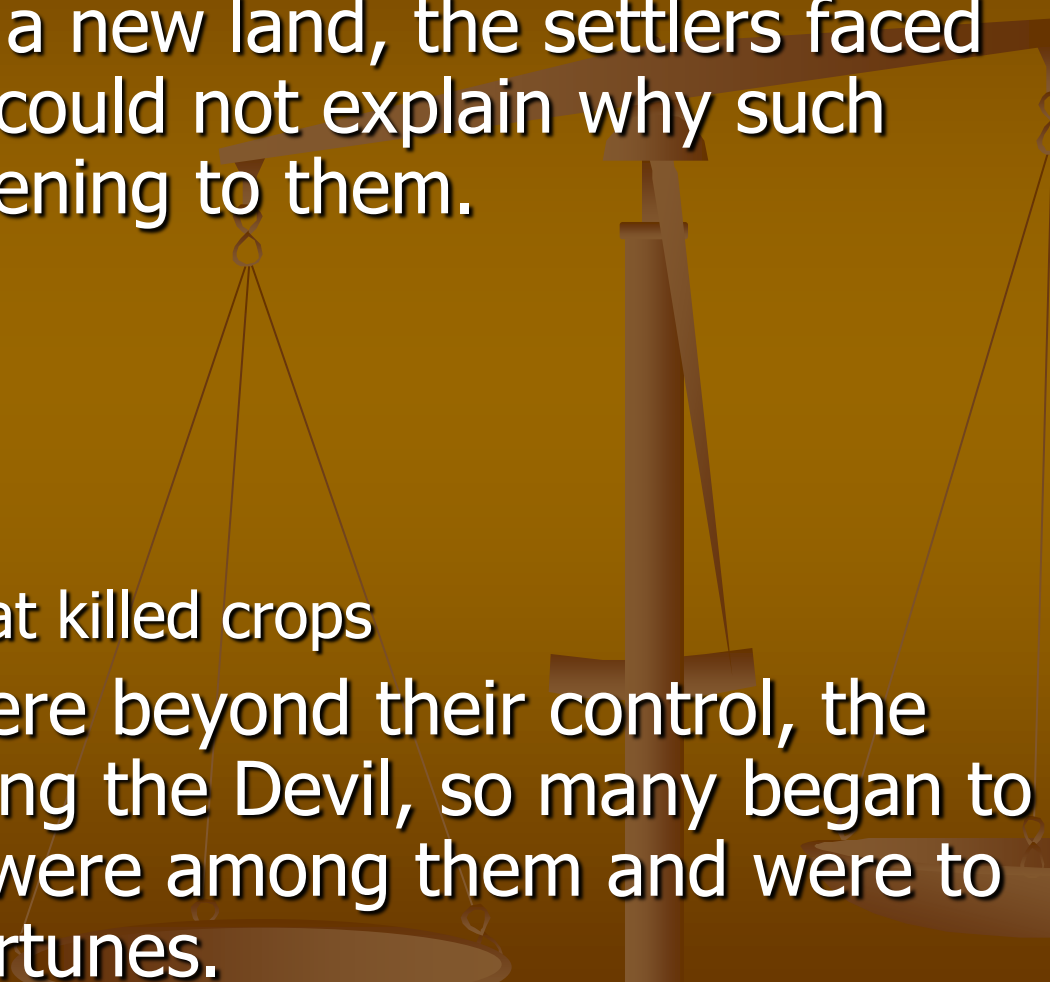
- Most witches were thought to be women. This probably stems from the belief that woman is the one who made man sin in the Christian religion.
  - Women were mostly accused of being witches.
- The most common forms of punishment were burning alive at the stake, hanging, and drowning in a sack.



# How does this influence the accusations of witchcraft in America?

- Because the American colonists' ancestors were originally from Europe, many of these folk practices had been passed down through the generations and still survived.
- Some Christian people may have been participating in European folk culture without even realizing it.
- Strict Christians, like the Puritans, labeled these practices as witchcraft, or magic, even though they really were not.

# How were the American witchcraft trials different from those in Europe?

- Being “foreigners” in a new land, the settlers faced many hardships and could not explain why such hardships were happening to them.
    - Bitter weather
    - Sickness and death
    - Devastating fires
    - Drought
    - Insect infestations that killed crops
  - Since these things were beyond their control, the Puritans began blaming the Devil, so many began to believe that witches were among them and were to blame for their misfortunes.
- 



# So what does this all mean?

- Some people in Salem, Massachusetts were becoming too outwardly “religious” instead of inwardly “spiritual.”
- People looked to accusing others of wrongdoings instead of looking at what they were doing wrong themselves.



# Motivations Behind the Accusations

## ■ **POLITICAL**

- People wanted a political office and felt threatened by someone else, so they made an accusation.

## ■ **RELIGIOUS**

- Some really thought they were doing the right thing by cleansing the church of witches

## ■ **VENGEFUL**

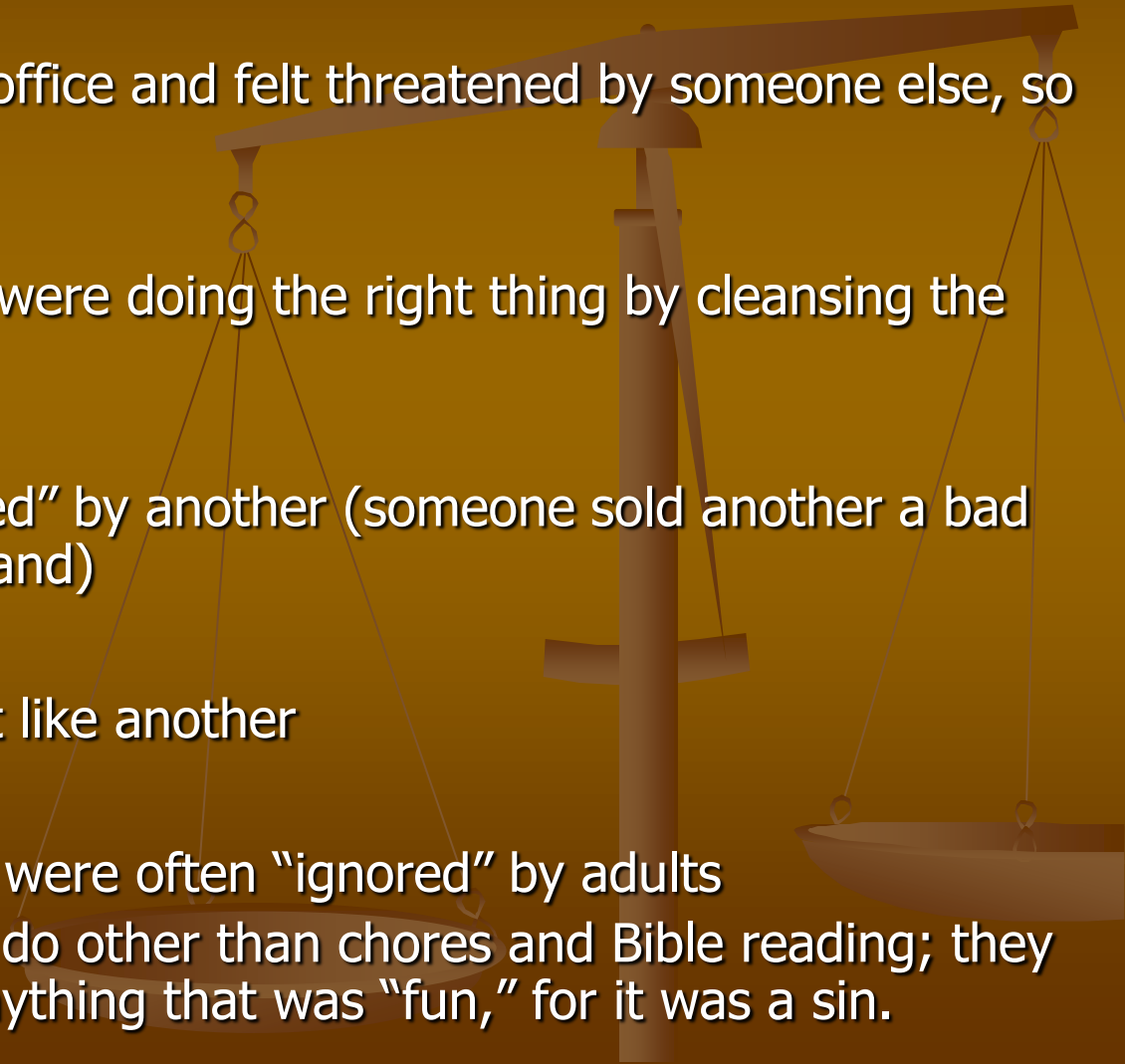
- If one person felt “wronged” by another (someone sold another a bad cow or stole some of his land)

## ■ **SOCIAL**

- One person simply did not like another

## ■ **TEENAGE BOREDOM**

- Young children/teenagers were often “ignored” by adults
- The youth had nothing to do other than chores and Bible reading; they were not allowed to do anything that was “fun,” for it was a sin.





# Arrest Warrant for Elizabeth Proctor and Sarah Cloyce

Salem Aprill. 4'th 1692 There Being Complaint this day made (Before us) by capt Jonat Walcott, and Lt Natheniell Ingersull both of Salem Village, in Behalfe of their Majesties for themselves and also for severall of their Neighbours Against Sarah Cloyce the wife of peter Cloyce of Salem Village; and Elizabeth Proctor the wife of John Proctor of Salem farmes for high Suspition of Sundry acts of Witchcraft donne or Committed by them upon the bodys of Abigail Williams, and John Indian both of Mr Sam parris his family of Salem Village and mary Walcott daughter of the abovesaid Complainants, And Ann Putnam and Marcy Lewis of the famyly of Thomas Putnam of Salem Village whereby great hurt and dammage hath beene donne to the Bodys of s'd persons above named therefore Craved Justice.

You are therefore in their Majest's names hereby required to apprehend and bring before us Sarah Cloyce the wife of peter Cloyce of Salem Village and Elizabeth proctor the wife of John Proctor of Salem farmes; on Munday Morneing Next being the Eleventh day of this Instant Aprill aboute Eleven of the Clock, at the publike Meeting house in the Towne, in order to their Examination Relateing to the premesis aboves'd and here of you are. not to faile Dated Salem Aprill 8'th 1692

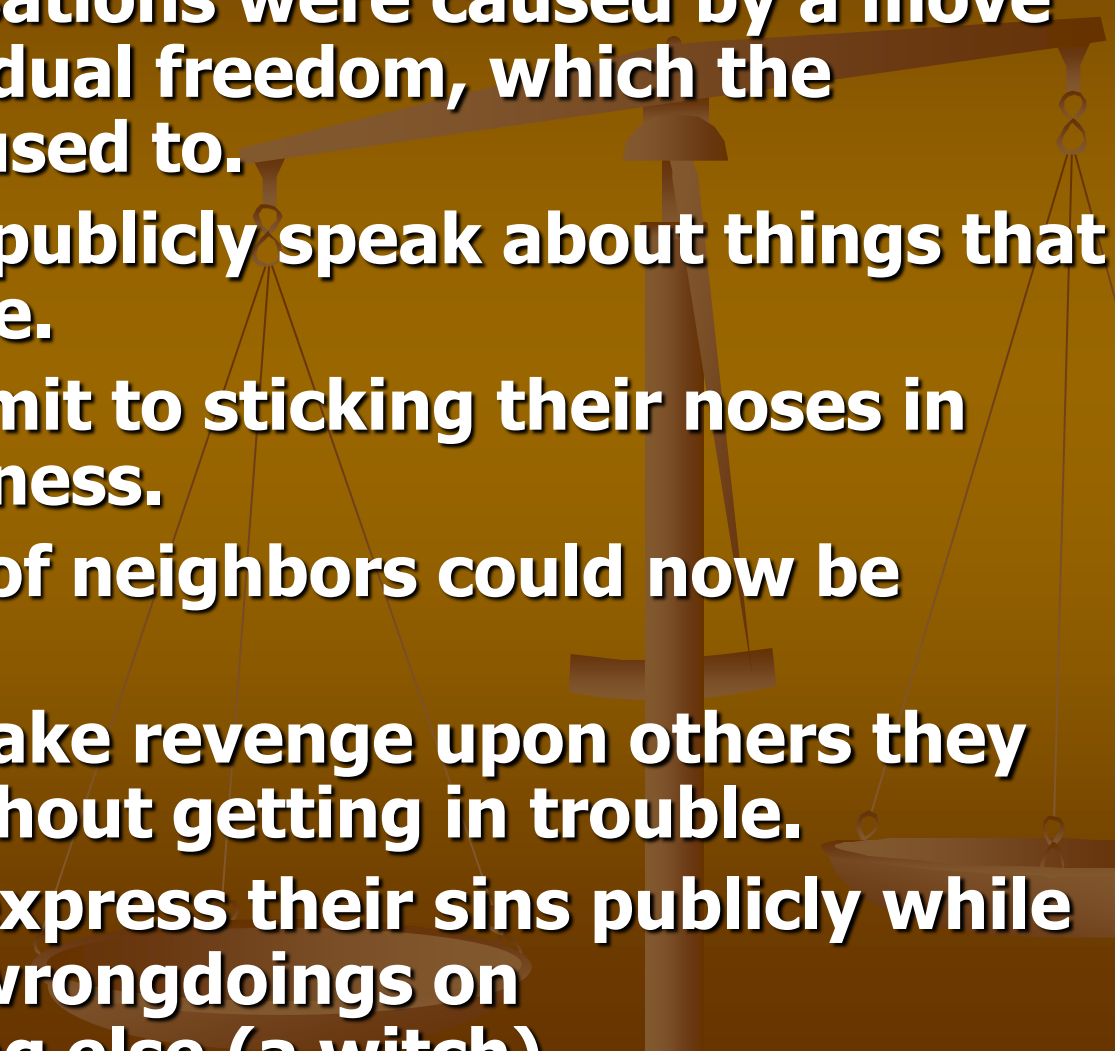
To George Herick Marshall of the County of essex  
John Hathorne  
Jonathan Corwin Assists

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# The Truth

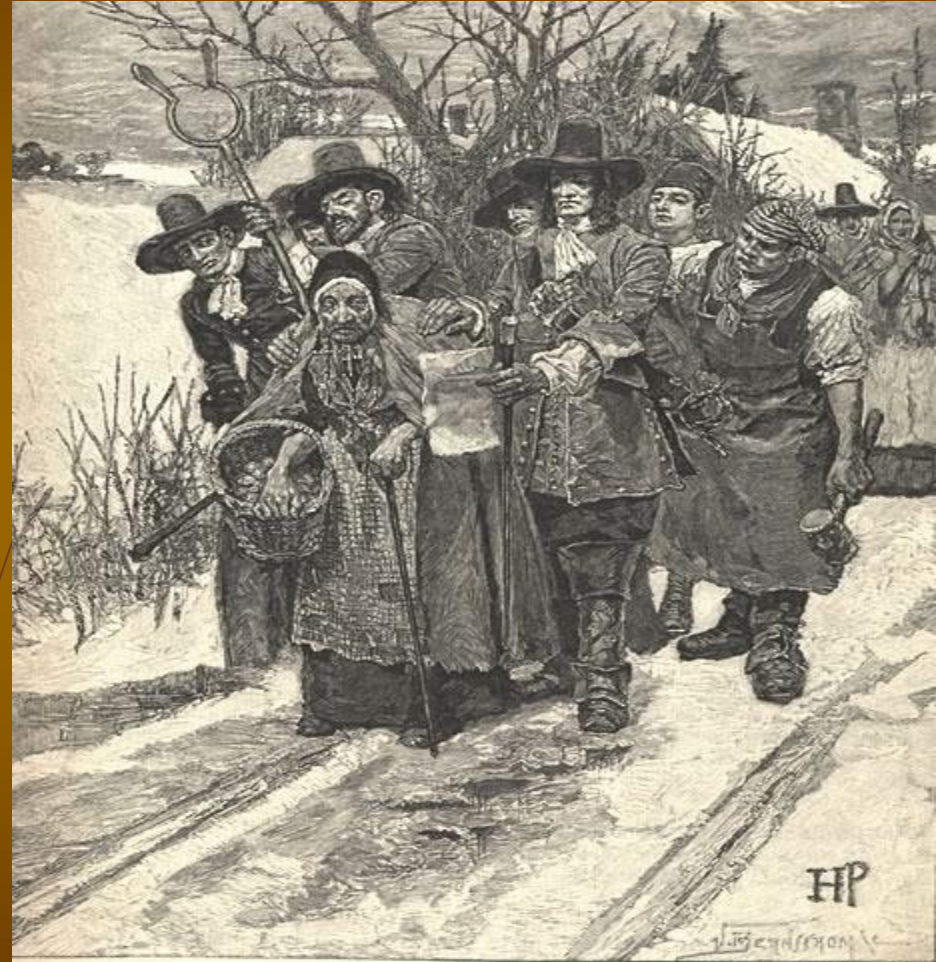
- The Puritans' government was a *theocracy*, or one in which laws were religiously decided.
  - Basically, the accusations were caused by a move toward more individual freedom, which the Puritans were not used to.
  - Now, people could publicly speak about things that were "taboo" before.
  - They could now admit to sticking their noses in other people's business.
  - Long-held hatreds of neighbors could now be openly expressed.
  - People could now take revenge upon others they were jealous of without getting in trouble.
  - People could now express their sins publicly while still blaming their wrongdoings on someone/something else (a witch).
- 



# The Consequences



**“The Hanging of Bridget Bishop”**



ARRESTING A WITCH.

**“The Arresting of a Witch”**



## "Accused of Witchcraft"



## “Execution of Mrs. Ann Hibbins”



EXECUTION OF MRS. ANN HIBBINS.

## “The Salem Martyr”





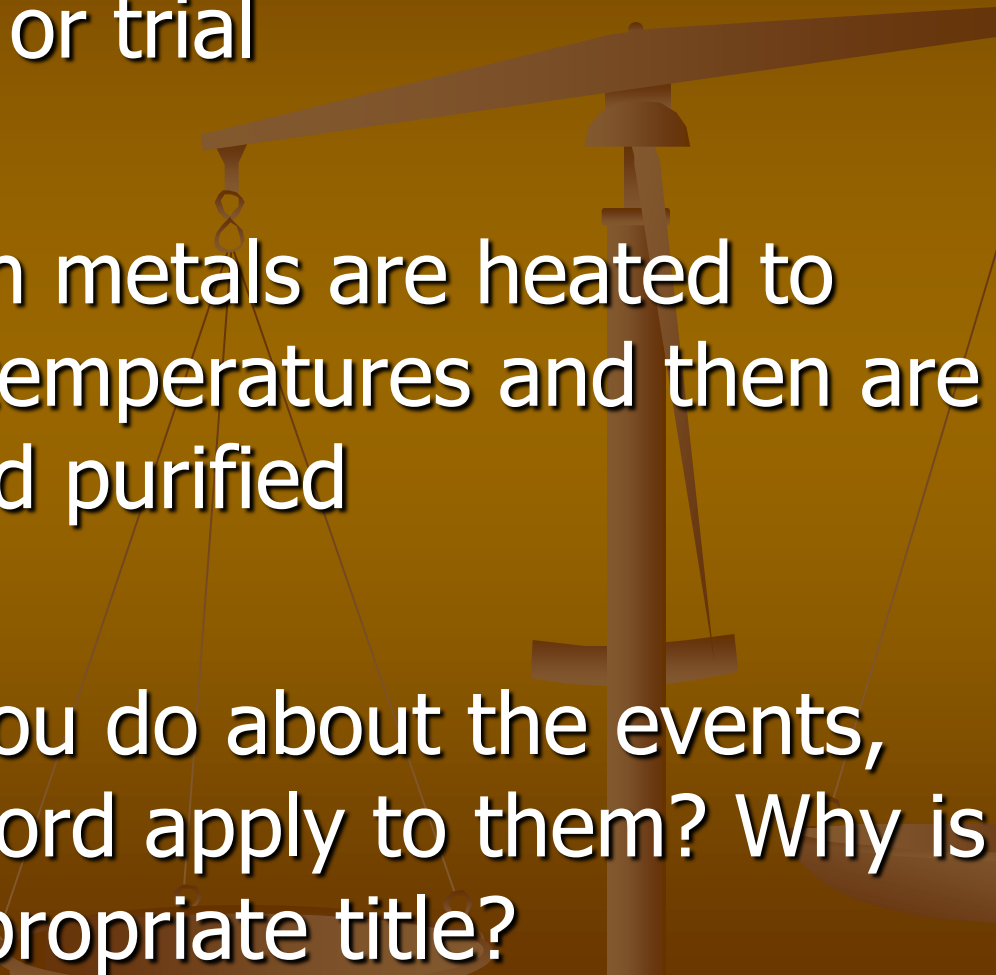
## “Witchcraft at Salem Village”



**Notice the young girl on the floor. The accusations in Salem started with a group of very young girls (9-17) who showed strange behavior. Some people say they may have eaten poisoned food or plants or had a new disease doctors did not know about.**



# Crucible

- An extreme test or trial
  - A vessel in which metals are heated to extremely high temperatures and then are melted down and purified
  - Knowing what you do about the events, how does this word apply to them? Why is this word an appropriate title?
- 

# Arthur Miller

- A living legend of American theater
  - Likes to write about the problems and challenges that common people face
  - The Crucible is an *allegory* for McCarthyism of the 1950s.
    - Senator Joe McCarthy accused many people of being Communists, and some believed it was similar to the witch hunts of Salem.
  - After the production of this play, Miller himself was investigated for Communism.
  - He was found guilty of contempt of Congress because he would not name any of his friends, but the verdict was later overturned.
- 