
Tituba: The Accused Witch

In late February of 1692, Reverend Samuel Parris hired a doctor to look at his nine-year-old daughter, Betty, and eleven-year-old niece, Abigail Williams. They were both experiencing strange behavior and sudden fits. The youngsters were soon determined to have witchcraft, making a frenzy through Salem Village and its neighboring towns that year. Numerous historians blame Parris' slave, Tituba, one of the first to be blamed for witchcraft.

She was previously married to another slave named, John Indian, before they were both purchased by Parris. Slaves in those days were looked down upon and treated unjustifiably. This could have played a part in why such a significant number of individuals accused her initially, or perhaps she was really a witch? She was taken to court and asked questions about her witchcrafting. The court record below is an actual report from the court trials. In the court records she is portrayed as negro, and colored lady. There is one section where the judge asked her if she had seen any evil spirits. She at that point says no, however after two or three questions later, she goes on to state that she has seen the devil.

For Puritans, that must have come on as a huge and shameful shock. She lies numerous more times from that point onward, changing her answers. This demonstrates she could have been an actual witch that has tortured the young ladies, or she could simply be playing along because there's not a lot to live for in a slave life. Later on in the trials, she admits that she is a witch and was sentenced to jail. Tituba confessed that she had taught the the girls in Parris's home the act of fortune telling. The fortune telling procedure that the young ladies' utilized was an egg white in a glass of water.

This training was condemned by the Puritans as a satanic practice. One of the young ladies saw an "apparition in the similarity of a coffin" in the glass, and she and another young lady began to have fits along with other strange behavior. Tituba did not admit to the educating of fortune telling; she admitted to signing the Devil's book, flying noticeable all around a pole, seeing cats, wolves, birds, and dogs squeezing or gagging a portion of the afflicted young ladies. She also said she was beaten by Rev. Parris, and was told to admit to witchcraft, which she did.

Tituba's confession created chaos for the entire trials, particularly after she named the other accused witches as genuine ones. Because she confessed, it also gave the accusers the plan to accuse more individuals.