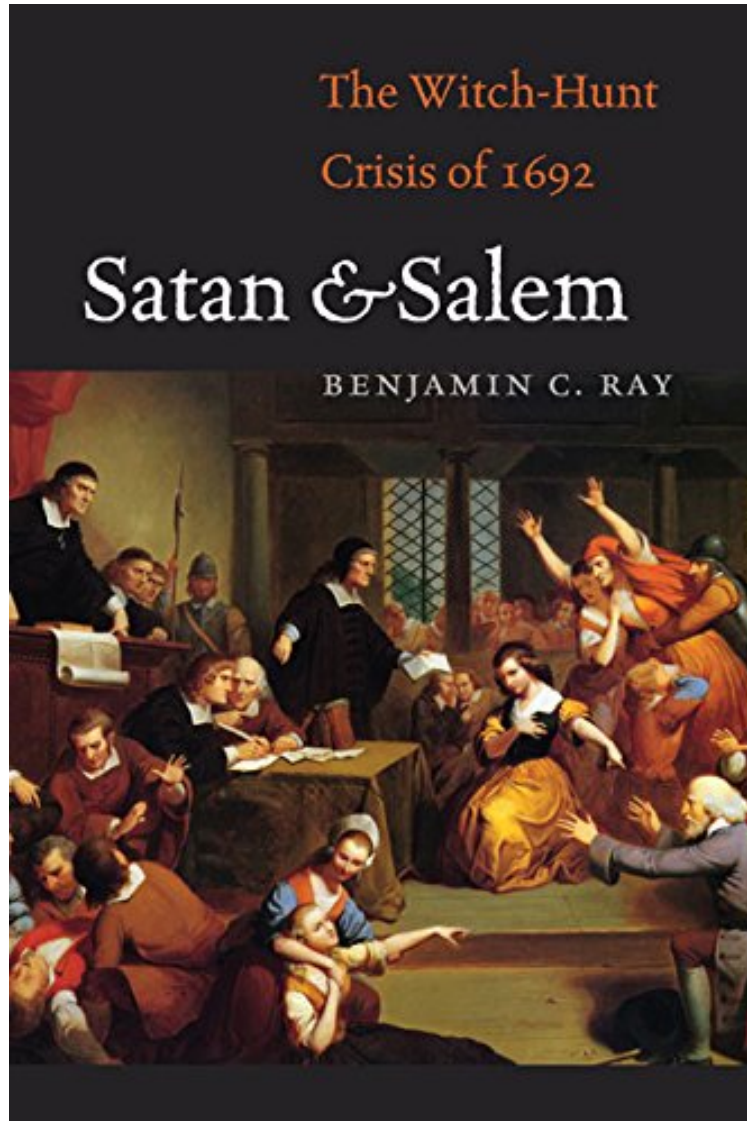


Satan and Salem: The Witch-Hunt Crisis of 1692

Benjamin C. Ray

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Benjamin C. Ray : Satan and Salem: The Witch-Hunt Crisis of 1692 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Satan and Salem: The Witch-Hunt Crisis of 1692:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed it a great dealBy Thomas D. St. HilaireIf you wanted to know just a little something about what happened in Salem, this probably isn't your book. If instead you are looking for a thorough understanding, then you won't find a more complete accounting than this! Clearly written and obviously well-researched, I enjoyed it a great deal.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Mrs. Deborah L. MitchelThanks!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy David J. FordVery interesting, well

written, compelling argument. Ray makes important corrections to the assertions/claims made by Boyer and Nissenbaum.

The result of a perfect storm of factors that culminated in a great moral catastrophe, the Salem witch trials of 1692 took a breathtaking toll on the young English colony of Massachusetts. Over 150 people were imprisoned, and nineteen men and women, including a minister, were executed by hanging. The colonial government, which was responsible for initiating the trials, eventually repudiated the entire affair as a great "delusion of the Devil." In *Satan and Salem*, Benjamin Ray looks beyond single-factor interpretations to offer a far more nuanced view of why the Salem witch-hunt spiraled out of control. Rather than assigning blame to a single perpetrator, Ray assembles portraits of several major characters, each of whom had complex motives for accusing his or her neighbors. In this way, he reveals how religious, social, political, and legal factors all played a role in the drama. Ray's historical database of court records, documents, and maps yields a unique analysis of the geographic spread of accusations and trials, ultimately showing how the witch-hunt resulted in the execution of so many people far more than any comparable episode on this side of the Atlantic. In addition to the print volume, *Satan and Salem* will also be available as a linked e-book offering the reader the opportunity to investigate firsthand the primary sources and maps on which Ray's groundbreaking argument rests.

The unmistakable achievement of this book is Benjamin Ray's close reading of court records, which has enabled him to correct a host of assertions made by others and to offer, in their place, a persuasive reinterpretation of whys and whens. (David D. Hall, Harvard University) Benjamin Ray is one of the leading scholars of Salem witchcraft. His knowledge of the field is deep and extensive, and he has combed the archives in pursuit of new information about the outbreak. *Satan and Salem* is a leading work in the field that will appeal to both professional historians and those interested in the occult and religion. (Richard B. Latner, Professor Emeritus, Tulane University) Measurably deepens our understanding of the underlying dynamics, especially the parts played by important participants. (John Demos, New York of Books) At least once a generation a scholar promises to give the final word on the origins and course of the 1692 Salem witchcraft outbreak. Ben Ray's *Satan and Salem* is a book that finally delivers on that ambitious claim. By combining shrewd analysis of newly transcribed and discovered documents, a corrected timeline of events, and a truly broad consideration of the religious, social, and political context for the outbreak, Ray makes us sympathetic to not only the tragedy of Salem but the complex world that produced it. (Gretchen A. Adams, Texas Tech University, author of *The Specter of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-Century America*) *Satan and Salem* offers a synthetic overview of the witch hunts that builds on previous scholarship while also presenting new insights into the importance of Samuel Parris and the Salem Village church. Ray's most significant argument is that the primary division in Salem was not geographic or economic but religious.... [Ray's] insights about religion are invaluable. (William Mary Quarterly) [A] clearly written and compact recounting of the major events of the Salem witch crisis. Its focus on the participants' fear that their religion was under attack by Satan adds an important dimension to the ongoing scholarly debates about this seminal event in seventeenth-century New England. (Nova Religio) Ray's analysis of the voluminous historical documents produced during the Salem witch trials and in their aftermath is second to none. The book is also intensely readable, as Ray's economical and compelling prose brings the reader through the key factors in the trials from the fate of seventeenth-century covenant theology to the effects of the loss of the colonial charter to the genre of confession and the status of spectral evidence. I can think of very few scholars who have such extensive knowledge of the Salem documents or who have assimilated them so thoroughly.... [E]ssential reading for any serious student of Salem. (American Historical) Benjamin C. Ray brings a high measure of authority to his analysis of the Salem witch trials in *Satan and Salem*.... Ray's book is not a conventional narrative of the events in Salem and surrounding communities. Instead, it is a thematically united collection of essays that explore key aspects of the crisis that began in Salem and the subsequent judicial processes.... Ray's *Satan and Salem* is essential reading for anyone interested in the Salem witch trials. (Journal of American Culture) Thoroughly researched, the book helpfully directs the reader to the original court records and associated primary source documents throughout via endnotes, which will prove immensely useful to any scholar.... The book is written in such a way that it will likely appeal to the lay reader with a passing interest in the Salem witch trials, as well as to students and scholars involved in research. (Reading Religion) About the Author Benjamin C. Ray is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. He is the Director of the award-winning Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and an associate editor of *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*.