

Transcript of Lecture

Delivered by

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"It Were as Well to Please the Devil as Anger Him,"

Witchcraft in the Founding Days of East Hampton

In 1657 Elizabeth Howell, the daughter of Lion Gardiner, East Hampton's most prominent citizen died screaming she was killed by a witch. According to legend, Lion Gardiner protected the woman his daughter believed killed her with witchcraft, and offered her asylum for the rest of her life on his island. The legend gives the impression that the founders of the town were somehow immune from the prevalent superstitions of their time. The court records tell us that they managed to resolve the crisis without sacrificing the witch, despite the fact that the founders were as susceptible as others living at that time to beliefs in witchcraft. To appreciate this rare peaceful resolution of a witchcraft crisis, we need to understand the mentality of the 17th century. The witnesses at the inquest concerning the charges of witchcraft told us how they felt, thought and acted when confronted with matters of life and death, fortune and misfortune. The records also show us how the newly devised legal system served them in this and other types of crises. If we acquaint ourselves with the religious and magical beliefs that helped them to understand the crisis, we have a more complete picture of just how remarkable it was that they never hung a witch in this town.

To help you to see the witchcraft crisis in the context of the very different world view of the 17th century, we will show you some art works in which the people of that time documented their inner experience of the supernatural world.

In the 17th century, even in civilized Europe, the supernatural was very much part of everyday experience. Protestant Reformers felt especially vulnerable because they cut themselves loose from the safety net of the soul-saving rites of the Catholic church. They chose instead to face the uncertainty of life in this world and the next without the comforts of the intercession of the saints, or rites of extreme unction, exorcism, or confession and forgiveness of sins.

Because most Protestants believed that nature lacked an inherent, self-sufficient order, they felt the world was precariously poised on the brink of chaos. Without God's restraining hand the waters--which were by nature heavier than earth--would inundate the land, all substances, all bodies, stars, earth and seas, in short, the whole structure of the world would collapse in an instant and be reduced to nothing.

Furthermore, chaos was exactly what humans deserved, because Adam had destroyed the original perfection of the world. Because of Adam's sin, the world and humans became so hopelessly corrupt and depraved that humans were incapable of redeeming themselves or nature by their own efforts. To make matters worse, God allowed Satan to have his way in the sinful world. Satan worked diligently, with the help of witches, to disrupt the precarious order of the world. Here we see a witch drawing the moon down from the sky and raising a storm. With religious reformations in progress in the 17th century, each of the contending churches and sects saw the power of Satan behind the efforts of their adversaries (slide G2).

The fact that God maintained order from moment to moment was testament to God's love for

undeserving sinners. John Calvin thought that was reassuring proof of God's reliability. Puritans were supposed to see it that way, but not all could.

Although all humans deserved eternal damnation in hell, God, in his mercy, had decided to forgive a select few. These, despite their sinful natures, were predestined for eternal life with him. The rest would reap their deserved eternal punishment in hell. God had made this selection before he created the world, and he would not change his mind. Because humans were incapable of understanding God's will, it was impossible to know who was among the elect.

However, with so much at stake, the Puritans were always on the look-out for clues. The world was pregnant with supernatural meaning and signs of God's intention. Any unusual event-- lightning, hailstorms, even the appearance of a very large cabbage in the garden-- was as a sign of God's approval or anger, usually the latter. Here we see meteors falling. One of the men has fainted from fright. Although it was impious to presume to interpret these signs of God's intentions, Puritans recorded them and pondered their significance in their diaries. Puritan orthodoxy shaped all facets of life in the colonies. Statements of the laws included quotations of the relevant passages from the Bible on which they were based. Although everyone was not a member of a congregation, member or not, all were expected to contribute to the maintenance of the church and pastor, and to believe and behave according to Puritan ideals.

All around the world people believe some extraordinary individuals have an inherent, supernatural capacity to harm others that normal, good people do not. This may be because the belief is useful. It explains the cause of misfortune, and at the same time it absolves the accuser of personal responsibility, justifies contempt for the witch and the most extreme measure to be rid of them, including murder. The person accused of being a witch became the embodiment of evil, a useful antithesis against which the righteous defined their own goodness. The witch acquired the hideous features of the accusers projected fear and disgust. In the 17th century fear and disgust bore the features of deformed femininity, old age, and familiarity with animals rather than civilized humans.

In the 16th and 17th centuries there were two distinct species of witch, each bearing the characteristics of one of two sets of fears. The oldest image of the witch represented the fears of common people. This witch harmed her neighbors' health and property by causing unfavorable weather, destroying crops and livestock and subverting the efficiency of housewives. These harmful magics were known as maleficium. A new species of witch evolved in the context of contending religious reformations and the instability of governments. This witch made a pact with Satan. He, or more often she, agreed to assist Satan in his campaign to destroy the church and orderly society. In exchange, Satan provided these witches with privileges and protection against poverty, sickness and other misfortunes that the state either could not, or would not, provide. Together these two images of the witch could account for all misfortune, personal and social. Theologians and scholars controlled the media, so theirs was the definitive portrayal of the witch. Laws against witchcraft reflected this anxiety about Satanic conspiracy. Demonology scholars, churchmen and lawyers established the features of Satanic witchcraft as objective facts. Their treatises explain that witches flew

through the night to Sabbath gatherings where they conspired with Satan. Witches collaborated with familiar spirits--often animals--and could turn themselves into animals.

During the 16th

and 17th centuries it was heretical to doubt the reality of Satanic witchcraft.

There was plenty of misfortune to explain in those troubled times. The collection of religious wars, plagues, syphilis, enormous inequalities in wealth and faltering monarchies would have seemed uncanny. Authorities knew it was a Satanic conspiracy. When individuals suffered sickness, starvation and other effects of these collective disasters, they accused one another of maleficium. The latter gladly resorted to the legal mechanisms in place to be rid of the witch, but they couldn't expect much help from the courts unless they were able to modify their stories of maleficium to accommodate the judges' concern with Satanic conspiracy. The colonialists brought these two versions of the witch with them, along with the laws relating to this capital crime. Witchcraft served them as a ready explanation for both the familiar and the novel misfortunes they encountered in the wilderness of the new world.

The earliest evidence we have for suspicion that Goody Elizabeth Garlick, wife of Joshua Garlick, was a witch comes from Goody Simon's memory of a strange thing that happened one day when she was having her fits. You will notice that most of the women were called "Goody" or "goodwife," except those of more elevated status who were called "Mrs." On the day of Goody Simon's fits, Goody Bishop hurried down the main street of the town of East Hampton with some dockweed that she got from Goody Garlick. Goody Bishop was hoping the herbs would ease Goody Simon's fits. When Goody Bishop arrived at Goody Simon's house the ailing woman recoiled in horror and threw the herbs in the fire. While she and Goody Davis burned the herbs, Simons explained that it had been like this on another day when she and several of the people who came to East Hampton were living in Lynn, Massachusetts Connecticut. On that occasion, also, a friend brought healing herbs to ease her fits. Then a strange black thing had entered the house. While Goody Simons was in the throes of a strong fit a neighbor asked "Who has a black cat?" Another answered, "Goody Garlick."

The women were able to organize the diffuse black thing into the form of Goody Garlick's cat because of the common belief that witches sent familiar animal spirits, or turned themselves into animals, to do their mischief. It was not unusual for the colonialists to see spectres. One example that is pretty close to home. In July of 1665, the inhabitants of several towns on Long Island witnessed an apparition. They heard the sound of guns and drums coming from the sea. In the clear light of morning they saw "companies of armed men in the air clothed in light-colored garments, and the commanders in red."

Why didn't the women realize that Goody Simons' fits and strange visions were symptoms of her pathology? They probably did, however that was an inadequate explanation. Because for Puritans, reason, science, philosophy and other knowledge were products of the deceptive senses. These were only useful as indicators of the ultimate cause behind superficial appearances. Ultimately all disharmony was the result of Man's sin. It would be important then, to know "whose sin?" Was Goody Garlick's the only person who owned a black cat? Probably not, but she knew something about healing. It was she who gave Goody Bishop the herbs that ended up in the fire. Many healers were accused of witchcraft, particularly if their

cures failed. After all, what was to prevent them from using the same power to harm rather than heal? Possession of valuable knowledge and skill also made Goody Garlick different and more powerful than other women. It is also likely that Goody Garlick was French. Being one of few foreigners among the English would have made her suspect. Goody Simons commented while burning Goody Garlick's herbs that she would have neither Goody Garlick nor Goody Edwards near her. The two women had something in common and it wasn't a fondness for black cats. Their insults were taken seriously. Women seldom came to the attention of the magistrates, unless their words or actions threatened the status or property of men. Lion Gardiner sued Goody Garlick -- along with her husband and Goody Simons-- for "uttering slanderous speeches."

As far back as 1643 in Lynn Massachusetts, Goody Edwards was described as "an ignorant, sottish and imperious woman," after she struck a man and "scoffed at his membership." In East Hampton she was ordered to pay a fine or stand with her tongue in a cleft stick. A few years later, the constable came to fetch her to court. Goody Edwards threatened to burn the warrant and kicked the constable. When the constable's assistant, the eminent Mr. Thomas Talmage, came to his friend's defense, Goody Edwards kicked him hard enough to break his shin. When her husband urged her to keep her peace, Goody Edwards berated him for bringing her to live among heathens and promised that when she got home she would hang him.

On another occasion Goody Edwards came to the attention of the court. Goody Price called Goody Edwards a liar when she bragged about a petticoat she brought from England. It was not Goody Edwards, but her husband who brought the suit for defamation. This apparently trivial female conflict might have remained a private squabble had it not endangered Mr. Edwards' posterity. He complained to the magistrates that people would say as his son walked by, "There goes the son of a base liar!"

But Goody Edwards was never brought to court for accusations of witchcraft; Goody Garlick was. Goody Edwards' hostility came under the jurisdiction of the public court because she was a liability to men as well as women. The overwhelming evidence against Goody Garlick consisted of offenses against women. These festered outside the court. Soon after the Garlicks moved to Gardiner's Island with the Gardiner family uncanny events followed in the tracks of Goody Garlick. Soon after Lion Gardiner sued both the Garlicks for slanderous speeches, Gardiner's ox broke its leg. Then a black child was taken away strangely. Next, a man died under suspicious circumstances. Then a perfectly normal pig gave birth to piglets in some anomalous fashion and died. According to Goody Davis these events happened one after another, all of a sudden, and all in connection with Goody Garlick.

Goody Davis and other women confirmed their suspicion that Goody Garlick was responsible for these uncanny events with some counter magic. The ritual was based on the belief that when witches harm a person or an animal, they open a channel of communication. The afflicted can exploit this link to discover the identity of the witch or effect revenge by returning the harm to its source. If they burned some hair, urine or flesh of the witch's victim, the witch would experience pain and be compelled to come forth. The women burned the tail of the sow that died strangely. Goody Garlick showed up. We may wonder just how soon after the burning of the tail she showed up, and how many other people passed by unnoticed while

they waited, but to their satisfaction, Goody Garlick proved her guilt.

Goody Davis was very interested in proving that Goody Garlick was a witch because she was convinced that Goody Galick killed her baby with the evil-eye. Goody Davis was no stranger to misfortune. She had been widowed twice, and her present husband, Faulk, was a philanderer. Then, one day, Goody Davis dressed her baby in clean linen. Goody Garlick came by and complimented the mother on how pretty the baby looked. Then she said, "the child is not well for it groaneth." On hearing these words Davis felt her heart rise within her. Goody Davis saw death in her baby's face. The child fell ill and never opened its eyes or cried until it died five days later. Goody Davis told her friends that Goody Garlick killed her baby with the evil eye.

Why did Goody Davis believe Goody Garlick gave her the evil eye? Her words were benign enough. However, believers in the evil eye attribute equal danger to the hostile and the overly appreciative gaze. The lethal gaze is believed by the jealous to express envy. The difference between jealousy and envy is this: the jealous wish to protect what belongs to them; the envious wish to destroy or expropriate what belongs to others. Goody Garlick said the child looked pretty; Goody Davis heard envy. Goody Davis was understandably jealous, or shall we say, defensive and protective of her baby. The infant mortality rate was high; all new mothers were anxious. Goody Davis was a new mother. Goody Garlick was beyond her child-bearing years. Goody Garlick commented that the child might be ill. Goody Davis heard a prophetic threat. Witchcraft trial records reveal that many older women were accused by young ones. For these young mothers the witch is the anti-mother. The good mother sees to it that her children thrive; the anti-mother turns mother's milk to poison and makes children sicken and die.

The Garlicks' moved from Gardiner's Island into the town. Their fortune was on the rise. They acquired land allotments in the town that would eventually elevate them from the lowest to the middle status group. This may have provoked some envy. When the Garlicks were planning to move to East Hampton, Goody Davis warned the people in town that they would regret having Goody Garlick as a neighbor because of all the uncanny misfortunes that followed in her wake. As she predicted--or perhaps because she predicted--the anti-mother image of Goody Garlick grew stronger as more new mothers and their babies were added to Goody Garlick's list of casualties.

One day Goody Garlick came by to ask Goody Edwards' daughter for some breast milk. The young mother complied and soon thereafter, her breast milk dried up and her child sickened. Goody Davis, informed Goody Edwards' daughter that the same sequence of events followed after Goody Garlick asked for breast milk from two other women, Goody Stratton and Goody Davis' daughter. Goody Davis' grandchild recovered, but Mary Stratton's baby died, just as Goody Davis' baby had died from Garlick's evil eye. Men had just as much, or possibly more, difficulty getting along with one another. Men redressed their grievances with that good old staple of East Hampton history: the law suit. Between 1650 and 1656 the magistrates recorded more than 34 court cases dealing with matters such as trespass, damage to crops, ownership disputes, overcharging in business transactions, and disagreements over land boundaries. Nearly half of the cases involved slander and defamation.

Highlights of these cases include the accusation that a servant stood behind Mrs. Gardiner and made "bow-wow noises." The Reverend Thomas James accused a man of attempting to seduce both his daughter and his maid. Four men, including Goody Davis' husband, were accused of being "notorious masturbators." This was a capital offense, punishable by death. For the first time the East Hampton magistrates called on the expertise of an external court. Only after extended examination of witnesses and serious debate and consultation with authorities in Connecticut did the townsmen decide the offense was not worthy of loss of life or limb.

In the year preceding our story these public interpersonal conflicts escalated to the point of overburdening the court. The townsmen passed a series of ordinances to discourage the contentious behavior. These have the tone of Old Testament justice: "an eye for an eye." Anyone who brought charges against another must be prepared to suffer the same loss of life, limb, or goods, that he would have done to his neighbor if the charges were proven false. Any man who struck another in anger would pay a fine to the court, and pay for his victim's cure as well as the productive labor lost as a result of the injury. A fine of up to 5 pounds would be imposed for slander.

In the year preceding the Goody Garlick witchcraft case 15 cases came before the magistrates; that is, one case for every 12 people in the town. If you think the magistrates were overburdened with court cases in the founding days of our town, listen to these statistics! In 1997 there were more court cases than there were people in the town, if we include vehicle, traffic and parking violations--problems that the town fathers didn't have to worry about. In 1997 the East Hampton court adjudicated 19,584 cases for a population of 16, 779 people. If we exclude traffic violations, there is a ratio of approximately one case for every 5 people living in the town.

In the midst of this whirlwind of contention a sudden illness came upon Elizabeth Howell, Lion Gardiner's daughter, one evening in February of 1657. Elizabeth, who was then 16 years old, had recently given birth to her first child. She was alone in her home until a friend, Samuel Parsons, came to visit her husband, Arthur Howell. He was not at home, she told him. However, Elizabeth invited her guest to warm himself at the fire. She confided that she was suffering from a headache and that she thought she had caught a chill. Samuel left for a short while, then returned to find her worse. Elizabeth bound a cloth around her head to ease her pain. Presently, Elizabeth's husband, Arthur Howell, returned home with a friend, William Russell. They found Elizabeth huddled by the fire. She said, "Love, I am very ill of my head, and I fear I shall have the fever." Arthur took her to bed. "Lord have mercy upon me," she sobbed, then asked her friends to pray for her. No doubt Elizabeth prayed for relief of her pain. But, for Puritans, the spiritual significance of suffering was of the utmost importance. In sickness they felt themselves hovering precariously between heaven and hell. For those who were not certain that they were among those elected for eternal life suffering was an opportunity to repent, and receive faith in one's election. Those who had received the conviction that they were among the elect might be tempted to doubt its authenticity. For those whom God had not chosen, no such conviction--at least no genuine one-- could ever come. In that case, suffering was nothing more than a preview of eternal damnation. The conversion

experiences generally didn't happen before the age of mid-twenties. Elizabeth was only 16. Judging from surviving records, most of the second generation Puritans either never received it, or didn't demonstrate it in the customary way. Elizabeth prayed, herself, that she would not lose her senses. Shortly thereafter she said, as she suckled her baby, "My poor child it pitties me more for thee than for myself for if I be ill, to be sure thou wilt be ill too." After the baby was taken from her, Elizabeth sang the words of a psalm, then terrified her friends by shrieking, "A witch! A witch! Now you are come to torture me because I spoke 2 or 3 words against you! In the morning you will come fawning..." Samuel said, "The lord be merciful to her...It is well if she bee not bewicht."

The men were reluctant to disturb Lion Gardiner with this new problem because he was attending his wife who was also quite ill. Finally, they sent Samuel Parsons to inform Lion Gardiner of his daughter's condition. Lion found his daughter peering fixedly at the foot of her bed shrieking, "A witch! A witch!" He asked her, "What do you see?" "A black thing at the bed's feet," she answered, sobbing and flailing to fight an adversary that she alone could see. Her struggle became more frenzied. Elizabeth's husband tried to restrain her, but she resisted him with uncharacteristic strength. At last she exhausted herself.

The next morning Lion Gardiner found that his daughter's condition was deteriorating. He decided to inform his wife. After several failed attempts to rise from her own sickbed, Mary Gardiner struggled across the village green to the bed of her daughter. Daughter and mother wept in each other's arms until Elizabeth said, "Oh, mother, I am bewitched." Mary, now startled, said, "No, no, you are asleep or dreaming." But Elizabeth insisted, "I am not asleep. I am not dreaming. Truly, I am bewitched." Mary asked her "Whom do you see?" After some hesitation, at last Elizabeth shrieked, "Goody Garlick! Goody Garlick! I see her at the far corner of the bed, and a black thing of hers at the other corner."

This is the first time that Elizabeth named the witch. She was delirious with fever, perhaps from an infection following childbirth. Mary Gardiner said, in her deposition, that Elizabeth named the witch, but it is possible that the two women arrived at the conclusion collaboratively. This seems to have been the case in the Salem trials some thirty years later. Adolescent girls became delirious. When asked what ailed them, at first they said they didn't know. When adults suggested the names of certain women who might be bewitching them, the girls obediently confirmed the adults' suspicions.

Again, Elizabeth struggled with an adversary, who was invisible to everyone except herself. "Hush, child," Mary said, "This is a terrible thing you say. You must never say it again, not to your husband, not to any living soul. For your husband, if he heard you speak so, would surely tell..."

Mary Gardiner's testimony ends with that dangling sentence. Who might Elizabeth's husband tell? Perhaps the mother was afraid that the Garlicks would find out and retaliate. Mary told her daughter explicitly no to tell her husband because he might tell. He might tell his father. Arthur Howells father, Edward, was one of the devout Puritan founders of Southampton. While Puritans acknowledged that Satan was empowered by God to create disorder through witches, he would think it blasphemous to believe any human could independently wield supernatural power that belongs only to God. The pious response to suffering was repentance,

not blaming others. In any case, it seems Mary feared an accusation of witchcraft might boomerang and bring shame on Elizabeth or the Gardiner family.

Mary was obliged to return to her own home and bed. That day, three neighbors-- Goody Birdsall, Ann Edwards, and Goody Simons--stood by as Elizabeth's afflictions intensified. She alternated between long periods of incoherence and clear and violent outcries. "She is a double-tongued woman...She pricks me with pins...Oh! She torments me..." "Who torments you," the women asked. At first Elizabeth was reluctant to reply. Finally she screamed, "Ah, Garlick, you jeered me when I came to your house to call my husband home. You laughed and jeered me, and I went crying away." : If sticks and stones don't break your bones, why were so many men suing each other for slander and defamation in the East Hampton court? Insults damage not only one's public image, but the personal estimation of the self. The Garlicks derided Elizabeth Howell's competence as a housewife. We do not see women defending their honor in court as men did. This personal humiliation would not interest the court because it cast no shame on Elizabeth's husband or the family's honor. Women negotiated their individual reputations privately among themselves. Law suits and witchcraft accusations were two separate, gender-specific defenses against insults. Most witchcraft accusations followed an argument or confrontation of this kind. Elizabeth continued to rant "Oh, you are a pretty one." "Send for Garlick and his wife," she cried out, "I would tear her in pieces and leave the birds to pick her bones." She answered the women who wondered why she would do such a thing, "Did you not see her last night stand by my bedside, ready to pull me to pieces? She pricked me with pins, and she brought a black thing to the foot of my bed." Then, clutching her throat, Elizabeth gagged and choked. Ann Edwards forced Elizabeth's mouth open with the handle of a knife. Finding no obstruction there, Ann next gave her some oil and sugar. (This was a common remedy against witchcraft.) After a brief calm, Elizabeth coughed and her attendants saw a pin fall from her mouth. Simons retrieved the pin and held it to the light. There had been no such pin in the house before.

Many pins were produced at the bedsides of the alleged victims of witchcraft. These are exhibited in museums in Salem Massachusetts and in Europe. Where did they all come from? It was Goody Simons who retrieved the pin, allegedly from Elizabeth's mouth. She had something at stake in providing clear physical evidence of Goody Garlick's witchcraft. She was convinced that Goody Garlick tried to harm her by intruding her herbs into her house. Goody Simons may have seen this as an opportunity to exchange her terror of Goody Garlick for effective aggression. This time the witch was endangering the life of a prominent woman. If Goody Simons could confirm Elizabeth's suspicions with objective evidence, maybe this time, Goody Simons could persuade others who were more influential than herself to confront the witch. With slight of hand, Goody Simons might have provided that concrete evidence.

Goody Simons remained and slept in the bed with Elizabeth after the other women went home. Arthur, and William Russell and a female slave, Boose, stationed themselves around the bed. Somewhat past midnight everyone except Elizabeth and Simons, who were sleeping, were frightened by a strange sound, as if someone were scratching near the bed. The men searched around the bed and were mystified when they found no source of the sound. (Perhaps Simons was tampering with the evidence again.)



Later the two men were startled by a rumbling and grating on the inside of the fireplace, for which they could find no cause. To Arthur it sounded like "a great rock were thrown down on a heap of stones, but found no place to rest." Neither Simons nor Elizabeth awakened to hear these strange disturbances, although at other times during the night Elizabeth woke Simons to ask her if she didn't see someone at the foot of the bed. Elizabeth complained repeatedly "ye prick me with pins."

The next day, Sunday, neighbors visited, including the pastor, Thomas James, to lead prayers for her soul. Puritans were supposed to welcome death. The angels were at the bedside, ready to convey the souls of those whom God had elected to heaven where they would be embraced by Christ and know joy and pleasure, and at last, complete understanding. However, Satan, and his demons, were also there, ready to convey the forsaken soul to the eternal fires of hell. The deathbed was the battle ground where Satan and the angels fought over the dying person's soul. The bravado must have been difficult to maintain considering no one could know with absolute certainty that they were among the elect and that the angels would win. Puritans prayed and fasted to console the tortured soul of the dying, but there was nothing any human could do to persuade God to redeem those he had not already chosen.

Puritans and other Protestants denied themselves the comforts of last rites when they condemned such rituals as blasphemous Catholic practices. Although the Pastor James left us very few records of his thoughts, it is likely that he responded as other pastors of the time did, by reading this crisis as a sign of God's impatience with the contentious people of the Town of East Hampton. Elizabeth, parched by fever, coughed and sobbed, clutched her head and her throat, as she descended deeper and deeper into delirium, surfacing now and then to give voice to her torment: "Garlick...double-tongued...ugly thing...pins...", And, she called out for her mother, until she finally grew quiet and her torment ended with death.

The Puritans searched for signs of how the battle between Satan and the angels was going. This description of the manner of Elizabeth's death does not make it seem that the final saving grace ever came to Elizabeth Howell. After the burial of Elizabeth Howell, the magistrates conducted an inquest to investigate the dead woman's claim that Goody Garlick had killed her with witchcraft. You have just heard the story the witnesses told in their depositions. Judges in East Hampton had more experience than they wished with the rational conflicts of men over property, status, unseemly conduct and their rights and obligations. They had no experience with the capital crime of witchcraft, or with the secret world of women's anxieties over the borrowing of breast milk and the uncanny causes they saw behind uncanny sicknesses and deaths and injuries to humans and animals.

All of the witnesses to Elizabeth's strange death testified, except for one. There is no record of a single word spoken by Lion Gardiner before the court.

Soon after the charge of witchcraft was made, Joshua Garlick filed a suit against Goody Davis for slandering his wife. Goody Davis was her most prolific accuser, although she never told her stories in court. The magistrates heard her stories second-hand in the testimonies of other women. It is curious that Goody Davis was absent from Elizabeth Howell's deathbed, as she seemed to be present every other time there was an uncanny misfortune that could be attributed to Goody Garlick's maleficium. In fact, it seems that after the Davises moved into town,

Goody Davis made her peace with Goody Garlick. The women remembered that Goody Davis had warned them that they would regret having Goody Garlick as a neighbor. When they asked about this new familiarity with her former enemy, Goody Davis said, Goody Garlick "brought many things to me...and is very kind to me," and, after all, "she were as good please the devil as anger him."

Few men other than those who witnessed Elizabeth's strange death spoke at the inquest. These few testified after Joshua Garlick sued Goody Davis for slandering his wife. These men all said they had heard Goody Davis say that Goody Garlick had killed her baby with her evil eye, or that she believed Goody Garlick was a witch. One of these statements came from Lion Gardiner's employee, Goodman Vaile. He told the court that he heard Lion Gardiner comment that Goody Davis had killed her own baby. For the sake of a little wampum she had sold her breast milk and starved her baby to death. This second-hand description of Lion Gardiner's opinion is the likely source of the legend that Lion Gardiner defended Goody Garlick. We must consider, however, that discrediting Goody Davis is not the same as defending Goody Garlick, and that Gardiner did not offer the evidence himself. Because Vaile and the other men testified after Joshua Garlick's filed his suit against Goody Davis, it is likely that they were offering evidence to support the Garlick's charge of slander. Lion Gardiner's second-hand comment may have been offered by Vaile to support his own opinion that Goody Davis was a slanderer.

The motives of the women were clear. Apparently without prompting or guidance from the magistrates, they offered evidence of the harm, sickness and death of humans and animals that the alleged witch caused with her malevolent power. We have no record of the questions the magistrates might have asked, but we find no evidence that they attempted to coerce the witnesses to make their stories of maleficium conform to the theological and legal definition of witchcraft as Satanic conspiracy. This is probably the product of their lack of experience with the legal procedures relating to the crime of witchcraft. What kind of evidence was sufficient to prove that Goody Garlick tormented Elizabeth Howell to death while she was not physically present? The magistrates were baffled. They wasted no time in asking the more experienced court in Connecticut to try the case. The town of East Hampton was obliged by a prior agreement to defer to the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Court in cases of capital crimes, but the magistrates seem to have forgotten in their panic, because they sent Lion Gardiner specifically to make these arrangements along with the two magistrates, John Hand and Thomas Baker, who were also responsible for accompanying the accused to Connecticut.

In the Particular Court of Connecticut Goody Garlick was indicted with these words:

"Elizabeth Garlick, thou art indicted by the name of Elizabeth Garlick the wife of Joshua Garlick of East Hampton, that not having the fear of God before thine eyes thou hast entertained Satan, the Great enemy of God and mankind, and by his help since the year 1650 hath done works above the course of nature to the loss of lives of several persons (with several other sorceries), and in particular the wife of Arthur Howell...for which, according to the laws of God and the established law of this Commonwealth, thou deservest to die."

Goody Garlick, must have been terrified. Colonial laws against witchcraft called for the death

penalty by hanging. The Connecticut court had already tried at least eight prior cases of witchcraft since 1647. It is likely that there were many more accusations than those for which records survive because the officials of the court complained that many who were charged with capital crimes fled to Rhode Island to escape prosecution. In only two of the known cases did defendants escape death by hanging. One woman was released, the other may have escaped. All of the accused were women, except one man who was accused along with his wife.

Goody Garlick was probably imprisoned for the intervening time, between her inquest in East Hampton and her trial in Connecticut. We may assume there were some witnesses from East Hampton, but we do not know who they were or what they said as the records of the trial are lost. Voluntary confession was the most conclusive evidence. Although the New England legal code expressly rejected the use of torture, defendants were subjected to considerable psychological pressure to confess. In the later trials in Salem, defendants were able to save their lives by confessing; only the recalcitrant and unrepentant were hanged. No such deal was struck in the other colonial courts. Still, most of the accused provided the judges and juries with the hard evidence they needed to make a conviction by confessing. It is tempting to condemn legal officials for pressuring defendants to confess. But, how else were they to prove that spectres harm people, or that the misfortunes they were asked to prosecute were related in any demonstrable way to the intangible malevolence of witches? They would, of course, wish to base their life or death decision on some hard fact. They may also have had the noble motive of giving the accused the opportunity to redeem their souls by confessing their crime.

The second most reliable evidence-- after confession-- was evidence of a distinctive mark on the body of the accused. "Witchmarks" were believed to be of two types. The witch's familiar spirits were believed to come to a teat on the witch's body, generally in some secret place, to suckle. The court would also post a guard to watch for the appearance of the familiar when it came to the witch to be fed. Also, the Devil was believed to distinguish his witches with other marks on their bodies. These were described as being "entirely bloodless and insensitive, so that even if a needle be deeply thrust in, no pain is felt and not a drop of blood is shed."

These, too, were expected to be in the secret parts. The examination for these marks would amount to torture. We know that a committee of women was assigned to examine another accused witch, Goody Knapp, in Connecticut. Goody Knapp was convicted and hanged largely because of the evidence of the witches mark the women were able to produce.

Then, there was the ordeal of the trial. Rather than explicit torture, New England judges preferred the more gentle-- though insidious-- persuasion. They interrogated accused witches in such a way as to put them into a state of confusion to elicit a confession. Defendants in criminal cases were not entitled to legal council. The only guidance available to the accused was that of the very judges who would attempt to confuse them to elicit a confession. The case was heard in the Particular Court of Connecticut in Hartford, probably on May 5, 1658 by seven magistrates including the governor, John Winthrop Jr., along with a jury of 12 men. This was Winthrop's first witchcraft trial. It is unlikely that Goody Garlick confessed, and we have no records to let us know if a witch's mark was found on her body. Failing that, the courts relied on legal treatises to establish proof. It is likely that the Connecticut court relied on one

written by Michael Dalton. Imagine that you are members of the jury. Would you have found Goody Garlick guilty of witchcraft according to these standards of proof?

First, it was necessary to establish that witchcraft was the cause of death, rather than natural causes. If the following conditions were present, it indicated the presence of witchcraft.

1. When a healthful body shall be suddenly taken without probable reason, or apparent natural cause.
2. When two or more are similarly taken in strange fits. The depositions of the inquest would have informed the judges and jury that during Goody Simons' fits black spectres--presumably Goody Garlick's cat— had similarly appeared and her fits worsened.
3. When the afflicted party in his fits tells truly what the witch, or other absent parties are doing or saying or the like. This evidence was provided also.
4. When the parties shall do strange things, or say strange things, and yet when out of their fits know nothing of what they did or said.
5. When there is a supernatural strength such that a strong man or two shall not be able to keep down a child, or weak person upon a bed. Arthur Howell apparently had this difficulty restraining Elizabeth.
6. When the party doeth vomit up crooked Pins, Needles, Nails, Coals, Lead, Straw, Hair, or the like.
7. When the party shall see visibly some Apparition, and shortly after some mischief shall befall him.

If the judges were satisfied that Elizabeth died of witchcraft rather than natural causes they would consider the evidence to decide if the accused was responsible for the witchcraft. The criteria included testimony that the accused had appeared to the sick party in his or her fits; and that the afflicted was able to name the suspected witch, and to describe their actions.

As it turned out, the Connecticut court did not find sufficient evidence to deprive Goody Garlick of her life. But, they didn't acquit her either. In fact John Winthrop Jr. commended "the Christian care and prudence of those in authority with you in search into ye case according to such just suspicions as appeared." The court required that Joshua Garlick post a hefty bond to assure his wife's good behavior, and Goody Garlick was required to appear periodically before either the East Hampton court or that in Connecticut. Why didn't the court convict Goody Garlick? The officials of the court and the witch's accusers were speaking two different languages. For her accusers witchcraft is maleficium, that is, "harmful magic," like the uncanny harms and deaths they attributed to Goody Garlick. However, according to Puritan orthodoxy, and the laws based on it, no human was capable of such supernatural harm without Satan's help. The legal definition of witchcraft as Satanic conspiracy is explicit in the text of the indictment, "thou hast entertained Satan, the Great enemy of God and mankind." But the fine points of Puritan theology were the business of learned gentlemen, not tenant farmer's wives.

Although the witnesses failed to mention Sabbath gatherings or pacts with the devil, they did provide some suggestive evidence that the court chose to ignore. Goody Simons and her friends said they had seen the strange black thing that made them think of Goody Garlick's cat. That might have qualified as evidence that the witch had a familiar spirit. Goody Simons found the pin in Elizabeth's mouth. Others testified that they saw it and that no such pin had

been in the house before. Goody Davis had made that suggestive remark that "it were as good to please the devil" in reference to Goody Garlick. But the court didn't consider that sufficient evidence, in fact they appear to have followed Goody Davis' lead. Although they agreed that the suspicions of witchcraft were just, they chose the conservative course. They preferred not to risk angering the devil--not to mention, God --for killing a person whom they could neither adequately prove guilty or innocent. Instead, John Winthrop Jr. advised that the people of East Hampton should deal with Goody Garlick and her husband as best they could. Winthrop wrote: "We think good to certify that it is desired and expected by this court that you should carry neighborly and peaceably without just offence to [Joshua] Garlick and his wife and that they should do the like to you."

This could have done nothing to reassure Goody Garlick's accusers back in East Hampton. The court had confirmed the suspicions then sent the accused witch back to them-- vindicated! That Goody Garlick got off with what they must have considered a technicality , must have made her appear invincible.

According to the legend, Goody Garlick was saved by Lion Gardiner, the father of her alleged victim. Although he was a powerful and influential man, we must be reluctant to assume he would attempt to subvert the legal process in Connecticut. It is possible that he did not want his opinion to be on the record. On another occasion the East Hampton court agreed to destroy the records of the case involving charges that Joshua Garlick had slandered him in exchange for payment. Would he ask the Connecticut court to protect his privacy in the same way? Gardiner was well acquainted with the judge of Goody Garlick's trial, John Winthrop Jr. It was Winthrop who brought Gardiner to Connecticut to build a fort at Saybrook. They maintained a cordial and productive relationship throughout their lives. If Gardiner attempted to protect his privacy in the public records of the Connecticut court, his efforts were wasted. All of the records of the case were lost, leaving us with no idea of what he might have thought, said or wanted. We have nothing except his servants' report of his opinion on the death of Goody Davis' baby. Gardiner was probably skeptical of the womens' belief in maleficium, as all pious educated men should be. However it would have been heretical to deny the reality of Satanic conspiracy, the night-flight of witches, or the reality of their animal familiars. Puritans read the manner of death as a sign of the status of the soul. A difficult death was not necessarily proof of unworthiness, because grace could come at the final hour to the elect. However, the description of Elizabeth's death that we find in the court records gives us little hope that a blazing epiphany of saving grace ever came. This may have interested Lion Gardiner much more than witchcraft. If God had allowed Satan to use Goody Garlick to torment his daughter to the very last moment of her life, Gardiner would have had to consider the possibility that his daughter was not among the elect, and that her soul was not welcome in heaven. He had a lot at stake in believing that this was not so. Perhaps this accounts for his silence on the issue of witchcraft.

In fact the Connecticut court's response to the charges against Goody Garlick was consistent with their treatment of a similar case. The only other witch who escaped conviction in that court prior to Goody Garlick's trial was Katherine Palmer. The wife of John Robins accused Katherine Palmer of tormenting her with witchcraft. Robin's husband entered this complaint on his wife's behalf. Women didn't bring their own complaints to the court in Connecticut, either.

Evidence of complicity with Satan was absent from the accuser's complaints, just as it was absent from the complaints of Goody Garlick's accusers.

Katherine Palmer's case was a very early witchcraft trial in Connecticut. Perhaps this inexperienced court, like that of East Hampton, was not yet adept at persuading witnesses to modify their stories of maleficium to conform to the charges of Satanic conspiracy that the court required for conviction. Katherine Palmer's husband was also required to post a bond for his wife's good behavior, just as Joshua Garlick was. The court's only justification for usurping a man's control over his own wife's behavior was proof of her complicity with Satan. Evidence that women harmed others by supernatural means was not sufficient. Some scholars believe the witch hunts were a conspiracy against women. Most of the accused were women. We believe, this is because it is more difficult to believe monstrous accusations about others who resemble ourselves. In many ways males and females are inscrutable to one another. The gentlemen of the court treated men differently on those rare occasions when they were accused of witchcraft. Men were not subject to the same pressures to confess, and when they did confess, they were almost all rebuked as liars. Their penalties were generally a whipping or a fine for telling a lie. Apparently the gentleman of the court found difficult to believe a person of their own gender was capable of being a witch.

Why might the gentlemen of the Connecticut court find it difficult to believe that Goody Garlick was such a monster? Most of the women who were condemned to death by the gentlemen of the Connecticut court were servants, poor women, or widows who inherited more wealth than it was then deemed appropriate for a woman to command. Many of them confessed to making a pact with Satan because he gave them, in exchange, the easing of the burdens of their labor, or gifts of such comforts as they could not hope to acquire otherwise. Goody Garlick didn't conform to this pattern, which probably made it harder for the gentlemen of the court to believe she was the kind of woman who could be guilty of witchcraft. It requires an impressive act of the imagination to feel empathy for a stranger, or someone who does not resemble oneself. It is also difficult to imagine that someone one know personally can be capable of the uncanny powers of the witch. Unless the misfortune in question is one's own. One's own misfortune almost always seems uncanny. In that case, it is tempting to suspect someone who knows us well enough to have jealous motives and exaggerate the power of their malevolent intent. Such was the case with Goody Garlick's accusers. Unaffected persons-- including the magistrates, judges and jury-- were either not interested, or found it difficult to understanding or believing the womens' complaints or their explanations for them.

This appears to be the way the witch hunts ended in Europe and the colonies. When individuals who resembled the judges and members of the jury in status or religious affiliation came before them, they suddenly became incapable of believing in witchcraft and the trials ground to a halt. It didn't stop people from accusing their neighbors of maleficium. After the courts refused to investigate such claims, the accusers took the punishment of the witches into their own hands.

This has been explained as an issue of class. We think it is more personal and intimate than that. It is easier to be empathetic to those we know and who resemble ourselves, so long as

they do us no personal harm. To the extent that we are able to think of others as different from ourselves, it is easier to believe the most uncanny things about them, particularly if we have something to gain by believing it.

Goody Garlick's judge, John Winthrop Jr., was well acquainted with her husband, Joshua. We have no evidence of his opinion of either of the Garlicks. However, we know that Gardiner provided Winthrop with valuable goods, including livestock and wampum. The intermediary in these exchanges of goods and payments was Joshua Garlick. The fact that Winthrop relied on Joshua Garlick's honesty in these exchanges would have made it difficult to believe that his wife was capable of the uncanny powers attributed to witches.

Not many women showed up for their trials as Goody Garlick had, flanked by some of East Hampton's most eminent townsmen, Thomas Baker, John Hand and Lion Gardiner. These men may not have been supportive of her; they had come to establish a relationship between East Hampton and the Connecticut court. But the fact that they all showed up with Goody Garlick could hardly fail to make her humanity recognizable to the gentlemen who served as her judges and jury.

The coincidence of Goody Garlick's trial with John Winthrop Jr.'s first appearance on the bench was sublime good fortune. Winthrop was a Puritan whose profession of saving grace is on record. He was also a philosopher, natural scientist, and a member of the Royal Society in London. He was a physician who often treated the poor for free. He was described by his friends in these ways: he is "a gentleman in every-way lovely and full of love" ; "You are a man most curious and able, and of a nature prone to pardon." Winthrop's intervention in another witchcraft case provides further evidence of his forgiving nature. Several years after Goody Garlick's trial, Elizabeth Seager, went so far in conforming to the legal definition of Satanic conspiracy as to tell the court she sent Satan to tell them she was no witch. She was found guilty of complicity with Satan in 1665. A year later John Winthrop Jr. called a special session of the Court of Assistants, to review her case. The court, over which Winthrop presided, reversed the conviction and ordered her "set...free from further suffering and imprisonment," She was, however, advised to leave town. Winthrop was notoriously patient, even with the Quakers who met the most extreme oppression in the colonies. The law required that their hands be cut off for merely entering a settlement. Winthrop had an unusual capacity to recognize the humanity not only in those who resembled him in gender, status and religious beliefs, but all humans. After Winthrop's brief tenure on the bench, convictions for witchcraft resumed in the Connecticut court.

We believe that Goody Garlick was the only person ever accused of witchcraft in East Hampton, and one of the few who escaped the death penalty because the fledgling court of East Hampton knew its limitations. They had no established preconceptions about what evidence was admissible for the crime of witchcraft. They did not encourage the witnesses to modify their story of maleficium to conform to the legal definition of witchcraft as satanic conspiracy. With few exceptions the witnesses were women and their complaints related directly to female concerns with their responsibilities as wives and mothers. These were alien to the male business of the court. Without hesitation the court honored its prior agreement to refer capital cases to the more experienced Connecticut court.

Goody Garlick was fortunate that her humanity was recognizable to the men who judged her, and that her judge was an exceptionally forgiving man. However, the women back home must have realized, after the Connecticut court sent the problem back home to them, that they could hope for no help from the legal system for their very different anxieties and conflicts and that it was best to try to resolve them in the same way they defined them, among themselves. They must have come to better understand Goody Davis' comment, "it is better to please the devil than anger him." Goody Davis made her peace with Goody Garlick, and never bothered to try to explain her distinctly female problems to the men of the court.

Did they really go peaceably with the Garlicks as the Connecticut court recommended? We find no evidence in the court records that they had serious problems with the Garlicks. But we have seen that womens' business is mostly invisible to the courts. And when they did bring their complaints they didn't translate well to the male language of the law. Perhaps if the women brought their problems to the court, as women do now, the ratio of court cases to the size of the population might have more closely resembled those of 1997.

Both of the Garlicks lived long and prospered. One of them lived to be 100 years old, and the other nearly as long. Goody Davis died within a year of her former enemy's trial. Goody Simons moved away. Goody Edwards persisted in her arrogant sottish and aggressive ways. But no one thought to accuse her of witchcraft. After the failed attempt to convict Goody Garlick, the men, as well as the women in East Hampton seem to have decided that with Goody Edwards, too, it was better to follow Goody Davis' advice: it is better to please some people than anger them, even if they seem like the devil.

THE END