

EAST HAMPTON'S LEGENDARY WITCH

Presented by Loretta Orion, Ph.D. for the Lecture Series, "Life in Olde East Hampton,"
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In the summer of 1998 I participated in a group tour of the Gardiner Mansion, the South End Burying Ground, and Gardiner's Island. Robert David Lion Gardiner was our guide. In the burying ground Mr. Gardiner leaned on the magnificent tomb of his founding ancestor, Lion Gardiner, and told us about him and other illustrious Gardiners. He also mentioned a witchcraft crisis that occurred in East Hampton in 1657. He told us that Goody Garlick was a babysitter, and some women thought she was a witch. They dunked her in town pond. Then his ancestor, Lion Gardiner, stepped in and protected Goody Garlick, and gave her a home on his island. Here she lived out the rest of her days under his protection. It was an amusing story; many laughed, or shook their heads in amused disbelief that people could ever have believed or done such things.

The story that Robert D. L. Gardiner told is a legend. Legends are essentially fictional narratives based on historical facts. They are intended to inspire and guide the living. When primary historical documents are lost, legends are substitutes for history. In this case, we have both. The record of the inquest into the charge that Goody Garlick was a witch are published in *The Records of the Town of East Hampton*, Vol. I.

The point of my story is to show that what people thought happened is as interesting as what 'objectively' happened. I reviewed the accounts of the witchcraft crisis in the works of twelve local historians to discover how facts evolved into legend. The story remains inspiring at all steps along the way. When the facts are restored the story becomes a cautionary tale that could and should guide us right now in 2002. If that were not so, I would have left sleeping dogs lie.

THE HISTORIANS

Four of the twelve historians were Gardiner descendants; three were Long Island historians. The remaining five had a primary interest in the Town of East Hampton. In chronological order of publication, the authors are: John Lyon Gardiner, 7th Lord of the Manor on Gardiner's Island who in 1798 wrote, "Notes and Observations on the Town of East Hampton at The East End of Long Island". David Gardiner, a Yale graduate who practiced law in Manhattan, published "Chronicles of the Town of East Hampton, County of Suffolk, New York," in 1840. Nathaniel Prime authored *A History of Long Island, From Its First Settlement by Europeans, to the Year 1845* in 1845. William S. Pelletreau composed the section devoted to East Hampton for *History of Suffolk County, New York* in 1882. Curtiss C. Gardiner, is the author of "*Lion Gardiner and His Descendants*, 1890. Henry P. Hedges, wrote, *A History of the Town of East Hampton, New York*, 1897.

Peter Ross, attorney, published *History of Long Island, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, in 1905. Judge Samuel Seabury, wrote *Two Hundred and Seventy-five Years of East Hampton; Long Island ~New York* in 1926. John Lion Gardiner's *Gardiners of Gardiner's Island*, was published in 1927, William Donaldson Halsey, wrote *Sketches From Local History* in the 1935. Jeannette Edwards Rattray, wrote *East*

Hampton History Including Genealogies of Early Families in 1953; Roger Wunderlich, who was a professor of history at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and former editor of the *Long Island Historical Journal*, wrote "An Island of Mine Owne': The Life and Times of Lion Gardiner, 1599-1663," in 1989.

We have the advantage of easier access to the primary documents that were not published until the mid 19th century. We have no way of knowing how accessible the records of Goody Garlick's inquest were before the handwritten documents were transcribed and published in 1887 by Joseph S. Osborne, and published as *The Records of the Town of East Hampton*. The outcome of the case, which was ultimately tried in the Particular Court of Connecticut, was not known until a letter from John Winthrop, Jr. was discovered and published in 1850. In the letter, Winthrop --- who sat as a magistrate at the trial --- informed the people of the town of East Hampton that a trial was conducted and he described the disposition of the case. The actual record of the trial in Connecticut was not published until 1867 in *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*.

If laying hands on the town records was possible, handwritten or transcribed, the reader would find the 17th century colonial language and syntax challenging. Samuel Seabury described the records as ". . . rambling, [and] absurd, . . . It dealt so fully with absurd superstitions that telling the story is difficult so that it will make sense." Errors of interpretation once made, were carried forward by later historians who resorted to the "authoritative texts" of former historians. Apparent anomalies were ignored and facts massaged to produce a happy and honorable ending that they and their contemporaries would approve of.

The legend told by Robert D. L. Gardiner and various journalist reconciles with the historical record on only one and a half points: the name of the witch, and that some women thought she was a witch. The missing half is that so did some men. The legend vindicates our confidence that the supernatural powers once attributed to witches are rationally impossible. It dismisses the very real fears that haunted people on both sides of the Atlantic in the 17th century. Lion Gardiner is made the vehicle of our conception of justice, rather than those of his contemporaries.

Arthur Miller, author of "The Crucible," a play based on the Salem witch trials, observed that "What terrifies one generation is likely to bring only a puzzled smile to the next." It took only two decades for young people to laugh at Hitler. In the 1960s a stage director, Harold Clurman was hoping to give his cast a sense of the Nazi period in which their play took place. He showed the actors a film of Hitler delivering an impassioned speech. The students giggled at his overacting. Witchcraft makes us smile, particularly at Halloween. The fact that thousands were tortured, burned or hanged to death, and their property confiscated was not amusing in the 17th century.

If we are to understand what happened in 1657, we must see the events from the point of view of the protagonists for whom witchcraft was a real and present danger.

Terror of humans considered capable of causing harm by supernatural means was documented as early as Hammurabi's era, the 18th century B.C. when writing was invented. The global distribution of this fear suggests it may be universal in the human condition. In Western culture, witchcraft acquired additional qualities that expressed Christian fears. Besides the usual ideas that a witch was an anomalous human who harmed persons, animals and property with malevolent supernatural force, witches became Satan's collaborators. Witches flew through the night to participate in orgies with Satan, signed pacts in which they agreed to help him destroy society and Godly religion. Witches turned into animals, or sent animal familiars to carry out her evil projects. They committed such abominable crimes as sacrificing infants and committing cannibalism.

Terror of the Satanic conspiracy reached a crisis in the 16th and 17th centuries in the context of the Wars of Religion. Communities on both sides of the Atlantic purged themselves of evil by attributing these uncanny powers to people who seemed to them capable of embodying evil. Authorities, both judicial and ecclesiastical, sustained and enforced the belief in witchcraft. They punished both disbelief (heresy) and alleged practice of witchcraft. In genuine sincere belief, sustained by the Church and state, people accused one another of witchcraft. Thousands were tortured and burned alive in public spectacles, all in the spirit of justice and Christian piety. The colonialists brought these memories, fears and systems of repression with them.

Now, I will describe the events that caused the magistrates to conduct an inquest to investigate the charge that Goody Garlic was a witch.

One might wonder why most of the women in the story have the same first name unless I explain that "Goody" is a term of address shared by lower status females. Goody Garlick has a first name; she was Goody Elizabeth Garlick. Higher status persons were addressed with the honorifics Mrs. or Mr. Now here is the story, paraphrased from the records of the inquest.

ELIZABETH GARDINER HOWELL'S UNCANNY CRISIS

On a February evening Elizabeth Gardiner Howell was suddenly taken ill. She was about 16 years old, and had recently married Arthur Howell, and given birth to her first child, also named Elizabeth. Her husband left her alone with the baby. Samuel Parsons, arrived and asked to speak with her husband. She informed him that he was not at home but invited him to warm himself by the fire. Elizabeth told him she had a headache and had caught a chill. Parsons left to conduct some business but quickly returned to find Elizabeth worse.

Soon Elizabeth's husband, Arthur, returned with William Russell. Arthur tried to persuade her to go to bed. She vehemently resisted him. She complained more bitterly and asked God to have mercy on her. She asked her friends to pray for her, turned to her husband and said she was afraid she was losing her senses. She nursed her baby and said

she was afraid the child would be ill also. After the child was taken from her Elizabeth sang a psalm.

It appears that up to this point the men were concerned because she was so gravely ill. After the following utterance, her illness caused another kind of anxiety. Elizabeth screamed, "a witch! A witch! Now you are come to torture me because I spoke two or three words against you. In the morning you will come fawning." Now her illness became uncanny. Samuel took her ravings about witchcraft seriously. He testified, "whereupon we were all afrighted at her being taken suddenly in so strange a manner." He confided to Russell that he hoped she was not bewitched.

Elizabeth asked for her father but insisted that her friends not let her mother know of her condition. Elizabeth's mother, Mary Gardiner, was gravely ill. Parsons was sent to inform Elizabeth's father, Lion Gardiner, that his daughter was also seriously ill. Lion Gardiner was sufficiently concerned to leave the bedside of his wife, Mary. When Mr. Gardiner arrived at his daughter's bedside, he found her screaming about a witch. When asked what she saw, Elizabeth described a black thing at the foot of the bed, and stretched forth her hands as if to strike it.

Lion Gardiner remained with his daughter through the night, until just before morning when he went to inform his wife that their daughter had a fever. He remained with his daughter until after daybreak when he returned to his wife's bedside again. This time he was more truthful, and informed her that their daughter was seriously ill. Mary wanted to go to her daughter but she was so weak she could not rise from the bed. Lion Gardiner returned to his daughter's bedside. Later, a neighbor helped Mary to her feet and brought her to visit Elizabeth. Mary Gardiner asked her daughter how she felt. Elizabeth, whom, her mother called Bettie, responded according to Mrs. Gardiner's own words, "She put out her hand oh mother & she cried & I cried & she said mother I am bewitched." Mrs. Gardiner told her she was only dreaming, but Elizabeth insisted she was not. When Mrs. Gardiner asked her whom she saw, Elizabeth answered, "Goody Garlick at one corner and a black thing at the other corner of the foot of her bed." Mrs. Gardiner then insisted that her daughter must not tell her husband or any living soul and "Your husband will tell." [whom?]

The next day three women came to Elizabeth's bedside. They testified that they heard her complain that she was being tormented and pricked with pins by Goody Garlick, whom she said, also brought a black thing to the foot of her bed. "She is a double-tongued woman . . . She pricks me with pins," "Who torments you?" her attendants asked. Elizabeth cried out, "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. Oh, you are a pretty one! . . . Send for Garlick and his wife. . . I would tear her in pieces and leave the birds to pick her bones!" The women asked why she would do such a thing. Elizabeth replied, "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 Elizabeth gagged and coughed. The women inspected her throat and found no obstruction there. Then they gave her some oil and sugar, a remedy for witchcraft and a cough syrup. After a brief calm, Elizabeth began to cough, and the women saw a metal pin fall from her mouth.

Two of the women went home. Goody Simons, remained and slept in the bed with Elizabeth. Arthur, and William Russell and the Gardiner's 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 to discover no source of the sound.

During another evening's vigil, the men were startled by a rumbling and grating inside 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." Again, Simons and Elizabeth slept through the disturbance. However, at other times during the night Elizabeth woke Simons to ask her if she did not see someone at the foot of the bed. Elizabeth complained repeatedly "ye prick me with pins." Elizabeth, descended deeper and deeper into delirium. She continued to cry out, "Garlick...double-tongued . . . ugly thing...pins....," until at last her torment ended with death.

THE AFTERMATH

Inevitably legal matters distract and intrude upon the fresh wounds of mourning. Shortly after Elizabeth's death (February 23, 1657), her husband and father arranged the custody of Elizabeth's infant and the disposition of her property. The document conveys a hint of the emotions and the intentions of the bereaved. Arthur wrote, ". . . for as much as it hath pleased Almighty god by his providence to take away by death the daughter of the abovesd Lion Gardiner and late wife of the abovesd Arthur Howell who bore in her time of life one daughter unto her aforesd husband . . . that for the present the aforesd Arthur Howell father of the child shall take the sole care and charge thereof as in good reason a loving father ought to doe." Lion Gardiner "out of his love and tender affection to the aforesd child" promised to preserve his deceased daughter effects "for his deere grandchild. . ." until she shall come to the age of fifteene years old, if the Lord shall be pleased to continue her life soe long." Few infants survived the deaths of their nursing mothers. In this case, thankfully, the motherless child did survive and appears to have lived a relatively normal and comfortable life.

An investigation into the cause of Elizabeth's death was already in progress. Both witchcraft and murder were capital crimes punishable by death. The magistrates needed to establish whether the cause of Elizabeth's death was witchcraft rather than natural causes. If the cause of death were found to be witchcraft, it was necessary to discover if the accused were responsible. Eleven witnesses testified.

It is likely that Goody Garlick was in jail. Ironically, she would have been incarcerated in an outbuilding moved from her own property to the center of town to serve as a jail a few years prior.

The inquest opened with testimony from the eyewitnesses to Elizabeth's deterioration and death. Their testimony is the source of the events I just described. But there was more; the same and other witnesses testified to other misfortunes --- besides Elizabeth's death -- that they believed resulted from Goody Garlick's witchcraft.

Three significant protagonists never testified at all, Lion Gardiner, Goody Garlick, and Goody Davis. Most of the incriminating evidence relating to misfortunes other than Elizabeth's death, which I will turn to later, originated in stories Goody Davis told to others.

THE INQUEST

There is no way of knowing how much the magistrates knew about how other courts established evidence of witchcraft, this being their first encounter with it. Nineteen other charges of witchcraft had been tried in New England courts since 1647, and many others elsewhere in America. Most courts relied on a legal treatise written by Michael Dalton for standards of proof of bewitchment, and for establishing the guilt or innocence of the accused. As it turned out, the eyewitnesses submitted evidence in the testimony that according to the legal standards then relied on proved bewitchment rather than natural causes were responsible for Elizabeth's death.

The presence of the following conditions showed the presence of witchcraft: 1) When a healthful body shall be suddenly taken without probable reason, or apparent natural cause. Samuel Parsons testified, "whereupon we were all afrighted at her being taken suddenly in so strange a manner." He said that he hoped she was not bewitched. 2) When the afflicted party in his fits tells truly what the witch, or other absent parties are doing or saying or the like. Witnesses testified to hearing Elizabeth complain about specters of the witch, black ugly things and being pricked with pins and being torn to pieces. 3) 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. Elizabeth's husband, Arthur Howell, "wn she was rageing against the witch she stroke upon ye bed as if she had stroke at sumthinge & violently striveing to get out of my armes I haveing her in my Armes kept he downe from gettinge away." aremstestified described how Elizabeth struggles against him and that he had difficulty keeping her down in the bed. 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. Elizabeth certainly did and said strange things. Nevertheless, none of the testimony clarifies whether her delirium was punctuated by moments of clarity in which she was unaware of what she had said or done. 5) When the party doeth vomit up crooked pins, needles, nails, coals, lead, straw, hair, or the like. Two of the witnesses testified to seeing a pin fall out of Elizabeth's mouth. 6) When the party shall see visibly some apparition, and shortly after some mischief shall befall him. Simons testified, "befor this ye first Day yt she was sick: yt she goeing to see her she tould her yt she saw

a black thinge, she said an ugly black thinge at ye feete of ye bedd . . . “ As we have seen, her condition rapidly deteriorated and ended with her death.

The last criterion --- “When two or more are similarly taken in strange fits”--- was satisfied by two witnesses who offered testimony relating to misfortunes other than the death of Elizabeth attributed to Goody Garlick’s witchcraft. Both women reported that Goody Simons’ also had fits, and black spectres --- that the women associated with Goody Garlick’s cat— had similarly appeared and her fits worsened.

Once it was determined that bewitchment was the cause of Elizabeth’s death, the following criteria would prove that the accused was responsible for the witchcraft: 1) the accused had appeared to the sick party in his or her fits. 2) that the afflicted was able to name the suspected witch, and 3) to describe the witch’s actions. Whether the magistrates realized it or not, they had collected sufficient evidence to prove that the cause of Elizabeth’s death was bewitchment and that Goody Garlick was responsible.

AN EMBARRASSMENT OF WITCHES

The 18th century saw the end of legal prosecution of witches. In the same century critical erudition and philosophy came together to produce modern historical thought. Historians recoiled in disgust from witchcraft, now acknowledged to be a ghastly error. Eighteenth century rationalism rejected the objective existence of witchcraft; the witch trials were attributed to the errors of superstition and fraud. Having lost all capacity to understand how people could have ever believed in witchcraft, local historians could not have been happy to learn that their own ancestors did. Witchcraft in East Hampton was both too close to home, and too distant from their philosophy to be treated with the objectivity they brought to other events in the past.

The Salem crisis, occurred 35 years after the crisis in East Hampton. Within a decade the surviving accusers of Salem were publicly repenting. Ann Putnam realized that she, rather than those she accused, had been deluded by Satan. She confessed before her congregation, “I desire to be humbled . . . in that I was a cause, with others, of so sad a calamity to them and their families; for which cause I desire to lie in the dust, and earnestly beg forgiveness of God, and from all those unto whom I have given just cause of sorrow and offence, whose relations were taken away or accused.”

Because the Salem trials were more spectacular and more widely known, the East Hampton historians were better acquainted with the Salem crisis, and its aftermath, than their own. They viewed their own witchcraft crisis through the lense of the far more disastrous events in Salem. Dozens of persons were accused, twenty were convicted, nineteen hanged, and another crushed to death.

Prime, wrote, “It could scarce be expected, that the gross delusion and consequent excitement of the Salem witchcraft, would fail to produce similar developments in these secluded regions.” David Gardiner, said the people in East Hampton are to be forgiven for the “delusion which had overcome them,” because, “every country was . . . afflicted

with absurd and frightful superstition. The accounts of trials and punishments for witchcraft in Massachusetts, long afterwards exceeded all rational credulity, and were they not attested by judicial records, and contemporary historians, such horrors would not at this day be believed." Halsey, wrote, "Eastern Long Island was settled with men who were formally part of . . . the Massachusetts Colony. And when they came over to their Island home they unquestionably brought with them many of these ideas of superstition and witchcraft, though I think it was of a milder form, the cause of . . . this business in Salem." Pelletreau remarked that "The whole testimony [of the inquest in East Hampton] bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the cases in Salem, which years after had so tragical a termination."

There was an unfortunate resemblance. The Salem crisis came about when teenage girls alleged that specters of older female neighbors assaulted them. The crisis in East Hampton was brought about when sixteen year-old Elizabeth saw specters of the middle-aged Goody Garlick.

Our first historian, John Lyon Gardiner, 7th proprietor lived closest in time to both of the witchcraft crises. He mentioned the witchcraft only parenthetically in his explanation of how East Hampton came under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Colony. He didn't mention that the witchcraft crisis that caused the local magistrates to refer it to a Connecticut court involved his own otherwise illustrious family. He couldn't bring himself to discuss it beyond, the following brief despatch: the matter of bringing East Hampton under the authority of the Connecticut colony was accomplished. But regarding the "other matter" [of witchcraft], he thought the authorities in Connecticut "didn't pay any attention to it."

In the 1953 Arthur Miller wrote "The Crucible" a play in which the Salem witch hunt served as a metaphor for the persecution of communists in the Mc Carthy era. The play allowed its audiences to discern the essential and immutable folly and viciousness of witch hunting. This awareness presented another obstacle to objective reading of the East Hampton witchcraft crisis.

DISAPPEARANCE OF ELIZABETH

The first impulse on the parts of our historians was to remove the larger than life Mr. Gardiner and his family from the witchcraft affair. Later, Lion would be brought in at the end of the story to restore reason and justice.

The strategy most of the historians favored was to disconnect Elizabeth's death from the witchcraft crisis. Only three historians explicitly stated that Elizabeth's death was the cause of the witchcraft charges (Seabury, John Lion Gardiner, 1927, and Wunderlich). Elizabeth Howell is absent altogether from more than half (7 of the 12) of the local histories (John Lyon, 7th proprietor, David Gardiner, Prime, Curtiss Gardiner, Hedges, Ross, and Halsey).

Two authors kept Elizabeth and her death in the story but made the connection between it and the charges of witchcraft in one case vague, and in another nonexistent. Rattray, wrote that Elizabeth was Lion Gardiner's daughter, but the suspicions of Goody Garlick's witchcraft occurred "shortly *after* Arthur Howell's wife died in childbirth," rather than *because of it*. Pelletreau denied the connection. He wrote "The wife of Arthur Howell (daughter of Lion Gardiner) was suddenly attacked by a fever, which caused temporary derangement." However he attributed the charge of witchcraft against Goody Garlick to "bewitching her neighbors by using various herbs."

Unfortunately, this strategy of removing Elizabeth's death from the story obscures a rare glimpse of Lion Gardiner acting as a family man. His vigil at the bedside of his daughter, interrupted by visits to his wife's sickbed, reveal the terrible conflict of a concerned father and husband. The tragic scene of Mary Gardiner struggling across the village green to weep with her terrified daughter is also edited out of the legend.

ALTERNATIVE CAUSES FOR THE CHARGE OF WITCHCRAFT

The seven historians who removed Elizabeth's death from the story had two problems to solve. They needed to attribute some other cause than Elizabeth's possible murder to the charges of witchcraft, as Pelletreau had done. They had to make other persons the accusers. The last was not so difficult as Elizabeth could obviously not voice her own complaints against Goody Garlick from the grave; the living testified to what they heard her say about her belief that she was bewitched.

John Lyon Gardiner 7th, and Prime simply stated that Goody Garlick was charged with practicing witchcraft, without saying what misfortunes she was suspected of accomplishing by mystical means. Four authors said that Goody Garlick was charged with "bewitching her neighbors by using various herbs." (David Gardiner, Pelletreau, Hedges, Halsey). Ross said that "the evidence involved among other details the death of a child."

Historian of witchcraft, Jeffrey Burton Russell remarked that "The weirdness of the subject of witchcraft caused serious historians to skirt the subject with undue levity or undue scepticism to protect themselves from the importunities of thrill-seekers and the ridicule of their colleagues. Much of the writing on the topic is incompetent --- no other subject in history has elicited so much drivel --- and marred by lack of seriousness in treating an idea that killed hundreds of thousands David Gardiner distanced himself by omitting murder as a cause of suspicion and offered among other things, the following causes: ". . . blasts of the atmosphere by draughts, and unseasonable frosts upon the growing corn . . . with the usual accompaniment of apparitions of black cats and harlequin devils, which had alarmed and tormented the subjects of witchery, were not omitted."

This sarcasm is characteristic of an optimistic confidence in progress and human rationality. Witchcraft became a prime example of the gross superstitions of the dark ages, beyond which rationalists believed they had infinitely progressed.

IDEALIZATION OF GOODY GARLICK

While Elizabeth Howell was pushed further and further into the skeleton closet, for having irrational and dangerous beliefs we no longer approve of, Goody Garlick emerged as a sympathetic victim., even though, according to Halsey, “she had no objection to be thought a witch,” and she “had as good please the devil as anger him.” John Lyon Gardiner (1927) referred to her as “this poor woman;” Wunderlich, as “this unfortunate woman.”

Seven of the twelve authors, (Pelletreau, Hedges, Halsey, Curtiss Gardiner, David Gardiner, Ross, and Rattray) believed she had friends and that Lion Gardiner was among them. Hedges and Halsey, said she had *many* friends. Although Hedges acknowledged in a footnote that “The conduct of Goodwife Garlick was not such as to disarm and quiet suspicion,” in the body of his text he claimed that the Goodwife had many *powerful* friends. Pelletreau, and Halsey believed she had *influential* friends. David Gardiner said “There was those among them who was desirous of saving her from the fate of these delusions.” Only Seabury thought the records indicated that “Public opinion was evidently rising against Goody Garlicke.”

ABSENCE OF TESTIMONY FROM FRIENDS

The record of the inquest favors Seabury’s impression. By the time the inquest was concluded the following list of misfortunes were attributed to Goody Garlick’s witchcraft. In addition to the murder of Elizabeth Howell: 4 other persons had died under suspicious circumstances relating to Goody Garlick: an unidentified man, a black child, and 2 infants. One of the infants died after Goody Garlick had borrowed breast milk from three lactating mothers. All three of the mothers’ breast milk dried up and their infants all fell ill; one of the infants died. The other infant died after Goody Garlick cast her evil eye on it. Goody Simons had “fits” which were caused by or worsened when Goody Garlick sent her herbs. Animals were harmed or died, including an ox that broke its leg, and a sow and her litter of piglets that died after the sow gave birth “strangely.”

Four testimonies which I will turn to later, are ambiguous. However, not one person went on record to defend Goody Garlick’s character or innocence.

WHERE WERE HER FRIENDS?

Both of the Garlicks made some enemies. The ox that broke its leg belonged to Lion Gardiner. Two witnesses at the inquest referred to the incident, one of them clarified that it was after Goody Garlick’s *husband*, Joshua “gave out some threatening speches & sudenly after Mr. Gardienr had an oxe leg broke.” This occurred after some “Difference betwene [Joshua Garlick and] Mr. Gardiner or some of his famyly.”

Three years prior to the inquest William Mulford and Lion Gardiner entered an action of defamation against Goody Garlick and her husband for uttering slanderous speeches against Lion's wife, Mary Gardiner.

In the same year Joshua and Goody Garlick were both involved in some conflict over corn. Joshua was accused of taking more than his share of corn in a deal with two other men. He was apparently uncooperative with the efforts to rectify the problem. Tempers flared, because Goody Garlick testified to hearing one of the men make a dangerous insult that might be construed as a curse. Goody Garlick testified to hearing Mr. Cooper say that Jonas Woods "would or should be cast to the Devill shortly."

Just three months prior to Elizabeth's death Joshua Garlick implied in a testimony before the magistrates that Elizabeth's husband, Arthur Howell, had taken possession of Mr. Dayton's lost horse as he had seen it in Howell's yard.

GARLICKS ON THE DEFENSIVE

The only person who defended Goody Garlick was her husband. Joshua Garlick entered a suit against Goody Davis for defaming his wife. Although Goody Davis never testified at the inquest; much of the incriminating evidence given by other witnesses consisted of stories they heard Goody Davis tell. One of these stories may be the source of the ideas that Goody Garlick had influential friends, and that Lion Gardiner defended her.

Goody Birdsall told the court that one day as she was dressing flax at Goody Davis home, Davis confided that she believed Goody Garlick killed her baby with the evil eye. Davis had dressed her baby in clean linens. Goody Garlick came by, picked up the baby and said how pretty the child looked, then said "The child is not well, for it groaneth." Goody Davis's heart did rise, and when she took the child from Goody Garlick she saw death in the child's face. The child never opened it's eyes or cried ever again. Five days later it died.

The same day, (February 27) Lion Gardiner's servants, Goodman Vaile and his wife, testified that they fairly recently heard Lion Gardiner comment on Goody Davis' claim that Goody Garlick had killed her child. They heard Lion Gardiner say that "Goody Davis had taken an Indian child to nurse for a little wampum and had starved her own child to death."

In the following week, two "influential men" Mr. Talmage and Mr. Stratton testified that Goody Davis had also told them the circumstances of her baby's death. Mr. Talmage testified to hearing Goody Davis suggest that Goody Garlick was or might be a witch. Mr. Stratton testified to hearing Goody Davis say she believed that her child died of bewitchment and that she couldn't think of anyone other than Goody Garlick who could have done it

These testimonies are probably the source of the historians' believe that Lion Gardiner defended Goody Garlick against the efforts of a negligent mother, Goody Davis,

to divert blame to Goody Garlick. The comment the Vailes overheard were attributed by five historians to Lion Gardiner himself, despite the fact that there is no record of any testimony from Gardiner.

David Gardiner and Prime claimed that “Mr. Gardiner charged upon one of the witnesses the death of her own child.” Pelletreau said that one of Goody Garlick’s “influential friends . . . , Lion Gardiner, boldly charged some of the witnesses with the very crimes they laid to the alleged witch.” Curtiss Gardiner’s said that “Lion Gardiner . . . charged one of the witnesses with falsification and declared the accused innocent.” Ross said that “Lion Gardiner openly accused the mother [Goody Davis] of being a murderess,”

This is as close as the record gets to providing any inkling of what Lion Gardiner believed about witchcraft. If the Vailes overheard correctly, Lion Gardiner didn’t believe Goody Davis, and surely didn’t respect her. Still, it doesn’t tell us anything about how he felt about witchcraft in general, or Goody Garlick’s in particular, or his feelings about the circumstances of his own daughter’s death.

The testimonies of the two “influential men,” Talmage and Stratton, have been construed as defending Goody Garlick, based on the understanding that the gentlemen intended to discredit Goody Davis’ story. Their testimonies might be considered responses to Garlick’s suit for defamation, that is, that they intended to provide proof that they also heard Goody Davis defame Goody Garlick. That line of thinking would be more convincing if the testimonies had been given after, rather than a week before, Joshua Garlick’s suit for defamation was recorded.

It is possible that the opposite is the case. They may have intended to lend the weight of their authority to Davis’ story, by putting it on the record that not only gossips, but they -- - trustworthy gentlemen --- also heard Davis’s claim. In any case, their testimonies can hardly be considered evidence of their friendship or desire to defend Goody Garlick.

LION GARDINER DEFENDED GOODY GARLICK?

Besides the five authors who claimed Lion Gardiner defended Goody Garlick against the charge of killing Goody Davis’s baby, four others claimed that Lion Gardiner defended her and/or was responsible for saving her life. According to Hedges, he “defended the accused;” Halsey, “Col. Lion Gardiner presented such a strong defense at the trial that she was acquitted;” Rattray, he “defended her and she was acquitted;” and Wunderlich, “Lion’s influence averted a trial at Hartford and saved Goody “from an awful fate” Only three abstained from making any comment (John Lyon Gardiner, 7th; Seabury, and John L.Gardiner, 1927).

THE DECISION TO DEFER TO THE MORE EXPERIENCED COURT AT HARTFORD

The final record of the inquest is dated March 19, 1657. The magistrates decided with a majority vote of the inhabitants of the town to send the case to the more experienced

court in Hartford Connecticut. Thomas Baker and John Hand were sent to Connecticut with two missions. One was to finalize negotiations already in progress to bring East Hampton under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut colony. The witchcraft crisis forced this necessity, as the magistrates were neither willing nor qualified to adjudicate a case that involved “life and limb,” particularly one requiring more experience than they had regarding supernatural crimes.

The same gentlemen were to deliver Goody Garlick to the authorities in Hartford for a trial for witchcraft. “It was afterward agreed vpon by the town to yt Mr. Gardiner shall be Interesed [invested?] with the same power wth Thomas Baker and John Hand for coming vnder Government.”

This afterthought of sending Lion Gardiner along with the party to Hartford may have given the impression that he hopped aboard at the last minute to defend Goody Garlick. The record clearly describes his mission, however. He was assigned to share the responsibility of negotiating the subordination of East Hampton to the Connecticut court, not to deliver Goody Garlick for her trial. Why “afterwards agreed?” We may consider the reluctance of the magistrates to burden him with such a responsibility so soon after his daughter’s death, or to ask him to leave his wife --- who may still have been ill --- alone with her grief, or to expect him to travel in the company of the prisoner who was accused of killing his own daughter.

SPECULATIONS

For a long time the story ended with the decision to send Goody Garlick to Connecticut for her trial. It was impossible to know what transpired there, if anything, because the historical record fell silent until a letter from John Winthrop Jr. was published in 1850 in *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. In the letter Winthrop informed the people of East Hampton that the trial of Goody Garlick for witchcraft had been conducted and he notified them of the verdict. The first historian to acknowledge this information was Henry P. Hedges, who published Winthrop’s letter along with his description of the inquest in East Hampton in 1897. The two of the three authors who wrote before the documents were available thought Goody Garlick was sent to Connecticut for a trial. David Gardiner and Prime, doubted that she was sent because Lion Gardiner intervened on her behalf. David Gardiner thought “Possibly the court thought better of the subject.” Prime thought that “Considering the high character of Mr. Gardiner, the respect with which his opinions were treated . . . , and the favorable opportunity he had enjoyed to ascertain the facts in the case, it is scarcely to be supposed that it was prosecuted further.” John Lyon Gardiner, 7th proprietor said that she was sent, though probably there was no trial.

The record of the Connecticut trial, was published in the *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut* in 1928. Two of the three scholars who wrote after this publication (Halsey, 1935 and Rattray, 1953) said that the trail had taken place. In the most recently published account by Roger Wunderlich, 1989, the author was certain that Gardiner averted a trial in Connecticut and “saved her from a terrible fate.” A total of seven of the

historians believed Goody Garlick was sent to Connecticut court (John Lyon Gardiner, 7th; Pelletreau; John Lion Gardiner 1927; Hedges; Halsey; Rattray; Seabury). However they disagreed on what happened after she got there. Pelletreau thought that Gardiner's strong defense of the accused probably averted the trial in Connecticut. Ross was aware that Goody Garlick was sent for her trial, despite the fact that "The magistrates entertained no doubt of Goody's guilt, but because of the heinousness of the crime, ordered the case sent . . . for final adjudication. There the matter somehow end . . . and probably the influence of Gardiner saved her from further legal persecution." Four thought she was never sent to Hartford (David Gardiner, Prime, Ross, Wanderlich).

The magistrates did bring Goody Garlick, along with the incriminating records of the inquest to Connecticut. Goody Garlick was imprisoned for the intervening time, between her inquest in East Hampton and her trial in Connecticut. Although the New England legal code expressly rejected the use of torture, defendants were subjected to considerable psychological pressure to confess. The search for "witches marks" could be considered torture, though mild compared to the fiendish contrivances in Europe. The accused were stripped naked and examined for evidence of some protuberance where their animal familiar came to her to be suckled. Guards were posted to watch for the appearance of the familiars. The Devil was believed to distinguish his witches with other marks; these were described as "entirely bloodless and insensitive to pain, so a needle be deeply thrust in, no pain is felt and not a drop of blood is shed.

Things were not looking good for Goody Garlick. Eight prior trials for witchcraft in the Connecticut court all resulted in convictions; all were hanged except two. One was released, the other may have escaped. Those accused of this capital crimes were not entitled to legal representation. The incriminating records would be presented, and witnesses appeared again to speak in the Hartford Court. We don't know who testified or what they said as the records of the testimonies are lost, although allocation of the costs for the transportation and food for the witnesses is described in the Winthrop letter.

The case was heard in the Particular Court of Connecticut in Hartford, by seven magistrates including the governor, John Winthrop Jr., along with a jury of 12 men. 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."

The record of the case reads as follows:

“The Jury doeth not finde Elizabeth the wife of Joshua Garlick guilty according to the inditemt. Joshua Garlick of East Hampton for himselfe and wife Elizabeth doeth acknowledge himselfe bound to this Comon wealth in a Recognisc of 30 11. That he and his wife shall cary good behauior to all the members of this Jurisdiction vntill the Court at East Hampton in September or October next, & that they will then & there personally appeare if hee till that time continues his habitation vpon the Island, but if he shall remoue his dwelling to the maine within this Jurisdiction then they here shall personally appeare at the quarter Court in Hartford on the first Thursday of September next.”

We learn from this statement that Joshua was also suspect and subject to the same obligation to appear before the court to assure his own as well as his wife’s good behavior. Although the court did not find sufficient evidence to take her life they didn’t exonerate her either, as we can see by this early precursor of probation. The letter from John Winthrop Jr. who was among the magistrates who tried the case makes this clear.

“Gen: & Loving Friends,

“We have received your letter and finding recorded a Court order of 1649, wherein ye Court declared their acceptance of your Towne under this Government; a copy whereof we have herewith sent you: and having received a full resignation of your Towne under this Government by your Agents Lift. Gardener etc: we shall present ye same to our next Gen Court for a further full confirmation thereof:

“And in ye meane tyme did take yt case which was presented from you into serious consideration ; and there hath passed a legall tryall thereupon; wherup, tho there did not appeare sufficient evidence to prove her guilty yet we cannot but well and commend the Christian care & prudence of those in Authority with you, in searchinge into yt case accordinge to such just suspicions as appeared.

Then follows the allocation of costs for the imprisonment, trial and transportation and board for the accused and the witnesses, etc.”

The letter confirms Lion Gardiner’s purpose in Connecticut was to oversee the momentous shift from the autonomy of the town of East Hampton to submission to the Connecticut Colony. We cannot know if he testified in Goody Garlick’s trial as no records of testimony accompany the short report of the trial. There is no evidence that Gardiner’s attempted to either save or condemn Goody Garlick. Under the circumstances, the lack of evidence that he was in any way unkind to his daughter’s spectral tormenter is consistent with the rest of what we know of his temperate character.

If only this letter had been available to more of our authors, how vindicating those sweet words would have been, “yet we cannot but well and commend the Christian care & prudence of those in Authority with you, in searchinge into yt case accordinge to such just suspicions as appeared.” It would have saved them the effort of conscious or unconscious distortion of the evidence to make it conform to the this happy ending.

Historian, Timothy Breen, an outside historian, viewed the handling of the crisis this way, "It is difficult not to admire the local justices --- John Mulford, John Hand, and Thomas Baker --- who gathered evidence in this case. At a moment when the villagers had perhaps begun to panic, the justices maintained calm, insisting that the town follow normal legal procedures. . . . None of the three men in authority had formally studied the law, but they had a deep, almost reflexive, sense of the importance of due process." We also have the magistrates and jury of the Particular Court in Hartford to thank for acquitting the first accused witch that came before them.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE STORY FOR OUR TIMES

I hope the reader agrees that the facts are better than the legend. The ancestors gave us an example worthy of following. We no longer believe in the mystical harm caused by witches. However, we know fear, and terror extreme enough to restore the word "evil" to our thoughts, dreams and discourse. To deem another evil is to deny their humanity and remove all reasonable restraint to destroying them by any means, as was the case in the witch hunts and other shameful episodes of history. We read and hear daily human beings referring to their enemies as "bestial," "monstrous," "a cancer." I remember hearing on the evening news a Palestinian in Jenin, say, "If they thought we were human they would not have done this."

The history of witchcraft has shown that when we fail to recognize the infinite value of human beings, and treat them as if they were less than this, it ultimately recoils on those who do it. In oppressing others we dehumanize ourselves. The people of 17th century East Hampton, and Connecticut ultimately avoided that error in a time when Satan and evil were their daily bread. Their example is relevant and inspiring three and a half centuries later.

GOODY GARLICK'S COTTAGE ON THE ISLAND

Now, about the cottage on Gardiner's Island that Gardiner gave Goody Garlick where she live out the rest of her days in peace. . . . There is no evidence in any of the records of any such home on Gardiner's Island. There appears, however, in the inventory of the estate of Lion Gardiner which accompanies his will, dated the 13th of August, 1668, "the house Simons lives in" valued at 20 pounds. This was the Goody Simons who lived on Gardiner's Island during Elizabeth Gardiner Howell's childhood, and in the town of East Hampton with her. Goody Simons laid beside Elizabeth in her bed every night during the long ordeal of her torturous death, while Lion Gardiner divided his time between two sick beds, that of his wife and the one Elizabeth ultimately died in. Lion Gardiner once sued Goody Simons for slanderous speeches, but he must have been a forgiving and generous man to provide the old widow with a home. Could this kindness be related to Gardiner's appreciation of Goody Simons' kindness to his daughter as she lay dying?

NOW, CAN WE LET ELIZABETH GARDINER HOWELL OUT OF THE SKELETON CLOSET?

Most of the historians made an effort to justify the ancestors' susceptibility to beliefs in witchcraft. Pelletreau said, "our ignorant ancestors may well be pardoned for believing what the greatest of our British Jurists never ventured to doubt." Sadly it appears the historians weren't able to take their own advice.

Can we forgive Elizabeth Gardiner Howell for believing she was bewitched? Pelletreau provided the justification — though he, himself, couldn't apply it: "Elizabeth Howell . . . was . . . attacked by a fever, which caused temporary derangement. To account for strange symptoms by attributing them to supernatural and infernal agency was characteristic of the times. The belief in witchcraft ,may have been absurd, but it was certainly universal. The dread of its power may have been groundless, but it was certainly unfeigned." Although we can't necessarily say the same for the women who must have produced the pin that "fell out of Elizabeth's mouth" --- most likely by sleight of hand --- or the performances of the Salem accusers, clearly Elizabeth's hallucinations were unfeigned." She was not performing to bring about a posthumous witchcraft trial in her honor. Once we understand the fears that troubled people at that time, the content of her hallucinations are predictable and, I think, forgivable.

Elizabeth's only claim to historical posterity is, as her father wrote, ". . . and there was born [on Gardiner's Island] another daughter named Elizabeth, September 14, she being the first born there of English parents." While we are at it shall we dare to correct Lion Gardiner and set that record straight? She was the first Dutch and English child born here; her mother was born in the Netherlands.

ENDNOTES

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.Reprinted in Tom Twomey, *Exploring the Past*,p. 149.

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.Vol. I, New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, p. 174.

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.Published by Jonathan T. Gardiner, East Hampton, N. Y.; The Star Press, pp. 115-116.

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.John S. Osborne, *Records of the Town of East Hampton ,Long Island,Suffolk County, New York*; [hereafter, RTEH,I) Sag Harbor N.Y: John H. Hunt printer.

.Arthur Miller, "Why I Wrote 'The Crucible,' An Artist's answer to politics," <http://asuaf.org/~gurujohn/drama/miller-crucible.html>, nd.

.Early Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets (18th C B.C.) of Hammurabi's era prescribed remedies for the effects of the evil eye. Samuel Noah Cramer, personal communication, in George Peter Murdock. *Theories of Illness, A World Survey*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980.

.RTEH, I, pp. 128-140.

.RTEH, I, pp. 130-132.

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.John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan; Witchcraft and the Culture of New England*, New York; Oxford University Press, 1983 (orig. 1982), pp. 402 - 404.

.Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice*, first published in 1618 and reprinted several times in the next 100 years. Louis J. Kern, "Eros, the Devil, and the Cunning Woman: Sexuality and the Supernatural in European Antecedents and in the Seventeenth Century Salem Witchcraft Cases," IN *Perspectives on Witchcraft; Rethinking the Seventeenth-Century New England Experience*, (A Selection of Papers From the Tenth Salem Conference), *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, Vol. 129 No. 1, January 1993. See p. 67, see especially n. 13.

.RTEH, I, p. 129.

.RTEH,I, p 129.

.Birsill, and Edwards, RTEH, I, pp. 139-40.

.Simons, RTEH, I, pp. 132-33.

.RTEH, I, Goodies Bishop, p. 134; Birdsall, p. 135.

.Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca N.Y.; Cornell University Press, 1984(orig. 1972), p. 28.

.This confession was read before Putnam's congregation, August 25, 1706, and it was recorded by J. Greene, Pastor. See Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft; With an Account of Salem Village and A History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*, Boston; Wiggins and Lunt, 1867. Vol.2, p. 510.

.Russell, 1972, p. 27.

.Russell, 1972, p. 30.

.Goody Hand, RTEH, I, p. 135-36.

.Lion Gardiner and Joshua Garlick ultimately agreed to bind themselves with a bond of 10 pounds to put the matter to rest. (RTEH, I, 7/3 1654 p. 58)

.Goody Garlick and Goody Bishop, RTEH, I, p. 73, 1/30/1654)

.RTEH, I, 11/13/1657, p. 114)

.RTEH, I, 3/15/57, p. 140.

.Goody Birdsill,, entered into evidence during Goody Garlick's inquest, RTEH, I, 2/27/57 pp. 135-36.

.Vailes,, RTEH, 1, 2/27/1657, p 136.

.Talmage,, RTEH, I, 3/1/5/57, pp.152-3.

.Stratton, EHTR I, 3/8/58, p.154.

.Timothy H. Breen wrote, “. . . the magistrates must have realized the case against Mrs. Garlick was falling apart. . . To be sure there was a “naughty woman” in East Hampton, but increasingly the evidence suggested that it was Mrs.[sic.] Foulk Davis and not Mrs. [sic.] . . . the investigation into witchcraft had uncovered no witch; rather it exposed once again a pattern of slander and defamation. . . .the tide of local opinion appears to have turned against Mrs. [sic.] Davis.” *Imagining the Past; East Hampton Histories*, ” N.Y.; Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1990 (orig. 1989), p.133. John Putnam According to John Putnam Demos, the Garlicks “decided to lodge a counter-suit . . . against the wife of Falk Davis. . . . New depositions are taken in order to establish precisely what Goody Davis had alleged, and when and to whom.” Demos describes the testimonies of Thomas Talmage and Richard Stratton as presenting evidence of Davis's slander. *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*,N.Y.;

Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 218-219. The testimonies of the two gentlemen were given on 3/1/57 by Talmage, and 3/8/57 by Stratton, *before* the Garlicks entered their suit for slander on 3/15/57.

.Joshua Garlick entered his suit for defamation 3/15/1657, RTEH, I, p.140.

.Alexander Gardiner, "Gardiner Family", 183-184 in Wunderlich , 1989. pp. 8-9)

.RTEH, I, p. 140)

.J. Hammond Trumbull, transcribed *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Prior to the Union With New Haven Colony, May 1665*, and they were published by Brown& Parsons, in Hartford; 1850, pp. 572-3.

.The letter is not dated although it was probably written soon after the trial, which probably took place within a few months after the inquest, despite the fact that it dated for the following year, May 5th 1658. The ending of one year and the beginning of the next occurred in spring, rather than January. And the exact date of that transition was not uniform among the colonies.

.Joshua Garlick was charged by the Connecticut court for his wife's diet while in prison., IN J. Hammond Trumbull, *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Prior to the Union With New Haven Colony, May 1665*, Hartford Connecticut; Brown and Parsons, 1850, pp. 572-73.

.Tomlinson, *Witchcraft Trials of Connecticut*, pp. 6-9.

.John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan; Witchcraft and the Culture of New England*, New York; Oxford University Press, 1983 (orig. 1982), pp. 402 - 404. Demos,

.*Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663*, Hartford Connecticut, 1928, p.188.

.*Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*, Hartford; Connecticut Historical Society and the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, 1928, articular Court Records, p. 188.

. "Also we think good to certify yt it is desired & expected by this Court, yt you should cary neighborly & peaceably, without just offence, to Jos Garlick & his wife, and yt they should doe the like to you. And ye charge wee conceive & advise may be justly borne as followeth: I, Yt Jos: Garlick should beare ye charges of his wive s dyete & ward at home, with ye charge of her transeptation hither & return home; 2ly, yt your Towne should all their owne charges at home & the charges of their messengers & witnesses in bringing the case to tryall here, upon ye Country's account. J. Hammond Trumbull, *The Public Record of the Colony of Connecticut*, Hartford: Brown & Parsons, 1850 (orig. 1665), p. 573.

.Timothy H. Breen, *Imagining the Past*, 1990, p. 129-130.

.Pelletreau, William, (ed.), *Records of the Town of Southampton*, Vol. 2, Sag Harbor; Hunt, 1874-77.p. 47.

.Lion Gardiner, in the family's Geneva Bible.