

Albany Plan of Union (1754)

Benjamin Franklin's Albany Plan envisioned the formation of a Grand Council, made up of elected delegates from the various colonies, to oversee matters of common defense, western expansion, and Indian affairs. A President General appointed by the king would preside. Franklin's most daring suggestion involved taxation. He insisted the council be authorized to collect taxes to cover military expenditures. First reaction to the Albany Plan was enthusiastic. To take effect, however, it required the support of the separate colonial assemblies as well as Parliament. It received neither.

Albany Plan of Union 1754 (1) It is proposed that humble application be made for an act of Parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of which one general government may be formed in America, including all the said colonies, within and under which government each colony may retain its present constitution, except in the particulars wherein a change may be directed by the said act, as hereafter follows.

1. That the said general government be administered by a President-General, to be appointed and supported by the crown; and a Grand Council, to be chosen by the representatives of the people of the several Colonies met in their respective assemblies.

2. That within — months after the passing such act, the House of Representatives that happen to be sitting within that time, or that shall especially for that purpose convened, may and shall choose members for the Grand Council, in the following proportion, that is to say,

Massachusetts Bay 7
New Hampshire 2
Connecticut 5
Rhode Island 2
New York 4
New Jersey 3
Pennsylvania 6
Maryland 4
Virginia 7
North Carolina 4
South Carolina 4

— — —
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3. — who shall meet for the first time at the city of Philadelphia, being called by the President-General as soon as conveniently may be after his appointment.

4. That there shall be a new election of the members of the Grand Council every three years; and, on the death or resignation of any member, his place should be supplied by a new choice at the next sitting of the Assembly of the Colony he represented.

[...]

15. That they raise and pay soldiers and build forts for the defence of any of the Colonies, and equip vessels of force to guard the coasts and protect the trade on the ocean, lakes, or great rivers; but they shall not impress men in any Colony, without the consent of the Legislature.

16. That for these purposes they have power to make laws, and lay and levy such general duties, imposts, or taxes, as to them shall appear most equal and just (considering the ability and other

circumstances of the inhabitants in the several Colonies), and such as may be collected with the least inconvenience to the people; rather discouraging luxury, than loading industry with unnecessary burdens.

[...]

23. That all military commission officers, whether for land or sea service, to act under this general constitution, shall be nominated by the President-General; but the approbation of the Grand Council is to be obtained, before they receive their commissions. And all civil officers are to be nominated by the Grand Council, and to receive the President-General's approbation before they officiate.

24. But, in case of vacancy by death or removal of any officer, civil or military, under this constitution, the Governor of the Province in which such vacancy happens may appoint, till the pleasure of the President-General and Grand Council can be known.

25. That the particular military as well as civil establishments in each Colony remain in their present state, the general constitution notwithstanding; and that on sudden emergencies any Colony may defend itself, and lay the accounts of expense thence arising before the President-General and General Council, who may allow and order payment of the same, as far as they judge such accounts just and reasonable.

(1) The Albany Plan of Union was the work of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Hutchinson. p.114 Morison, Samuel Eliot and Henry Steele Commager, William E. Leuchtenburg. *The Growth of the American Republic* : Volume 1. Seventh Edition. New York : Oxford University Press; 1980. (Note added by the Avalon Project).

Source:

Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States. Government Printing Office, 1927.

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Selected, Arranged and Indexed by Charles C. Tansill

Ann Putnam's Confession (1706)

*Ann Putnam was one of the accusers in the 1692 Salem Witch Trials, eventually claiming that 62 members of the community were witches. She was 12 years old at the time. As a result of the claims of Putnam and others in Salem Village, 19 people were executed for being witches. In addition, another accused individual was executed for refusing to submit to a trial, and several others died while in prison awaiting trial or execution. The trials were widely publicized at the time, and they continue to capture public attention through modern representations of the events, such as Arthur Miller's 1953 play, *The Crucible*. Significantly, Putnam was the only accuser who issued a public confession, which is reproduced below.*

Note: "Goodwife" was used much as we use the titles "Miss" or "Mrs." today. "Goodwife Nurse" was Rebecca Nurse, one of the women she accused of witchcraft.

"I desire to be humbled before God for that sad and humbling providence that befell my father's family in the year about '92; that I, then being in my childhood, should, by such a providence of God, be made an instrument for the accusing of several persons of a grievous crime, whereby their lives were taken away from them, whom now I have just grounds and good reason to believe they were innocent persons; and that it was a great delusion of Satan that deceived me in that sad time, whereby I justly fear I have been instrumental, with others, though ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon myself and this land the guilt of innocent blood; though what was said or done by me against any person I can truly and uprightly say, before God and man, I did it not out of any anger, malice, or ill-will to any person, for I had no such thing against one of them; but what I did was ignorantly, being deluded by Satan. And particularly, as I was a chief instrument of accusing of Goodwife Nurse and her two sisters, I desire to lie in the dust, and to be humbled for it, 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.

[Signed]

"This confession was read before the congregation, together with her relation, Aug. 25, 1706; and she acknowledged it."

"J. Green, Pastor."

Ann Putnam's Deposition (1692)

Ann Putnam was one of the accusers in the 1692 Salem Witch Trials, eventually claiming that 62 members of the community were witches. She was 12 years old at the time. As a result of the claims of Putnam and others in Salem Village, 19 people were executed for being witches. In addition, another accused individual was executed for refusing to submit to a trial, and several others died while in prison awaiting trial or execution. The trials were widely publicized at the time, and they continue to capture public attention through modern representations of the events, such as Arthur Miller's 1953 play, The Crucible. Significantly, Putnam was the only accuser who issued a public confession, years later in 1706.

Who testifieth and saith that on 20th of April, 1692 at evening she saw the Apparishon of a minister at which she was grievously affrighted and cried out oh dreadfull: dreadfull her is a minister com, what are Ministers wicthes to: whence com you and What is your name for I will complaine of you tho you be a Minister: if you be a wizzard. . . . and Immediately I was tortured by him being Racked and allmost choaked by him: and he tempted me to write in his book which I Refused with loud out cries and said I would not writ in his book tho he tore me al to peaces but tould him that it was a dreadfull thing: that he which was a Minister that should teach children to feare God should com to perswad poor creatures to give their souls to the devill; oh, dreadfull, dreadfull, tell me your name that I may know who you are; then againe he tortured me and urged me to writ in his book; which I refused and then presently he tould me that his name was George Burroughs, and that he had had three wives: and that he had bewicthed the Two first of them to death; and that he had kiled Miss T. Lawson because she was so unwilling to goe from the village, and also killed Mr. Lawson's child because he went to the eastward with Sir Edmon and preached to the souldiers and that he had made Abigail Hobbs a wicth and several wicthes more: and he has continwed ever sence; by times tempting me to write in his book and grievously tortoring me by beating, pinching and almost choaking me severall times a day and he also tould me that he was above a wicth he was a conjuror. . . .

The Divine Right of Kings (1598) James I

1918. *The Political Works of James I.* reprinted from the edition of 1616 with an introduction by Charles Howard McIlwain. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

James Stuart (James VI of Scotland, 1567-1625; James I of England, 1603-1625) was an intellectual who was rarely able to implement his ideas. He had hoped to unify England, Scotland, and Ireland, but was thwarted by both political realities and his own personal failings. He sought to ease international tensions, but his efforts to prevent the conflict that would become the Thirty Years' War were unsuccessful. The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War also destroyed his hope of brokering a European religious compromise. In addition to his duties as monarch, James I wrote on a variety of topics. His most famous work, the True Law of a Free Monarchy, is a classic argument for divine-right monarchy. Interestingly, although James penned this work in 1598, before he assumed the throne of England, he never tried to implement divine-right rule in England. He firmly believed that his power and authority derived solely from God, but acknowledged that as king of England, he had sworn oaths to govern according to the "laws and customs of England."

The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: or the Reciproock and Mutuall Duetie Betwixt a Free King and His Naturall Subjects

As there is not a thing so necessarie to be knowne by the people of any land, next the knowledge of their God, as the right knowledge of their alleageance, according to the forme of government established among them, especially in a Monarchie (which forme of government, as resembling the Divinitie, approacheth nearest to perfection, as all the learned and wise men from the beginning have agreed upon; Unitie being the perfection of all things,) So hath the ignorance, and (which is worse) the seduced opinion of the multitude blinded by them, who thinke themselves able to teach and instruct the ignorants, procured the wracke and overthrow of sundry flourishing Common-wealths; and heaped heavy calamities, threatening utter destruction upon others. And the smiling successes, that unlaw rebellions have oftentimes had against Princes in ages past (such hath bene the misery, and the iniquitie of the time) hath by way of practise strengthened many of their error: albeit there cannot be a more deceivable argument; then to judge by the justnesse of the cause by the event thereof; as hereafter shall be proved more at length. And among others, no Common-wealth, that ever hath bene since the beginning, hath had greater need of the trew knowledge of this ground, then this our so long disordered, and distracted Common-wealth hath: the misknowledge hereof being the onely spring, from whence have flowed so many endlesse calamities, miseries, and confusions, as is better felt by many, then the cause thereof well knowne, and deeply considered. The naturall zeale therefore, that I beare to this my native cuntry, with the great pittie I have to see the so-long disturbance thereof for lack of the trew knowledge of this ground (as I have said before) hath compelled me at last to breake silence, to discharge my conscience to you my deare country men herein, that knowing the ground from whence these your many endlesse troubles have proceeded, as well as ye have already too-long tasted the bitter fruites thereof, ye may by knowledge, and eschewing of the cause escape, and divert the lamentable effects that ever necessarily follow thereupon. I have chosen the onely to set downe in this short Treatise, the trew grounds of the mutuall deutie, and alleageance betwixt a free and absolute Monarche, and his people.

First then, I will set downe the trew grounds, whereupon I am to build, out of the Scriptures, since Monarchie is the trew paterne of Divinitie, as I have already said: next, from the fundamental Lawes of our own Kingdome, which nearest must concerne us: thirdly, from the law of Nature, by divers similitudes drawne out of the same.

By the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his Coronation: And as the Father of his fatherly duty is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and vertuous government of

his children; even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects. As all the toile and paine that the father can take for his children, will be thought light and well bestowed by him, so that the effect thereof redound to their profite and weale; so ought the Prince to doe towards his people. As the kindly father ought to foresee all inconvenients and dangers that may arise towards his children, and though with the hazard of his owne person presse to prevent the same; so ought the King towards his people. As the fathers wrath and correction upon any of his children that offendeth, ought to be by a fatherly chastisement seasoned with pitie, as long as there is any hope of amendment in them; so ought the King towards any of his Lieges that offend in that measure. And shortly, as the Fathers chiefe joy ought to be in procuring his childrens welfare, rejoycing at their weale, sorrowing and pitying at their evil, to hazard for their safetie, travell for their rest, wake for their sleepe; and in a word, to thinke that his earthly felicitie and life standeth and liveth more in them, nor in himself; so ought a good Prince thinke of his people.

As to the other branch of this mutuall and reciproock band, is the duety and alleageance that the Lieges owe to their King: the ground whereof, I take out of the words of Samuel, dited by Gods Spirit, when God had given him commandement to heare the peoples voice in choosing and annointing them a King. And because that place of Scripture being well understood, is so pertinent for our purpose, I have insert herein the very words of the Text.

10. So Samuel tolde all the wordes of the Lord unto the people that asked a King of him.

11. And he said, this shall be the maner of the King that shall raigne over you: hee will take your sonnes, and appoint them to his Charets, and to be his horsemen, and some shall runne before his Charet.

12. Also, hee will make them his captaines over thousands, and captaines over fifties, and to eare his ground, and to reape his harvest, and to make instruments of warre and the things that serve for his charets:

13. Hee will also take your daughters, and make them Apothicaries, and Cookes, and Bakers.

14. And hee will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best Olive trees, and give them to his servants.

15. And hee will take the tenth of your seed, and of your Vineyards, and give it to his Eunuches, and to his servants.

16. And hee will take your men servants, and your maid-servants, and the chief of your young men, and your asses, and put them to his worke.

17. Hee will take the tenth of your sheepe: and ye shall be his servants.

18. And ye shall cry out at that day, because of your King, whom ye have chosen you: and the Lord God will not heare you at that day.

19. But the people would not heare the voice of Samuel, but did say: Nay, but there shalbe a King over us.

20. And we also will be all like other Nations, and our King shall judge us, and goe out before us, and fight out battles.

As likewise, although I have said, a good king will frame all his actions to be according to the Law; yet is hee not bound thereto but of his good will, and for good example—giving to his subjects: For as in the law of abstaining from eating of flesh in Lenton, the king will, for examples sake, make his owne house to observe the Law; yet no man will thinke he needs to take a licence to eate flesh. And although by our Lawes, the bearing and wearing of hag-butts, and pistolets be forbidden, yet no man can find any fault in the King, for causing his traine use them in any raide upon the Borderers, or other malefactours or rebellious subjects. So as I have already said, a good King, although hee be above the Law, will subject and frame his actions thereto, for examples sake to his subjects, and of

his owne free-will, but not as subject or bound thereto.

And the agreement of the Law of nature in this our ground with the Lawes and constitutions of God, and man, already alleged, will by two similitudes easily appeare. The King towards his people is rightly compared to a father of children, and to a head of a body composed of divers members: For as fathers, the good Princes, and Magistrates of the people of God acknowledged themselves to their subjects. And for all other well ruled Common-wealths, the stile of Pater patriae was ever, and is commonly used to Kings. And the proper office of a King towards his Subjects, agrees very wel with the office of the head towards the body, and all members thereof: For from the head, being the seate of Judgement, proceedeth the care and foresight of guiding, and preventing all evill that may come to the body, so doeth the King for his people. As the discourse and direction flowes from the head, and the execution according thereunto belongs to the rest of the members, every one according to their office: so it is betwixt a wise Prince, and his people. As the judgement coming from the head may not onely imploy the members, every one in their owne office, as long as they are able for it; but likewise in case any of them be affected with any infirmitie must care and provide for their remedy, in-case it be curable, and if otherwise, gar cut them off for feare of infecting of the rest: even so is it betwixt the Prince, and his people. And as there is ever hope of curing any diseased member of the direction of the head, as long as it is whole; but by contrary, if it be troubled, all the members are partakers of that paine, so is it betwixt the Prince and his people.

And now first for the fathers part (whose naturally love to his children I described in the first part of this my discourse, speaking of the dutie that Kings owe to their Subjects) consider, I pray you what duetie his children owe to him, & whether upon any pretext whatsoever, it wil not be thought monstrous and unnaturall to his sons, to rise up against him, to control him at their appetite, and when they thinke good to sley him, or to cut him off, and adopt to themselves any other they please in his roome: Or can any pretence of wickedness or rigor on his part be a just excuse for his children to put hand into him? And although wee see by the course of nature, that love useth to descend more than to ascend, in case it were trew, that the father hated and wronged the children never so much, will any man, endued with the least sponke of reason, thinke it lawful for them to meet him with the line? Yea, suppose the father were furiously following his sonnes with a drawn sword, is it lawful for them to turne and strike againe, or make any resistance but by flight? I thinke surely, if there were no more but the example of bruit beasts & unreasonable creatures, it may serve well enough to qualifie and prove this my argument. We reade often the pietie that the Storkes have to their olde and decayed parents: And generally wee know, that there are many sorts of beasts and fowles, that with violence and many bloody strokes will beat and banish their yong ones from them, how soone they perceive them to be able to fend themselves; but wee never read or heard of any resistance on their part, except among the vipers; which proves such persons, as ought to be reasonable creatures, and yet unnaturally follow this example, to be endued with their viperous nature.

And it is here likewise to be noted, that the duty and alleageance, which the people sweareth to their prince, is not bound to themselves, but likewise to their lawfull heires and posterity, the lineall to their lawfull heires and posterity, the lineall succession of crowns being begun among the people of God, and happily continued in divers Christian common-wealths: So as no objection either of heresie, or whatsoever private statute or law may free the people from their oathgiving to their king, and his succession, established by the old fundamentall lawes of the kingdom: For, as hee is their heritable over-lord, and so by birth, not by any right in the coronation, commeth to his crowne; it is a like unlawful (the crowne ever standing full) to displace him that succeedeth thereto, as to eject the former: For at the very moment of the expiring of the king reigning, the nearest and lawful heire entreth in his place: And so to refuse him, or intrude another, is not to holde out uncomming in, but to expell and put out their righteous King. And I trust at this time whole France acknowledgeth the superstitious rebellion of the liguers, who upon pretence of heresie, by force of armes held so long out, to the great desolation of their whole country, their native and righteous king from possessing of his owne crowne and naturall kingdome.

Not that by all this former discourse of mine, and Apologie for kings, I meane that whatsoever errors and intollerable abominations a soveraigne prince commit, hee ought to escape all punishment, as if thereby the world were only ordained for kings, & they without controlment to turne it upside down at their pleasure: but by the contrary, by remitting them to God (who is their onely ordinary Judge) I remit them to the sorest and sharpest school-master that can be devised for them: for the further a

king is preferred by God above all other ranks & degrees of men, and the higher that his seat is above theirs, the greater is his obligation to his maker. And therefore in case he forget himselfe (his unthankfulness being in the same measure of height) the sadder and sharper will be correction be; and according to the greatnes of the height he is in, the weight of his fall wil recompense the same: for the further that any person is obliged to God, his offence becomes and growes so much the greater, then it would be in any other. Joves thunderclaps light oftner and sorer upon the high & stately oaks, then on the low and supple willow trees: and the highest bench is sliddriest to sit upon. Neither is it ever heard that any king forgets himself towards God, or in his vocation; but God with the greatnesse of the plague revengeth the greatnes of his ingratitude: Neither thinke I by the force of argument of this my discourse so to perswade the people, that none will hereafter be raised up, and rebell against wicked Princes. But remitting to the justice and providence of God to stirre up such scourges as pleaseth him, for punishment of wicked kings (who made the very vermine and filthy dust of the earth to bridle the insolencie of proud Pharaoh) my onely purpose and intention in this treatise is to perswade, as farre as lieth in me, by these sure and infallible grounds, all such good Christian readers, as beare not onely the naked name of a Christian, but kith the fruites thereof in their daily forme of life, to keep their hearts and hands free from such monstrous and unnaturall rebellions, whensoever the wickednesse of a Prince shall procure the same at Gods hands: that, when it shall please God to cast such scourges of princes, and instruments of his fury in the fire, ye may stand up with cleane handes, and unspotted consciences, having proved your selves in all your actions trew Christians toward God, and dutifull subjects towards your King, having remitted the judgement and punishment of all his wrongs to him, whom to onely of right it appertaineth.

But craving at God, and hoping that God shall continue his blessing with us, in not sending such fearefull desolation, I heartily wish our kings behaviour so to be, and continue among us, as our God in earth, and loving Father, endued with such properties as I described a King in the first part of this Treatise. And that ye (my deare countreyemen, and charitable readers) may presse by all means to procure the prosperitie and welfare of your King; that as hee must on the one part thinke all his earthly felicitie and happiness grounded upon your weale, caring more for himselfe for your sake then for his owne, thinking himselfe onely ordained for your weale; such holy and happy emulation may arise betwixt him and you, as his care for your quietnes, and your care for his honor and preservation, may in all your actions daily strive together, that the Land may thinke themselves blessed with such a King, and the king may thinke himself most happy in ruling over so loving and obedient subjects.

When Historians Disagree

What Caused the Hysteria in Salem?

As Mary Beth Norton points out in her book, *In the Devil's Snare*, historians have offered many different reasons for the extraordinary outbreak of charges and prosecutions for witchcraft that took place in and around Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Perhaps it was a moment in which the general disdain for women in much of Protestant European culture broke through the surface, perhaps a few young women were simply seeking a way to get attention, perhaps some form of illness—mental or physical—took hold of some of Salem's residents, perhaps some Salem residents really did make a pact with the Devil or, as Norton suggests, perhaps the intense warfare with France and France's Native American allies was taking its toll and inducing fears that had to make themselves felt one way or another. The oft-studies case of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 provides an ideal test case for looking at ways in which different historians can come to quite different conclusions about the same moment in history. Writing in a book on the history of women in the United States, Jane Kamensky saw the Salem hysteria as one more example of ways in which women who spoke out or who did not fit social norms could be persecuted. Looking at some of the same data, Mary Beth Norton noticed that many of those caught up in the events in Salem in 1692 were writing a great deal about something quite different—their fears of the Indian

attacks that were engulfing New England at that time. There are no right or wrong answers here. There are, however, fascinating and important differences in where the data might lead one, as the material from these two distinguished historians illustrates.

Jane Kamensky, "The Colonial Mosaic, 1600-1660," in Nancy F. Cott, editor, *No Small Courage: A History of Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 95-98.

In Salem, Massachusetts, women confronted a range of perils and possibilities during the social upheaval of the late seventeenth century. There, in 1692, the most extensive witch-hunts ever seen in the colonies took place. Witchcraft had a long history in British North America. Prosecutions of women suspected of practicing witchcraft began in the 1630s and continued sporadically throughout the seventeenth century. In Salem, as in other locations, women comprised the vast majority of those accused—as well as a significant proportion of the accusers and some of the most vocal "victims." The crisis at Salem belonged, in part, to a very old Puritan pattern in which the Devil almost always seemed to appear in the shape of a woman.

But there were different things about Salem. For one thing, there appeared in Salem new sorts of "devils" to fight against: the rapid growth of the population, the spread of commerce, the feuding of neighbor against neighbor. And there was also, at Salem, an entirely new scale to the prosecutions. Between the day the first charges were leveled in January 1692 and the end of the trials early the following October, approximately 156 people in 24 towns had been accused. Nineteen of them—fourteen women and five men—had been hanged; one man had been pressed to death with heavy stones. Just what had plunged Salem and many nearby villages into such a panic?

If we could interview someone from late-seventeenth century Salem Village, the part of town that was home to most of the

Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Random House, 2002), pp. 3-5.

Salem. The word alone evokes persistent images in the minds of twenty-first century Americans: the misogynistic persecution of women, hysterical girls telling tales of being tormented by specters, falsely accused "witches" bravely refusing to confess, even—erroneously—women being burned at the stake. Few other events in colonial American have so fascinated modern residents of the United States; few other incidents in the seventeenth-century Anglo-American colonies have been so intensively studied by historians...

Scholars have developed a variety of interpretations of the crisis. Some have detected natural causes for the girls' visions of ghostly specters: ergot poisoning or, most recently, an encephalitis epidemic. One has argued that at least some of the accused really were practicing witchcraft and thus that some of the charges had merit. Several historians content that the girls were faking their fits from the start, others that they were hysterical, angry, or delinquent adolescents. The influential *Salem Possessed* (1974), by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, attributes the crisis to long-standing political, economic, and religious discord among the men of Salem Village, denying the significance of the women's prominence as both accused and accuser...

What I found has led me to develop a new interpretation of the witchcraft crisis, one that places it firmly in the context of its very specific time and place: Essex County, Massachusetts, in the early 1690s. The county's residents were then near the front lines of an armed conflict that today is little known but which at the time commanded their lives and thoughts, as was

accusers, she would probably say that the story began one icy January morning in the kitchen of the Reverend Samuel Parris, minister of Salem Village. There, several girls and young women, including Parris's nine-year old daughter Betty and his eleven-year-old niece, Abigail Williams, began an innocent game of divining: looking to the occult for signs as to the identity of their future husbands. Excitement soon gave way to fear as the girls experienced what they described to local ministers as a feeling of being "bitten and pinched by invisible agents ... taken dumb, their mouths stopped, their throats choked, their limbs wracked and tormented." News of their "cruel Sufferings" spread through the village, and many who heard descriptions of their "fits" knew immediately what the cause must be: witchcraft.

As the winter wore on, Betty Parris, Abigail Williams, and several of their friends displayed their "afflictions," real or pretended for ever larger audiences. By June, young women living as far away as Boston, where some of the accused were jailed, had experienced similar symptoms. And plenty gathered to see them perform. Perhaps like Mary Rowlandson, these young girls were eager to claim a larger space for women's voices in a changing world. Perhaps they truly were suffering—not from what we today would understand as witchcraft, but from some other mental or physical illness. To their audiences, however, the explanation was readily at hand in the shape of three local women whom the girls accused of tormenting them.

demonstrated by the ubiquity of the subject in the letters and diaries I was reading. They called it the Second Indian War. Early American historians today term it King William's War. Whatever the name, after 1688 that struggle with the French and the Indians for control of New England's northeastern frontier dominated public policy and personal decisions alike. Historians have examined Salem Village itself, Massachusetts legal practice, and Puritan attitudes toward women, all of which provide essential background for comprehending the witchcraft crisis. *In the Devil's Snare*, though contends that the dramatic events of 1692 can be fully understood only by viewing them as intricately related to concurrent political and military affairs in northern New England... When I started my research, I expected the accusers' familial origins to prove to be important for my analysis, but I had no idea that this book would become what it has: an exploration of the history of frontier warfare and its impact on the collective mentalite of an entire region. Yet the more I read the documents produced in New England in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the more I realized that the evidence required such an approach. The histories of King William's War, King Philip's War (it equally brutal predecessor in the 1670s), and the Salem witchcraft crisis are intricately intertwined. *In the Devil's Snare* explicates those links through what has evolved into a dual narrative of war and witchcraft.