

The Historic Salem Witch Trials



Belmont Historical Society September 2017 Program

On **Tuesday, September 19th**, at 7PM at the Corner Meeting House in Belmont the local historical society is sponsoring a program on the Salem Witchcraft Trials. The program is titled: ***The Capital Crime of Witchcraft: What Primary Sources Tell Us.*** With Halloween coming up in October, this should be both an interesting and timely program.

On first impression, the witchcraft trials of the Colonial era may seem to have been nothing but a free-for-all, fraught with hysterics. **Margo Burns**, of Manchester, NH, explores an array of prosecutions in seventeenth century New England, using facsimiles of primary source manuscripts, from first formal complaints to arrest warrants, indictments of formal charges to death warrants, and the reversals of attainder and rescinding of excommunications years after the fact; demonstrating how methodically and logically the Salem Court worked. This program focuses on the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692 and 1693, when nineteen people were hanged and one crushed to death, but also examines a variety of other colonial witchcraft cases in New Hampshire and Connecticut. Margo is a descendent of Rebecca Nurse, who was also hanged in 1692.

Margo Burns is the Project Manager and Associate Editor of *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, published in 2009 by Cambridge University Press, the definitive collection of transcriptions of the legal records of the episode. Burns has appeared in a variety of documentaries about the trials. This past summer, she spoke at *Salem's Trials: Lessons and Legacy of 1692, A Symposium Commemorating the 325th Anniversary of the Salem Witch Trials* at Salem State University.

Funding support for the program has been provided by the **NH Humanities Council** and the **Belmont Sargent Fund**. The program is free and open to the public. Handicapped parking is available. For additional information call Chris at 603-524-8268.