Research Guide to Colonial Witchcraft Trial Materials at the Connecticut State Library

This bibliography lists some of the materials on colonial witchcraft trials that are available at the Connecticut State Library. While not exhaustive, it will help researchers formulate successful strategies for consulting materials dealing with the colonial witchcraft trials in New England. For materials noted as Archives, Main Vault, Special Collections, or Wells Collection, please see the *Rules and Procedures for Researchers Using Archival Records and Secured Collections Materials*. For additional information on access, please see *Use of Offsite and Secured Collections*.

The sections of this Research Guide are:

**General & New England**

- Bibliographies
- Books & Articles
- Laws

**Connecticut**

- Archives -- Original & Published
- Books & Articles
- Laws

**Massachusetts**

- Archives -- Original & Published
- Books & Articles -- Church & Town Histories
- Books & Articles -- Salem Witchcraft Trials
- Laws

**Links to Related Resources**

- *Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archives and Transcription Project* (University of Virginia). Scans and transcriptions of original documents.
GENERAL & NEW ENGLAND

General & New England -- Bibliographies


Holmes, Thomas James. *Cotton Mather and His Writings on Witchcraft*. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926] [CSL call number Z 8554 .H74]. Reprinted from *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. XVIII, Parts 1 and 2. Pamphlet (29 pages) discusses how Cotton Mather’s writings on colonial witchcraft trials were only a small part of his total writings.


General & New England -- Books & Articles


Drake, Frederick C. "Witchcraft in the American Colonies 1647-62." *American Quarterly* 20 (Winter 1968): 694-725. Available at CSL only through JSTOR, online journal database for institutions (subscription). Original issues not at CSL.

Roxbury, MA: W. Elliott Woodward, 1866 [CSL call number Special Collections BF 1575 .D75 1866]. The same items Fowler (below) edited and published in 1865, but with Mather’s work first and with his own comments.

Fowler, Samuel, ed. Salem Witchcraft: Comprising More Wonders of the Invisible World, collected by Robert Calef, and Wonders of the Invisible World, by Cotton Mather; ... notes and explanations by Samuel P. Fowler. Boston: William Veazie, 1865 [CSL call number Special Collections BF 1573 .A3 F69 1865]. Published with his own comments one year before Drake, above, published the same items, but in opposite order.

Glanvill, Joseph. Saducismus Triumphatus or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions.... [3rd ed.] London: Printed for S.L., 1689 [CSL call number Charles T. Wells Collection BF 1565 .G58 1689]. This book played a major roll in renewing and promoting English beliefs in witches, ghosts, and the supernatural by recounting “true” incidents. The author believed that the English were losing belief in the supernatural, and if that trend continued, they would soon lose belief in God. The book was widely popular and a major influence on colonial thinkers like Cotton and Increase Mather.


Hall, David D. “Witchcraft and the Limits of Interpretation,” New England Quarterly 58 (June 1985): 253-81 [CSL call number F 1 .N62]. A review of earlier discussions of witchcraft cases. Contends that the witchcraft cases reflect “a world made up out of multiple and overlapping realms of meaning and behavior” requiring a tolerance of alternative interpretations.


______. The Surreptitious Printing of One of Cotton Mather’s Manuscripts. Cambridge, MA: [Harvard University Press], 1925 [CSL call number BF 1575 .C23]. Cotton Mather’s manuscript for “Another Brand Pluckt Out of the Burning” was only to be hand-circulated, but was published without his consent in More Wonders of the Invisible World (London, 1700) by his adversary, Robert Calef (Sr.).


Reis, Elizabeth. Damned Women: Sinners & Witches in Puritan New England. Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1997 [CSL call number HQ 1438 .N35 R45 1997]. The author states that in Puritan theology, women were seen as the weaker sex and so were more likely to see themselves as sinful, damned, and in the power of Satan. This belief contributed to the witchcraft trials in colonial New England.


Watt, Francis. The Law's Lumber Room. London: John Lane, 1898 [CSL call number KD 358 .W38 1898]. See "State Trials for Witchcraft," pp. 68-87, for an overview of five cases from Howell's State Trials. These English witchcraft trials possibly influenced those in the American colonies.


General & New England -- Colonial Laws

Officium Vicecomitum. The Office and Authority of Sheriffs…. London: Printed by the assigns of Richard Atkins, and Edward Atkins, 1682 [CSL call number KD 7312 .D15 1682 Oversize]. Used in England and its colonies, this book advises sheriffs on how to carry out their duties -- jury selection, escape of prisoners, etc.


CONNECTICUT

CT -- Archives -- Original & Published

Connecticut Archives: Crimes and Misdemeanors, Series I, 1662/63-1789 [CSL call number HistRef F 91 .C56 Crimes Misdemeanors Ser. 1, mfms 22-24]. Includes documents relating to the cases of Hugh Crosia, Sarah Dibble, Sarah Spencer, and others. Index online; the microfilm is available for use at CSL or through Interlibrary Loan.

Grant, Matthew. Matthew Grant Diary [CSL call number Main Vault 974.62 W76gra; also available online]. See inside cover for "a list of persons who were hanged." This is the only known original source providing the name of Alse Young, the first person in Connecticut hung as a witch [1647]. The "diary" also has sermons by Thomas Hooker and others, Grant family records, the Windsor church covenant, rules for measuring land, extracts from various religious books, and other miscellaneous material.

Records. See p. 77 for “Capitall Lawes Established By the Generall Court, the First of December, 1642,” stating witchcraft is a capital crime.

Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut. The originals are in State Archives Record Group 1, Early General Records, Vol. 55 (1650-1663) and Vol. 56 (1663-1665). Records to April 1663 were published in Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663, Connecticut Historical Society Collections, Vol. 22, Hartford, 1928 [CSL call number HistRef F 91 .C7 Vol. 22]. Bracketed page numbers in this latter source cite pages in original manuscript volume of Particular Court Records.

Samuel Wyllys Papers: Depositions on Cases of Witchcraft, Assault, Theft, Drunkenness, and Other Crimes Tried in Connecticut, 1663-1728 [CSL call number Main Vault 974.6 fW97]. The most important primary source for information on Connecticut witchcraft cases. This volume, in the State Archives, consists of 88 original Wyllys documents. Available online in the State Library’s Digital Collections. Microfilmed by Genealogical Society of Utah (film 0003645, item 2) and available through LDS Family History Centers, but the readability of the film is not good.

Samuel Wyllys Papers, Supplement. Depositions on Cases of Witchcraft Tried in Connecticut, 1662-1693 [CSL call number Main Vault 974.5 fW97 supp.]. This second volume of a two-volume set of manuscripts (see above) consists of bound negative Photostats of the Samuel Wyllys Papers, 1638-1757 at the John Hay Library at Brown University. Microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah (film 0003645, item 1) and available through LDS Family History Centers, but the readability of the film is not good. As an alternative, you may wish to contact the John Hay Library, which holds the originals.


CT -- Books & Articles


Jacobus, Donald L. "Connecticut Witches." New Haven Genealogical Magazine 4 (September 1926): 951-58 [CSL call number F 104 .N6 A64]. Good overview of cases of Mary Johnson (1648/9) and Mary Bassett (1650); quotes original
records and contemporary writers; gives own comments, compares sources. Photocopy of article in H&G Vertical File: "Connecticut Witches and Witchcraft."


Marcus, Ronald. *Elizabeth Clawson... Thou Deservest to Dye.* Stamford: Stamford Historical Society, 1976 [CSL call number BF 1756 .M35]. The Elizabeth Clawson case in detail; photo of the affidavit (by friends and neighbors) that saved her.


"When Connecticut Hanged Witches". Hartford Magazine [in Hartford Courant], October 25, 1970, "C", n.p. [CSL call number AN 104 .H3 C69 Mfilm]. Article in H&G vertical File: "Connecticut-Witches & Witchcraft". Brief overview of Connecticut witchcraft trials; comments on the 1903 finding of the entry for Alse Young, the first Connecticut witch executed. (However, see Stiles, above for an account of the 1891 discovery of Alse Young’s name).


Trumbull, Annie Elliot. "'One Blank' of Windsor." Hartford Courant, December 3, 1904, p. A11 [CSL call number AN 104 .H3 C69 Mfilm]. Also available online Proquest Historical Newspapers, Historical Hartford Courant (1764-1922). A discourse on the entry for Alse Young inside the cover of Matthew Grant’s "diary."


CT -- Laws

The Blue Laws of Connecticut; Taken from the Code of 1650 and the Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut Previous to 1655, ... With An Account of the Persecution of Witches and Quakers in New England... New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1899 [CSL call number Special Collections KFC 3881 .S8 B54 1899]. Early Connecticut laws, including those on witchcraft.

MA -- Archives -- Original & Published

Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts. Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1916 [CSL call number F 72 .E7 M42].
*Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts.* Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1911- [CSL call number F 72 .E7 M44].


**MA -- Books & Articles -- Church and Town Histories**

First Church [Danvers MA.]. *Proceedings at the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the First Parish at Salem Village, Now Danvers, October 8, 1872.* ... Boston: Congregational Pub. Society, 1874 [CSL call number F 72 .D2 D39].


**MA -- Books & Articles -- Salem Witchcraft Trials**


Hutchinson, Thomas. *The Witchcraft Delusion of 1692*. Boston: D. Clapp & Sons, 1870 [CSL call number BF 1576 .H8]. "Reprinted from the *New-England Historical and Genealogical Register* for October, 1870, pp. 381-414. Written by a Governor of Massachusetts (1771-1774), also a historian. As Governor, Hutchinson had unlimited access to state papers on the trials. Includes partial transcriptions of questioning in Andover witchcraft trials, among others. The draft upon which this survived the riots of 1765, when a mob attacked his house. (A later draft went into his *History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay*, ed. by Wm. Frederick Poole. 3 vols. Orig pub. 1764-1828. Reprint New York: Arno Press, 1972 [CSL call number F67 .H97 1972].)


Upham, Charles W. *Salem Witchcraft: With an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*. Reprint 1959 (2 vols.). New York: Ungar, [CSL call number BF 1576 .U56 1959]. Mr. Upham, a native of Salem, was one of the first to thoroughly examine all the Salem town records -- land and probate as well as vital and church -- and to analyze the trials in the light of the town’s history and previously little-known "jealousies, discontent, and animosities" of its residents.


**MA -- Laws**


**Photo Credits**

The five images of drawings depicting people and demons are from the frontispiece of the book *Saducismus Triumphatus or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions...* by Joseph Glanvill.  See the entry under General & New England -- Books & Articles.


Bill of Accusation against Elizabeth Clawson from Samuel Wyllys Papers, *CSL Digital Collections.*  Prepared by the History and Genealogy Unit, Connecticut State Library, 11-96.  Updated, expanded, and revised by Bonnie Linck, History & Genealogy Unit, 02-09.