# SWITCHING SIDES

## How a Generation of Historians Lost Sympathy for the Victims of the Salem Witch Hunt



### TONY FELS

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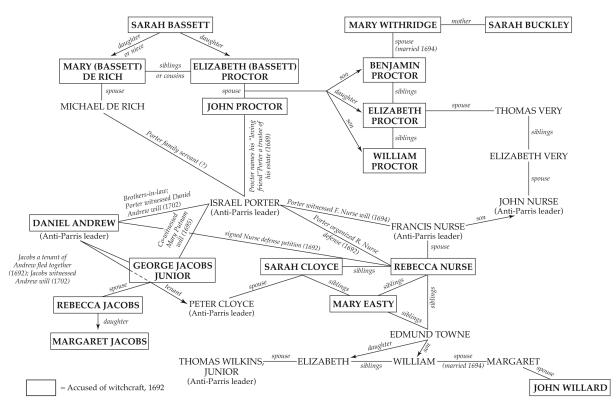
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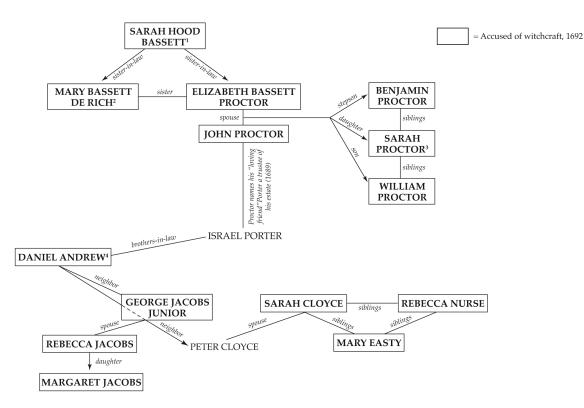
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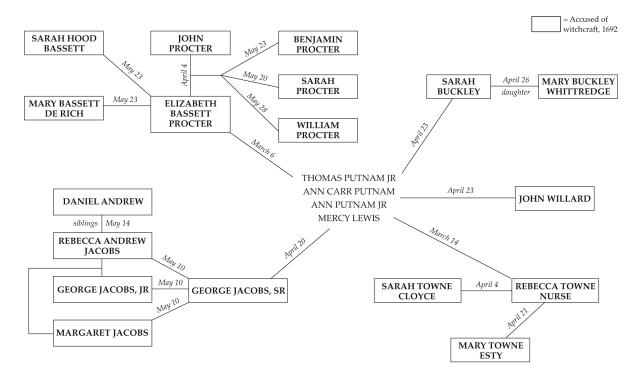
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*Figure 1.* Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Anti-Parris Network" of suspects accused of witchcraft, built around ties to Israel Porter. *Source: Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1974 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 184.

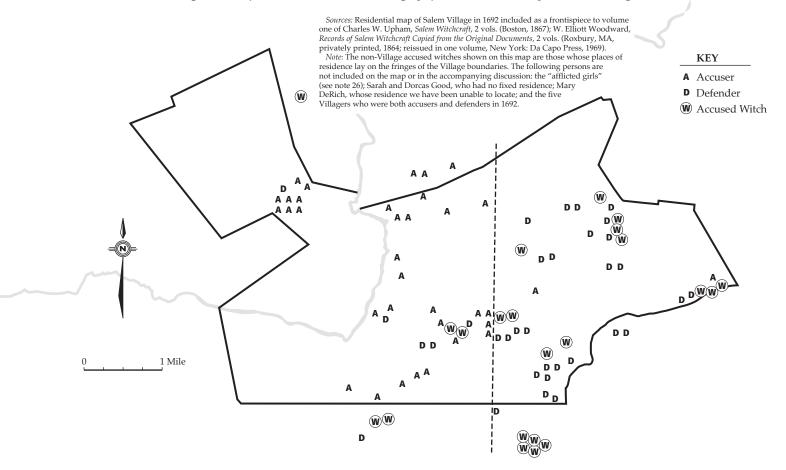


*Figure* 2. Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Anti-Parris Network," restricted to shown pre–witch-hunt relationships. *Notes*: 1. The full name and corrected relationships of Sarah Hood Bassett have been substituted for the original "Sarah Bassett." 2. Mary De Rich's husband, Michael De Rich, has been removed, because the original chart established only a relationship to Israel Porter's father, not Israel Porter. After the elder Porter's death in 1676, De Rich appears to have begun working for John Buxton (*RFQCE*, 5:346, 428; 7:160). 3. Sixteen-year-old Sarah Proctor was the one accused of witchcraft; her older stepsister Elizabeth was never accused. 4. I have found no evidence that Daniel Andrew was the landlord to George Jacobs Jr. or Peter Cloyce. *Salem Possessed* cited (183n4) Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* frontispiece for this information, but Upham states only that the land surrounding their houses was "owned, in 1692, by Daniel Andrew and Peter Cloyce" (1:xxvi). *Source*: Modification of data from figure 1.

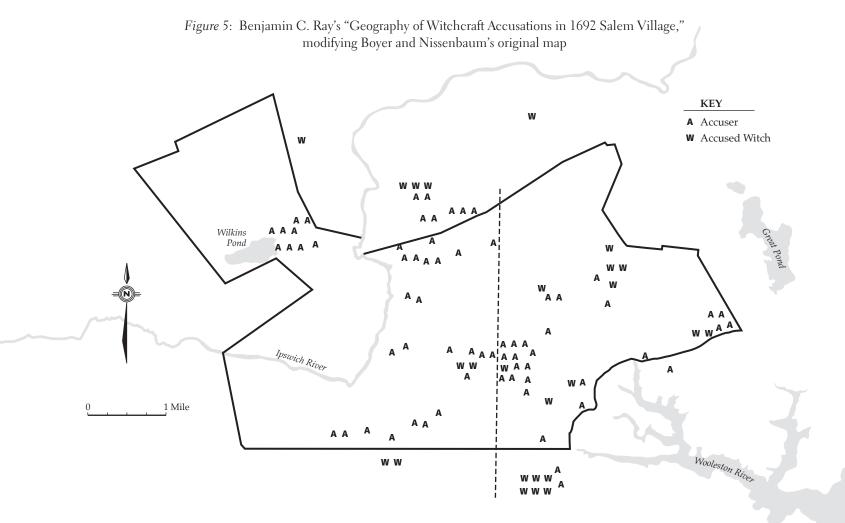


*Figure* 3. Boyer and Nissenbaum's network of suspects accused of witchcraft, rearranged in chronological order of accusation, built around the accusing family of Thomas Putnam Jr. *Notes*: Dates shown are the earliest recorded mention of accusation. For all unlabeled personal relationships, see figure 2. In this figure, unlike figures 1 and 2, I revert to the spellings of names used throughout my book. *Sources*: For E. Procter, see Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 30; J. Procter, Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 71; S. H. Bassett, SWP, 1:77; M. B. De Rich, *Records*, #198; B. Procter, SWP, 2:655; S. Procter, SWP, 2:692–694; W. Procter, *Records*, #221; S. Buckley, SWP, 1:148; M. Whittredge, SWP, 1:320; G. Jacobs Sr., Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 132; R. Jacobs, *Records*, #135; G. Jacobs Jr., SWP, 2:476; M. Jacobs, Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 158–159; D. Andrew, *Records*, #151; R. Nurse, Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 47; S. Cloyce, Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 73; M. Esty, *Records*, #79; J. Willard, SWP, 3:850.

#### Figure 4: Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Geography of Witchcraft" map of Salem Village, 1692

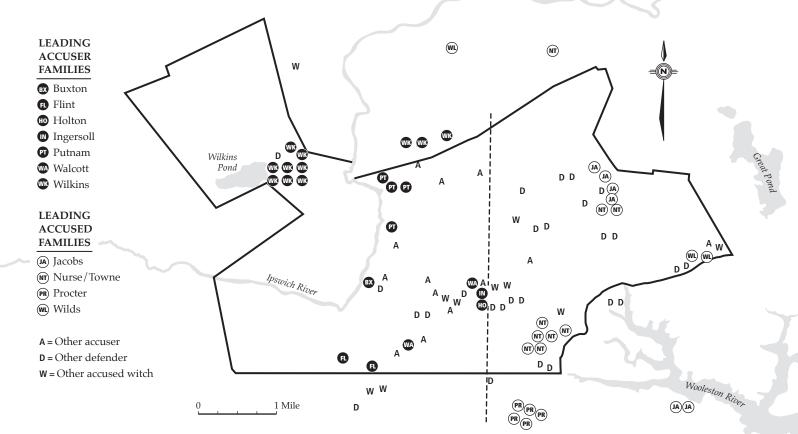


Source: Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft, by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1974, by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 34.

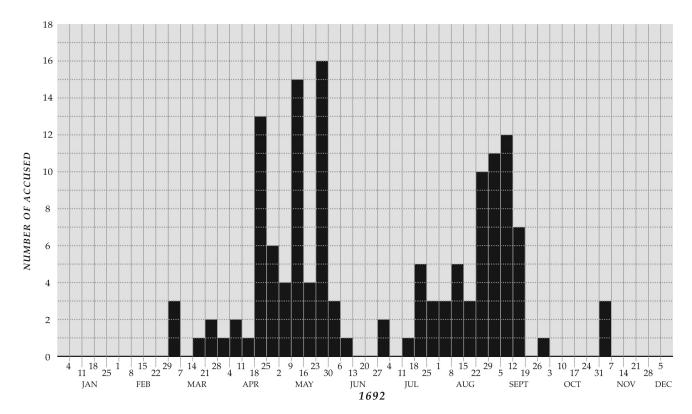


Source: Benjamin C. Ray, "The Geography of Witchcraft Accusations in 1692 Salem Village," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 65, no. 3 (July 2008): 469.

Figure 6: Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Geography of Witchcraft" data, with family groups highlighted



Notes: Extended family names have been assigned to the data points shown in figure 4 by correlating the data points with the lists of accusers, accused, and defenders presented in Boyer and Nissenbaum, ed., Salem-Village Witchcraft, 375-382, and with the households shown on the residential map appearing in Upham, Salem Witchcraft 1:xv-xxvii, plus map insert. The household names of all but two of Boyer and Nissenbaum's ninety data points (two accusers) could be identified. A complete list of each data point and associated household name appears in appendix 1. Documentation for extended family members not readily apparent from the list in appendix 1 may be found in note 28. I have added to figure 6 four data points not appearing in figure 4 --- the accused witches Sarah Wilds (WL) and Mary Esty (NT) just north of Salem village, and George Jacobs, Sr. (JA) and Margaret Jacobs (JA) just south of the village -- because they are in line with the rules governing the rest of Boyer and Nissenbaum's data and they help illustrate the significance of family ties in the witch hunt. Source: Modification of data form figure 4.



*Figure 7*. Accused suspects in Salem witch hunt, by date of first formal legal action (in weeks). *Notes*: Each bar represents the number of suspects accused in the week beginning on Monday (the dates displayed along the bottom of the graph) and ending on Sunday just before the start of the next week. Almost no legal actions were taken on Sundays, the Puritan Sabbath. Legal actions include, in descending order of frequency: arrest warrant, complaint, examination, testimony, statement, deposition, and other. A table showing each of the 138 suspects included in this figure, together with their dates and type of legal action, appears in appendix 2. *Source: Records*, pp. 101–124.