

SWITCHING SIDES

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



TONY FELS

© 2018 Johns Hopkins University Press
All rights reserved. Published 2018
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper
2 4 6 8 9 7 5 3 1

Johns Hopkins University Press
2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363
www.press.jhu.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fels, Tony, 1949– author.
Title: Switching sides : how a generation of historians lost sympathy
for the victims of the Salem witch hunt / Tony Fels.
Description: Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017016625 | ISBN 9781421424378 (pbk. : alk. paper) |
ISBN 9781421424385 (electronic) | ISBN 1421424371 (pbk. : alk. paper) |
ISBN 142142438X (electronic)
Subjects: LCSH: Witchcraft—Massachusetts—Salem—
History—19th century. | Trials (Witchcraft)—Massachusetts—
Salem—History—19th century.
Classification: LCC BF1576 .F45 2017 | DDC 133.4/3097445—dc23
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017016625>

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

*Special discounts are available for bulk purchases of this book.
For more information, please contact Special Sales at 410-516-6936
or specialsales@press.jhu.edu.*

Johns Hopkins University Press uses environmentally friendly book
materials, including recycled text paper that is composed of at least
30 percent post-consumer waste, whenever possible.

Figures

1. Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Anti-Parris Network" of suspects accused of witchcraft, built around ties to Israel Porter 31
2. Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Anti-Parris Network," restricted to shown pre-witch-hunt relationships 32
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. 33
4. Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Geography of Witchcraft" map of Salem Village, 1692 36
5. Benjamin C. Ray's "Geography of Witchcraft Accusations in 1692 Salem Village," modifying Boyer and Nissenbaum's original map 37
6. Boyer and Nissenbaum's "Geography of Witchcraft" data, with family groups highlighted 40
7. Accused suspects in Salem witch hunt, by date of first formal legal action (in weeks) 88

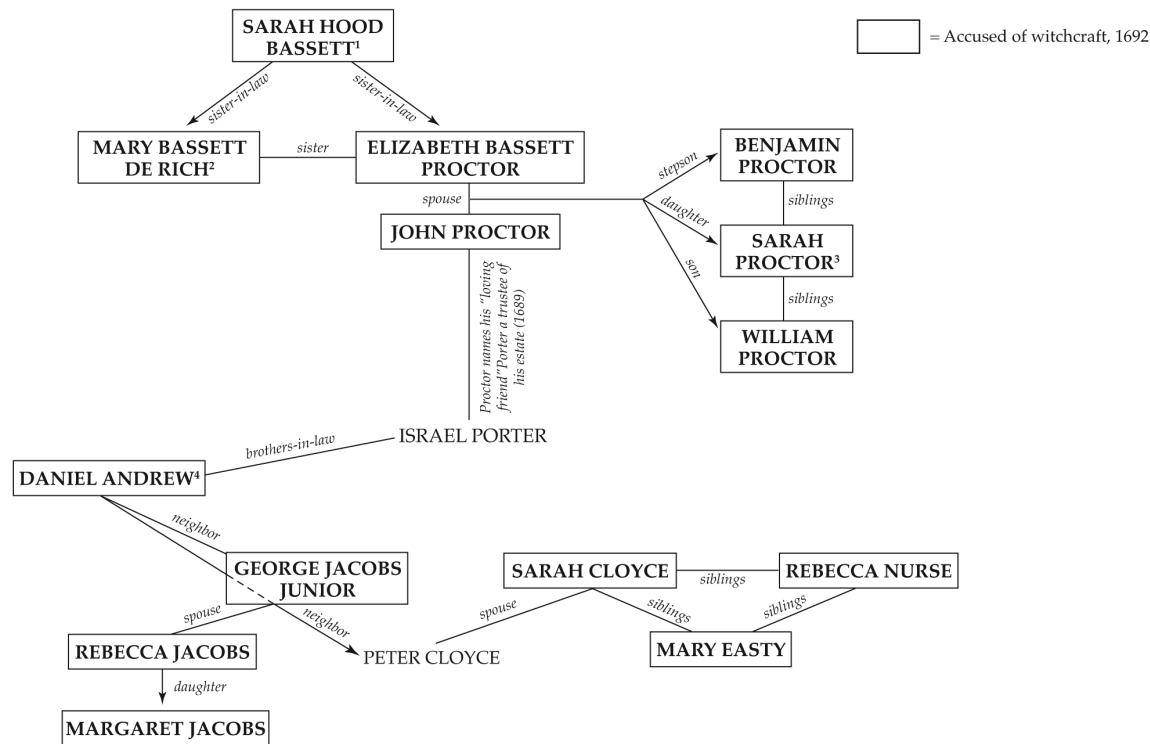


Figure 2. Boyer and Nissenbaum’s “Anti-Parris Network,” restricted to shown pre-witch-hunt relationships. *Notes:* 1. The full name and corrected relationships of Sarah Hood Bassett have been substituted for the original “Sarah Bassett.” 2. Mary De Rich’s husband, Michael De Rich, has been removed, because 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.

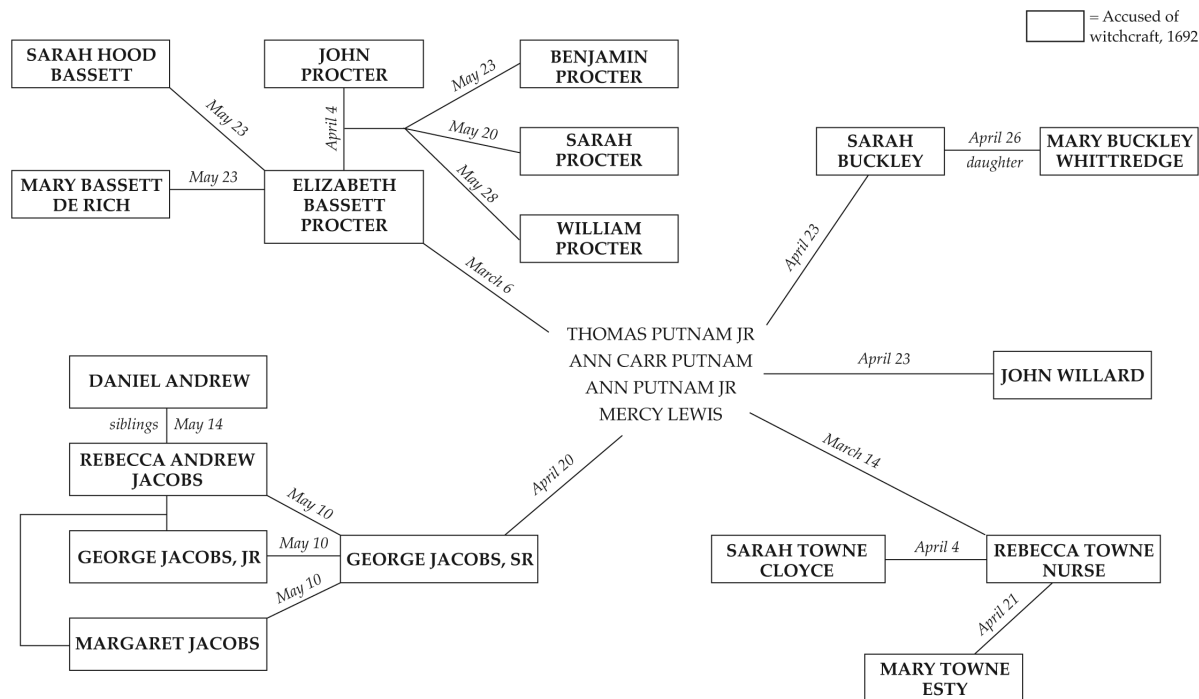
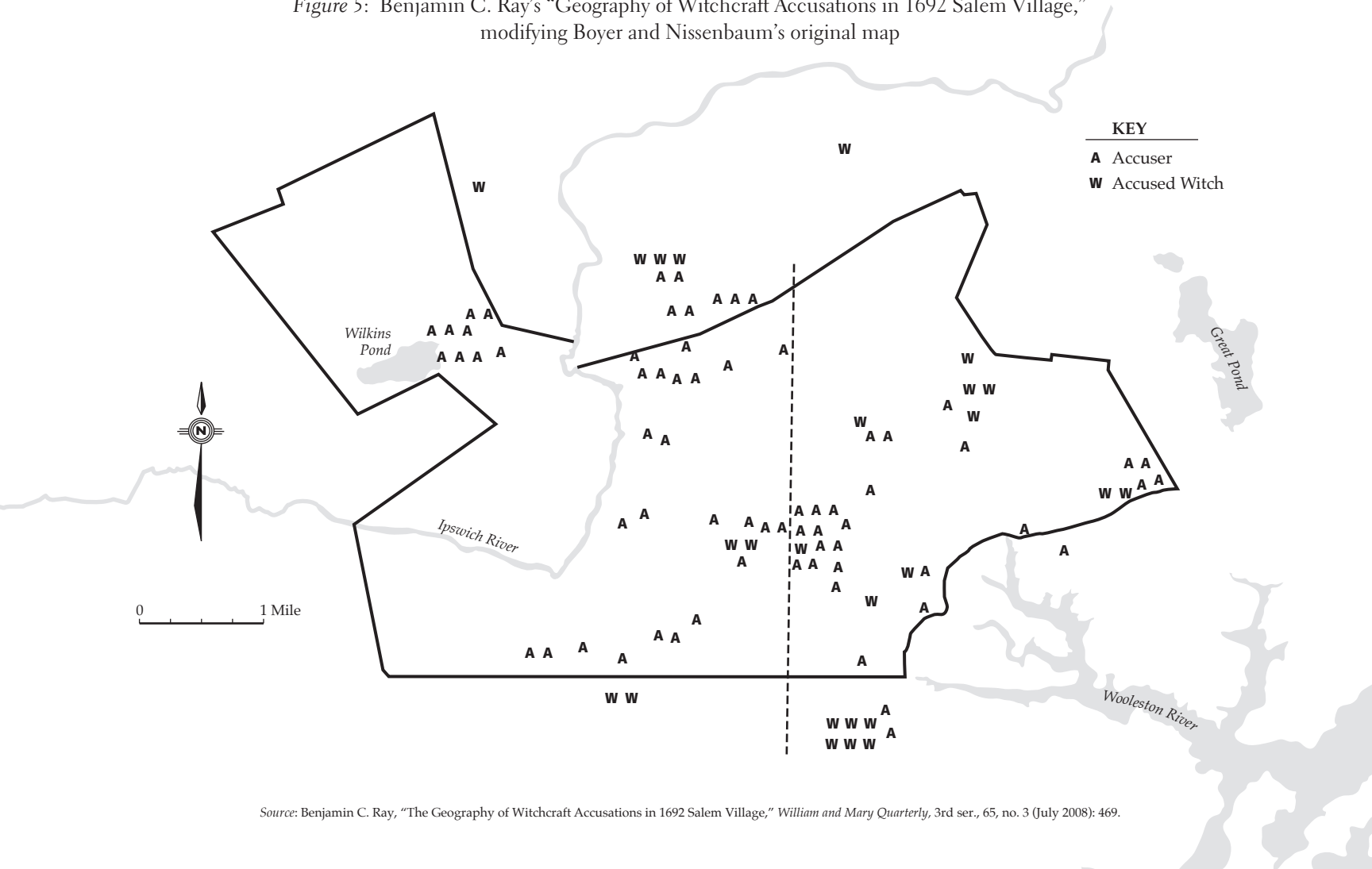


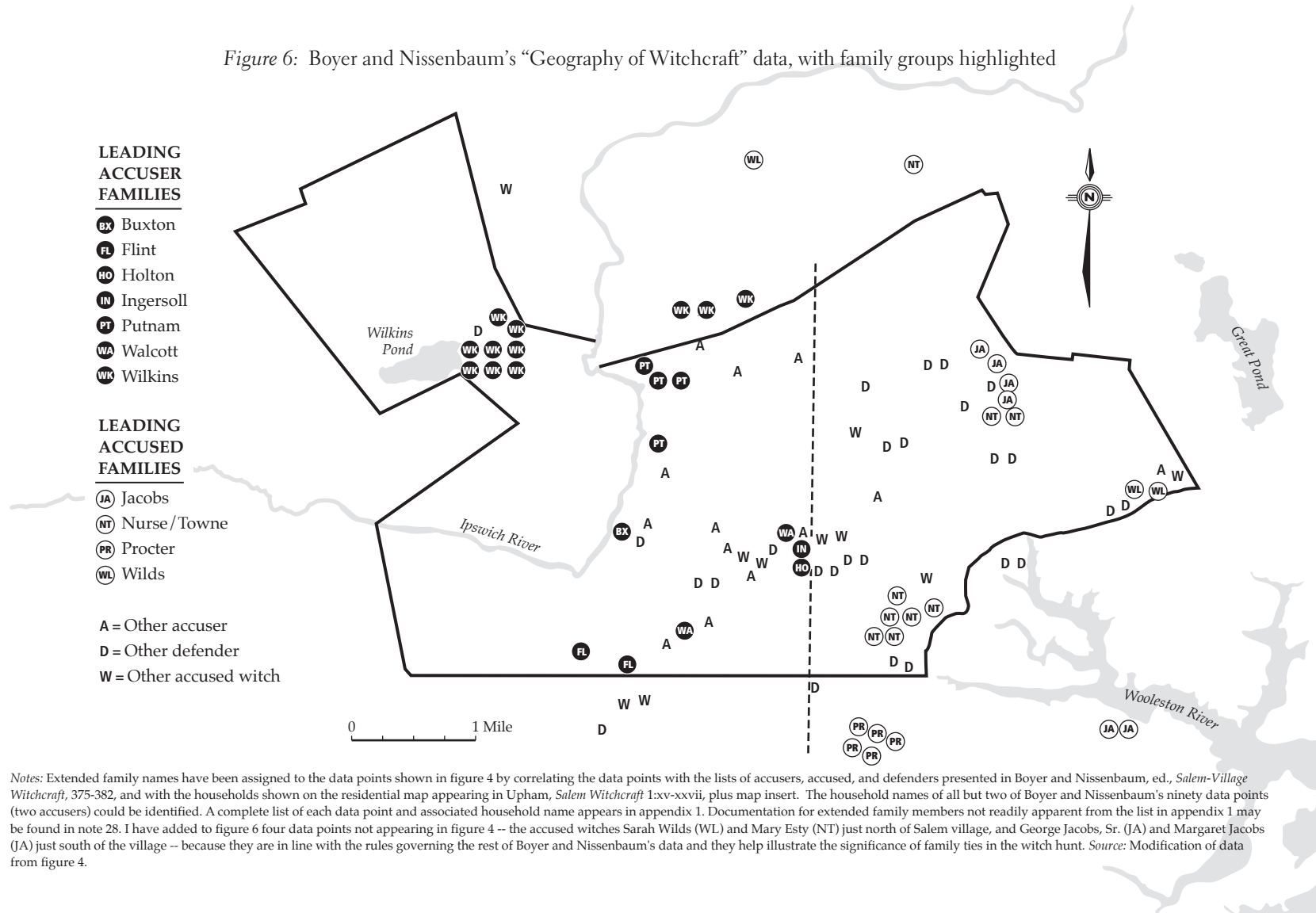
Figure 3. Boyer and Nissenbaum's network of suspects accused of witchcraft, rearranged in chronological order of accusation, built around the accusing family of Thomas Putnam Jr. *Notes:* Dates shown are the earliest recorded mention of accusation. For all unlabeled personal relationships, see figure 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 5: Benjamin C. Ray's "Geography of Witchcraft Accusations in 1692 Salem Village,"
modifying Boyer and Nissenbaum's original map



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



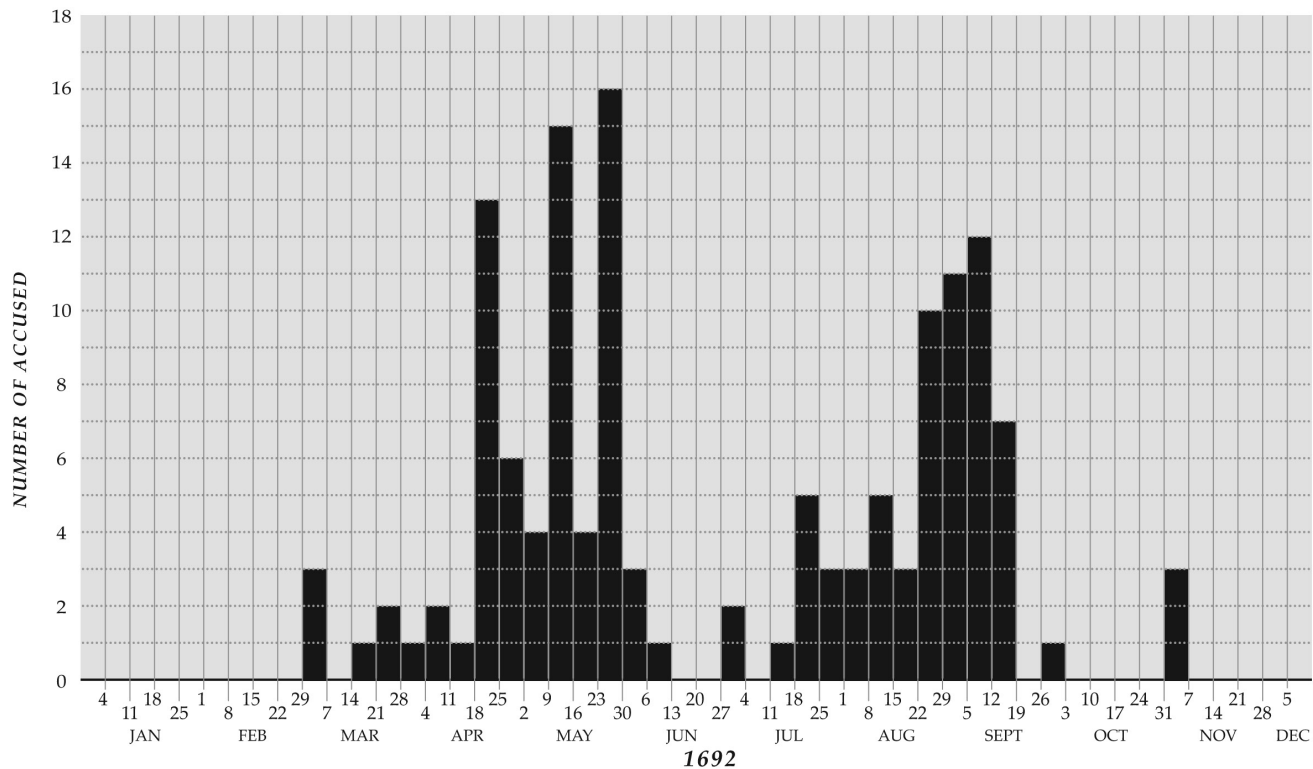


Figure 7. Accused suspects in Salem witch hunt, by date of first formal legal action (in weeks). *Notes:* Each bar represents the number of suspects accused in the week beginning on Monday (the dates displayed along the bottom of the graph) and ending on Sunday just before the start of the next week. 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.