THE WITCHCRAFT DELUSION IN COLONIAL CONNECTICUT, 1647-1697

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The witchcraft delusion in colonial Connecticut, 1647-1697 by John M. Taylor

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1647-1697

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JOHN M. TAYLOR

Author of "Maximilian and Carlotta, a Story of Imperialism," and "Roger Ludiow, the Colonial Lawmaker"





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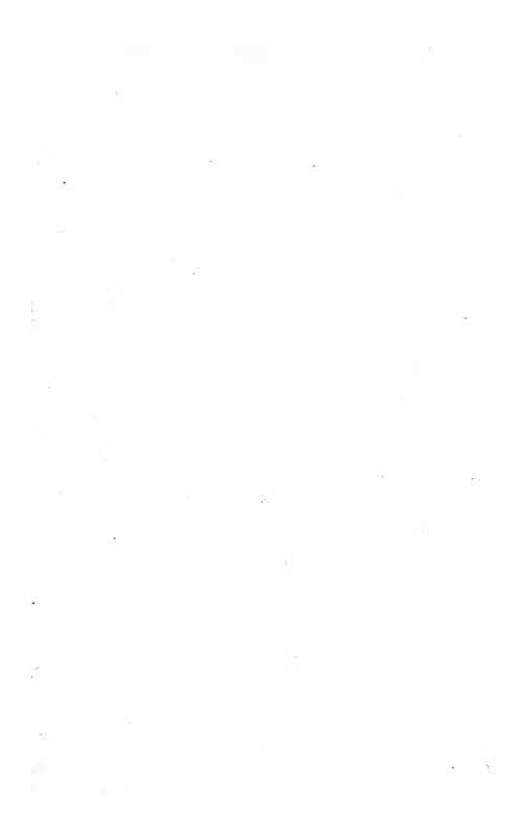
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"Connecticut can well afford to let her records go to the world." Blue Laws: True and False (p. 47), J. HAMMOND TRUMBULL.



FOREWORD

THE true story of witchcraft in old Connecticut has never been told. It has been hidden in the ancient records and in manuscripts in private collections, and those most conversant with the facts have not made them known, for one reason or another. It is herein written from authoritative sources, and should prove of interest and value as a present-day interpretation of that strange delusion, which for a half century darkened the lives of the forefathers and foremothers of the colonial days.

J. M. T.

Hartford, Connecticut.

TWO INDICTMENTS FOR WITCHCRAFT

"John Carrington thou art indited by the name of John Carrington of Wethersfield—carpenter—, that not having the feare of God before thine eyes thou hast interteined ffamilliarity with Sattan the great enemye of God and mankinde and by his helpe hast done workes aboue the course of nature for web both according to the lawe of God and the established lawe of this Commonwealth thou descruest to dye."

Record Particular Court, 2:17, 1650-51.

"Hugh Crotia, Thou Standest here presented by the name of Hugh Crotia of Stratford in the Colony of Connecticut in New England; for that not haueing the fear of God before thine Eyes, through the Instigation of the Devill, thou hast forsaken thy God & covenanted with the Devill, and by his help hast in a preternaturall way afflicted the bodys of Sundry of his Majesties good Subjects, for which according to the Law of God, and the Law of this Colony, thou descruest to dye."

Record Court of Assistants, 2:16, 1693.

A WARRANT FOR THE EXECUTION OF A WITCH * AND THE SHERIFF'S RETURN THEREON

To George Corwin Gentlm high Sheriff of the County of Essex Greeting Whereas Bridgett Bishop als Olliver the wife of Edward Bishop of Salem in the County of Essex Sawyer at a special Court of Over and Terminer ----- (held at ?) † Salem this second Day of this instant month of June for the Countyes of Essex Middlesex and Suffolk before William Stoughton Esqe. and his Associates Justices of the said Court was Indicted and arraigned upon five several Indictments for useing practising & exercising on the ----- † last past and divers others days - † witchcraft in and upon the bodyes of Abigail Williams Ann puttnam Jr Mercy Lewis Mary Walcott and Elizabeth Hubbard of Salem Village single women; whereby their bodyes were hurt afflicted pined consumed wasted & tormented contrary to the forme of the statute in that case made and provided To which Indictmts the said Bridgett Bishop pleaded not guilty and for Tryall thereof put herselfe upon God and her Country ------ † she was found guilty of the ffelonyes and Witchcrafts whereof she stood Indicted and sentence of death accordingly passed agt her as the Law directs execution whereof yet remaines to be done These are therefore in the name of their Majties William & Mary now King & Queen over England & to will and command you that upon Fryday next being the fourth day of this instant month of June between the hours of Eight and twelve in the aforenoon of the same day you safely conduct the sd Bridgett Bishop als Olliver from their Majties Goale in Salem aforesd to the place of execution and there cause her to be hanged by the neck until she be dead and of your doings herein make returne to the Clerk of the sd Court and precept And hereof you are not to faile at your peril And this shall be sufficient warrant Given under my hand & seal at Boston the Eighth of June in the flourth year of the reigne of our Sovercigne Lords William & Mary now King & Queen over England Annoque Dm 1692

WM. STOUGHTON

* Original in office of Clerk of the Courts at Salem, Massachusetts. Said to be the only one extant in American archives.

t Some of the words in the warrant are illegible.

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