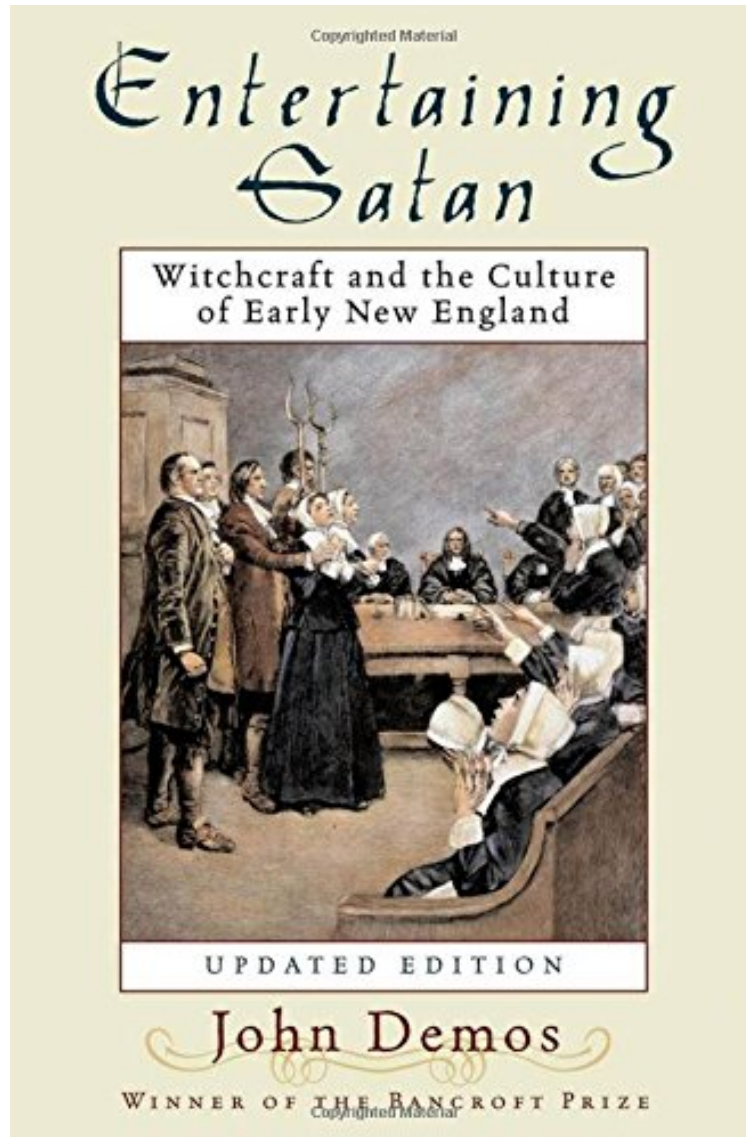


Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England

John Putnam Demos

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#598530 in Books John Putnam Demos 2004-11-18 Original language: English PDF # 1 5.30 x 1.10 x 7.80l, 1.55 #File Name: 0195174836576 pages Entertaining Satan Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England | File size: 19.Mb

John Putnam Demos : Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I love the subject matter-- witchcraft in 17th century New

EnglandBy Khowes74I love the subject matter-- witchcraft in 17th century New England. The really good feature of this book is that the author gives accounts of smaller, lesser-known cases of "witchcraft" and accusations of witchcraft and doesn't focus on the Salem Witch Trials. That said, the writing style is rather dry. In spite of my interest in the topic, I found myself skimming large portions of the book because the author would take two pages to say something that could have been said in two paragraphs. Still, I appreciate the treatment of this social history of New England, and if you are at all interested in the beliefs and lives of 17th century colonial New Englanders, you should have this in your library.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Approach to understanding Witchcraft in Colonial New EnglandBy Rick MaloneyEntertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England by John Demos is a comprehensive study of the various influences surrounding witchcraft in the early American colonies. Diving the book into four sections: biography, psychology, sociology, and history, Demos uses "the four corners of one scholar's compass" to provide a 360 degree perspective of early American witchcraft and culture (15). The primary focus of Demos' research was on the social and psychological aspects of witchcraft; however, including sections on biography and history, the author delivers an inclusive representation of early New England society through the lens of witchcraft. I was especially intrigued by how exhaustive and extensive court documents were for those put on trial for witchcraft. In the preface, Demos states that he wanted to tell true stories about witchcraft putting individual men and women at the center-stage (xii).Part one examines the biographical nature of witches in seventeenth century New England. Using the examples of John Godfrey and Rachel Clinton, Demos organizes a considerable amount of historical records and court documents detailing the biographical characteristics of witches. Part two studies the psychology of those accused of witchcraft, those accusing others of being a witch, and examines the psychological structure of seventeenth century New England Puritan communities. The psychology of witchcraft is the strongest argument in the book. This was a new and thought-provoking analysis of the mass hysteria that flourished in New England over witches. A significant amount of research was done at the local level through archival documentation utilizing primary sources from court hearings and eyewitness accounts of those present during witchcraft accusations. Demos states very clearly that this information may not be complete, but provides enough primary and secondary evidence to substantiate his conclusions.Part three examines the sociology of witchcraft through the power of local gossip and Demos' own interpretation of how the community viewed those charged of witchcraft. In part four, Demos traces witchcraft throughout history concluding that witchcraft was more prevalent than originally believed and not limited to just Salem, Massachusetts. Providing a few examples of witchcraft outside of Salem, Demos strengthens his argument showing that witchcraft accusations were not specific to Salem, but occurred elsewhere. The last section tightly concludes the biographical sketches with the psychological and social influences witchcraft had on communities facing the phenomenon of witchcraft.In Entertaining Satan, there is a substantial amount of psychological interpretation of what it was like living in colonial New England during the witchcraft hysteria. The objective of Entertaining Satan is to show that witchcraft was not as simple as accusing an individual of being a witch. The witchcraft phenomenon was a conglomeration of multiple issues converging together providing the perfect storm for mass hysteria. There are really no simple answers, yet Demos does a brilliant job of interconnecting each idea to achieve his thesis.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Clear presentation of info- psychoanalytic approachBy Debbie DavisNice delivery of pertinent content. Not 5 stars because of the (overly) psychoanalytical approach to the historiography.

In the first edition of the Bancroft Prize-winning Entertaining Satan, John Putnam Demos presented an entirely new perspective on American witchcraft. By investigating the surviving historical documents of over a hundred actual witchcraft cases, he vividly recreated the world of New England during the witchcraft trials and brought to light fascinating information on the role of witchcraft in early American culture. Now Demos has revisited his original work and updated it to illustrate why these early Americans' strange views on witchcraft still matter to us today. He provides a new preface that puts forth a broader overview of witchcraft and looks at its place around the world--from ancient times right up to the present.