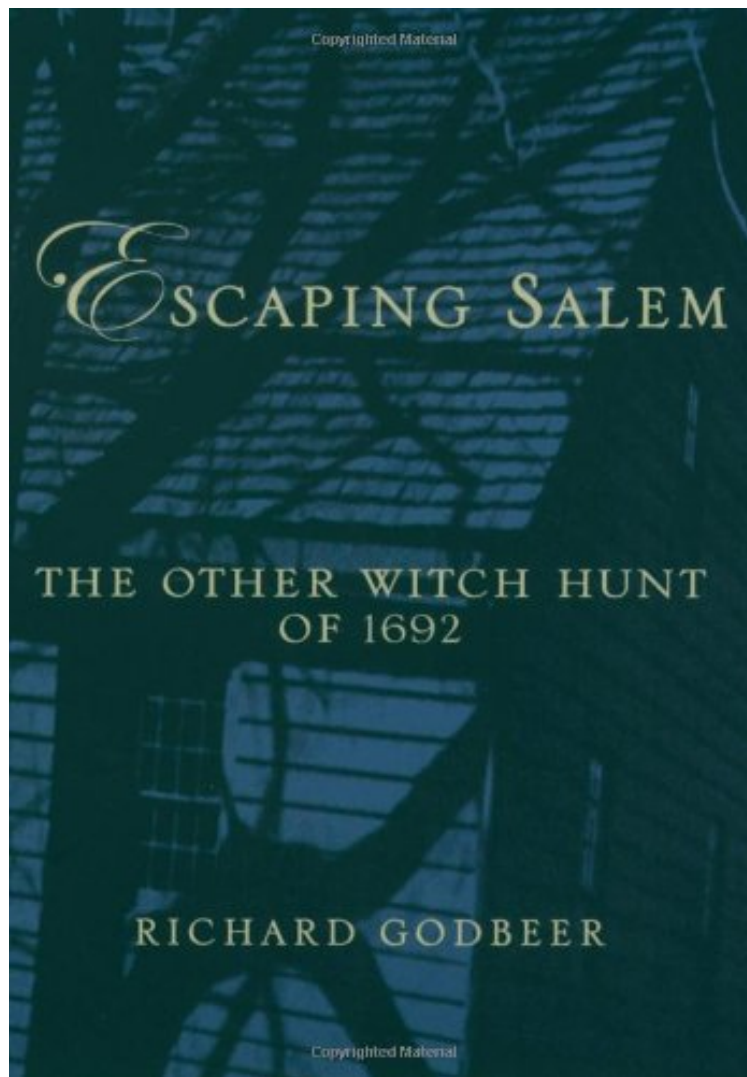


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Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692 (New Narratives in American History)

Richard Godbeer

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Richard Godbeer : Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692 (New Narratives in American History)

before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692 (New Narratives in American History):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Short and easy to readBy NekuShort history exploring witch trials outside of the Salem cliché. Looking at a different region, this book still compares situations to Salem to highlight

important socio-cultural connections to American society. Short and easy to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By GeorgeOk2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By Susan E. Calverley A great look into the curiosity of witchcraft in 1692. Everyone is familiar with the Salem witch hunt of 1692, but the witch hunt that took place in Stamford, Connecticut is little known. Excellent read.

The Salem witch hunt of 1692 is among the most infamous events in early American history; however, it was not the only such episode to occur in New England that year. *Escaping Salem* reconstructs the "other witch hunt" of 1692 that took place in Stamford, Connecticut. Concise and accessible, the book takes students on a revealing journey into the mental world of early America, shattering the stereotype of early New Englanders as quick to accuse and condemn. Drawing on eyewitness testimony, Richard Godbeer tells the story of Kate Branch, a seventeen-year-old afflicted by strange visions and given to blood-chilling wails of pain and fright. Branch accused several women of bewitching her, two of whom were put on trial for witchcraft. *Escaping Salem* takes us inside the Connecticut courtroom and into the minds of the surprisingly skeptical Stamford townspeople. Were the pain and screaming due to natural or supernatural causes? Was Branch simply faking the symptoms? And if she was indeed bewitched, why believe her specific accusations, since her information came from demons who might well be lying? For the judges, Godbeer shows, the trial was a legal thicket. All agreed that witches posed a real and serious threat, but proving witchcraft (an invisible crime) in court was another matter. The court in Salem had become mired in controversy over its use of dubious evidence. In an intriguing chapter, Godbeer examines Magistrate Jonathan Selleck's notes on how to determine the guilt of someone accused of witchcraft, providing an illuminating look at what constituted proof of witchcraft at the time. The stakes were high--if found guilty, the two accused women would be hanged. In the afterword, Godbeer explains how he used the trial evidence to build his narrative, offering an inside perspective on the historian's craft. Featuring maps, photos, and a selected bibliography, *Escaping Salem* is ideal for use in undergraduate U.S. survey courses. It can also be used for courses in colonial American history, culture, and religion; witchcraft in the early modern world; and crime and society in early America.

"*Escaping Salem* will engage every reader who has fallen under the spell of witchcraft's history in New England. But beware: still deeper enchantment awaits as Richard Godbeer unfolds his riveting tale of how ordinary men and women struggled to make sense of the wonders and terrors at work in their Connecticut village."--Christine Leigh Heyrman, University of Delaware
"Richard Godbeer's *Escaping Salem* is a thoughtful and lively retelling of a 'forgotten' witchcraft case. The strong story line is nicely balanced with astute commentary on the background and context. Indeed Godbeer uses the case to open up a broad vista of early New England life at ground level. And, in doing so, he shows a balance of interests and concerns that differs significantly from the endlessly hyped (but somewhat atypical) picture of the 'Salem witch-craze' in exactly the same year."--John Demos, Yale University
About the Author Richard Godbeer is at University of California at Riverside.