The Crucible Reasons Innocent People Confessed To Witchcraft Essay, Research Paper

Living in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692 during the Witchcraft Trials must had been an

uncanny event to experience. The entire witchcraft hysteria started because people were

pointing fingers at each other. Innocent women and children were being accused for ridiculous

reasons such as mysterious book reading and having poppets, or rag dolls, lying around the

house. The way the judicial system operated in the 1600’s was entirely mismanaged. It let guilty

people live and innocent people die. If one was accused they were given one of two choices,

they could either confess and live or not confess and be hanged. Therefore innocent people that

were being accused would confess to save their life, even though they were not witches.

Women that were accused of witchcraft could make a third choice that men could not.

One would make this choice when they did not want to blacken their name by admitting and still

wanted to live. This choice was to pled that one was pregnant. When one made this choice their

trial would be put off for several months because the higher officials would not want to kill the

innocent infant. For example both Sarah Good and Elizabeth Proctor did not confess but said

they were pregnant so they were both thrown in jail until they gave birth or the officials could

definitely determine if in fact they were pregnant.

Throughout the story people mostly considered themselves as the first priority and they

could care less about the others in town, this meant they all looked out for just themselves. For

this reason many of the people in Salem, whether a witch or not, would confess so they could

live. They would not care that innocent people were dying because they would not confess to

witchcraft like the other cowards that confessed just to live. This was Tituba?s confession, who

was one of the first persons to be accused. ?No, no, don?t hang Tituba! I tell him I don?t desire

to work for him, sir.? (1058). With that confession she was thrown in jail even though she

confessed to being a witch. On the other hand, the sweet and innocent Rebecca Nurse never

confessed so she was hanged. Elizabeth later informs Proctor that not all the accused are

truthful like Rebecca Nurse because they have confessed. Elizabeth says, ?There be many

confessed.? ?Who are they?? Proctor responds. Elizabeth replies, ?There be a hundred or more,

they say. Goody Ballard is one; Isaiah Goodkind is one. There be many.? John questions,

?Rebecca?? ?Not Rebecca. She is one foot in Heaven now; naught may hurt her more.?

Elizabeth answers. (1113).

Another way to get yourself out of trouble was to point fingers at someone else. If you

were accused and you just said that you saw someone else with the Devil you never got thrown

in jail or hanged. Abigail was the first to be accused of witchcraft, but as soon as she had the

opportunity she accused as many other people as she could. At the right time Abigail decided to

divulge about her encounters with the Devil, but immediately accused someone else before the

people realized she was confessing herself. ?I want to open myself! I want the light of God, I

want the sweet love a Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to

Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I

saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!? (1060). With that she got herself off the hook and was no

longer thought of as a witch or bad person. Thomas Putnam also pointed fingers at other people

when in fact he was the actual man of evil. Thomas Putnam wanted people to die so he could

take their land. Giles Corey was the man that found this out and presented it to the court. When

they asked where he got his information from he would not say. Therefore Giles was pressed to

death. This is another example of honest dying and evil living.

The sheer fact that innocent people died and guilty people lived is mind-boggling. What

makes it worse is that after they realized that all the accusations were false they tried to

compensate for the lives lost. How can you compensate for a dead person, that died for no good

reason? There is no way that can be done. Therefore the judicial system during the Salem

Witch Trials should of not listened to all the hysteria and followed along with the finger

pointing. Instead they should have convicted the guilty from the start, commencing with Abigail

Williams.