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GRANT**

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY

SUMMER 2006

CLASS –LESSON THREE

GRADE LEVEL- 5TH Grade

LESSON- ENACTMENT OF THE TRIAL OF REBECCA NURSE

**STANDARDS: COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM
FRAMEWORKS**

- **5.8 Identify the political principles and practices developed and such institutions and practices as written constitutions and town meetings of the Puritans.**

**TOPIC: A REINACTMENT OF THE TRIAL OF REBECCA NURSE AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF SALEM AND ITS PEOPLE.**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The students will research the Salem Witch Trials and compare them with a trial of today. The focus will be on the trial of Rebecca Nurse and its impact on future trials. The political, economical, and religious issues that caused fear, suspicion, and a constant state of turmoil fueled the insecurity of the people of Salem. The understanding of these pressures will promote a more accurate depiction of the trial and its tragic end.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- **Students will research the causes that led to the trials.**
- **Students will examine the trial documents that focus on Rebecca Nurse.**
- **Students will analyze the backgrounds of the accusers.**
- **Students will examine the procedures of a trial.**
- **Students will analyze photographs depicting Rebecca's Nurse's trial.**
- **Students will report on the aftermath of the trial and impact on the people of Salem.**

SCHEDULE: MATERIALS AND TIME

- **Length of time: 3 days**
- **Instruction: Guiding Question: How did the Salem Witch Trials impact the future of Salem and its people?**
- **Other questions to consider:**
 1. **What were the causes that led to the trials?**
 2. **Who was Rebecca Nurse?**
 3. **Why was she accused of being a witch?**
 4. **Who were her accusers?**
 5. **Where did the accusers live?**
 6. **What was the evidence used to accuse Rebecca?**
 7. **What was her sentence for the crime she supposedly committed?**

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES: The students will respond to a KWL questionnaire as an introductory activity. This will be followed by discussion of possible theories as to why her trial occurred. They will research the causes of the trial using primary source documents. The class will read a biography on Rebecca Nurse. A review of her life and problems will be discussed as group exercise. They will take a field trip to the Fitchburg District Court to observe a trial and compare it to Rebecca's trial. The students will explore the biographies and primary documents of the people behind the trials. They will choose one of Rebecca's accusers and put themselves in their shoes analyzing the motivation for their actions. What were they feeling and thinking at that time? They will write letters about their feeling and why they acted as they did. These letters will be shared with the class.

The courtroom reenactment of the trial. It will be addressed by using excerpts from the actual trial transcripts. Students will be assigned to play the judge, the accused, the accusers, the town leaders. They will explore the difference between the Salem trial and today's courts is that in the Salem court you are guilty until proven innocent. In our court system it is the reverse. Each student will write a first-hand fictional account of the trial as a critic or a supporter of this type of justice. The students will report in groups on the aftermath of the trial and how it affected the Town of Salem and its people. They will reflect on the state of turmoil and unrest of its citizens from the religious, political, economic, and social pressures they endured on a daily basis.

RESOURCES: Websites

- <http://www.salemweb.comguide/witches.shtml>
Photographs on examination of a witch, and the cemetery of Old Burying Point
- <http://school.com>
The Story of the witch Hunt
- <http://www.mayflowerfamilies.com/enquirer/witch.htm>
A short biography on Rebecca Nurse
- http://law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/salem/SAL_BMAT>HTM
A short biography of Cotton Mather
Procedures used in conducting the trials
Causes for the outbreak of witchcraft hysteria
Documents on the Trial
- <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=BoySal2.sgm&images=images/modeng...>
The Salem Witch Papers, Volume 2 verbatim transcripts of legal documents of the trials
- <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/salem/images/people/nursecourtl.jpg>
Image of Rebecca Nurse in chains before the magistrate
Image of her Rebecca Nurse's trial
- <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/salem/images/people/nursemem2.jpg>
Photograph of Rebecca Nurse's headstone with famous inscription

- <http://www.salemwitchtrials.com/salemwitchcraft.html>
The events and causes of the Salem Witch Trials

Books

Bonfanti, Leo. The Witchcraft Hysteria of 1692. Vol. 1 New Historical Series, 1994

Hoffer, Peter. Salem Witchcraft Trials: A Legal History. University Pr of Kansas. 1997

**Norton, Mary Beth. In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692
Random House, 2002**

**Boyer, Paul S. and Nessenbaum, Stephen. Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of
Witchcraft. Harvard University Press. 1976**

**Roach, Marelynne. Salem Witch Trials: A Day to Day Chronicle. National Book
Network. 2002**

Books for Young People

Hill, Frances. Salem Witch Trial. DaCapo Press. 2000

Rosenthal, Bernard. Salem Story. Cambridge University Press. 1993