

LITERATURE

Virus of fear: Witchcraft in Salem

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for American Literature

Target audience – American literature learners Ti

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity Explore the geographic context and spatial extent of the witch trials in the American colonies. Play: The Crucible by Arthur Miller

English Standards CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text. CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

- **Learning Outcomes** Students will describe the distribution and spread of the witch trials of the late 1600s along the American colonies.
 - Students will measure distances between isolated communities during the time of the witch trials and understand how information spread between these communities.

Map URL: http://esriurl.com/litGeoInquiry2

? Ask

Where was English settlement at the time of the witch trials?

- → Click the link above to launch the map.
- → With the Details button depressed, click the button, (Show) Content.
- ? What geographic area does the 1733 map cover? [Eastern North America, Central America, and northern South America]
- → Pan to locate the title of the map; what is the title? [A Map of the British Empire in America]
- → In the search field, type Massachusetts and then zoom to the Boston area.
- → Where are the towns and cities? Why are they there? [Along coastlines and rivers as livelihoods were tied to fishing and trade.]

🕑 Acquire

Where did the Salem witch trials take place?

- → Locate the communities of Boston, Salem Town and Ipswich on the 1733 map.
- → Click the checkbox to the left of the layer name, North America 1733. The layer will turn off.
- → Turn on the layer, Salem Witch Trial Towns.
- ? Using the Measure tool, how far in miles are the towns from each other? [Salem to Andover: 15 overland; Salem to Ipswich: 15 overland, 35 sea; Salem Town to Salem Village: 4 overland, 3.8 sea]
- ? How long would it take to bring news and goods to the next town by horse at 2 mph to 5 mph? [One to seven hours]
- → Turn off the layer, Salem Witch Trial Towns.

🔍 Explore

Where were the 19 accused in the Salem area hanged?

- Read aloud, "Gallows Hill in Salem Town was thought to be the location, but scholars have recently identified Proctor's Ledge. Salem plans a memorial on Proctor's Ledge to honor the victums of the accused and to remind us that yielding to hysteria and fear can have tragic consequences."
- → To locate Proctor's Ridge, in the search field, type -70.909555, 42.517993.
- → Zoom in to see today's built environment surrounding Proctor's Ledge.
- ? What business is adjacent to Proctor's Ledge? [Walgreens drugstore]

Where else did witch trials occur?

- → Turn on the layer, Colonial Witch Accusations.
- → Click the button, Bookmarks. Select American Colonies.
- The heat map layer, Colonial Witch Accusations, shows the density of witch accusations.
- ? What is the geographic distribution of the trials? [Concentrations in areas that are present-day states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire]
- ? How is the pattern different south of Connecticut? [Fewer, more isolated]
- → Click on points in the layer, Colonial Witch Accusations. Read some dates and names of the accused.
- → Turn on layer, The American Colonies population.

Act

What role did religion and population play?

- → Click Massachusetts to select the state. A pop-up window will open.
- ? What are the values of the two rows: Religion and POP_1690 (population in 1690). [Puritan, 49,504]
- → Click the other colonies to explore the dominant religion and population size.
- ? What generalizations can you make about population, religion, and the distribution of witchcraft accusations? *[Extreme Puritanism and higher population densities may have contributed to a fast-spreading virus of fear.]*

USE THE MEASURE TOOL

- Click Measure, select the Distance button, and from the drop-down list, choose a unit of measurement.
- On the map, click once to start the measurement, click again to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.
- Hint: Position the area of interest on the map so that it is not obscured by the Measure window.

SEARCH BY PLACE NAME

- In the Find Address Or Place field, type a place name or keyword.
- Choose a search option that appears below the field or click the Search button.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at http://www.esri.com/schools.

THEN TRY THIS ...

- Explore the following Salem Witch Trials story map: http://esriurl.com/Geo3211.
- Explore more details of accused persons in the following table by Marc Carlson: http://esriurl.com/Geo3212.
- Consider: What social or economic factors might be catalysts for "witch trials" today?



This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of the following play.

• The Crucible by Arthur Miller

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