

# **Student Essay on Lapse of Judgement - The Salem Witch Trials**

## **Lapse of Judgement - The Salem Witch Trials**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Student Essay on Lapse of Judgement - The Salem Witch Trials.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Essay.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>



# Essay

During the Salem witch trials many innocent lives were taken because of the lies of others. In Stephen Benet's "We aren't Superstitious" he describes the events of the Salem witch trials. The excitement of the trials spread like fire, it kept a whole town in fear of being persecuted. The Salem witch trials caused a lapse in judgement in the villagers.

Benet relates Salem's concerns to those of modern America with a health scare. When the Y2K buzz hit a lot of people sold their belongings and got all their money out of the banks and were prepared for the worst, this is similar to how the people in Salem lived the entire summer. One simple error could have destroyed the American economy, just like one lie destroyed the lives of many in Salem. When fear is highly publicized it causes people to worry and impairs their judgement, this was the case in Salem. Everyone was so worried about witchcraft and the victims they didn't give themselves time to think the situation through.

The witch trials became very popular in Salem, because everyone was being accused. If people spoke out they would be accused of being a witch. If you didn't believe in the trials then you didn't say anything at all. Many people lied about others just to get out of dying, like Tituba did. In Puritan society to call someone a witch was a serious accusation. Many of the people pleading not guilty went unheard, because others had already made a judgement. In the case of Giles Corey he decided not to make a plea at all. The seriousness of the accusation led people to believe that it must be true, seeing that people aren't called witches very often. They only had circumstantial evidence, but everyone still believed that the girls were bewitched. The girls had chosen their victims so well that everything seemed so reasonable.

Having a judicial system not based on circumstance alone is something that you can learn from the witch trials. The cause of their lapse in judgement was their emotions. They let fear control their thoughts instead of their thoughts controlling their fears. The trials caused confusion and disruption throughout the town. These trials have left a stain on American history forever.