A USC Libraries Exploration

Ross Scimeca

To add to your enjoyment and understanding of The Crucible, the USC Libraries present a selection of books and articles that illuminate key issues in Arthur Miller’s 1952 play and the historic circumstances of the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials.

Visions and Voices will present two performances of the play, on October 12th and 13th, in the Bing Theatre on the University Park Campus.

Arthur Miller’s The Crucible


The Salem Witchcraft Trials


Ergotism: A Theory

Did a fungus play a role in the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials? Linda R. Caporael offers a physiological explanation for the events in "Ergotism: The Satan Loosed in Salem?" In her well-documented article, she argues that a fungus in the barley crop contributed to the hysterical atmosphere by causing convulsive ergotism among the people of Salem.

Caporael’s article is available online. It first appeared in Science, Volume 192 (2 April 1976).

PBS revisited Caporael’s theory in an episode of the Secrets of the Dead series.

Questions

For research assistance or additional information about these topics, please contact philosophy and humanities librarian Ross Scimeca at scimeca@usc.edu.