Gabrielle Dickins

Representing: Ezekiel Waters

Salem Witch Trials

The Salem Witch Trials seem to be characterized by destructive isolationism; within the bubble of Salem, frenzy, radicalism and aggression were allowed to build up, contained and accepted. There is, therefore, something to be said for the perspective of an outsider. I, Ezekiel Waters, have only recently entered Salem Town, and now find myself in the middle of a rising calamity involving witchcraft. My actions may be considered more impartial than others – I have few political or religious ambitions to promote – my position on the Witch Trials reflects my own interests. Some would call my attitude self-serving. I would call it shrewd.

There is no better time to turn a profit than in times of turmoil, and I will task to use these Witch Trials to my economic advantage. It is known that I am a well-travelled man, and have thus been able to extensively study the witch trial proceedings throughout England, as well as in the colony. For example, witchcraft accusations brought up against men and women in Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania and elsewhere throughout the 1660s to today have illuminated me on various methods of examination (Carlson, 2011). I am well-versed in prayer tests, swimming tests, witch’s marks and pricking tests (Andrews, 2014), and will look to advertise my services in the upcoming times. There is already a legacy of hired “prickers” whose tactics I know to be a clever con; I admire them very much. These very “legitimate” tests can be performed at a charge, and if there is anything I can do to increase my clientele, I certainly will. The power of the Magistrates in determining the procedures of witch trials is very important, and alliances must be forged to ensure that they are pliant and allow the trials to take their natural course.

Anonymity is a rare gift in a town such Salem, and I will use it to my advantage. Ideally, I will be able to forge ties with either high-ranking officials in the governance of the Colony or the religious leaders of the community. I will have the ability to keep from them elements from my past, including dealings with Native Peoples. I have no particular quarrel with the Native Americans, and hope to do business with them. I see the encroaching threat of renewed Indian attacks on our lands, and feel that a positive relationship with this community can only benefit me.

The division between Salem Town and Salem Village is not lost on me. As a vagrant, one who makes his living through opportunity, I have little time to care for the grievances of the agrarian population of Salem Village. The bustling Town is where I seek to form alliances and turn a profit.