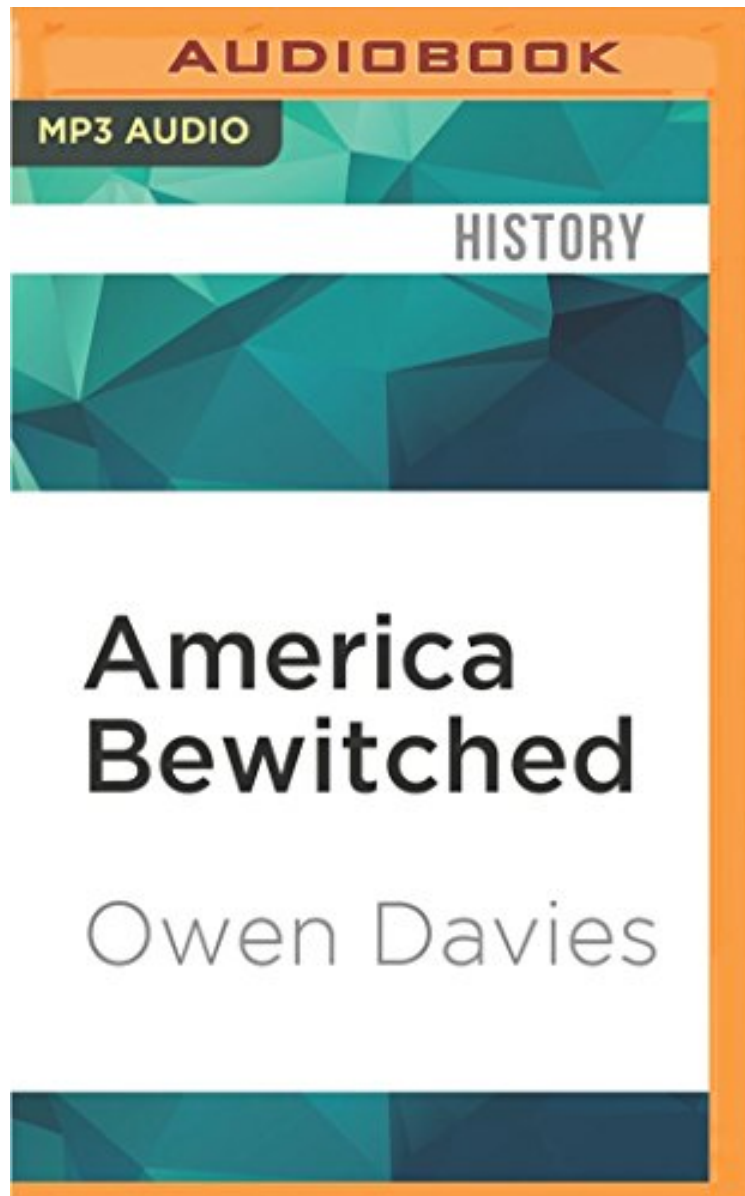


## America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft After Salem

*Owen Davies*

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**Owen Davies : America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft After Salem** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft After Salem:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a much needed book By JoeySo! You thought witchcraft fears ended with the shameful acts of Salem in 1692? Not so fast. In this highly readable and exhaustive book, Davies fills in much

that has been forgotten from the time of Salem, all the way to the 21st century. Although people were not legally hanged anymore, fear of witches persisted among many people. This unfortunately tore up communities and led to the murder of many people by those who believed they were bewitched. Filled with many fascinating stories about the witchcraft beliefs of Europeans, Native Americans and African Americans, this is a rewarding addition to the library of those interested in early American superstitious beliefs. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good history of witchcraft in the USA By Virginia F. Richards-taylor This is a great book. I'd especially recommend it to those who think that witchcraft started with Gerald Gardner. I originally took this out of the library, but thought I should own a copy. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Superstitions explained By Roger Tory I've often wondered what happened to witchcraft in America after Salem. This book is an excellent analysis of just that question. Witchcraft and other supernatural beliefs didn't disappear. They "reinvented" themselves with the waves of immigrants of the 18th and early 20th centuries. Owen Davies does a wonderful job of documenting that process.

America Bewitched is the first major history of witchcraft in America from the Salem witch trials of 1692 to the present day. The infamous Salem trials are etched into the consciousness of modern America, the human toll a reminder of the dangers of intolerance and persecution. The refrain 'Remember Salem!' was invoked frequently over the ensuing centuries. As time passed, the trials became a milepost measuring the distance America had progressed from its colonial past, its victims now the righteous and their persecutors the shamed. Yet the story of witchcraft did not end as the American Enlightenment dawned a new, long, and chilling chapter was about to begin. Witchcraft after Salem was not just a story of fire-side tales, legends, and superstitions: it continued to be a matter of life and death, souring the American dream for many. We know of more people killed as witches between 1692 and the 1950s than were executed before it. Witches were part of the story of the decimation of the Native Americans, the experience of slavery and emancipation, and the immigrant experience; they were embedded in the religious and social history of the country. Yet the history of American witchcraft between the 18th and the 20th century also tells a less traumatic story, one that shows how different cultures interacted and shaped each other's languages and beliefs. This is therefore much more than the tale of one persecuted community: it opens a fascinating window on the fears, prejudices, hopes, and dreams of the American people as their country rose from colony to superpower.

"Owen Davies tells a fascinating tale that has never been told before with all the skills of a true craftsman. Its sheer breadth of coverage amazes from the start." --Ronald Hutton, author of *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Pagan Witchcraft* "An extraordinary achievement... I was frankly staggered at the range of Davies's research." --Professor H. C. Erik Midelfort, University of Virginia "Davies tells a highly original story, yet one that makes instant sense... This is a vivid, arresting, insightful book, written with sympathy and human understanding. It extends Davies's reputation as an original thinker in the field, when so much work is derivative or merely illustrative of well-established ideas." --Malcolm Gaskill, *Fortean Times* "Davies's catholic approach has produced a volume densely packed with fascinating material. Along with detailed excursions into folklore -- there are sustained discussions of hairballs, hag-riding, and skin shedding -- the author presents a trove of historical anecdotes and case studies drawn from his wide research into local histories, obscure newspapers, and other neglected byways." --Nova Religio About the Author Owen Davies is Professor of Social History at the University of Hertfordshire. He has written extensively on the history of magic, witchcraft, ghosts, and popular medicine, including *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (2007), *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (2009), *Paganism: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), and *Magic: A Very Short Introduction* (2012). He is also the editor of *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*, which is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.