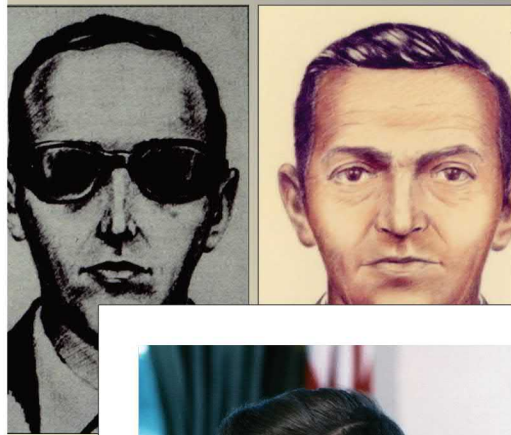


TOP SECRET

History's Mysteries

Research, Discuss and
Solve Some of History's
Biggest Puzzles



Created by Taylor Sapp
with Catherine Noble, Peter Lacey,
Mina Gavell & Andrew Lawrence

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How to Use this Collection

The purpose of these readings is to create history-themed topics for reading and also for research, creative writing, and discussion. The unique aspect of this book is that the reader is not just a passive observer of history but also a Historical Researcher and their job is to investigate and change history for the better. Each chapter presents an interesting historical mystery or controversial event students can get involved in solving. Some are about events that historians debate to this day, such as what happened to the Lost Colony of Roanoke or how the pyramids were built. Others are about popular conspiracy theories such as whether aliens created crop circles or whether Bigfoot exists.

Each chapter is organized the same way:

1. **Topic:** The topics chosen are all interesting or unique open-ended aspects of history. Some of these might be more well-known like Jack the Ripper's identity or JFK's assassination, while others are much more obscure, such as Project Serpo.
2. **Before you read:** Questions to introduce the topic.
3. **Vocabulary:** A preview of vocab for the reading along with 3 comprehension or discussion questions.
4. **Your Briefing:** A description of the historical event with the facts and areas of controversy of 300-800 words.
5. **Your Mission:** What does the student need to decide about? For example, in the chapter about JFK, students must decide how they can prevent the assassination?
6. **Comprehension Quiz:** 4-5 questions to check reading comprehension.
7. **Discussion Questions:** 3-5 discussion questions about the historical situation.
8. **Projects:** Each reading has 3 or more choices of extension activity:
 - a. **Be a Part of History to Complete the Mission:** The reader should imagine themselves in this situation and write what they would do. This can be approached creatively as fiction, or the reader can do research and write with as much historical accuracy as possible, or both!
 - b. **Other expansion topics:** These include research projects, interviews, art projects, and many more activities!

The Osage Indian Murders



Delegation of the Osage tribe with President Coolidge, 1924

Before You Read

1. What do you know about the Native American Indians?
2. Do you know about indigenous people in your part of the world?
3. What can we learn by studying the traditions of indigenous cultures?
4. Wealth has many benefits but also can lead to problems. What sorts of problems arise when people have a great deal of money?

Vocabulary Definitions

Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. tribe (n.) ____ | a. moved from one place to another |
| 2. migrated (v.) ____ | b. asked for something in a serious way |
| 3. reservation (n.) ____ | c. a close group of people linked by family, societal, religious, or economic ties |
| 4. uprooting (v.) ____ | d. to be made less important than something or someone else |
| 5. unscrupulous (adj.) ____ | e. having no or low moral values |
| 6. passed down (v.) ____ | f. a person who takes responsibility for another |
| 7. guardian (n.) ____ | g. given from one person to another, usually from an older generation to a younger |
| 8. deceased (adj.) ____ | h. no longer alive |
| 9. remains (n.) ____ | i. land set aside for native people to live on |
| 10. appealed (v.) ____ | j. moving from a comfortable place such as a home |
| 11. overshadowed (v.) ____ | k. what is left of a dead body |

Vocabulary Questions

Discuss with a partner.

1. Are there any native **tribes** in your country or region? Were there in the past?
2. Have you ever done or witnessed something **unscrupulous**? How did you feel about it?
3. Give an example of something that was **passed down** in your family.

Your Briefing

593 words -1010 -1200L

Place: Osage County, Oklahoma

Time: 1921-1925

1897 found the *tribe* of Osage Native American Indians living in the northeastern part of Oklahoma. As was the case with many Native American tribes, though the Osage had originated in the eastern part of the United States, wars, migration, and the government kept them moving west until they were forced to move onto a *reservation* in Kansas. Later, they agreed to sell this land to the government and resettle on a reservation in Oklahoma. This could not have been an easy or pleasant experience for them as they had to keep *uprooting* their homes and moving to new areas, most often on foot. Moreover, the new area in Oklahoma was poor land for farming.

Fortunately, in 1897, oil was discovered on the Osage land. As a result, by the 1920s, the Osage were taking in hundreds of millions of dollars a year (by today's standards) and were known to be the richest people on Earth. Unfortunately, all this wealth attracted the attention of the government and many *unscrupulous* people.

Even though the Osage owned their land and the money made from its oil belonged to them, this was done through a system called "headrights". Headrights, or the ability to collect money from oil on the land, could be *passed down* to children or other relatives even if they were not Osage. In 1921, the US government passed a law that required every person with these headrights who was more than 50% Osage to have a *guardian*. These guardians would manage the money for the Osage and prevent them from spending all of it. However, the guardians, who were always white men, were able to keep some of the money for themselves and often prevented the Osage from spending their money as they liked. The guardians also had a lot of influence over who would inherit the

headrights of *deceased* Osage. Around this time, some suspicious things started to happen with the Osage landowners.

The early 1920's was referred to as the "Reign of Terror" for the Osage people. During that time, over 20 people were murdered in Osage county—18 of them were Native American and several were all from one family. In May of 1921, hunters found the *remains* of an Osage woman named Anna Brown. After an investigation, her death was ruled to be accidental and her headrights passed to her mother, Lizzie Q. Kyle, who died a few months later. Over the next few months, two of Anna's cousins were shot dead and her sister died when a bomb exploded in her house. Clues pointed to a business associate, a white man named William Hale. Interestingly, Hale's nephew was married to an Osage woman, Mollie Kyle. In addition to her own headrights, she had inherited those of her murdered sisters, mother, and cousin. During the trial of William Hale and his nephews, it was revealed that Mollie was slowly being poisoned.

As the deaths piled up, local officials and the Office of Indian Affairs seemed incapable of, or uninterested in, solving the crimes. Out of desperation, the Osage *appealed* to the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). It was their first murder case. Hale and his accomplices were convicted of murder and conspiracy. In 1925, Congress changed the law allowing only Osage people to inherit headrights. However, by then over 100 suspected murders had occurred and very few were ever solved. It was a devastating time for the Osage people and the notoriety of the "Reign of Terror" *overshadowed* their general reputation as a peaceful and hard-working people.

Your Mission

Prevent the murders of the Osage people.

You are on the Osage Reservation in 1920. The oil is pumping, the Osage are getting rich, and none have been murdered yet. How will you stop the "Reign of Terror"? Will you start by talking to the Osage people themselves or to the people who want to take their money?

Osage Indian Murders History Quiz

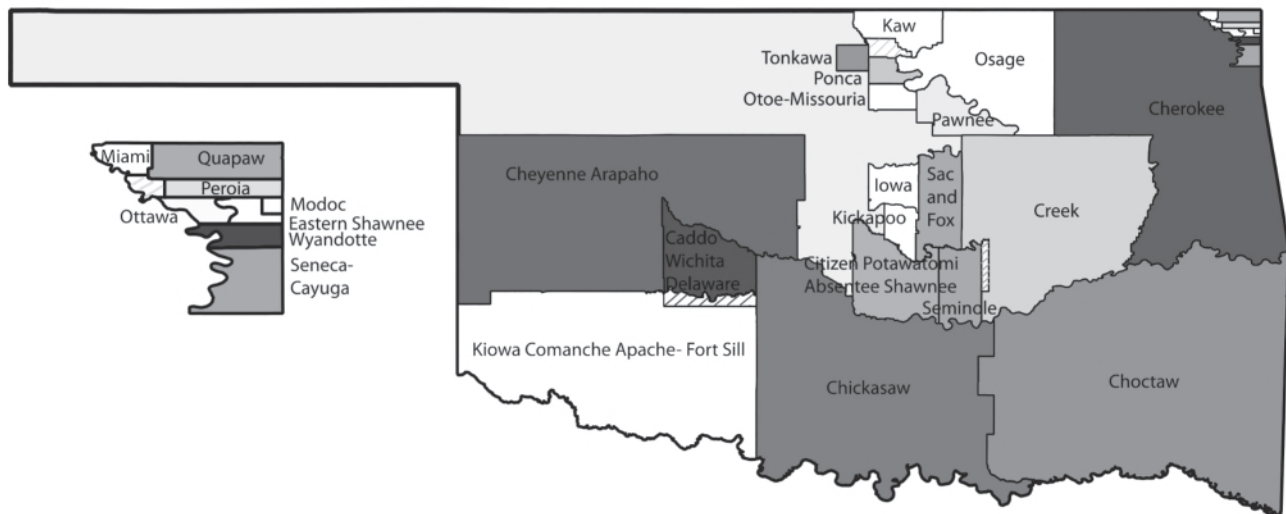
1. The Osage tribe first formed in ____.
 - a. Kansas
 - b. Oklahoma
 - c. the Eastern United States
 - d. various areas
2. Oil was discovered on Osage lands in ____.
 - a. 1897
 - b. 1921
 - c. 1925
 - d. 1997
3. The official reason Osage were given guardians to help them with ____.
 - a. drilling oil
 - b. education
 - c. saving their money
 - d. farming
4. ____ was one of the first Osage victims of the "Reign of Terror".
 - a. Mollie Kyle
 - b. Lizzie Q. Kyle
 - c. Anna Brown
 - d. William Hale
5. The Osage asked the FBI to help them because _____.
 - a. the FBI was very famous
 - b. the FBI offered to help
 - c. the FBI was responsible for helping native people
 - d. no one else would help them

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the United States government implemented the guardian program for the Osage Indians?
2. Only people who were more than 50% Osage were required to have a guardian. What role do you think our "blood" or genetics play in who we are as people? What role can stereotypes about people's ethnicities play in how they are treated?
3. The Osage case was the first time the FBI tackled a murder case. Do you know of any famous cases the FBI has solved or been unable to solve?
4. The Osage felt their reputation was highly damaged by the "Reign of Terror". Why or how is a community affected when they suffer from negative publicity, even when it is not their fault?

Projects

1. **Be a Part of History to Complete the Mission:** Travel back to 1920 when the oil is pumping, the Osage are getting rich, and none have been murdered yet. How will you stop the "Reign of Terror"? Will you start by talking to the Osage people themselves or to the people who want to take their money? You know about William Hale and his nephews, but there are other people to watch out for too.
2. Continue the story- After some of those guilty of murdering the Osage were put in prison and the government changed the law allowing only Osage to inherit headrights, did life return to normal? Write about 1-2 pages from the perspective of an Osage person living during this time.
3. Research the Osage Indians-What are some other ways we can remember them other than for the "Reign of Terror"?
4. Research an indigenous group from your area of the world- Where did they come from? What were their accomplishments? What was/is their relationship with the national government of their area? As you read, use "Supplement 6: List of Sources or References") to help you determine how biased or unbiased the information is.
5. Write a letter to the United States government asking them to change the law requiring the Osage landowners to have guardians. Be sure to include two or three strong reasons why the law should be changed.

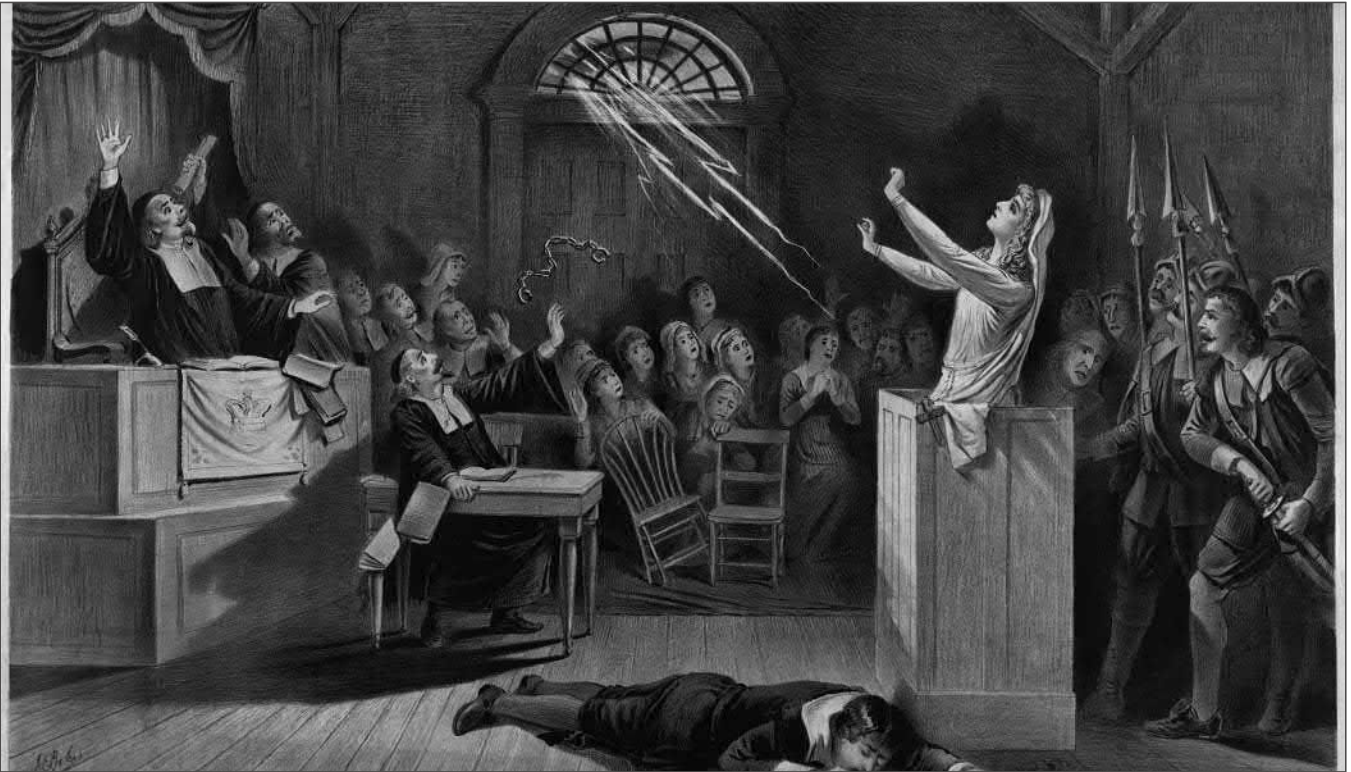


Map of the tribes of Oklahoma's territory, 2012. Wikimedia Commons.

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The Salem Witch Trials



An artist's depiction of a witch trial, created around 1892. In this scene, a bolt of lightning breaks the accused witch's handcuffs and knocks down the accuser.

Before You Read

1. What is your definition of a witch? Are they always evil? Do they always have magical powers?
2. Witches appear in the legends and stories of many cultures. What witches or other supernatural beings are part of your culture?
3. When someone is accused of a crime, what kind of proof is necessary to show guilt or innocence?
4. False confessions (when people say they committed a crime they actually did not do) are not uncommon. Why do you think innocent people sometimes claim to be criminals?

Vocabulary Definitions

Write the letter of the definition next to the matching word

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. contorted (v.) ____ | a. formally said to have done something illegal |
| 2. bizarre (n.) ____ | b. twisted and bent into a strange shape |
| 3. witchcraft (n.) ____ | c. the practice of using magic and spells, usually for evil purposes |
| 4. charged (v.) ____ | d. to claim another has done wrong |
| 5. confessed (v.) ____ | e. very strange |
| 6. frail (adj.) ____ | f. spoke as a witness or gave evidence in court |
| 7. testified (v.) ____ | g. unreasonable fear |
| 8. accuse (v.) ____ | h. uncontrolled movements of muscles |
| 9. executed (v.) ____ | i. admitted to doing something wrong or illegal |
| 10. hysteria (n.) ____ | j. put to death as a punishment |
| 11. fungus (n.) ____ | k. weak and easily injured or broken |
| 12. spasms (n.) ____ | l. uncontrolled emotion often in a group of people |
| 13. delusions (n.) ____ | m. a kind of organism such as molds, yeast, and mushrooms |
| 14. paranoia (n.) ____ | n. untrue beliefs or ideas |

Answers at the end of the book

Vocabulary Questions

Discuss with a partner.

1. Talk about a bizarre experience you have had or heard about.
2. What are some different ways that criminals were executed in the past?
3. What are some common things people experience paranoia about? Why do you think this happens?

Your Briefing

504 words - 810-1000L

Place: Salem, Massachusetts

Time: 1692

In the winter of 1692, one of the coldest on record, two girls aged 9 and 11 began to act very strangely. They complained of feeling pinches and screamed and threw things as their bodies *contorted* themselves. As the news of this behavior spread, so did the behavior itself, and other girls in the American village of Salem began to also act in *bizarre* ways. The local doctor blamed *witchcraft*.

Soon, three women were *charged* with being witches. The first woman, Tituba, was a slave from the Caribbean. The second was Sarah Good, a pregnant and homeless woman. The third was a poor, elderly woman named Sarah Osborne. Though all three women denied being witches at first, eventually Tituba

confessed. She said it was true she was a witch but had been forced into it by Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. Though Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne still claimed to be innocent, all three women were put in jail.

Once in jail, the situation for the women and the community became worse. Sarah Osborne, already *frail*, could not survive the difficult conditions and died. Rather than defending his wife, Sarah Good's husband said it was true that she was a witch. Good's four-year old daughter was also put in prison until she also *testified* against her mother who was later hanged for her crime. Tituba was allowed to go free.

Meanwhile, the people of Salem started to believe everyone in their community was a witch and began to *accuse* one another. Once people, mostly women, were arrested, they were given a choice: confess to being a witch and go free or be executed for being a witch. A confession always involved accusing others as well, and so the cycle continued. Moreover, those who spoke out about the accusations and arrests were often charged with witchcraft as well. By the spring of 1693, over 200 hundred people had been accused, more than 100 were jailed, 20 were *executed*, and five others died while in jail. Salem and the surrounding area were living in total fear, not only of witches but of the accusations of one another.

The *hysteria* finally came to an end when the wife of the governor of Massachusetts was accused of being a witch. Governor Phipps then put an end to the accusations and trials and released those still in prison.

So why did this happen? Were there really witches in Salem casting spells and putting curses on the village people? It seems unlikely. A study published in 1976 suggested that a *fungus* commonly found in the food of that time could have acted as a poison, causing the girls to have *spasms* and *delusions*. Most likely, we will never know what caused the original symptoms that led to the accusations of witchcraft. However, we do know that the people of Salem were too quick to turn on one another, and some even used the situation to harm enemies and benefit themselves. Innocent people died as a result of fear and *paranoia*.

Your Mission

Find the source of the hysteria and put an end to it.

Salem Witch Trials History Quiz

1. The Salem Witch Trials began because some ___ were acting in a strange way.
 - a. girls
 - b. women
 - c. men
 - d. animals
2. ___ confessed to being a witch.
 - a. Tituba
 - b. Sarah Good
 - c. Sarah Osborne
 - d. Governor Phipps
3. Why didn't someone stop the Salem Witch Trials sooner?
 - a. Witchcraft was a serious problem in Salem.
 - b. People were scared to speak up.
 - c. They were finding so many witches.
 - d. The witches prevented it.
4. How many people died as a result of the trials?
 - a. 200
 - b. 100
 - c. 25
 - d. 5
5. What happened when Mrs. Phipps, the wife of the governor, was accused of witchcraft?
 - a. She was hanged.
 - b. She confessed.
 - c. She accused her husband of being a witch.
 - d. Her husband ended the trials.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne were accused of witchcraft?
2. How do you think the difficult conditions of living at that time contributed to people's enthusiasm for the witch trials?
3. What do you think caused the girls to experience the strange symptoms in the first place?
4. Have you heard of similar accusations of witchcraft in other countries?
5. What would you do if you were accused of being a witch?

Projects

1. **Be a Part of History to Complete the Mission:** Consider the viewpoint of someone living at that time. Write a journal entry about what your community is experiencing and how you feel about it.
2. Re-enact a trial: What are the accusations? How do the accused defend themselves? What do the witnesses say? What does the judge and/or jury decide?
3. Compare and contrast: Witches are present in many cultures and stories around the world. Choose two cultures and compare and contrast how they think of witches. Consider their appearance, their powers, and whether they are helpful or harmful. Present your findings in a poster. Consider using Wikipedia and the guidelines in "Supplement 12: Using Wikipedia" to guide your research.
4. Interview your classmates or friends and family:

Interview Question: : Do you believe in witches or other supernatural beings? Why or why not?		
Name	Answer	Reason
Mina	Yes	My friend saw a ghost once.

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2 Create Your Own Mystery

Research a historical mystery from your country or another!

Name of Topic: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

1. Description (what is the situation and why is it still a mystery?)

2. Solution: How will you solve this mystery? If you were going back to this time, what would you do and what would you see?

3. Vocab: Write 2 new vocab you learned related to this topic

Words	Definitions

4. Source to support your research:

4 Finding Credible Sources

In the age of the internet, a great amount of good information is available, but also false information and lies. Sometimes people post biased information and sometimes sources appear official but are in fact fake. So how do you know if a source is credible, which means believable and reliable? The key is a good source should be RELIABLE. This means the source is one that we can trust versus an UNRELIABLE source that we're unsure provides trustworthy information.

So roughly we can consider reliable:

- Anything that is a primary source – statistics, professional speeches from conferences or TED Talks, research on the ground, interviews etc.
- Peer reviewed journals as they go through the process of peer review
- Books as they get edited and the author usually has done a lot of research to write them
- Papers written by experts.

Examples of less reliable/unreliable sources:

- Newspaper articles (except that which is primary) as they often have both bias and have very little time to check facts.
- Forums, blogs etc.
- Social Media of public figures or others promoting an agenda.
- Wikipedia and other user generated content – however Wikipedia will often give links to find more reliable information.

Criteria for Evaluating Sources:

There will be exceptions; a blog by a professor on his specialist subject is as likely to be as reliable as any papers he writes. Use the checklist below to evaluate your source before using it.

- Is this a primary source or secondary?
- If secondary, does it link to the primary source so you can verify?
- Is the source falsified or disguised?
- Is the source well-known and authoritative (a university or well-known publication) or a random blog or unknown organization?
- Has the information been verified or edited (peer-reviewed journal, book,)?
- Is the source known to have a bias?
- Is the article internally consistent?

Sources

Evaluating news resources: Steps and tools for evaluating the news. Research Guides. (n.d.). https://libguides.rutgers.edu/fake_news.

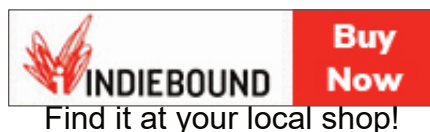
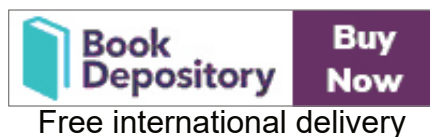
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History's Mysteries

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Mina Gavell

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