

'The Rest of The Story'

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If there is a stain on the record of our forefathers, a dark hour in the earliest history of the American Colonies, it would be the hanging of the "witches" at Salem.

But that was a pinpoint in place and time-- a brief lapse into hysteria. For the most part, our seventeenth century colonists were scrupulously fair, even in fear.



There was one group of people they feared with reason-- a society, you might say, whose often insidious craft had claimed a multitude of victims, ever since the Middle ages in Europe.

One group of people were hated and feared from Massachusetts Bay to Virginia. The Magistrate would not burn them at the stake, although surely a great many of the colonists would have recommended such a solution. Our forefathers were baffled by them.

In the first place, where did they come from? Of all who sailed from England to Plymouth in 1620, not one of them was aboard.

"VERMIN." That's what the Colonist called them. Parasites who fed on human misery, spreading sorrow and confusion wherever they went. "DESTRUCTIVE." They were called.

And still they were permitted coexistence with the colonists. For a while, anyway. Of course there were colonial laws prohibiting the practice of their infamous craft. Somehow a way was always found around all those laws.

In 1641, Massachusetts Bay colony took a novel approach to the problem. The governors attempted to starve the "devils" out of existence through economic exclusion. They were denied wages, and thereby it was hoped that they would perish.

Four years later, Virginia followed the example of Massachusetts Bay, and for a while it seemed that the dilemma had been resolved. It had not, somehow the parasites managed to survive, and the mere nearness of them made the colonists skin crawl.

In 1658, In Virginia, the final solution: Banishment; EXILE. The "treacherous ones" were cast out of the colony. At last, after decades of enduring the psychological gloom, the sun came out and the birds sang, and all was right with the world. And the elation continued for a generation.

I'm not sure why the Virginians eventually allowed the outcasts to return, but they did. In 1680, after twenty-two years, the despised ones were readmitted to the colony on the condition that they be subjected to the strictest surveillance.

How soon we forget!

For indeed over the next half century or so, the imposed restrictions were slowly, quietly swept away. And those whose treachery had been feared since the Middle ages ultimately took their place in society.

You see, the "vermin" that once infested colonial America, the parasites who prayed on the misfortunes of their neighbors until finally they were officially banished from Virginia, those dreaded, despised, outcasts, masters of confusion were lawyers.

And Now You Know The Rest of The Story...

**THE FIRST
THING WE DO,
LET'S KILL ALL
THE LAWYERS**

-William Shakespeare

