**Humor: The Salem Witch Trials**

**by** [**Helen Stuart**](http://www.helium.com/users/582671/show_articles)

**Created on**: November 13, 2010

It's hard to see the humorous side of the Salem Witch Trials, but I figure if anyone should be allowed to look for it, I should.  You see, my great-great-great-great-great-great add another great or two grandfather, George Jacobs, was one of the six men hanged as a witch during those infamous trials.  Historians now have many theories on what went wrong with the population.  Was it merely mass hysteria?  Was it a fungus called ergot that grew on the rye and caused hallucinations?  Or was the government going after the land and cattle of those killed?  Or was it merely a language barrier of Indian slave girls.

I know one thing, it was another reason for me, a smarty-pants-know-it-all kid in school to hold up my hand during the discussion of Cotton Mathers and the Salem Witch Trials and say,  "My Great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather was hanged as a witch during those trials."   At which the kids would usually gasp and the ones who liked me would say "that's terrible" and the ones who were tired of me being a smarty-pants-know-it-all would point their fingers and exclaim, "She's a witch, she's a witch!"   I would smugly roll my eyes and say "I guess that's possible, if they were so sure he was a witch."  And I would enjoy a few days on the playground pretending to cast spells and recruiting other little witches to right the wrongs that were done so long ago in Salem.

But George Jacobs Sr. wasn't really a witch, of course.  In those days they called both male and females witches.  He walked with a cane, sometimes two, he was a very old man, and when called to testify he merely repeated, "I'm as innocent as the day I was born."  They asked if he could read, and whether he read or memorized it, he recited the Lord's Prayer.  His cane is still held as an artifact, as his accusers said he used it to do magic.  It is said that two girls saw him on one side of a creek and suddenly he was on the other, dry as a bone, and that led to his accusation and death as a witch.

We all come from some kinds of backgrounds of abuse throughout history.  The individual cases are never funny, and man's inhumanity to man is a tragedy.  But we can't go forward lamenting every shameful episode without celebrating the brave people who gave their lives and handed down their legacies to us, and part of that is finding whatever tiny spark of irony or humor there is.  George Jacobs Sr. and the other men and women who were killed were put to death because they refused to confess to witchcraft or name others.  Every day I live and laugh with a passel of Jacobs and I think George Sr. is smiling down.