



# Tip Of The WEEK

DC HOME - THE SALEM WITCH HUNT

## THE MANY FACES OF MOLD IN HISTORY

### THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS OF 1692



Mold-Induced food poisoning called ergotism may have been responsible for the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

Ergot, a chemical with effects similar to LSD, is produced by the fungus *Claviceps Purpurea*, which is believed to have infected the rye crops of Salem, Massachusetts. It may also have been responsible for the development of hallucinations, seizures, mental disturbances, miscarriages, and even death in small children all of which could have been mistaken for witchcraft or satanic influences.

Mold infected crops causing epidemics and mass hysteria can be dated as far back as the 14th century.

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