



# The Linden Times

A bi-weekly newsletter for the members & friends of the Calvert County Historical Society – [November 6, 2020](#)



**Have you heard** about the notorious Salem Witch Trials that took place in colonial Massachusetts in the 1600s? The Salem Witch Trials were a procession of hearings and prosecutions accusing the arraigned of witchcraft. Aside from enduring relentless ridicule and ostracization, the methods of execution were unpleasant and gruesome for the convicted. Nineteen of the convicted were executed by hanging. The grisliest execution was performed on Giles Corey. Corey endured a painful death by pressing. The pressing method entails placing extreme weight upon a person until they succumb to injuries caused by the crushing of their body. These horrific trials are forever embedded in American history.

Every year around the time of the celebration of Hallows Eve also known as All Saints' Eve, there is an influx in the infatuation of these trials. What is the driving force of this mad obsession? Is it the increased hysteria of witches, ghosts, goblins, and ghouls? Or is it a deep feeling of empathy we harbor for these wretched souls?

**When asked about witch trials**, many will allude to the Salem Witch Trials, by far the most notorious witch trials in American history. What you may not know is that Calvert County has had its share of sending innocent souls to the gallows for the sake of witchcraft and sorcery.

Maryland's past is cloaked in a dark secret—an intriguing and rarely mentioned history of witches. In 1635, the state adopted the Witchcraft Act of 1604 that declared witchcraft a felony, punishable by death. Between 1654 and 1712, there were ten witch trials in Maryland's recorded history, most of which were formally conducted in county courts of law.



One of the most infamous cases occurred seven years before the Salem Witch Trials. A woman by the name of Rebecca Fowler was accused of witchcraft in Calvert County. Rebecca sailed from England to Calvert in 1656. She met her husband John while they were indentured servants to the same landowner. By 1683 Rebecca and John had worked their way out of indenture. John then, purchased a plantation, Fowler's Delight. An indentured servant named Francis Sandsbury worked on Fowler's Delight Plantation. According to court documents, Francis sustained an injury or became ill which he inculpated Rebecca. Prior to [cont. on page 2](#)

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Mr. Sandsbury's injury, he engaged in an altercation with Rebecca. During the altercation she may have cursed at him. Francis reported Rebecca for witchcraft, which led to her seizing by the authority.

On September 30, 1685, Rebecca was taken to St. Mary's City (the state capital at the time), where she was tried at the Maryland Provincial Court. She pleaded not guilty to the charges and requested a jury trial. Unfortunately, the twelve jurors found her guilty of all charges and left the decision to determine if she legally met the definition of witchcraft to the courts. On October 3, 1685, the justices sealed Rebecca's fate by ordering hanging by the neck until dead. On October 9, 1685, in Calvert County, Rebecca Fowler was charged, convicted, and executed by hanging, on counts of "certain diabolical arts called witchcraft, enchantments, charms, and sorceries." Of the ten Maryland witch trials, Rebecca Fowler was the only person to be put to death for witchcraft in Maryland. Her final resting place is unknown.

Ref: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem-witch-trials> & Rebecca Fowler Story by Benjamin Shaw, July 23, 2015  
<https://boundarystones.weta.org/2015/07/23/witch-hunts-dc-area-older-you-think>



The Maryland State House, circa 1865, in St. Mary's City, where the Provincial Court met and where Rebecca would have been tried.

UPCOMING  
Events



## Calvert Hospice 5<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Wreaths\*

**Location:** Linden House - Prince Frederick. Admission is FREE!

**When:** November 21, 2020, 10:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

**Live music:** 11:00a.m. – 1:00p.m.

Beautiful, handcrafted wreaths and holiday gift baskets will be on display; this year you will be able to bid on your favorite wreaths via cell phone all day **from the comfort of your home** or let our helpful staff help you create a bid. Participate in our Spree Wreath raffle with prizes worth hundreds of dollars!

We will be following all CDC and Calvert County Health Department regulations regarding COVID-19 precautions. Face masks required in the building and maintaining social distancing when viewing the wreaths. For more details visit [calverthospice.org/festival-of-wreaths](http://calverthospice.org/festival-of-wreaths) or **text wreaths2020 to 76278** to pre-register and start previewing items.

## CCHS presents "Light Up Linden" \*

December 5<sup>th</sup> – Save the date!

**Caroling: 6:00 - 6:30p.m. – Tree lighting 6:30p.m.**

Free fun for the whole family.

For additional information visit [www.calverthistory.org](http://www.calverthistory.org) – events

\* Face masks required

