



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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17th Century Witchcraft Program at the Connecticut State Library

Robert Laughlin, an historical consultant, will present "Death by Witchcraft: Witch Trials and Medicine in 17th Century Connecticut" Thursday, October 21, 2010, from Noon to 12:45 at the Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford. Mr. Laughlin will take us back nearly 350 years in the past to investigate the first autopsy recorded in Connecticut and how it is connected to the 17th century witch trials that took place in Hartford, thirty years prior to the events in Salem, Massachusetts. In 1662, Doctor Rossister of Guilford was asked to determine the cause of death for an eight year old girl named Elizabeth Kelly. The presentation will also uncover the state of medicine in 17th century Connecticut. Borrowing some of the most popular theories used to find the cause of the Salem witch panic, Mr. Laughlin takes a closer examination of the Connecticut girl's death. Comparing several theories, including that of Doctor Rossister with his own, he finally, with aid of modern science, reveals the most likely cause of the young girl's death.

Mr. Laughlin is currently completing an M.A. in American Studies at Trinity College. He has conducted research and developed programs for the Old State House, the Stanley Whitman House in Farmington and served as Education Coordinator at Old Sturbridge Village.

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY



The Connecticut State Library which includes the State Archives and the Museum of Connecticut History contains some of the most primary source documents on witchcraft in Connecticut. The Library is open free to the public Tuesday – Friday 9-5 and Saturday from 9-2. The Museum of Connecticut History is open Monday – Friday 9-4 and Saturday from 9-2.

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