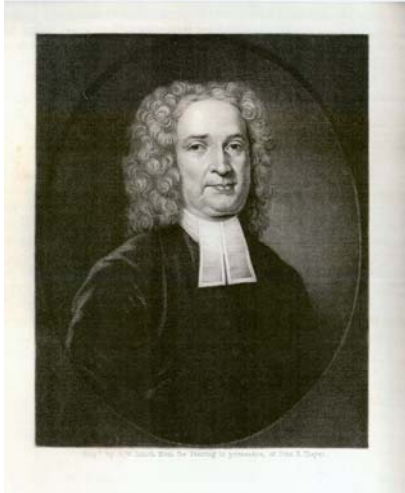


#597 Salem Rebellion, Salem Witchcraft – The Cottons and the Mathers

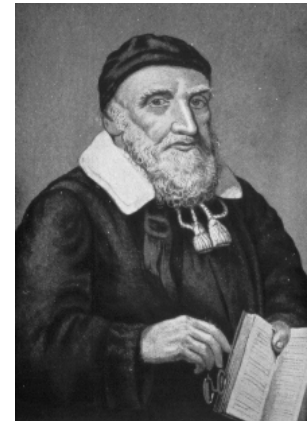
Before we go any further, it will be helpful to present a brief outline of the **Cottons** and the **Mathers**, and the marital links between the two families.



John Cotton – John Cotton (*left*) was born on December 4, 1584 (some sources say 1584; other sources say 1585), in Derby, England. He served as the vicar (Church of England minister) of St. Botolph's Church in Boston, Lincolnshire, England, from 1612 to the early 1630's. He became increasingly critical of the Church of England and an outspoken advocate of independent congregational governance. The Anglican hierarchy took action against him in 1632 by attempting to enforce ceremonial conformity. In 1633, Cotton removed himself from the growing controversy and sailed with his family to Boston, Massachusetts. At First Church in Boston, he became one of the most respected leaders of New England, and many would say the most prominent theologian of early colonial America. John Cotton had married his second wife, Sarah

Hawkrige, in 1632. She survived him at his death on December 23, 1652. In 1656, as the widow of John Cotton, she would marry Richard Mather.

Richard Mather – Richard Mather (*right*) was born in Lancashire, England, in 1596. He was ordained a minister of the Church of England in 1620, but his Puritan beliefs antagonized church authorities, who suspended him from his ministry in 1633. In 1635, persuaded by letters from John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, he departed Old England for New England. He arrived in New England, in mid-August 1635, amidst one of the most catastrophic hurricanes in New England's history. From 1636 until his death in 1669, he was pastor of the parish in Dorchester, near Boston (and now within the City of Boston). After his first wife died, **Richard Mather married the widow of John Cotton** in 1656.



Increase Mather – Increase Mather (*left*), the son of Richard Mather, was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1639. He graduated from Harvard College in 1656. After receiving a further degree from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in 1658, he returned to America in 1661. **In 1662, Increase Mather married Maria Cotton, the daughter of John Cotton** (who also happened to be his step-sister by way of his father's remarriage to the widow of John Cotton in 1656). In 1664, Increase Mather joined the Second Church of Boston in the important post of teacher. He became Acting President of Harvard in 1685 and he held the position until 1701.

Cotton Mather – Cotton Mather (*right*) would bear both family names. He was born in Boston in 1663, the son of Increase Mather and Maria Cotton. His grandfathers were Richard Mather, who died in 1669, six years after his birth, and John Cotton (after whom he was probably named), who died eleven years prior to his birth. About 1680, Cotton Mather joined his father at the Second Church in Boston as an assistant. He remained there until his death in 1728. Mather published nearly 500 books and pamphlets, with his best-known book being *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702). In his numerous writings, Cotton Mather set the colonial moral tone, and sounded the call for second and third generation Puritans, whose parents and grandparents had left England for the New England colonies of North America, to return to the theological roots of Puritanism. Both he and his father would become figures attached to the Salem Witchcraft Trials of 1692.



Key Understanding: *The Cottons and the Mathers*. The Lord joined together the two prominent Puritan families of the Cottons and the Mathers.

The key verse for the Salem Witchcraft Trials and the historical/prophetic story of the Cottons and the Mathers is 1 Samuel 15:23.

*1 Samuel 15:23 (KJV) **FOR REBELLION IS AS THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT**, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king [speaking of Saul].*

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