The Salem Witch Trials were a notorious episode in New England colonial history that led to the execution of 14 women and 6 men, in 1692, for charges of witchcraft. The trials began as a result of the bizarre and inexplicable behavior of two young girls, afflicted by violent convulsions and strange fits that seemingly rendered them unable to hear, speak, or see. After a medical examination and a review by Puritan clergy, the girls were judged to be victims of witchcraft. In the ensuing hysteria during Originally published: [New York] : Cooper Square Press, 2002. Includes bibliographical references (pages 661-673) and index. "The Salem Witch Trials is based on over twenty-five years of original archival research (including the author's discovery of previously unknown documents), as well as on newly found cases and court records. From January 1692 to January 1697, this history unfolds a nearly day-by-day narrative of the crisis as the citizens of New England experienced it, while providing details of the communal, colonial, and international events that influenced the witch scare an Salem Witchcraft Trials - The History of Witches and Witchcraft It is difficult to understand why the Salem Witchcraft Trials occurred unless they are taken in context with the history of witches and witchcraft and the general beliefs of people in the late 1600's, when the Salem witchcraft trials took place.Â Books about Astrology, Alchemy and Magic were readily available and increased the interest in witchcraft, witches and witch hunts. A book called the 'Malleus Maleficarum' was published as guide used for the torture and persecution of witches - it was a best selling book, only being out-sold by the Bible. Salem Witchcraft Trials - The History of Witches, Witchcraft & Witchfinders.