

Package ‘saalem’

January 14, 2026

Type Package

Title Provides Access to Salem Witchcraft Data

Version 1.0.1

Description Data related to the Salem Witch Trials

Datasets and tutorials documenting the witch accusations and trials centered around Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Originally assembled by Richard B. Latner of Tulane University for his website <https://www2.tulane.edu/~saalem/index.html>. The data sets include information on 152 accused witches, members of the Salem Village Committee, signatories of petitions related to the events, and tax data for Salem Village.

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Encoding UTF-8

LazyData true

URL <https://elinw.github.io/saalem/>, <https://github.com/elinw/saalem/>

BugReports <https://github.com/elinw/saalem/issues>

Depends R (>= 4.1.0)

Suggests dplyr (>= 1.0.0), ggplot2, knitr, rmarkdown, sf, stats, tidyr

VignetteBuilder knitr

RoxygenNote 7.3.3

Collate ``accused_witches.R" ``cent17th.R" ``committee_list.R" ``compensation.R" ``ergotism_symptoms.R" ``forfeitures.R" ``long_doc_name.R" ``saalem_village.R" ``tax_comparison.R" ``parris_social.R" ``saalem_region.R"

NeedsCompilation no

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accused_witches	<i>accused witches</i>
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Description

A dataset containing list of accused witches, the month of accusation, whether they were executed and, if so, what month.

Usage

```
accused_witches
```

Format

A data frame with 152 rows and 8 variables:

Accused.Witch Name of accused

Residence Town of residence

Month.of.Accusation Month of accusation as number

Month.of.Execution Month of execution as number. Missing for those not executed.

Sort ID from original data set

Month.of.Accusation.Name Month of accusation as ordered factor

Month.of.Execution.Name Month of execution as ordered factor. Missing for those not executed.

executed Indicator of whether the accused was executed

Source

<https://www2.tulane.edu/~salem/Accused%20Witches.html>

cent17th*Names and link segments*

Description

A dataset based on data about the accused found <http://17thc.us/primarysources/accused.php?id=1&pg=1>

Usage

cent17th

Format

An object of class `data.frame` with 156 rows and 17 columns.

Details

containing a comprehensive list of names from the records of the Salem Witchcraft Trials and the correspondent stub indicating the page name associated with them.

table Source table

Name Name of those who were condemned during the trial

Marital Status (if female) (source) The marital status of those condemned if they were female with the source

1. evidence of forfeiture (source) 2. Article seized The evidence they had for forfeiture, the source in which they had and if they had article seized or not for those who were condemned

Legal statues (source) their legal status in which this case is condemned and their source

Attainder reversed if the declaration of the attainders were reversed or not for the condemned

Comments Any comments made for those who were condemned

Source

<http://17thc.us/primarysources/accused.php?id=1&pg=1>

committee_list	<i>Committee list</i>
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Description

A dataset containing list of Salem Village Committee members 1685-1698. Given in long format, with one row per member per year. In 1688 there were only 4 members; in all other years there were five.

Usage

committee_list

Format

A data frame with 69 rows and 5 variables:

Committee.Members Name of committee member

Social Their social position (3 groups)

Petition Did this person sign either the pro- or anti-Parris petition in 1695

Sort ID from original data set

Year Year of membership

Source

<https://www2.tulane.edu/~salem/Committee%20List%20Data%20Set.html>

compensation	<i>Compensation A data set containing the amount of compensation awarded in 1711. Order for payment of damages by Governor Joseph Dudley, December 17, 1711</i>
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Description

Compensation A data set containing the amount of compensation awarded in 1711. Order for payment of damages by Governor Joseph Dudley, December 17, 1711

Usage

compensation

Format

A data frame with 19 rows and 6 variables:

name Name of those compensated
pounds Pounds part
shillings Shillings part
pence Pence part
total Total amount converted to pence
gender Male, female or couple

Source

<http://swtdocuments.pem.org/documents/15/>

ergotism_symptoms	<i>Ergotism symptoms</i>
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Description

A dataset containing the ergotism data presented in Spanos and Gottlieb (1976) Table 1. The dataframe records the symptoms possible symptoms of ergotism reported about 22 individuals.

Usage

```
ergotism_symptoms
```

Format

A data frame with 22 rows and 20 variables:

name Name of the sufferer
rsw_volume Volume number of RSW
rsw_page Page number
vomitting Vomitting
diarrhea Diarrhea
livid_skin Livid skin
permanent_contractures Permanent contractures
pain_in_extremities Pain in extremities
death Death
temporary_muscle_stiffness Temporary muscle stiffness
convulsions Convulsions Cases Spanos and Gottlieb considered uncertain are coded missing.
ravenous_appetite Ravenous appetite

- perceptual_disturbances** Perceptual disturbances Cases Spanos and Gottlieb considered uncertain are coded missing.
- apparitions** Apparitions
- sensations_of_hot_and_cold** Sensations of hot & cold
- skin_sensations** Skin sensations
- stomach_pain** Stomach pain
- choking_sensations** Choking sensations
- inability_to_speak** Temporary inability to speak
- total** Total number of symptoms

Details

Spanos and Gottlieb, with one exeption (E. Keysar), drew the data from depositions in the *Records of the Salem Witchcraft* collection. Details of data collection are provided in the article. The data set indicates the volume and page of the individual report. J. Doritch is also mentioned in volume 2 page 179 of *RSW*.

The article is an attempt to compare the actual symptoms reported to a list of symptoms of ergotism. For each variable a 1 inidicates that the symptom was reported, while a 0 indicated it was not reported. They conclude that "We examined these 112 depositions looking for behavior that, even in a broad sense, might possibly represent symptoms of convulsive ergotism."

Source

Spanos, N. P., & Gottlieb, J. (1976). Ergotism and the Salem Village Witch Trials. *Science*, 194(4272), 1390–1394.

forfeitures	<i>forfeitures A data set containing list of forfeitures for those who were condemned, escaped, and stood mute during trial.</i>
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Description

forfeitures A data set containing list of forfeitures for those who were condemned, escaped, and stood mute during trial.

Usage

forfeitures

Format

A data frame with 30 rows and 6 variables with the name Person_condemned:

legal_status Legal status at time of forfeiture

Name Name of those who were condemned during the trial

marital_status The marital status for females

forfeiture The evidence that a forfeiture was ordered

reversed Was the declaration of the attainders was reversed

The source has some Key Tables which are: for the 1703 and 1711 acts reversing some of the witchcraft attainder see Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Act and Resolver, Public and Private, of the providence of the Massachusetts Bay, 21 vols. (Boston, 1869-1922), VI, 49-50 (1703 act), VI, 71-72 (1711 act). SWP-Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbain, eds., The Salem Witchcraft Papers; Verbian Transcript of the Legal Documents of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692, 3 vols. (New York, 1977). Calef-Robert Calef, More Wonders of the Invisible World (London, 1700), excerpted in George L. Burr, ed., Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1684-1706 (New York, 1914), 293-393. Brattle-Thomas Brattle, "Letter," Oct. 8, 1692, in Burr, ed., Narratives, 169-190. Hale-John Hale, A modest Inquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft (Boston, 1702), in Burr, Narratives, 399-432. Gage-Thomas Gage, the History of Rowley (Boston, 1840).

Source

Brown, David C. "The Forfeitures at Salem, 1692." The William and Mary Quarterly, # vol. 50, no. 1, 1993, pp. 85-111. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2947237?seq=1, 10.2307/2947237

long_doc_name	<i>Names and link segments</i>
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Description

A dataset containing a comprehensive list of names mentioned in the records of the Salem Witchcraft Papers and the correspondent stub indicating the page name associated with them.

Usage

long_doc_name

Format

An object of class data.frame with 3884 rows and 2 columns.

Details

There are 139 separate pages which mention a total of 1392 unique names. 857 individuals were mentioned once. The maximum number of mentions is 85 (John Hathorn, who served as Salem's Magistrate).

link Source table

name Name of person mentioned

Source

<https://salem.lib.virginia.edu/category/swp.html>

parris_social

The social positions of pro-Parris and anti-Parris individuals

Description

A dataset containing a list of individuals who signed pro-Parris and anti-Parris petitions and their social positions

Usage

parris_social

Format

A data frame with 189 rows and 5 variables:

Name Name of the individual

view Stance on Parris

Sex Sex of the individual

Identification The social position of the individual (five groups)

Sort ID from original data set

Source

<https://www2.tulane.edu/~salem/Pro-Parris%20Data%20Set.html>

salem_region

Simple Features data for Salem

Description

A dataset containing map information for the three counties represented in the accused_witches data set (not including present-day Maine locations) in simple features format. It also includes associated data on accusations. This data should *never* be used to analyze accusations. The data is based on modern town boundaries from the Massachusetts Document Repository. Some simple cleaning has been done to facilitate basic mapping. Specifically, the names Salem Town and Salem Village are used rather than the modern Salem and Danvers. Additionally, a field, TOWN_LABEL is attached to the largest area for each town or community.

Usage

salem_region

Format

A simple features data frame with 437 rows and 28 variables:

geometry Simple Features geometry

TOWN Name of town in upper case letters

TOWN_ID ID of town

TYPE Type of municipality C = City or T = Town

ISLAND Indicator for islands. Note that many towns have multiple polygons

COASTAL_PO YES for ocean polygon within town limits, NO otherwise

FOURCOLOR Codes allowing shading of all towns with 4 symbols

FIPS_STCO FIPS for state and county

CCD_MCD US Census town code

FIPS_PLACE FIPS town code

FIPS_MCD FIPS State & County & Census Town Code concatenated

FIPS_COUNT FIPS County

ACRES Area in acres

SQUARE_MIL Area in square miles

SHAPE_Leng The perimeter in meters

SHAPE_Area The polygon area in square meters

n_accused Total accused

February Number accused in February

March Number accused in March

April Number accused in April

May Number accused in May

June Number accused in June

July Number accused in July

August Number accused in August

September Number accused in September

October Number accused in October

November Number accused in November

TOWN_LABEL Town name to be used for labelling

Details

Complex analyses require the sf package, but simple mapping can be done using ggplot2.

FIPS refers to the Federal Information Processing Standard

Source

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-municipalities>

saalem_village	<i>Salem_village</i>
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Description

A dataset containing tax list of everyone who appeared on the tax assessment rolls for 1690, 1695, and 1697. This is a "a good, though imperfect, indicator of the village's adult male population" plus some widows (and excluding young men who were not independent).

Usage

saalem_village

Format

A data frame with 137 rows and 5 variables:

Name Name of taxpayer (may be a family)

Petition Did this person sign either the pro- or anti-Parris petition in 1695

Church.to.1696 Was the person a member of any church through 1696

Sort ID from original data set

Details

May be merged with the tax_comparison data set based on name matching, but care should be taken to review and make judgements about matching.

Source

<https://www2.tulane.edu/~saalem/Salem%20Village%20Data%20Set.html>

tax_comparison	<i>Tax list data for Salem</i>
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Description

A dataset containing tax list data for Salem, MA, 1681-1700. Payments are in shillings (converted from original records). Petition refers to Pro-Parris, Anti-Parris and No Signature. Data are in long format with one record per person per year, while the original data was in wide format with a variable for each year. May be merged with the tax_comparison data set based on name matching, but care should be taken to review and make judgements about matching. This data set includes more years of tax records than saalem_village.

Usage

tax_comparison

Format

A data frame with 200 rows and 5 variables:

Name Name of the tax payer

Petition Stance on Petition

Year Year of payment

Tax Tax paid

Sort ID from original data set

Source

<https://www2.tulane.edu/~saalem/Tax%20Comparison%20Data%20Set.html>

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