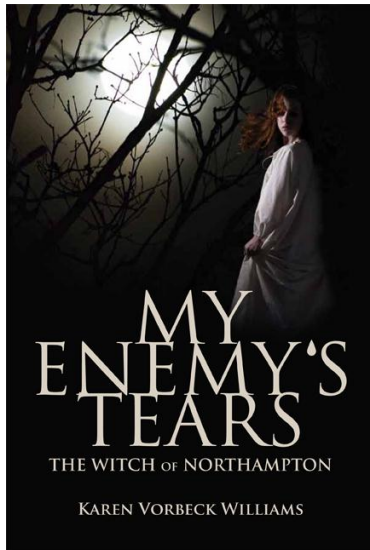


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Novel shines dramatic spotlight on early settlers – and witches - of New England *Author's family tale makes history*



RUMFORD, R.I. – Like many young girls, Karen Vorbeck Williams grew up hearing tales about witches and enjoyed the delicious fright they gave her. Except one thing made them hit a little bit closer to home: a witch in her family history.

These stories, told by her grandmother, instilled a lifelong fascination in Karen with her ancestor and the witchcraft trial she endured long before the infamous Salem witch trials that took place in the same region.

After 20 years of research and writing, Karen put her family history into novel form. *My Enemy's Tears: The Witch of Northampton* is based on the historical record of her 11th great-grandmother Mary Bliss Parsons and Mary's arch enemy Sarah Lyman Bridgeman. Their lives trace the journey of not only the English Separatists to the New World and the growth of the first settlements along the Connecticut River from Hartford and Springfield to Northampton, but the lives of women in 17th century New England as well.

The Puritans in Hartford find the wilderness a terrifying place full of warring natives, pestilences and floods, blazing comets, earthquakes and hurricanes—all portents of God's anger - or a witch's meddling curse.

The two women spend their married lives in the villages of Springfield and Northampton, where a youthful disagreement festers into a reason to hate and then fear each other. In a time when a woman's worth and a man's wealth were counted in sons, Sarah's sons died in infancy as Mary gave birth to six sons, one after another. Sarah believed that since Mary was a witch, she made a trade-off with the Devil – her living children for Sarah's dead children. As the years pass, Sarah accuses Mary of murder by witchcraft, prompting a trial before the Court of Assistants in Boston in 1675—17 years before the Salem witch trials.

My Enemy's Tears looks at two lives—one blessed and one cursed—and the transcendent power of forgiveness.

KAREN VORBECK WILLIAMS, an 11th generation descendant of Mary Bliss Parsons, heard the story of the witch of Northampton at her grandmother's knee. She has lived in New England for more than 35 years where she found the inspiration, settings and spirit for her first published novel.

For more information, please visit www.MyEnemysTears.com.

To schedule an interview, contact Babs Chandrasoma at babs@prbythebook.com | 512.501.4399 x706

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