



MEDIA RELEASE
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WITCHCRAFT LECTURE ON OCTOBER 17

KENNEBUNK/KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine – The Brick Store Museum and the Kennebunkport Historical Society take great pleasure in inviting the public to a lecture and book signing by Dr. Emerson W. Baker on Wednesday, October 17, at 7 pm at the Nonantum Resort, 95 Ocean Avenue, in Kennebunkport. Dr. Baker's latest book, just released October 2, *The Devil of Great Island: Witchcraft and Conflict in Early New England* recounts how witchcraft hysteria overtook one town and spawned copycat incidents in Maine and Connecticut.

In 1682, ten years before the infamous Salem witchcraft trials, the village of Great Island – now Newcastle, New Hampshire – experienced a series of mysterious events: strange demonic noises, unexplainable movement of objects, and hundreds of stones that rained down upon a local tavern. Town residents blamed what they called “Lithobolia” or “the stone-throwing devil”. Emerson Baker leaves no stone unturned, revealing a popular culture of marvels and wonders and in the process overturns many popular assumptions about witchcraft in the 17th century.

Though just released, the book has already garnered high praise. Pulitzer-prize winning historian Alan Taylor calls it “a gripping tale, well told.” Mary Beth Norton, author of *In the Devil's Snare: the Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*, calls Baker's book “thoroughly fascinating and fascinatingly thorough.”

Emerson “Tad” Baker is a Professor of History at Salem State College. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the history and archaeology of early New England. Most recently he was co-author of *The New*

England Knight, an award-winning biography of Sir William Phips. He was a consultant and on-camera expert for the Emmy nominated PBS-TV series *Colonial House*, and has also appeared on Maine Public Broadcasting's *Home: The Story of Maine*. Baker is also the director of Old Berwick Historical Society's Chadbourne Archaeology project, and he has excavated archaeology sites throughout York County. He lives in York with his wife Peggy and their daughters Megan and Sarah.

Copies of the book will be available for purchase at \$24.95 per copy, plus tax, with discounts available to both Kennebunkport Historical Society and Brick Store Museum members. The lecture and accompanying refreshments are offered free of charge, with donations gratefully accepted. The dining room at the Nonantum opens at 5:30 PM for those wishing to have dinner prior to the program.

The lecture is part of *The Kennebunks: Views From Within* series, presented with major support from The Nonantum Resort. For more information, call The Kennebunkport Historical Society at 967-2751 or The Brick Store Museum at 985-4802.

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