

THE CRUCIBLE

GILES COREY



- He is in his early 80s at the time of the trials.
- He represents the many innocent victims of the witch-trials in Salem
- His conscience would not let him answer to, or confess to something which he was not guilty of and he paid for this with his life.
- He is an example of moral integrity and an inspiration for John Proctor when he urges his torturers to place more weights on him. He showed great bravery up to his death.
- Personality – wise he is an argumentative but fundamentally honest farmer, who seems to have made a hobby out of taking people to court over land issues.
- He was always under the suspicious eye of the community for something – if ever a fire started or something went missing the first port of call was always Corey.
- The worst he could be accused of was being a nuisance and a ‘crank’ – but certainly not witchcraft.
- He didn’t care what other people thought of him and had only come to the church late in life when he had married Martha.
- He has quarrelled with Thomas Putnam over a piece of land.
- His mention of his wife’s fondness for reading puts her under suspicion.
- He knows that if he answers the court’s charge of witchcraft his sons will lose their right to inherit his land so he refuses to answer to the court. If he had denied the charge and been hanged they would have forfeit the right to inherit.
- He is pressed to death under large stones.
- **“I will not plead. If I deny, I am condemned already, in courts where ghosts appear as witnesses, and swear men's lives away.**

If I confess, then I confess to a lie, to buy a life which is not a life, but only death in life. I will not bear false witness against any, Not even against myself, whom I count least...I come! Here is my body; ye may torture it, but the immortal soul ye cannot crush!"

The real Giles Corey:

- On or before September 18, 1692, Giles Corey was slowly pressed to death in the field next to the jail. In the literature about Giles Corey's tortuous death, there is reference to his famous last words, "more weight." These words were uttered as a final attempt to expedite his death while also showing that not even imminent death could convince him to go to trial.
- It is even told that the Sheriff took his cane and pressed Giles' tongue back into his mouth just before he died at the end of the two days of being slowly crushed.
- On September 18, 1692, Giles Corey was ex-communicated from the Village church so that he would not die as a member of the church.
- On September 21, 1692, Martha, his wife, was hanged on Gallows Hill.
- It has been speculated that the publicity surrounding the pressing of Giles may have in fact helped to build public opposition to the witchcraft trials.