

Individual Rights and Accusations: Deposition of Thomas Boucher (Witchcraft Accusation), 1703

Transcription

Corahtuck pr[e]cinct August the [31th?] 1703
The Deposition of Tho: Boucher aged :39: years
or thereabouts sayeth that upon the: 24th: of July
=1703 your Deponts' ~~fan~~ Houshold (or famaly)
was then in perfect helth Excepting one
person which was Recovering out of his salli
=vation: the same day att Eve[nin]g I ^your depont^ called one
Tho: Walker a servant of the Deponts to come
to meet: but he instantly cryed out that his
paine was soo great that he cold not come
crying out of his belly and stumack and
soo continueth Dissabled to this Day; the next
~~Day~~ morning it being the 25th of July: 1703
the aforesaid Walkers wife came from -
John Evans ^his^ House and youre Depont said
to her I was very glad that shee was come
that shee might nurs her husbund; within one
hower or two my wife was taken with a paine
in her foot soe Exsteremly and sevearly
that shee cryed out: and acquainted me that
her pain was in such sort that her foot
felt as ~~though~~ if a thousand alls or nailes
was Pearsing them and could have noe
ease but when (???) her foot was put in
hott water soe she continued: 24: howers
there the paine seased in her foot but shee
was tormented in her bowels to the day of her
death the which sickness continued abought a month

Reflect & Discuss

The first record of witchcraft in the North Carolina colony dates to 1679. The infamous Salem Witch Trials began in 1692. North Carolina stopped convicting those accused of witchcraft in the early 1700s. Learn more about North Carolina's history with witchcraft on [NCPedia](#).

The charge is brought against John Evans's wife, Susannah, though her first name is not mentioned in this deposition. Consider why John Evans would be named, but not his wife, though the charge is against her.

The words "witch" or "witchcraft" are also omitted from Thomas Boucher's deposition, but related records make it clear this is an accusation of witchcraft. Why do you think they aren't included here?

Source:

Witchcraft, 1703. Colonial Court Record 148, Witchcraft. State Archives of North Carolina. Call no. SR.401.2. Digital ID CCR_148_Witchcraft_1703_001-003.

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and many helpfull men and woman: ende
=vered to give her Ease and helped but all
in vaine and it was observed that soone after shee
shee was taken sick shee cried out ^of^ John Evans
his wife still saying that shee was an Evall woman
and that shee was satisfied that she -
suffered these great [e???] paines by her means
and Ernestly desiered [??me] mee to have her -
Examined and serched for shee should certain-
=ly Dy. but it may serve to prevent her from
Doing more Mischeif This she said with many
more words Releating to the said Evans his wife
adding that she coold not slumber but she thought
of her; before many persons present soo that in
a bought a weake after shee was taken I Thomas
Bowcher the Depont was allso taken with strainge
and unuseual paines in my stomack and belley
and [prevyiparts] and am still afflicted to this day
Soo that I and my wife could hardly Tell which
shold dy first and Jno Taylor and his wife
and all the people of my famally ware soo bad
that ¶ one could not helpe another. Some time
before [be] my wife Dyed John Evans came for
one to meet his wife att Mr. Tho: Vandormulens
to appeare before Mr Richd: Cominfort for
she that was his wife was not willing to
heare such Reports against her selfe
I Readely went and there acquainted what
obligation my wife had Laid one me to serch the
matter' more plaine John Evans and his wife

As you continue to read the document, you find more information about John's interactions with Thomas. Based on this record, it is probable that the Evans and Boucher families knew each other personally. What could have happened between the families that led to this accusation?

Throughout history, the vast majority of people accused of witchcraft are female. Why do you think more women are accused? What can this tell us about the gender roles and societal values of the time?

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Did abuse me and my wife and he thretned me
that he wold much bruse my body I acquainted him
that I was sick he said that he did not believe
but that I was as well as he. this is what is
most pertinent and what I can Remember syd which
I do attest and sett my hand unto

Tho: Boucher

Copia vera Test Ed[mo]nd Taylor Clk Co[u]r[t]

This Deposition sworn To in open Court

The 31st day of august 1703

Test Ed[mo]nd Taylor Clk Court

Curious how the jury ruled in this case? A later record indicates that on October 27, 1703, a jury found “no Bill and the person Ignoramus and it is ordered that the said Susanh. Evens be acquitted paying the Charges.” What does this mean?

How did Thomas Boucher fare? Court minutes from later in 1703 indicated he was deceased and indebted to John Evans. It is not clear whether he was indebted before or after this case. Does this information affect your perception of Thomas’s accusation?