



## *Extracts From 17<sup>th</sup> Century Court Cases*

*Hankerton*

CASE Elizabeth Whitinge v John Forte: Defamation, 24 February 1608/9

DEPONENTS John Shott, farmer, of Painswick. Lived there 3 years. Born Barnwood. Aged 40. John Charles, mason, of Painswick. Born & lives there. Aged 30. Joan Forte, daughter of Walter Forte of Painswick, sister of the defendant. Born & lives there. Aged 34. On the part of Elizabeth Whitinge.

DEPOSITIONS (Abstract) Last April or May Elizabeth Whitinge was standing in her back side by her well washing her clothes. John Shott, John Charles and John Forte were standing in Shott's adjoining ground called Crunch Orchard. Joan Forte was standing at her father's door. The plaintiff and defendant fell at hard words and John Forte said Whitinge was a whore and she should not go to bull over his grounds which Shott took to mean that Whitinge had lived incontinently with someone or other and that she went over Forte's grounds to be naughty. Forte repeated these speeches again and again with intent to discredit Whitinge though before this Shott never heard but that she was an honest woman. Shott is worth five pounds. Whitinge used no words to incite Forte to use the words said but after she gave him very bad speeches which Shott will not express as it is not required of him.

At the time that John Shott's house at Painswick was being built John Charles was working with Shott and John Forte. He confirmed the words used by Forte to Whitinge were said without provocation. Forte also said Whitinge's husband was laid of the pox and that she had been in Court long ago but she had good friends at the Court.

Joan Forte gave similar evidence concerning the words spoken. About seven years ago she had had a bastard by John Gwilliam of Standish and about two years ago she had a bastard by Richard Vyner of Hankerton in Wiltshire for which she had done public penance in a white sheet by order of a court.

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