

# BOWNE HOUSE ARCHIVES



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## BOWNE FAMILY PAPERS - TRANSCRIPTIONS

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Document ID: #2018.1.3-10

Document Title: Testimony of John Bowne at Hannah Bowne's Memorial

Date: 2nd day of 12 month, 1677/8.

(February 2, 1677 - Old Style) / February 12, 1678 - New Style)

Note on dates: Early Quakers used the numbers, not the names, of the months and days of the week. Prior to 1752, English people mostly used the Julian ("Old Style") calendar, which was 10 days behind the modern ("New Style") calendar and began the New Year on March 25th.

This transcription retains the spelling and punctuation of the original document.

Transcribed by: Charlotte Jackson

Last revised: 3/2024

John Bowne's Testimony for Hannah Bowne, 2<sup>nd</sup> of 12<sup>th</sup> mo. 1677

BFP #2018.1.3-10

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The Testimony of John Bowne concerning his Innocent Wife and faithfull Yoak-fellow Hanah Bowne as in the Simplicity of Truth it arose and was spoken amongst Friends when met together to accompany her Body to the Ground at the house of their deare friends John and Mary Elson at the Peele meeting Place Lond<sup>o</sup>. the 2<sup>d</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>: m<sup>o</sup>. 1677

My Deare Friends for so I can truly call you The desire of my Heart is that every mind may Sink downe inwardly that so you may feele Yea may taste and may truly Savour that which springs from the Lords begetting for I can in truth say it Livingly springs in my heart this day although I may in some Sence truly declare that my naturalls have been even as dissolved in this weighty Exercise<sup>1</sup> in this deep and very neare tryall wherewith my heavenly Fathers Pleasure hath been to prove me who now hath Seen good to gather to himself into everlasting rest that which he alone hath prepared and fitted for himselfe out of that Earthly tabernacle which now I must leave behind as once the thing sprang in her that shee must stay behind her Husband.

Now must I leave that earthly tabernacle to be layed among many of the Lords [....] amongst his Valiants and amongst his tender Babes, many of which wee have been truly refreshed with for these many yeares and I know not any place from my outward being could have been such sattisfaction to me as with you at this time and I find my Selfe having this Oportunity weightily concerned to testifie a little of the abundance that is in my heart concerning my deare and tenderly beloved Wife to whose charge I have not anything to lay since I first injoyed her Company.

To declare a little to you my Freinds to ease my heart in this matter when I first heard of her before I knew her face a true Love was begotten in my heart towards her because of the Love of God that lived in her and that from her childhood shee sought after heavenly ~ things whose face when I did behold it as I may say it was outwardly beautifull and am- =iable and so hath it continued unto me and to all that truly knew her shee was very ~ zealous: for the Lord in what she knew in that day and from the first closeing with the thing I declared unto her shee hath been truly faithfull unto me untill her last Minute

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<sup>1</sup> "exercise": ordeal, trouble

as I have often heard her say the resolution of her heart and the bent of her spirit was altogether to be Subject unto me in all things which for conscience sake shee could doe

But after the Lords Messengers<sup>2</sup> came amongst us and declared the eternall Truth shee redily Joyned with it and durst not derogate from it shee was a true and tender Mother to her children Seven I hope is yet remaining of them her care over them was Such that shee would never consent to part with any one of them nor of her family<sup>3</sup> except [....] [de?]-scribe a place better for them for their Eternall welbeing.

But when the Lord layed it upon her then was shee truly willing to Leave both her native ~ Country and her Husband and Children and all her deare Relations and after some other difficult travells<sup>4</sup> shee was concerned to See Friends in the Nation of England w<sup>ch</sup> being accomplished in an acceptable time shee returned to my owne dwelling where Joyfully she was received of all that truly knew her.

But in a little time shee declared unto me that when shee was upon the Seaes it was in her Veiw that shee must say Husband I am come to see thee but I must not tarry which came to pass in Some Months time that except she returned to England againe shee could not Injoy peace with the Lord.

At the knowledge of which I could freely have given up all to have accompanied her but not dareing to stir without the Leading of the Lord I was made freely willing to part with her and remaine at home with my little ones but after some time the thing sprang in my heart to make preparation to come for England and it was made truly easy to me that if the Lord required her travelling in these Countrys that I should take the care of her and accompany her if it were to the disbursing of halfe my outward ~ Estate. ~~

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<sup>2</sup> **The Lord's Messengers:** the first Quaker preachers in New Netherland, Robert Hodgson and his companions, arrived on the *Woodhouse* in summer 1657.

<sup>3</sup> alternative reading: "out of her family"

<sup>4</sup> "other difficult travells": Hannah traveled to Maryland, and possibly other colonies, *en route* to England in 1675.

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But when I came here I understood shee was in Ireland<sup>5</sup> which place I expected I might find her which being accomplished it lay upon her spirit to visit Friends throughout all that Nation wherein I did accompany her willingly to a thousand miles travell and afterwards came over into England into part of many Counties in this Nation hoping when I came to London the Lord would make her way homeward but a nesessity was laid upon her of further travell in these Countrys but it was much with me to press her so far as I durst to haste away to her children and when I durst proceed no farther I gave up to accompany her wheresoever the Lord might order her which hath been through Holland Friesland and as far as the City of Embden<sup>6</sup> in the Low Countrys which was the furthest place that stood in her veiw ere shee went over through all which I have a testimony in my heart she was made Servicable [sic] for the Lord and perticularly at that City of Embden haveing cleared her Conscience to those that were convinced<sup>7</sup> and ~ they from that Established thire Meeting twice a week that had been long neglected through all which Countrys she was inabled to cleare her conscience to them in thi[re] own Language, in which she had been little exercised ever Since I had the knowled[ge] of her<sup>8</sup> ~~~

[PAGE TWO]

Aafter which being accomplished returning for England Now said shee if there were a Shi[p] at London am I ready to returne home Nay my deare said I if there were a Ship I should n[ot] now carry thee at this Season of the yeare oh said shee I would Scruple no Season if it were the Lords time

Now my Deare Freinds as the Lord hath enabled me have I in short given you this account for your Sattisfaction concerning her though I am well perswaded it need not be spoke[n] to many of you.

And this can I in truth say as I said at first I have nothing to lay to her charge sin[ce]

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<sup>5</sup> According to John Bowne's journal Hannah suffered a stillbirth in Dublin, although he does not mention it here.

<sup>6</sup> City of Embden: Emden in East Frisia, today part of Germany.

<sup>7</sup> "convinced": converted to the Quaker faith

<sup>8</sup> "in thire own language": Hannah had grown up in Dutch territory and apparently was bilingual as a child.

John Bowne's Testimony for Hannah Bowne, 2<sup>nd</sup> of 12<sup>th</sup> mo. 1677

BFP #2018.1.3-10

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I first knew her and I am satisfied in my owne heart that her garments are cleane an[d] were cleane and without spott a tender Mother to her children and faithfull wife to her Husband and that which passeth all truly resigned to Serve the Lord to the uttmost of her power haveing truly denyed all parted with all forsaken all to answ[er] the Lords Requireing.

And now to add a little for the sakes of those that are convinced of the Truth to whome t[his] may come shee was always diligent in what she undertook ever shy of coming into debts and alwayes carfull to answere Engagments and performe to every one the thing [....] was equall upon all accounts never willing to make use of things above her ability but constantly minding that which was decent comely and of good report amongst sober people and when concerned in her family to Exhort Reproach or Correct it w[as] done in tenderness wisdom and godly feare to the reaching Gods Wittness and causin[g] the stuborne nature to Bow.

She could always freely make use of what the Lord did afford her for the Service of Tru[th] and Friends thereof never questioning but the Lord would take the care of her and provide for her when she was concerned<sup>9</sup> to leave all her outward acquaintance and travel up[on] the Truths account in divers Countrys where shee was a Stranger alwayes believing tha[t] the Lord would take away all Scruples and remove all doubts that might arise in a[ny] of his faithfull People concerning her.

And in all the time of the weakness of her Body there was not the least appearance of any trou[ble] upon her mind and some of her last words to me were if the Lord should take her away/

to remember her deare love to all Freinds that are faithfull and to her deare children[n] and not long after passed away without Sigh or Groane. \_\_\_\_\_ Willing Submission fait[h=] full obedience and Liveing Praises be rendered unto God for ever Sayth my Soule Amen

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<sup>9</sup> alternative reading: "conjoined"

**John Bowne's Testimony for Hannah Bowne, 2<sup>nd</sup> of 12<sup>th</sup> mo. 1677**

**BFP #2018.1.3-10**

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And many Friends being come together wee had a precious Meeting before her Body was carrie[d] forth and I am a liveing witness with many more that the liveing power of God with u[s] accompanied her Body to the Ground.

And now it's the breathing of my Soule to the Lord that the residue of my time here [I] may live her Life. And not only performe the faithfull and true care of a lovin[g] father but also keep the dilligent watch of a tender Mother unto and over our de[ar] children.

And so in true tenderness and Brotherly Love I dearly Salute all faithfull Friends to whom this may come and bid you all Farewell.

Your Friend and Brother in the Trut[h]

John Bowne~~

Of Long Island In Newengland~~