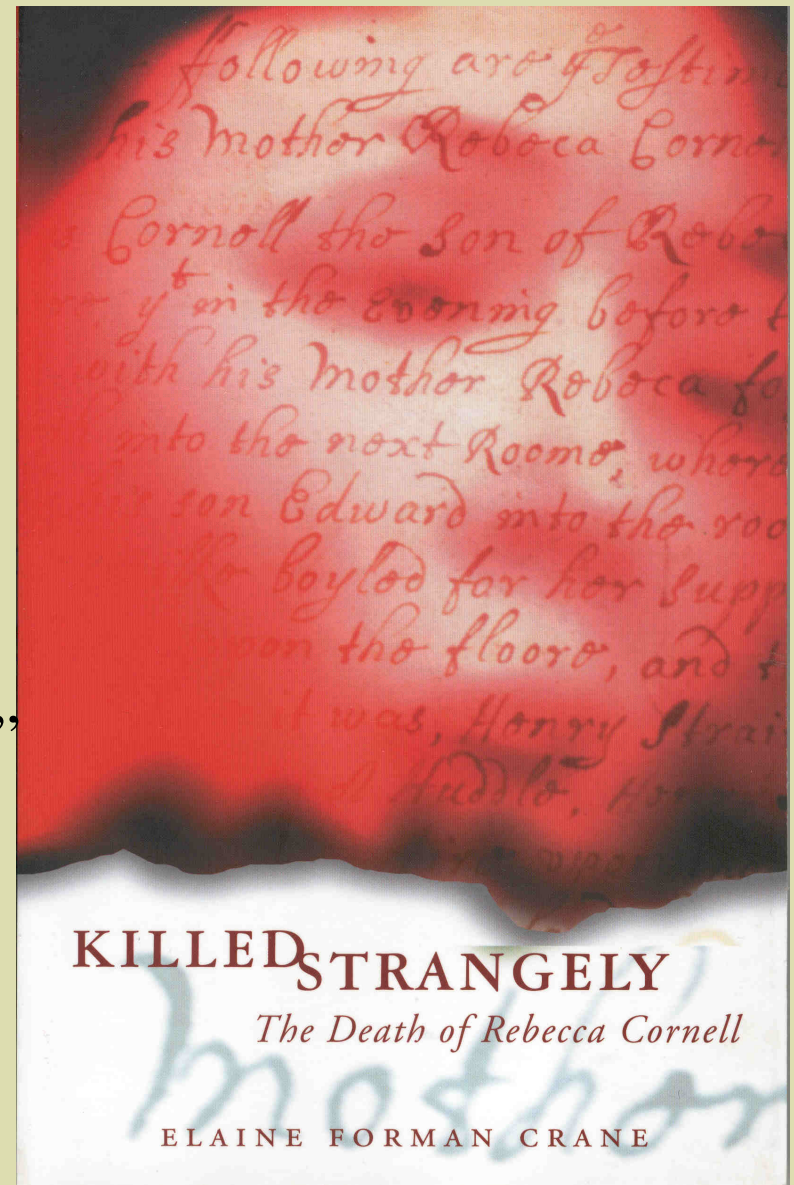


The Murder of Rebecca Cornell

- Lived in Portsmouth, RI
- Across the street from Hugh & Elizabeth
- Died Saturday, February 8, 1673 8:00pm
- Rebecca was 73 years old
- Found burning by her grandson Edward
- First ruled an “Unhappie Accident of fire”
- Buried Monday, February 10, 1673
- Exhumed Thursday, February 20, 1673
- Surgeons found a “Suspitious wound”



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Elizabeth Parsons

- Helped to prepare the body for burial on Sunday, February 9, 1673
- Gave a sworn deposition on April 11, 1673:

Elizabeth y^e wife of Hugh Persons of y^e Towne of Portsmouth, Aged sixty yeares or thereabouts being According to y^e Law Engaged, & sworne, Deposeth, & Testifieth y^t shee being wth Goodwife Earle, desired to lay forth y^e Body of the Deceased M^{rs} Rebeca Cornell, they on y^e Sabath Day towards night, Accordingly layd forth the Body of the s^d Deceased, & saith y^t then there was noe Apeareance of Blood about y^e Corps, but comeing thether on y^e Munday there had beene in the roome where y^e Corps lay, Thomas Cornell wth Wm. Hall to measure y^e Corps for y^e makeing A Coffin to interr Her in, & some saying y^e corps did purge, this depon^t went to see whether y^e corps did purge or not, & found y^t y^e corps did not purge, onely saw y^t shee had bled fresh Blood at y^e Nose; and ffurther saith not.

Taken before y^e Dep^t Gov^r & part of y^e Gen^{ll} Councill, the 11th day of Aprill 1673.

John Sanford Secretary



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Hugh Parsons

- Found Rebecca's outside door to be "fast bolted" from inside.
- Gave a sworn deposition on April 11, 1673:

Hugh Persons of y^e Towne of Portsmouth Aged 60 yeares, or thereabouts, being According to Law Engaged & sworne: Deposeth & Testifieth that y^t night M^{rs} Rebeca Cornell lost Her Life, this Depon^t comeing to y^e House: went in to y^e Roome where shee lay, & M^r Coggeshall goeing in before this Depon^t, Emediately M^r Coggeshall went to y^e outward Doore opening to y^e Southward, to see whether it were fast bolted. And this depon^t heard M^r Coggeshall say y^t Doore was fast Bolted. And further this Depon^t saith, y^t upon y^e hearth there was burnt sinders lay in A traine, & almost covered y^e floare in such A manner as if shee had beene drawne thether.

Taken before y^e Dep^t Gov^r and part of y^e Genll Councill the 11th Day of April 1673.

John Sanford Secretary



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Thomas Cornell Jr.

- Oldest son of Rebecca
- Lived in her house with his wife and six children
- Tried for murder at Newport on May 12, 1673
- Jurors included:
 - Clement Weaver - father-in-law of two of Henry's sons
 - William Allin – Henry witnessed his will
- Convicted and sentenced to be “Hanged by y^e neck untill you are Dead Dead.”
- Hanged on Friday May 23, 1673 at 1:00pm, 104 days after murder.



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Henry Matteson in Court

- Inferior Court of Common pleas
 - At Rochester (Kingstown) RI – September 14, 1687
 - “bound to the peace” [probation?], “noe person appearing against” [him]
 - “Cleered from his bond paying officers fees”
- Had Henry posted a bond for some earlier offence, and this is when it was returned?



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Henry Matteson in Court

- Inferior Court of Common pleas
- At Newport, RI – January 4, 1687 (1688)
- “Debt Commenced by William Palmer, Plaintiff against Henry Mattison Defend^t”
- “there being no answer” Plaintiff enters a plea of “Nihil dicit” (“He says nothing”)
- “The Debt being under fourty Shillings [\$3.17] the Court Declare it not Tryable in this Court”



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