

Testimony of Witnesses in Coroner's Inquest
held over the bodies of Ella Wilson ~~colored~~ &
her child August 7th 1879

Beaac Harrison "colored" being sworn; says, I arrived at
at the house of deceased, about half past twelve or one
o'clock. Was in the habit of going there when working in
the vicinity, to take my dinner. She (Ella Wilson) did
not seem to be in any pain at the time. Willie Johnson,
"colored", a supposed mid-wife was in the house. I knew
nothing about her as a mid-wife. Had very little acquaint-
tance with her anyway. Did not know whether she practiced
as midwife or not. Saw her (Willie Johnson) give her
(Ella Wilson) a razor. Razor was open at the time.
Knew that cutting would kill her. Told her it would.
Used every means to prevent it by advice. Was not
in the room at the time of cutting. Am positive that
the razor was given to her by Willie Johnson. Deceased
never said anything about being cut. Do not believe she
was in her right mind. Could not understand any-
thing she said. Was called in after the cutting and
then learned from Willie Johnson's information that
she had cut her self. I am sure the razor was open
when handed to deceased.

Willie Johnson "colored", midwife, being sworn, says.
One of the children came after me about 8 or 9 o'clock. I
did not want to go. Was very reluctant in attending the
case. On my arrival the patient moaned and seemed
anxious to be out of pain. She asked for a razor to relieve
herself. Do not know where she got the razor. Would not look
at her using it. Did not see the cut. Was present and
assisted at the delivery of the children. Children were
born through the natural channel, not through the cut.
The razor just now shown me is the one used. I washed

it & put it back in the trunk. Am positive it is the same razor. Think she now would have been living if she had not cut her self. Thought the cutting would produce death, but did not wish to interfere with her, so thought it best to let her do as she pleased. The children were born half an hour after the cutting. The deceased did not speak rationally & tried to hug the dead baby. The baby now living was the first one born. I was on good terms with the deceased. Her husband some times came to my house. He never remained long - seldom an hour at a time. I made no attempt to prevent the cutting. I closed the doors & windows during the birth of the children. After the children were born, I opened the door & called in Isaac Harrison. I was requested by deceased to darken the room. I am in the habit of attending on women in child birth. Followed it during slavery times for my master's family. Generally charge about \$2⁵⁰. Would look to the husband for payment in this case.

Isaac Harrison, being recalled says, Willie Johnson handed deceased the razor.

James Wilson, husband of deceased, being sworn, says. I left home about 8 o'clock. I identify the razor as my property. Left it in the chest as usual. I am acquainted with Willie Johnson but know nothing about her as midwife. My wife was well, when I left her in the morning. She had been sick occasionally, but I did not look for her confinement until about the middle of the month. Knew nothing of the cutting until I turned her in the bed. Willie Johnson told me that she gave my wife the razor.

Elisabeth Strickland, being sworn, says, James Wilson, husband of deceased, came to my house & told me to go & see his babies. Went & found his wife dead. The old woman, Millie Johnson, covered up the wound. I think there was a hole cut through the garments. Millie Johnson told me confidentially, that she washed the razor and put it back in the chest, where she found it. She told me not to tell.

Margaret Horton, Corroborated, the above witness.

Alice Wilson, daughter of the deceased, says Millie Johnson & mother seldom or ever spoke. Mama did not like for her husband to visit Millie Johnson's daughter, Harriet Johnson. Heard mother say so. Came home this morning.

Dr. J. S. Carlton says. The incised wound in the abdomen was sufficient to cause death. The wound was inflicted with some sharp instrument. Women in her condition are not generally in their right minds & will have recourse to everything in order to relieve themselves from pain & would be likely to ask for any weapon.

Verdict of the Jury in the foregoing case.

We, the Jury, find that Ella Wilson (colored) came to her death by a wound in the abdomen, inflicted with a razor. The deed was done while in the agonies of labor + supposed to be done by her own hands she having been furnished with the razor by a colored midwife named Willie Johnson.

James Thomas Comer - Foreman

Wm. H. Boynehan

Joseph L. Burch

John C. Cournoy

John F. Finch

Wm. C. Kemp

Benjamin F. Reddy

John C. Jackson

Archie A. McDuffie

David Walters

Robert Childers

King M. Marks

Athena Clarke Corum - law }
August 7th 1879 }

Wiley F. Hood
Coroner