



## **Snook v. Snook - Property Dispute**

### **Wilts Lent Assizes**

This was an action for the recovery of the possession of a small cottage and a piece of garden ground situated at East Knoyle. Mr. Saunders was counsel for the plaintiff, and Mr. Crowder, Q.C. appeared for the defendant. The plaintiff was a step-son of the defendant, and the claim on the part of the former was that the property passed into his possession on the death of the father, which happened in 1841, by virtue of a verbal gift. The father married Ruth Sanger in the year 1799, by which marriage he came into the possession of the land, upon which he shortly afterwards built a cottage. In 1810 the wife died, and Snook married a second time in 1811, and resided in the cottage until his death in 1841. From that time to the present, his widow (the defendant) has continued in possession of the cottage and being in rather indigent circumstances, has been latterly receiving parochial relief. The plea on the part of the plaintiff was that if the possession continued for a much longer period, that which did not now constitute a legal claim would become such, and the plaintiff would lose all title to the property. The plaintiff was called to prove the verbal gift of the cottage and land to him by his father, and stated that "paper" had also passed between them. This "paper," carefully enveloped, was produced by the plaintiff, but it was not put in as evidence. Mr. Crowder, in opening the defence to the jury, denominated the claim as an impudent attempt to deprive a poor woman of her property. An old man of 77 years of age, the defendant herself, and a Mr. Thomas Mullett, were called as witnesses, the latter of whom produced an attested deed, which conveyed the property from Edward Snook to his son Stephen by the second marriage, and the latter had allowed his mother to remain in possession of the property. The real claim turned upon the point whether Ruth Sanger, the first wife of the plaintiff's father, was legally entitled to the property by the verbal gift of her father, or whether the estate was verbally conveyed to the brother-in-law of Edward Snook - which points were advanced by the witnesses on each side. In the event of the former being the case, it was ruled that the plaintiff would be entitled to the verdict, and in the latter, the defendant's claim would be valid. The learned judge summed up the case, and after a short deliberation, the jury returned a verdict for the defendant.

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