



**REVOLUTION 1817**

## THE PENTRICH RISING 1817

In 1815 the battle of Waterloo ended 25 years of war against the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies, which had taxed England's resources as never before. The relief was immediate. The war was over. Prices fell. A Derbyshire gentleman wrote in his notebook: "All Household Articles much lower".

The relief was shortlived. A financial crisis and years of political strain lay ahead. During the war the pattern of the country's trade and working life had changed. It was not simply that Napoleon had tried to block our trading enterprises. The steady increase in population which began in the mid 18th century and has since continued almost unchecked was well under way. Trade had not yet expanded sufficiently to provide enough work. The Industrial Revolution of the early and mid 18th century also had had time to take effect. New trades were emerging, demanding new skills, and served by many semi-skilled factory workers. Demand in a few long established crafts fell off and many craftsmen lost both livelihood and standing, creating uneasiness in men of other crafts threatened by different shortages of work. Nowhere were the changes more marked than in the East Midlands, traditional home of framework knitting and now also home of the cotton industry and the new factories. Fashion accentuated the difficulties. Brandreth, awaiting trial for treason told a visiting magistrate that he cared not whether he lived or died for there were no Derbyshire ribs now. The Derbyshire rib was the type of stocking he made, "for which, in the change of fashion, there had ceased to be any demand", according to his defending Counsel, Thomas Denman.

In fact lack of work had caused continued unrest amongst framework knitters throughout the opening years of the 19th century, leading to sporadic outbreaks of machine breaking. The Government, aware of the need for greater, cheaper production, disapproving of violence, and terrified of the spread of French revolutionary principles, tried to stamp out trouble with severe repressive legislation. Byron in his maiden speech in the Lords in 1812 spoke against the Nottingham Framework-breaking bill, declaring dramatically: "I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula, I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey but never under the most despotic of infidel governments have I beheld such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return in the heart of a Christian country". Byron's fears were justified. The legislation only aggravated the situation.

Peace brought no plenty. There was a huge war debt, and taxation remained high. 1816 was cold and wet, with snow in June in Derbyshire, and no grass till the end of June. This was a severe blow to a county which even in 1789 was largely pastoral, quite unable to produce enough corn for its population but exporting 2,000 tons of cheese yearly. The autumn was unusually wet so that the harvest failed throughout the British Isles. In the higher parts of Derbyshire the oats were not cut till October and in many places could not be housed but had to be left in the fields all winter. "Besides this wonderful untowardness of the Season", wrote Sir Henry Fitzherbert in his notebook, "we had to contend with the re-action in the prices of everything produced by the General Peace". He noted that Public Credit was shaken, many banks failed and many great trading companies went bankrupt. He calculated that surviving banks reduced their notes in circulation by £50,000,000. Gold coin disappeared, and only the most debased silver currency was in circulation. "In consequence of all this a third of the working population were thrown out of employment and became paupers".

In 1816 each parish was responsible for the relief of the poor who were legally settled in it but this settlement was not gained by simple residence. It was gained by birth, apprenticeship, unbroken service for a full year and more without one day holiday, or by other means limited for practical purposes to the more prosperous. A man could live and work for years in a parish without gaining a settlement. Once he applied for relief he was removed to his parish of settlement. Sir Henry commented that a very general removal of persons who had never contemplated such a reverse in their fortunes became necessary. Parishes receiving these unfortunates frequently appealed against the removal order, and nearly £1,000,000 was spent in 1816/7 on removal expenses only.

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The whole poor rate for the country, according to Sir Henry, was over £9,000,000. Tenant farmers in some districts near Nottingham and Mansfield threw up their farms because their gross earnings did not meet their poor rate assessment.

Crime, said Sir Henry, increased fourfold so that the prisons were overcrowded. To crown it all the year saw "the maturity of all that was most extravagant in the Political Theory of hot headed Democrats who began to force their theories into practice". The increase in crime was largely the result of the efforts of desperate men to get food or remedy the situation by ridding themselves of the machines of those who in equal desperation would work at uneconomic rates. Even before the harvest failed there were renewed outbreaks of frame breaking in the E. Midlands, and a young barrister, Thomas Denman, first attracted attention by his able defences of the Luddite frame breakers at the Nottingham Assizes in summer 1816.

The Luddites were not simply machine breakers. The movement probably had both a tenuous organisation and some degree of political principle. The stresses in social and economic life had both produced and had their parallel in political strain. The compromise constitutional settlements of 1660 and 1688 had resulted in a political system favouring factional interest and corruption. By the second half of the 18th century men of very different backgrounds were pointing out the need for reform. The interest of statesmen, politicians and the propertied classes in general was suddenly ended by the shock of the French Revolution and the excesses of the revolutionaries. Re-action was strong, and there was widespread support for repressive legislation to prevent the establishment and spread of revolutionary ideas. Peaceful associations of men were strictly controlled, and their activities severely limited. Embryonic trade unionism was forced underground. Printing presses, possible sources of propaganda, had to be registered with the Clerk of the Peace for each county.

The ordinary man however remained interested in political thought. Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* swept England. Men met in the only places open to them, inns and alehouses, discussing their ideas. Political societies were formed, corresponding with one another where possible, though such correspondence was illegal. Conferences, also illegal, were held occasionally. There was little unity, and in fact grave division between the cautious constitutionalists led by Sir Francis Burdett, the Radical M.P. for Westminster, of Derbyshire descent, the outright reformers of Jacobin or revolutionary ideas, and the middle of the road men such as Cobbett, the journalist and political pamphleteer.

The Hampden Clubs, outcome of Major Cartwright's zeal, began in 1812. Cartwright stumped the country addressing reform meetings, upholding whenever possible manhood suffrage and annual parliaments. The Clubs increased rapidly in 1816 and some far outran Cartwright's views on possible methods of reform. Late in the same year William Cobbett's writings suddenly became popular. His *Political Register* had been gaining ground in the north, but cost 1s. 0½d. In November 1816 he began to publish his leading article separately at 2d. The first "Address to the Journeymen and Labourers", pointing out the burden of indirect taxation and the constitutional connection between taxation and representation sold 44,000 in under a month, and 200,000 by the end of 1817.

In these circumstances the government's constant apprehension stirred to fright. Habeas Corpus was suspended in March 1816. The Seditious Meetings Act attempted to suppress all reforming clubs and societies. Cobbett then took fright, publicly warned the nation against political clubs, and fled to America. The political meetings continued underground. Government agents moved round the country, spying on any groups whose confidence they could gain, testing their loyalty by suggesting rebellion. The most notorious of these was William Oliver who toured the country

leaving London on 24 April, visiting Birmingham, Derby, Sheffield, Wakefield, Dewsbury, Leeds, Manchester, Wakefield again on 5 May for a central delegate meeting attended by Thomas Bacon, delegate for the North Midlands, Huddersfield, Barnsley, Ossert, Spen Valley, Bradford, Leeds, and returning to London on 15 May. The rising, Oliver reported, was planned for 25 May but was "a weak unpractical scheme" and if it could be delayed it would blow up of itself". He advised the plotters to delay the rising to 9 June because then the nights would be dark and preparations for the rising would be more advanced. A final meeting was planned at Sheffield on 7 June the delegates to which were seized by the troops. Oliver "escaped", and went on to Sheffield to encourage the Nottingham and Pentrich contingent to continue with their plans.

The East Midlands were not the only disturbed area. There had been meetings and riots throughout the winter, the Watsons had made a hopeless and senseless attack on the Tower, traditional seat of power in the middle ages but no longer of any real importance. Lancashire was plotting but in Manchester wiser counsels prevailed. A peaceful march on London was planned, the march of the Blanketeers to petition the Prince Regent. Troops chased even these peaceful men, and the last remnants of the marchers were stopped at Ashbourne and sent back to Manchester. There was a rising near Huddersfield in Yorkshire where Oliver's true role was known, but it was nipped in the bud. In Pentrich alone men walked into the government trap.

Thomas Bacon, a middle-aged man who had worked for some years at the Butterley Foundry, was the leading reformer of the Pentrich district, and possibly of mid-Derbyshire. He had attended secret conferences as the Derby delegate, and was probably the man behind the Ripley, Alfreton and Pentrich Hampden Clubs. The government considered him the centre of political agitation in the north and east Midlands. He was however a believer in reform by constitutional methods intending the local Clubs to follow his lead. He was worried by the talk of rising at Wakefield, and still more at Sheffield and told Stevens of Nottingham that he would have no more to do with the business, that it would be best dropped altogether. Stevens went to Derbyshire on 2nd June threatening that if they would not rise willingly they should be forced into rising by Nottingham men. On 5 June Bacon visited Stevens in Nottingham and withdrew completely from their schemes. He had in fact nothing to do with the actual rising which complicated matters for the Crown later.

Stevens sent a stranger back to Pentrich with Bacon. He was Jeremiah Brandreth, a frame-work knitter, legally settled in Wilford in Nottinghamshire but until recently living in Sutton-in-Ashfield. He was a devout, upright, independent man who had been driven by the failure of his trade to seek parish relief, and had been denied it until his family were actually starving. Because there was no room for him in Wilford the parish had made him live in Nottingham, where he tried to improve matters by taking a frame. Help was immediately stopped, and only after repeated appeals was part relief given. Brandreth was only in Nottingham nine months but in this time he met the Hampden Clubs, and Stevens who seems to have been one of the more violent reformers. By now he must have been desperate. Bacon lamenting in prison that violence was not the real reason for the popular movement, commented that "Mr. Oliver over-acted his part by exciting it instead of detecting it. But if it had not been for public Distress it would have been in vain for Mr. Oliver to [have] Excited the Disturbance."

Brandreth went to Pentrich as leader to the group of men who met at Ann Weightman's alehouse "The White Horse". These men, probably the more hot-headed members of the local Hampden Clubs, knew him as the Nottingham Captain. The plan he revealed to the local men from Pentrich, Ripley, South Wingfield, Alfreton and Swanwick, was already known to the government. From 7 June the army and the magistrates were waiting for the rising. The Town Clerk of Nottingham had

his confidential clerk watching in Pentrich while the Nottingham authorities sat up waiting for news. Brandreth assured his followers that they must rise, collect arms and men, if necessary by force, in the neighbourhood, and march to Nottingham Forest where they would meet men from the rest of the Midlands. He told them that the North would rise, that a provisional government would be formed and relief given to their dependants. He exhorted them:

Every man his skill must try  
He must turn out and not deny;  
No bloody soldier must he dread  
He must turn out and fight for bread;  
The time is come you plainly see  
When Government opposed must be.

On Monday 9 June the men gathered. Brandreth's lieutenants were George Weightman of Pentrich, son of the licensee of the White Horse; William Turner a stone mason of South Wingfield, a farmer companion of Thomas Bacon at meetings outside the county; and Isaac Ludlam, a small landowner of South Wingfield in financial difficulties who had taken to quarrying. The rebels split into two parties, going from house to house with varying degrees of success. One farmer, Samuel Hunt, willingly gave them bread and cheese, dressed, and joined them, for which he was sentenced to death, and actually transported. At one farm, the widowed owner, Mary Hepworth, refused them admittance, and only surrendered arms to them at gun point after Brandreth had broken in and killed one of her servants. They met with extraordinarily little resistance but were easily dissuaded from their plan to take Butterley Foundry by the manager Mr. Goodwin. He had planned a defence force of special constables armed with truncheons, but came out and argued with the rebels trying to persuade them to drop their plans. He rescued a couple of their pressed men but failed to stop the rest from marching on. They went through Ripley to Codnor and on to Langley Mill where they met George Weightman who had been sent to Nottingham on a stolen pony as their liaison officer. He told them that Nottingham was taken. Losing men along the way they marched on almost to Eastwood, but scattered when they heard that the troops were moving out against them. They were chased and arrested, some on the road, some, including Brandreth, later.

The prisoners were held in the Nottingham and Derby gaols; indicted at the Derby July Assizes, and tried at Derby by a special commission of four judges, sitting from 15—25 October. The Attorney General and Solicitor General led for the Crown supported by eight other barristers. Mr. Cross and Mr. Denman were counsel for the defence, assigned by the Court at the request of the prisoners. 300 jurors, and 286 witnesses for the prosecution were summoned. The Crown seems to have intended originally to make an example of Bacon, whose name heads the list of men indicted. Unfortunately for this plan Bacon had taken no part in the actual rising and could be tried only for his earlier part in the conspiracy. The government were anxious in the extreme not to bring Oliver forward, but to keep him concealed in the background. Therefore the original plan was changed, the charge confined to overt acts of rebellion and Brandreth with his lieutenants Turner, Ludlam and Weightman became the leading defendants. The defence based its case for Brandreth, the first to be tried, largely on a plea that the rising was not high treason but more of a riot, that no attack had been made or intended on the Crown itself, that the men had been led astray by pamphleteers, especially the writer of "The Address to Journeyman and Labourers", that it was ludicrous to call the talk at the White Horse a conspiracy, and that all the men wanted was a bigger loaf, better times, and a change of government.

Denman bore the brunt of the argument, but even he made no direct reference to Oliver though well aware of his activities. Indeed they were common knowledge. Oliver was exposed by the Leeds Mercury on 14 June dealing with the Yorkshire rising, and had been denounced in the Commons by Sir Francis Burdett who accused the government of employing him as an agent to seduce the ignorant and unwary into seditious practices and then betray them. Denman himself in September while preparing his case had written to a friend, mentioning Oliver and asking for instances of the treachery of spies. He later claimed that he did not call Oliver because he did not wish to strengthen the evidence of conspiracy. Once Brandreth was convicted the defence switched emphasis to the influence of Brandreth over lesser men. Whether, as has been suggested, Cross and Denman traded the unveiling of Oliver for the lives of all the defendants except three ringleaders is not known. It could well be what happened.

Eleven men indicted were not arraigned. Twelve men who were allowed to plead "Not Guilty" were freed without evidence being brought against them, on the grounds that they were young close relatives of older men who had led them astray. Nineteen were persuaded to plead guilty including Thomas Bacon and Samuel Hunt. They were sentenced to death but the sentences were commuted to transportation. Brandreth, Turner, Ludlam and Weightman were sentenced to be hanged, beheaded and quartered. George Weightman's sentence was in fact later commuted to transportation but his three companions were hanged and beheaded. Quartering was remitted. The Government, having made its example, was satisfied, and also somewhat shaken by the widespread expression of public revulsion and shame over the part played by Oliver.

Reactions to their sentences varied but Brandreth remained calm and firm. He stated that he accepted the verdict which God allowed to be inflicted on him, but that his conduct was for God alone to judge. He expressed no remorse, only his trust in God.

The immediate aftermath was sad. The families of the prisoners had sold everything, even their beds, to finance their defence. In Pentrich according to the Census Summary many of the houses of the prisoners were destroyed. The population fell from 726 in 1811 to 508 in 1821. But the prisoners did not die in vain. Cobbett never let their names or that of Oliver be forgotten. Not only the revolutionaries but more moderate men were shocked. The path to manhood suffrage was long, hard and winding. In 1832 the first step was taken and a broader property franchise introduced. Early in the twentieth century manhood suffrage was attained. By then new stars shone on new horizons.

## THE BACKGROUND

### 1a. A framework knitting machine.

(Messrs. F. Longdon & Co. Ltd.,  
Surgical Elastic Fabric Manufacturers)

It is hoped that this machine will be worked from time to time during the exhibition.

It is an ancient tradition that the stocking knitting frame was the invention of William Lee, rector of Calverton, Nottinghamshire. The date of the first construction is placed in the last years of the sixteenth century, thus making it the most complex machine of its time. It was not fundamentally changed until the introduction of the latched needle in the middle of the nineteenth century. The operation of the frame was first established as a trade in London during the seventeenth century and although frames were worked in the Midlands at that time, it was not until the eighteenth century that the whole of the district took to frame knitting as a major industry.

While the frame can be worked well by boys it remains the device of a skilled operator and placing the thread is an operation requiring manual dexterity. A wood framed machine is especially sensitive to rough handling and the needles will quickly go out of alignment and become bent, yet a skillful workman could make a frame knit for a decade before an overhaul was necessary.

Stockingers, colliers and labourers were the mainstay of the rising. The stockingers particularly were in great distress.

2a. Photograph of an oil painting, "The Stockinger" by Walter Farmer, painted early in the 20th century shows a close view of a knitter at a stocking frame placing a thread in the machine. The slightly gloomy atmosphere was probably more pronounced with early 19th century lighting conditions. (Nottingham Castle Museum)

3a. Photograph of a water colour painting, "A Dying Craft" by William Hallam Pegg (1863-1945), showing a frame knitter's shop in 1940. Three stocking frames can be seen, each with a water filled globe (tinted green with copper salts) to concentrate daylight on the line of needles in front of the knitter. In the foreground a spool winder is rigged on a stool with a frame nearby to take banks of yarn. Hanging on the window sill is a lead ladle for use in firing the needle banks. Most shops were not so adequately lit, and had windows only along one side. The long shallow window of the late 18th century and early 19th century stockinger's shop can still be seen in a few buildings including a house at Crich.

4. Parish apprenticeship indenture of Mary Redgate to Francis Parker of Shirland, framework knitter, to learn his trade, 1793. (Derbyshire Record Office: Quarter Sessions)

Apprenticeship to learn a trade was the normal form of education for the older child in the 18th and early 19th century. Poor children were apprenticed at the expense of the parish normally in country areas to local ratepayers who were forced to accept and maintain the child for the period of apprenticeship. Many small framework knitters must have been burdened with these apprentices, and many masters doubtless started from such an apprenticeship.

5. Wood engravings, "The Fellow Apprentices at their Looms" and "The Industrious Apprentice performing the Duty of a Christian", from Hogarth's *Idle and Industrious Apprentices*, pr. Thomas Richardson, Derby, 1831, based on plates etched by William Hogarth in 1747. (Derbyshire Record Office: Strutt Collection)

The prosperous viewed with approbation Hogarth's conventional moralising on the theme of the two Apprentices "where the one by taking good courses, and pursuing points for which he was put apprentice, becomes a valuable man, and an ornament to his country; the other by giving way to idleness, naturally falls into poverty, and ends fatally". The theme was regarded as one proper and valuable in the training of the young. It remains an ironic comment on the actual fate of the virtuous and industrious Brandreth, a pious, hardworking man, and others whose trade failed them.

6. Articles of agreement between Thomas Marlow of Nottingham, hosier, Thomas James of Nottingham, joiner, James Hargreaves of Nottingham, cotton weaver, and Arabella Sadler, widow of William Sadler of Nottingham, framework knitter, reciting an agreement of 1770 between Hargreaves, James Marlow and Sadler to exploit in partnership Hargreaves' new engine for spinning, drawing and twisting cotton, and now permitting Marlow to transfer his share to James, 1776. (Mr. R. H. Johnson)

Marlow's renunciation of his share in the exploitation of Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny reflects the chequered existence of many business firms first introducing inventions which eventually revolutionised industry.

7. Text of Lord Byron's maiden speech in the House of Lords on 27 February 1812 expressing his disgust at the terms of the Frame-Work Bill, which was designed to suppress the Luddite riots by making frame-breaking a capital offence. (Nottingham City Library: Local Collection)

8. Statement by George Goodwin on practices adopted by Benjamin Outram and Company to meet the high prices and shortage of corn in 1800, stating that the Company employ about 800 workmen, whose earnings are reckoned monthly, and amount yearly to between £25,000 and £26,000. Until the 1800 food shortage the Company paid a weekly subsistence allowance of 40s. to 50s., or issued written orders on local shopkeepers, but the new high prices necessitated almost daily payments. Small silver change was needed at the rate of £250 to £300 weekly but could not be found and the Company resorted to printed orders for 2s. 6d. redeemed from shopkeepers with £20 bills of credit. Because of the extreme shortage of corn in the neighbourhood the orders passed into general use over a wider area. The Company unsuccessfully attempted to limit the area of circulation but continued the use of the orders, the legality of which was questioned by persons who were demanding an easier method of redemption. Undated, early 19th century.

(The Butterley Company Ltd.)

George Goodwin, manager of Benjamin Outram & Company, as the Butterley Company was first called, was one of the few men who treated the Pentrich rebels firmly but sanely. His account of the circumstances leading to the issue of the paper "tokens" after the failure of the harvest in 1800, and the continued issue of the orders by a reluctant company give a clear picture of the difficulties of life in much of the early 19th century.

9. Three sample bills of credit redeeming orders from local shopkeepers, 1800.

(The Butterley Company Ltd.)

Note that Butterley did not always insist on a minimum exchange of £20. Bills to Mrs. Waters were frequently less. Henry Strafford was a Ripley draper.

10. Rules of the Pentrich and Ripley Loyal Volunteers, 1803.

(The Butterley Company Ltd.)

The resumption of the wars with France after the brief truce of Amiens in 1801 renewed feelings of loyalty and patriotism. The threat of invasion by foreign arms was met by the raising of Volunteer forces to defend their own localities and not less important to help keep order in time of trouble. Pentrich, Ripley and Alfreton responded eagerly after a series of public meetings called in each township in August 1803.

11. List of persons enrolled in the Pentrich Volunteers giving names and heights, 1803.

(The Butterley Company Ltd.)

12. Bill of Henry Strafford for clothing the Volunteer Corps 1803.

(The Butterley Company Ltd.)

The Volunteers were clothed and financed by local subscription.

13. Receipt by Joseph Milward, vicar of Pentrich, for £12, annual composition for the small tithes of the township of Pentrich consisting of wool, lamb, turnips, potatoes, clover and orchards, etc., paid by Thomas Clarke on behalf of the Duke of Devonshire, 1805.

(Chesterfield Borough Library)

This title composition receipt is a useful indication of the main crops other than corn and hay produced in Pentrich at the turn of the century. The payment by the Duke of Devonshire of a composition for the whole of the small tithes shows the Duke's position as an improving landlord, and the largest landowner in the parish.

14. Receipt for payment for coal worked by George Godber in Widow Marsden's farm near Pentrich at the rent of £60 per acre, 1805.  
(Chesterfield Borough Library)

This further item from a bundle of Devonshire estate vouchers indicates both the importance of mining as a local industry and the value of coal to the mineral owner.

15. Receipt for £43 2s. 6d. property tax on the Duke of Devonshire's estate at Pentrich, 1805.  
(Chesterfield Borough Library)

16. Receipt to William Booth for £5 14s. 10d. for 53 quarters of lime, supplied by Mary Hepworth, endorsed "Hepworth's bill for Booth's building at Pentrich" with further bill to Duke of Devonshire for work and materials on William Booth's farm, Pentrich, 1804.  
(Chesterfield Borough Library)

Mary Hepworth was a widow who owned her own farm in South Wingfield, a redoubtable lady who defied the rebels. William Booth may be that William Booth whose pony was commandeered the same night for George Weightman to ride to Langley Mill. There were however two men of that name in Pentrich in 1817, both tenants of the Duke, William Booth senior and William Booth junior. It is not clear what happened to which.

18. J.P.'s order for the removal of Joseph Buxton, his wife and family from South Wingfield, to Tibshelf, the place of his legal settlement, 1817.  
(Derbyshire Record Office: Quarter Sessions)

Persons applying for poor relief were usually removed from their home to their place of legal settlement by order of two Justices of the Peace. The receiving parish or township frequently appealed to Quarter Sessions where the case was tried between the two parishes. This removal order is part of the evidence in such a case. Non-contested orders are found not in Quarter Sessions papers but in the parish records.

19. J.P.'s order for the removal of Catherine Haslam and her children from Shirland to South Wingfield 1817.  
(Derbyshire Record Office: Quarter Sessions)

In 1817 there was a good deal of removal as parishes tried to shift the burden of maintaining the poor, but what a parish gained on the swings it could lose on the roundabouts. In addition it had to meet the cost of removal.

20. Cost of maintaining Thomas Martin and his family pending a removal appeal, together with the "usual cost of appeal £2 0s. 0d." in all £3 12s. 0d., 1817.  
(Derbyshire Record Office: Quarter Sessions)

- 21a. J.P.'s order for the removal of Jeremiah Brandreth, his wife Ann, and children, Elizabeth aged 3 years and Timothy aged 15 months, from Sutton-in-Ashfield to Wilford, 12 September 1816.  
(Nottinghamshire Record Office: Quarter Sessions)

- 22a. Entry for Jeremiah Brandreth living in Butchers Close, Nottingham, giving age and occupation, Nottingham Watch and Ward Book 186.  
(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

23. Certificate countersigned by W. Halton, J.P., of the officers, Minister, churchwardens and overseer of the poor, for the parish of Crich that Lot Simpson has not been employed in the manufacture of cotton, linen, silk or woollen, iron, brass, steel or copper, or in any other manufacture, but solely as a farmer and husbandman, and that they know no reason why he should not be permitted to leave the country, 1818.  
(Derbyshire Record Office: Mr. J. E. S. Thompson)

Trapped by lack of work and rising prices the skilled workman in many trades could not even escape legally by emigration at this period. To help protect the British technical lead in industry, first the export of machines was made illegal, then the export of plans, and finally the skilled workman was forbidden to leave the country. William Halton, the countersigning justice was the man first attacked by the rebels, and as a local justice to some degree culpable in not nipping matters in the bud when the plans of the rising were being discussed.

## THE RISING

24. Prices at Christmas 1816 together with an account of 1816 and 1817 by Sir Henry Fitzherbert telling of the failure of the harvest in 1816, the collapse of trade, widespread unemployment and distress, a rising poor rate, a fourfold increase in crime, and "the maturity of all that was most extravagant in the Political Theory of hot-headed Democrats who began to force their theories into practice", of the march of the Blanketeers to petition the Prince Regent, of the plan for a general insurrection, and the capture of the plotters' delegates at Sheffield, of the failure to warn the men of E. Derbyshire in the hundred of Scarsdale and the country between Alfreton and Nottingham; "They alone were bravely faithful to their oaths and wicked purposes; for they commenced the rebellion precisely at the time appointed, headed by the noted Jerry Brandreth; "concluding with a brief account of the trial and a comment on the prisoners. "J. Brandreth was a man of the most undaunted courage and firmness, and possessed every talent and qualification for high enterprise. He had been a framework knitter and latterly a Sailor. He was 28 years old, of short stature, and very dark, with a very strong expression of countenance. He conducted himself very well upon his trial. The other prisoners were common characters". Sir Henry Fitzherbert's memorandum book on prices 1812-1819.  
(Derbyshire Record Office: Sir John Fitzherbert, Bt.)

Sir Henry Fitzherbert's brief account of the Pentrich rising and its background is marked by an intelligent appreciation of the political and economic circumstances, and a sympathy with the individuals not diminished by his disapprobation of their actions. His comments on the prisoners are the more valuable because he was a member of the Grand Jury which indicted them.

25. Map drawn up for the use of the prosecution at the trial, showing the route taken by the insurgents in their march on Nottingham.

(Public Record Office:  
Treasury Solicitor)

26. Letter from Lord G. H. Cavendish to his nephew, the 6th Duke of Devonshire in St. Petersburg giving a short account of the rising "organised principally at Pentridge by a man, who was formerly one of your tenants but had been dismissed on account of bad character and conduct", adding that similar risings had been planned elsewhere but dropped, and that planned rising had been a matter of common conversation in Nottingham before the outbreak, and ending that Derbyshire now seems tranquil again, 15 June 1817.

(The Trustees of the  
Chatsworth Settlement)

27. Page of land tax assessment for South Wingfield showing entries relating to properties of Isaac Ludlam, one of the rebel leaders, William Halton, the local J.P., Mary Hepworth and Elijah Hall, two of the farmers attacked 1816.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

These were not the only properties in South Wingfield belonging to Halton and Ludlam. Their main properties appear on other pages, as do the entries concerning Samuel Hunt, the small landowner and farmer, who joined the rebels on their night foray. No other owner occupiers were involved in Pentrich, Ripley or Alfreton, or even apparently tenants large enough to be assessed to the land tax though two rebels seem to have shared names with two of the Duke's tenants in Pentrich.

28. Copy of deposition by Thomas Bacon of Pentrich to his defence solicitors concerning his political activities in the north and east Midlands prior to the Rising, made whilst awaiting trial in Derby Gaol, October 1817.

(Nottingham City Library:  
Archives)

Bacon had not taken part in the rising but his earlier political activities implicated him. The government's plan to try him first as prime mover in the Midland reform movement had to be abandoned to keep Oliver out of court. He was in fact persuaded to plead guilty as one of a batch of defendants, and eventually transported.

29a. Deposition of Thomas Bacon written in 2 hands, the first of which may be his own, October 1817.

(Public Record Office: Home Office)

30a. Deposition of John Fletcher of Ripley, gentleman, one of the proprietors of the Ripley Brewery concerning alarm felt in Ripley and the neighbourhood at the frequent private assembly of members of the Hampden Clubs, and of the interception by lookouts of a man he sent to investigate one meeting; and concerning local belief that there was frequent communication between the clubs in Ripley, Alfreton and Pentrich, communication by a delegate with Manchester, and that each club sent a delegate to London to carry up Petitions for reform in Parliament; with the idea that some respectable inhabitants are hiding their valuables 6 June 1817; together with covering letter from the Clerk of the Peace at the County Hall, Derby, to the Home Office 6 June 1817.

(Public Record Office: Home Office)

31a. Second Report from the Committee of Secrecy, on papers presented (sealed up) to the House of Commons on 5 June 1817. Ordered to be printed, 20 June 1817.

Recommends that the extraordinary powers given to the Government by Parliament are still necessary to deal with threats of disaffection in the Northern and Midland counties.  
(Nottingham University Library:  
Duke of Newcastle)

32a. Deposition of John Cope of Butterley, fettler, concerning his membership of the Ripley Hampden Club meeting at the Cock, the signing of a petition carried to London by William Smith who presented it to Sir Francis Burdett and claimed to have seen Major Cartwright and Lord Cochrane concerning the cession of the club under the Seditious Meetings Act, and the subsequent meeting by Brandreth and the Pentrich men at the White Horse, the Wingfield Committee's report on arms in the parish, the rising, and his own escape; declaring the insurgents' intention to make Nottingham their headquarters, seize public property, extinguish the National Debt, abolish taxes, coin new money, and issue bills which creditors would be forced to take, 15 June 1817.

(Public Record Office: Home Office)

33a. Report by William Oliver to Lord Sidmouth, Home Secretary, on his tour of the provinces spying on the reform groups from 17 April-7 June, ending with the meeting in Nottingham at which Stevens declared his intention to kill or be killed; narrated from notes taken daily, and sworn on 29 June 1817.

(Public Record Office: Home Office)

34a. Copy of examinations of 28 men arrested in the neighbourhood of Eastwood on 10 June 1817, who were colliers and tradesmen from Ripley, Pentrich and places in the vicinity, taken 13 June 1817.

(Nottingham University Library:  
Duke of Newcastle)

35. Deposition by Richard King of Nottingham, framework-knitter, as to his meeting the "London Delegate" (Oliver) at the house of William Stevens in Nottingham on 25 May 1817, and later at the Punch Bowl tavern, Barker Gate, on 7 June, when Oliver was replying to local suspicions as to whether he was a Government spy, 5 November 1817.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

36. Deposition by George Watson, of Barnsley, as to the efforts of Thomas Bradley, the Government agent, to lure him to a meeting at Thornhill Lees, Yorkshire, on 6 June 1817, where all the delegates were subsequently arrested; 30 September 1817. Endorsed with note by Daniel Massey of South Wingfield, who sent the deposition to Charles Sutton, the publisher of the radical "Nottingham Review", 12 January 1818.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

37. Copy details of a conversation between Thomas Bradley of Sheffield, and Joseph Turner and Daniel Massey, both of South Wingfield, in which Bradley describes his actions as an "agent provocateur" in aiding the initiation of the risings both at Pentrich and in Yorkshire, and his later remorse for his actions, 29 September 1817.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

38. Collected depositions of John Stables of Horsley, framework-knitter, as to his conversations with John Brown, alias George Jackson, whom he met on his weekly trips to take finished stockings to a hosier's warehouse in Derby. Brown, a former regular soldier and also a member of the Belper Local Militia, had been one of the leaders of the men assembled on Nottingham Forest on the night of 9 June 1817 waiting to join the men from Pentrich; according to his conversations with Stables he was now involved in a further plot to overthrow the government with the aid of exiled French generals, 23 October 1820-2 April 1821.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

39. Truncheon No. 65 one of those provided by the Butterley Company to arm the workmen sworn in as special constables by their Manager George Goodwin for the defence of the foundry, 1817.

(Butterley Company Ltd.)

The constables armed with truncheons and those armed with pikes or guns kept watch all night and had actually dispersed when the rebels reached the foundry. They were turned away by Goodwin who went out and argued with them, giving shelter to those who would leave the rebels.

## FROM CAPTURE TO TRIAL

40a. Letter from Robert Leeson, under-Sheriff for Nottinghamshire, to the Duke of Newcastle as Lord Lieutenant reporting the dispersal at Eastwood of an armed body of men from Derbyshire, with an additional note by Lancelot Rolleston, J.P., that he had arrested 28 men and taken a quantity of arms; with endorsement by the Duke of Newcastle that he had informed Lord Sidmouth, Home Secretary, 10 June 1817.

(Nottingham University Library:  
Duke of Newcastle)

41a. Copy of a letter from the 4th Duke of Newcastle, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, congratulating Mr. Rolleston and asking his opinion of a draft address attempting to enlist the sympathies of the country people against the agitators. 11 June 1817.

(Nottingham University Library:  
Duke of Newcastle)

42a. Memorandum on work necessary at the County Gaol, Derby, to prevent prisoners escaping or communicating with each other. 8th July 1817.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

43. Analytical return concerning conditions in the County Gaol, Derby, 1818.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

44. Calendar of Prisoners in the County Gaol, Derby, awaiting trial at the Assizes on 26 May 1817.

(Mr. F. Hall)

This printed list includes 23 of the men implicated in the rising, all charged with High Treason, and 5 also charged with the murder of Robert Walters. The manuscript addition concerns Jeremiah Brandreth, "received into custody last night". The rebels were not tried at Assizes, merely indicted, and remanded for trial in October by a Special Commission.

45. Entries for Appletree Hundred, including Oslaston and Thurstaston, List of freeholders liable for jury service in the County of Derby, 1816.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

These lists were drawn up in October each year. The 1816 list is the one from which the jurors were summoned for the trial of the rebels. Thomas Gilman of Oslaston and Thurstaston, and Robert Eaton were two of the jurors sworn for Brandreth's trial.

46. Opening entries in the list of 300 jurors summoned for the trial. The pencil annotations relate to challenges by the prisoner and Crown or other matters affecting the choice of the jury in the first two trials, those of Brandreth and Turner, October 1817.

(Mr. L. N. Darbyshire)

Note: It is normal to summon about 70 jurors to present day Assizes with a much greater volume of work. Much challenging was obviously expected.

47. Quotation from a letter from Thomas Denman, junior counsel for the defence to his friend Mervale, written on 10 September 1817, telling of his plans to read on the authorities on High Treason, remarking on the poverty of the prisoners, including Brandreth, on Brandreth's stern and inflexible patriotism, his abuse of a visiting magistrate, and his indifference to death; commenting on the activities of Oliver and asking for stories touching the credibility and honour of spies, Joseph Arnould, *Memoir of Thomas, First Lord Denman, formerly Lord Chief Justice of England*, London 1873.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

48. Abstract of depositions concerning the rising from the papers of the solicitors for the Crown, probably those depositions on which the Crown's counsel based their case, 1817.

(Derby Borough Library:  
Messrs. Taylor, Simpson and Mosley)



## TRIAL

49. An Act for the Safety and Preservation of His Majesty's Person and Government against treasonable and seditious Practices and Attempts [18 December 1795] 36 George III c. VII, from Statutes at Large 35 George III - 38 George III, Eyre and Strahan, 1798.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Law Library)

50. An Act to make perpetual certain Parts of an Act of the Thirty-Sixth Year of His present Majesty, for the Safety and Preservation of His Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts; and for the Safety and Preservation of the Person of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent against Treasonable Practices and Attempts [17 March 1817] 57 George III c. VI, from *The Public General Statutes 1817*.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Law Library)

Whilst treason is an offence in common law these two Acts defined acts of treason more closely, and the rebels were actually tried partly under their provisions. They invalidate the argument of counsel for the defence of Brandreth that treason was not involved as no harm was intended to the Crown, and the matter boiled down to a bunch of simple hotheaded men wanting a change in the government.

51. Part of the examination by the Solicitor General of Anthony Martin, one of the Butterley special constables, and witness for the Crown in the case against Brandreth, concerning events at the White Horse, Pentrich, when Brandreth outlined to the local men the plan to rise, seize arms and men, and march to Nottingham. *The Trials of Jeremiah Brandreth, William Turner, Isaac Ludlam, George Weightman and others for High Treason under a Special Commission at Derby on Thursday 16th . . . Saturday 25th October 1817, with the antecedent proceedings Vol. I* taken in shorthand by William Brodie Gurney, Shorthand Writer to both Houses of Parliament, London, 1817.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

52. Part of the examination by Mr. Clarke of James Shipman, witness for the Crown in the case against Brandreth, concerning a conversation with Brandreth, "the prisoner", and Weightman on their way to the gathering of men for the rising, recounting their plans for the armed march to Nottingham where they would be met with music, bread, beef and rum for every man, form a provisional government and relieve the wives and children of the risers, that England, Ireland and France would rise at ten that night, and that a cloud of men would come down from the North sweeping all before them. *The Trials . . . Vol. 1*, by W. B. Gurney, 1817.

(Chesterfield Borough Library)

53. Abstracts of the examinations by Serjeant Copley, Mr. Reader and Mr. Gurney, of William Roper, Launcelot Rolleston and Captain Phillips of the 15 Hussars witnesses for the Crown, concerning a rally at Nottingham Forest, and the dispersal of the Derbyshire marchers at Eastwood, *Trials for High Treason* [title page missing but a first edition of Item 55 issued very shortly after the conclusion of the trials].

Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

54. Examination by Mr. Reader of Mrs. Mary Hepworth, witness for the Crown, concerning the attack on her farmhouse by armed men demanding arms and men, her defiance, their breaking in and Brandreth's shooting of her servant Robert Walters. *The Trials . . . Vol. II*, by W. B. Gurney, 1817.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

This shooting of Robert Walters made it impossible for defence counsel to hope to save Brandreth, and must have determined much of the line of the later defence of the other prisoners as falling under Brandreth's sway.

55. Address to the jury by Thomas Denman, junior counsel for the defence of Isaac Ludlam referring to evidence of Ludlam's discussion with Brandreth of "schemes of riot and confusion," and hints that this was not the first meeting of the conspirators, questioning the Crown's reason for suppressing mention of former conspiracies, alleging that Brandreth acting on the minds of ignorant men was himself deceived and led by others, and questioning "whether it was the act of base spies and wicked informers, whose trade it is to report nothing but danger and alarm, who find their interest in creating the mischiefs which they were only appointed to detect and prevent", or whether it was inspired in fact by traitors of deeper view; complaining that in either case the Government has full knowledge of the facts and withholds them; sweeping into a panegyric of Brandreth as a leader with a lengthy quotation from Byron's "The Corsair", *The Trials . . .*, by W. B. Gurney, 1817.

(Chesterfield Borough Library)

This was not Denman's only reference to Oliver, whose activities were public knowledge by the time of the trial. His references however remain veiled and offer alternatives.

56. Abstract of the closing of the case against George Weightman with appeals for mercy by both counsel for the defence, with execrations called by Denman on the escape with impunity of the "original author of the calamities", reinforced by a statement by the Attorney-General that unless impelled by duty he would never step in between a prisoner and the Royal mercy, together with an abstract of the group pleas of guilty and the opening of the discharge without trial of the twelve youngest. *Report of the Whole of the Proceedings under the Special Commission . . . in the Month of October 1817, including the Trials of Jeremiah Brandreth . . . William Turner, Isaac Ludlam, the elder, and George Weightman for High Treason . . . to which is added an Account of the Execution and a Detail of Oliver's Tour through Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire, 2nd edition, Nottingham, 1817.*

(Chesterfield Borough Library)

Weightman was in fact reprieved.

57. Sentencing of Brandreth with his reply "Let me address you in the words of our Saviour: if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but your Lordship's be done", with an account of his behaviour after the court was over. *Report of the Whole Proceedings*, 2nd edition, 1817.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

58. Printed copy of a letter written by Jeremiah Brandreth in Derby Gaol to his wife at her parents' home in Sutton-in-Ashfield, exhorting her to bring up their children in the fear of God, and requesting her to visit him if possible. 18 October 1817.

(Nottingham City Library:  
Local Collection)

59. Letter from Brandreth to his sisters and brother-in-law, expressing no repentance but a calm confidence in God and a total resignation to his will "and he has permitted me to be found guilty of High Treason", continuing with an exhortation to trust in Christ to deliver them from the burden of their distress, quoting the miraculous deliverances by God of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and Elijah's ascent to heaven, 26 October 1817. **The Solemn Appeal or Remarks founded upon the Letters, Prayers, and Untimely Death of Jeremiah Brandreth . . .** by William Smedley, Mansfield, 1818.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Strutt Collection)

The authenticity of Brandreth's letters and prayers has been questioned without real justification. Brandreth's character as a pious stern man of great ability is widely accepted by contemporaries in a position to judge him. Although his style is devout in the extreme it is in keeping with the popular religious works of the day. He never pretends repentance but takes his stand almost as a martyr, confident in a glorious and happy re-union with his family in heaven.

60a. Petition of William Turner to the Duke of York (Commander-in-Chief of the Army) reciting his war service in Holland and Egypt, his repentance, and the plight of his aged parents dependent on him for support, begging the Duke's intercession for mitigation of sentence, 24 October 1817.

(Public Record Office: Home Office).

## THE AFTERMATH

Immediately after the rising while the countryside was still upset there must have been many who took part who remained unrecognised and fearful. Other innocent men were arrested on suspicion. Others who felt threatened took precautions. The country however quickly settled down again. The trials were held, Brandreth, Turner and Ludlam executed, others transported. Oliver was executed by men of all political shades. Pentrich settled down to live as best it could in a troubled world.

61. Draft statements of Benjamin Hutchins, James Harding (of Ringsash, Devonshire), and John Clay, all woolcombers, arrested at the Rose Inn, Bellar Gate, Nottingham, on suspicion of implication in the Rising. Clay had been to Wirksworth, where he had stayed at the Workhouse, and had followed the route of the Pentrich men on his way to Arnold after they had been dispersed. 12 June 1817.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

62. Draft statement by William Rowbotham of Sutton-in-Ashfield, arrested at Jeremiah Brandreth's house in Nottingham on suspicion of implication in the Rising. A former acquaintance of Brandreth's at Sutton, and being unemployed, he had travelled to Nottingham in the hope of finding a frame. He was subsequently released. 28 June 1817.

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

63. Letter from Lord G. H. Cavendish to his nephew, 6th Duke of Devonshire, in St. Petersburg, reporting that Derbyshire like the rest of the Kingdom remains tranquil, of measures taken at Chatsworth to lay local alarm at the idea of Sheffield men attacking the house in pursuit of arms, the dismantling of muskets and despatch of their locks to Derby, sending of ornamental plate to London, and the retention of arms for 30 local militia men for defence of Chatsworth; and of national events, continued suspension of Habeas Corpus, the acquittal of the Watsons in London, and the general disappearance of plots and conspiracies. 30 June 1817.

(The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement)

64. First sheet of a 16-page letter from Cobbett from Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., where he had fled fearing arrest, to Orator Hunt his political colleague discussing in detail the rising, denying indignantly Cross's assertion as defence counsel that the insurgents were led astray by Cobbett's works, and beginning his long campaign against Oliver.

(Derby Borough Library)

65. Entries for Pentrich in the Census Abstract of Answers and Returns, 1821, with the note that the population of the township of Pentrich has decreased one third since 1811, "which is said to be owing to the insurrection which took place there in 1817, in consequence of which the Duke of Devonshire's agent destroyed many of the houses".

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Law Library)

The population fell from 726 to 508 and the number of houses from 122 inhabited, and 3 uninhabited to 82 inhabited and 1 uninhabited. If the dependants of those transported left because they could not afford to live in their houses, and men involved found it wisest to leave the area, a large number of houses must have been left vacant. It would have been better to pull them down than allow them to stand empty as a possible centre for malcontents. There is a local story of a private investigation after the rising by the Duke's agents, and of the turning out of persons implicated. No record of this has been found.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

66. Anne Weightman; persons keeping inns were required to enter into bonds with the Justices of the Peace to ensure that they kept an orderly house. A register of the bonds or recognizances, was kept among the records of Quarter Sessions. Anne Weightman is shown as an inn-keeper in 1816, but not in 1817 after the rising.

(Derbyshire Record Office:  
Quarter Sessions)

67a. A survivor's story; the recollections of Miles Bacon, whose father and brother were transported to Australia for their share in the rising, as told to his descendants.

(Derbyshire Countryside)

68a. Notes by descendants of those involved in the rising, stimulated by the story above. Apparently there are still descendants of the Ludlam, Weightman and Bacon families in Australia—even a place called Pentrich.

(Derbyshire Countryside)

## BROADSHEETS AND NEWSPAPERS

69a. "Leeds Mercury" June 1817, with an editorial and leading article exposing Oliver's part in the rising, and commenting that it is "a diabolical conspiracy, not of the people, but against the people".

(Central Library, Leeds)

70a. "Leeds Mercury" October 1817, with an account of the trial.

(Central Library, Leeds)

71a. "Gentleman's Magazine" October—November 1817.

(Manchester Public Library)

72. "Sentences of the prisoners confined in his Majesty's Gaol for the County of Derby, who have taken their trials at the Assizes for the said County, held at the County Hall, in Derby, on Saturday, the 26th of July 1817," including Brandreth, the Ludlams and Turners.

(Derby Borough Library)

73. A contemporary coloured engraving of Brandreth, handcuffed and shackled.

(Derby Borough Library)

74. "A brief narrative of the lives and execution of Jeremiah Brandreth, William Turner and Isaac Ludlam".

(Nottingham City Library: Archives)

75. "Account of the life, trial and behaviour of Jeremiah Brandreth, William Turner and Isaac Ludlam, who were executed on the new drop in front of the County Gaol, Derby, on Friday, November 7, 1817, for high treason."

(Derby Borough Library)

76. "The last dying words of Jeremiah Brandreth, alias John Coke, alias the Nottingham Captain, aged 27; William Turner, aged 46; and Isaac Ludlam, (the elder), who were executed on the new drop, in front of the County Gaol, Derby, on Friday the 7th November, 1817, for high treason".

(Derby Borough Library)

77. "The executions of Jeremiah Brandreth, 27, William Turner, 46, Isaac Ludlam, 52, for high treason, at Derby".

(Derby Borough Library)

78. Two contemporary coloured engravings of the executioner's arms holding Brandreth's head.

(Derby Borough Library)

79. A later engraving of the executioner holding up the head to the crowd; "Jeremiah Brandreth—a traitor". 1821.

(Derby Borough Library)

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Also on view are displays mounted by the Derby Museum and Art Gallery, and the Derbyshire Museum Service.

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- C. — Chesterfield Central Library:  
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- S. — Derbyshire Record Office:  
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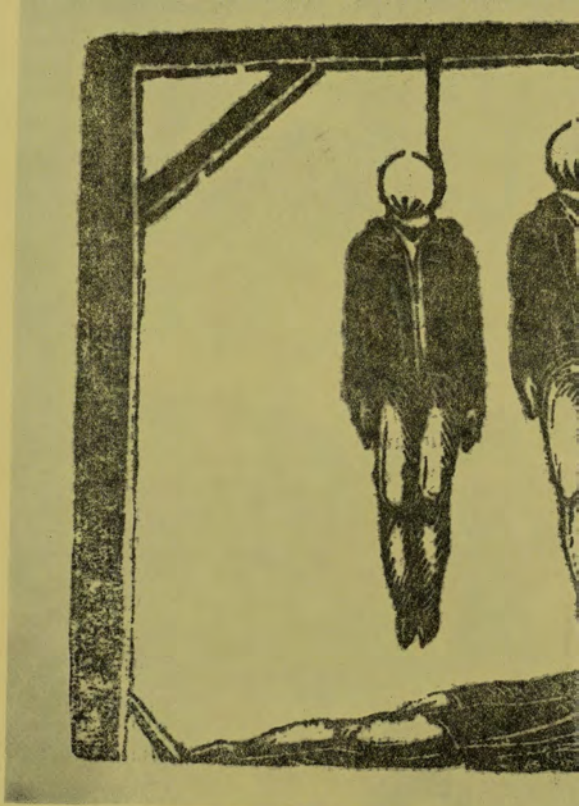
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**PENTRICH**

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