

HO40/16 fol.289 Evidence of John Thompson, carrier, Manchester, 2 November 1819.

'John Thompson of Manchester Carrier says upon oath that on Monday the 16th of August being near the lower end of Market Street in Manchester he saw Hunt with his party in an open carriage before the Exchange with a great multitude of people, they seemed at the moment to be standing, there was a great noise. That Deponent was afterwards led by curiosity to the place of meeting near St Peter's Church. When he got there he believes that Hunt and his party had arrived they appeared to be speaking from the hustings but Deponent could not from the distance hear. That from thence Deponent went for a short distance, meaning to go home, when he heard that military were coming. Deponent hurried back & went to the ground in front of the Quakers meeting house. That after being there a short time the Cavalry appeared in front of the houses in Mount Street. They were drawn up in line and remained there a few minutes when Deponent heard three distinct cheers, but by whom he could not tell. The Cavalry waved their Swords nearly at the same time. That immediately the cavalry seemingly fell into file, and Deponent observed them going towards the Hustings upon which great confusion took place, & a great noise issued, but the cloud of dust was so great that he could not see distinctly what passed at the Hustings. That at this moment Deponent saw more Cavalry coming upon the ground when the rush became so great from the Hustings towards the place where he stood, that he turned round to get away, and went up the steps of the Quakers' meeting house into the Burial Ground or yard adjoining as a place of safety. That the yard had a good number of people in it, many standing upon the walls, that it was so full upon the walls that Deponent could only see towards the Hustings by looking thro' the legs of the people there. That immediately on Deponent getting into the yard, he saw stones or brickbats thrown from the walls of the Quakers' meeting house apparently, as Deponent believes, at the Military. That he himself spoke to the people near him not to throw stones. That during the time the stones were being thrown Deponent heard a report which he thought louder than a pistol, he could not see the direction, that believing the Cavalry would come into the place owing to the stones being thrown Deponent was turning round to go away when he heard a female twice call out that one of the Cavalry had shot another. Deponent looked away and saw one of the Manchester Yeomanry lying upon his face. That Deponent got away as well as he could conceiving himself in danger, & as soon as he got from the steps, looking around, he saw a soldier [...red] on horseback clearing the meeting house yard. That Deponent on going down Mount Street passed a party of Cavalry who allowed him to go, on being known to one of them, that pursuing his course in Deansgate, Deponent was followed by a party of men, most of whom had sticks in their hands, like broom sticks. Deponent heard them say, speaking of deponent, what is that fellow, he is a special constable or some thing, they then surrounded him, holding up their sticks, and insisted on his giving his name and address which he did. [During?] the party, one of them said, I know him; he is one of them, I saw him on the Hustings, the next question to Deponent was, where is Mr Hunt. Deponent said I believe he is escaping as I am. Deponent said so as a subterfuge. They kept close to Deponent for some time 'till Deponent got to the end of Brazen Nose Street, & there he turned to leave them, when one of the men came after him, & said, Is not your name Johnson. Deponent

said no, it is very near that. The man then said Don't go that way meaning up Brazen Nose Street, as there are Soldiers there. Deponent however joined the Soldiers.

J. Thompson.

That this meeting had a most imposing appearance that Deponent had never seen so large a concourse of people together.

J. Thompson.

Sworn at Manchester the 2nd of November 1819 before me J. E. Norris.'

Transcribed by Maxine Peake, Peterloo Witness Workshop, 22 Aug. 2015.