

HO42 198 f. 667. Information of Robert Brooks of Bolton.

Transcribed by Claire Robinson.

'The Information of Robert Brooks of Great Bolton in the said County, Quarter-Master in the second Regiment of Dragoon Guards, taken upon oath before me one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for this said County this 1st day of November 1819...

Who saith that he was on the area of St Peters at Manchester on the 16th of August last about half past eleven in the forenoon, that there was a very great crowd of persons, that on going to the area at St Peters being in Old Millgate he saw a crowd of person consisting of not lass than two thousand were marching in military order with flags of different descriptions seemingly in sub-divisions going to St Peters. That Informant followed them till they arrived on the area of St Peters. That Informant after he had remained on the ground about an hour and a half saw a carriage containing three persons at least which drove up to the Hustings. The three persons he saw were on the dickey, two of whom were women and the other Informant understood to be Hunt. They all three got on the Hustings, one of the women bearing a sort of flag and Cap of Liberty. That Informant was about 100 yards from the Hustings. Mr Hunt was cheered by the mob. That Hunt began to speak but Informant was not near enough to hear the whole of what he said but he did hear Hunt the moment the Manchester Yeomanry made their appearance give orders to the people to give three cheers which Informant considered to be a sort of contempt to the Yeomanry. The Yeomanry came on the ground on a gentle trot, and made their way towards the Hustings. There was then a very great movement in the crowd which carried informant off his legs and informant lost his hat. Informant got on his legs again and set off running but got amongst the crowd again. That informant was running off and he cast his eyes to the right when he saw the flash and heard the report of a pistol. The pistol appeared to Informant to be pointed towards the soldiers and was fired from the crowd. Immediately after the firing of the pistol Informant saw a stone thrown by one of the Mob which hit a soldier who fell from his horse. Informant believes him to be one of the fifteenth hussars. About two or and three minutes after this informant saw a large quantity of stones thrown. They appeared to come from the back yards of the houses where the Mob were. The stones so thrown came in a direction where the fifteenth hussars were. That Informant then went away and left the ground. That Informant saw the Manchester Yeomanry dispersing the crowd for five or six minutes. That they had their sabres in their hands some of them waving them over their heads as if to frighten the people but they did not use them as Informant saw. That when Informant got clear of the Mob Informant stood at the corner of a house four or five minutes and saw the Military dispersing the Mob and Informant saw no violence used by the soldiers of any description. That Informant saw many of the mob in the confusion fall down and were trampled upon by others and many of their faces were cut and bruised in consequence of such falling particularly the pavement of the middle of the street leading from the Hustings. Informant saw at least a dozen cut by so falling on the pavement. Informant himself was very much squeezed and with great difficulty got away from the crowd. Most of the persons who fell on the pavement whose faces were cut in consequence of the falling Informant saw before they fell and their faces were not then at all [hurt?]. That Informant was in such a situation as to distinctly see the Military and if they had used their sabres with violence whilst Informant was a spectator he must have seen them.

Robert Brooks
Sworn before

Jas. Watkins